PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES
United Nations Member States

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations
801 Second Avenue, Third Floor
New York, N.Y. 10017

Phone: +1 (212) 937 - 0074
Fax: +1 (212) 937 - 0079
E-mail: psids.ny@gmail.com

Statement of H.E. Ms. Marlene Moses
Ambassador/Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Nauru
Chair, Pacific Small Island Developing States
At the Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference to Support Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 :
Elements for the Call for Action

Wednesday, 15th February 2017, New York
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Co-facilitators,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 12 Pacific Small Island Developing States with representation at the United Nations. At the outset, for those of us that are members, we associate with the statement delivered by Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and with the statement delivered by Maldives on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

2. In the Pacific, we are intimately connected to our ocean and are therefore keenly attuned to the mounting negative impacts on its health, driven by human activity.

3. These serious and mounting impacts are not merely threats to our ocean, but constitute a serious challenge to our sustainable development, livelihoods, food security and wellbeing, and therefore our ability to meet the aspirations encompassed in the 2030 agenda.

4. The PSIDS were at the forefront of those advocating for the inclusion among the SDGs, a standalone goal dedicated to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of our Oceans and Seas, and we look forward to catalyzing the critical work of implementation to meet the targets on protecting marine ecosystems, on addressing acidification, ending IUU fishing, and increasing benefits to SIDS and LDCs among others.

Co-Facilitators,

5. The Call for Action should reflect the high aspiration which we have for Goal 14 and for the 2030 agenda as an integrated whole and mutually reinforcing. It should also reflect the necessity of restoring and conserving the health of the ocean environment. This must begin with the building of effective partnerships capable of

delivering real resources to where it is most needed. The means of implementation must be at the center of our Call to demonstrate our commitment to act on a number of fronts.

6. To ensure a healthy productive and resilient ocean, we will need to address marine pollution, both land-based and at-sea, including solid waste management and addressing toxic materials and explosive ordinances from war relics and other undersea wreckage.

7. We would support a global strategy to phase out single use plastics.

8. To catalyze restoration of the ocean, the PSIDS suggest strong commitment on marine protected areas. We would support an element on the need to establish effective MPAs that are science-based and take into account local settings and traditional knowledge, with the goal of conserving 10 percent of coastal and marine areas by 2020, and the aspiration to conserve 20 percent of coastal and marine areas by 2030, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction. We would also suggest increased assistance to SIDS to support their work in this area.

9. As an integral part of ensuring the health of the ocean as a whole, we would also urge a timely and comprehensive conclusion to the BBNJ Preparatory Committee on the elements of a draft text of an international legally binding instrument and support the convening of a time-bound intergovernmental conference no later than during the seventy-third session of the United Nations General Assembly.

10. Another central element of Goal 14 is sustainable fisheries, which includes the need to combat IUU fishing. The importance of healthy fisheries to our economies and livelihoods cannot be overstated, and the Pacific has been a site of global leadership in investing in fisheries management and monitoring, control, and surveillance activities and our commitment remains steadfast.

11. The PSIDS recommend an element of the Call for Action encouraging fisheries management organizations to adopt modern tools to manage highly migratory species, such as tunas, within science-based limits and to ensure the verifiability and legality of catches as well as manage bycatch, discards, and other adverse ecosystem impacts from fisheries including by eliminating destructive fishing practices, including through eliminating ghost gear.

12. To combat IUU fishing, we need to develop and implement concrete measures to deprive offenders of the benefits accruing from IUU; identify the needs and build capacity of developing countries, including support for monitoring, control, surveillance, compliance and enforcement systems and improve the implementation and enforcement of traceability of fish products throughout the supply chain, including by ensuring that no fish sold is the product of IUU fishing.

13. We must also encourage States to voluntarily commit to decrease or eliminate harmful subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and IUU fishing within a given time-period, taking into account special and differentiated treatment of SIDS.

14. With regard to increasing economic benefits to SIDS, an element of the Call for Action could support current initiatives in SIDS to develop market centers and fisheries cooperatives in rural areas to consolidate production and supply to urban areas.

15. We should also develop and implement mechanisms that maximize social, economic, and environmental benefits to SIDS, as resource owners, in the harvesting and processing of their fish, and marine products, and the exploration and exploitation of seabed minerals, in global markets.

Co-facilitators,

16. The uses for the Ocean are constantly evolving and we should support economic development through use of ocean resources, including through sustainable tourism, ocean derived energy, and capacity building that promotes environmental awareness, conserves and protects the environment, including through the development of regional road maps to address the linkages and synergies between conservation needs and development aspirations of coastal developing states.

17. Finally, understanding the importance of youth to the success of our endeavors here, we would suggest that we promote at the national level curriculum educating youth on the importance of a healthy, productive and resilient Ocean to our future.

18. But to reiterate, the success for these elements in the PSIDS will require adequate means of implementation, and support, including in the areas of science and acquisition of reliable data.

Co-facilitators,

19. We were not alone in reacting with deep concern to recent reports that marine biodiversity has undergone considerable decline. Given the critical role which oceans, and its health, play for our societies and for development, this news is stark indeed. Especially when coupled with the increasing adverse impacts which climate change and ocean acidification are having on our oceans and seas.

20. The pace at which we work both here and outside this conference room must be equal to the urgency of the threats which the oceans, and by extension, we ourselves, face. Let us further galvanize the commendable political commitment we all demonstrated in adopting the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development by building an action-oriented and transformative SDG 14 for all.

21. In closing, we reiterate our constructive support and cooperation to the UN Oceans Conference Co-Facilitators, the Co-Presidents and all other stakeholders, for a successful outcome that makes real difference in the restoration of the health, productivity and resilience of our oceans and seas.

Thank you.