



SIDS4 Plenary Statement

Delivered by Ms. Olive Justine Vaai, Oceania Pacific Regional Coordinator for the High Seas Alliance

Thursday 30 May 2024

Madame President/Mr. President ,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the International Programme on the State of Oceans (IPSO) and the High Seas Alliance and its 50 plus member organizations including the IUCN, who collectively represent millions of people around the world concerned with the future of the high seas.

Under the overarching theme of “Charting the course toward resilient prosperity”, we are at a critical time to take action on the conservation and preservation of the High Seas. The ocean is central to SIDS’ livelihood, culture and identity and critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a result, many SIDS have been leaders in ocean protection and climate action for years. It is no coincidence that they were integral to the Paris Agreement, or amongst the first countries to ratify the High Seas Treaty.

The SIDS4 Conference is an opportunity for UN member states to call for more ambitious global action to protect the ocean in the next 10 year Plan of Action for SIDS. For SIDS, The High Seas Treaty offers a landmark opportunity for State governments to forge even more meaningful and productive partnerships with non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, private enterprises, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and other important constituents of civil society to help drive sustainable blue economy development, improve protection of marine biodiversity, contribute to climate action and, importantly, improve ocean justice and equity including by recognizing and integrating the invaluable knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples.

As a global organization of civil society partners, the High Seas Alliance stands ready to support SIDS countries and SIDS regions in efforts to achieve sustainable development through effective, inclusive and management of the ocean and its resources and protection of healthy, functioning marine ecosystems.