

**Thank you, Co-Chairs,**

Thank you to the esteemed panellists for your valuable contributions to this important dialogue.

~~Today I will focus on three interrelated areas: (1) maritime sovereignty and legal certainty; (2) the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources; and (3) the need for the implementation of international law, especially for Small Island Developing States.~~

### **~~1. Maritime Sovereignty and Legal Certainty~~**

The ocean holds immense potential for all nations, whether coastal or landlocked.

Yet uncertainty surrounding maritime zones and entitlements continues to fuel disputes and delay action needed to sustainably manage and conserve marine resources.

Addressing marine pollution and piracy, and combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing requires clearly defined rights and responsibilities under international law.

Timor-Leste is proud to have engaged in the first-ever **Compulsory Conciliation under UNCLOS**, which successfully helped us delimit our maritime boundary in the Timor Sea with Australia. This process, while not easy, demonstrated that the Convention provides States with avenues for peaceful and effective mechanisms to resolve disputes.

We call on all States to pursue peaceful means of dispute settlement in accordance with UNCLOS.

### **~~2. Conservation and Sustainable Use of Ocean Resources~~**

UNCLOS is a living instrument, complemented by other international legal frameworks.

Timor-Leste has ratified the ~~Third Implementing Agreement under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)BBNJ Agreement~~, and we ~~encourage~~~~call upon~~ all States to do the same.

It is essential that we close governance gaps, and ensure equity and sustainability in the management of the high seas.

We also strongly support the negotiation of a legally binding global agreement to end plastic pollution. ~~especially in the marine environment. The scourge of plastic pollution must be addressed through robust global cooperation.~~ We need commitments and enforcement mechanisms that take into account the different responsibilities and capabilities of ~~Small Island Developing State and Least Developed Countries.~~ SIDS and LDCs

### **~~3. Effective Implementation and Support for Small Island Developing States~~**

Timor-Leste is actively working to implement its obligations under ~~international ocean law~~international law. ~~at the national level~~. We believe global commitments must be translated into local actions, and that local knowledge and traditional practices should be integrated into marine governance.

~~For example, in our efforts to implement UNCLOS and the Convention on Biological Diversity, Timor-Leste has developed community-based and nationally managed marine protected areas, informed by both science and traditional knowledge.~~

We are ~~also~~ in the process of finalising our Blue Economy Policy and Action Plan, which will serve as the national framework for aligning sustainable ocean-based development with our international legal obligations.

As a ~~Small Island Developing State~~SIDS, Timor-Leste faces capacity constraints and limited access to finance and technology. To meet our obligations under UNCLOS, BBNJ, and other international regimes, we urgently need targeted capacity-building, technology transfer, and predictable, adequate financing.

Despite our constraints, Timor-Leste is committed to regional and global cooperation.

We are pleased to share that last month we hosted an international conference titled *Navigating Challenges: Law of the Sea and the Settlement of Maritime Disputes* that brought together judges, lawyers and academics from around the world to share their experiences and knowledge.

The conference was a unique and diverse gathering of over 100 delegates from ASEAN, ~~PIF~~the Pacific Islands Forum, ~~CPLP~~the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, and the G7+.

The conference discussed maritime boundaries and entitlements and emerging issues such as ocean governance, climate change and the conservation and sustainable use of the high seas.

Timor-Leste would like to use this opportunity to reiterate our trust in the international rules based system and in the power of collaboration and multilateralism to address the pressing ocean challenges of our time.

**Thank you.**