



*PERMANENT MISSION OF ITALY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS*



Statement by the Honorable Silvia Velo

Under Secretary of State for Environment, Land and Sea Protection

Ocean Conference

**Partnership dialogue 2: Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine
and coastal ecosystems**

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Honorable President of the Republic of Palau,
Ms. Moderator,
Honorable Ministers,
Excellences, Colleagues,
Delegates,

It is an honour for me to be here today and Co-chair this Partnership Dialogue.

I want to join those that have thanked and congratulated with Sweden and Fiji for having taken the lead on oceans and for having imagined a forward-looking, multistakeholders Conference.

Having the opportunity to address this assembly, I would like to contribute to today's discussion, highlighting few main messages.

In 2010, Italy has introduced the Standardized Measures of Effective Management in Marine Protected Areas, a national unitary system for MPAs' management that aims at strengthening their efficacy. This is a multi-stakeholders management model that allows the comparability among MPAs and maps the habitats and protected species, the threats to their conservation and existence as well as the policies in place to respond to anthropic impacts.

Italy also adopted a methodology for the allocation of financial resources based on selected objective criteria and performance indicators. Performance assessments are conducted on three different areas: 1- conservation measures within MPAs; 2-human impact; 3 – management efficiency.

From a National point of view, Italy can count on 29 Marine Protected Areas, on sea sites under the EU Natura 2000 network, and on Pelagos Marine Sanctuary that overall accounts for the protection of 19.87% of territorial waters. Two additional Marine Protected Areas are currently under establishment, one in Sicily and one in Sardinia.

Addressing now the global level, as the background document points out, while MPA coverage has grown significantly over the last decade, the geographical distribution of MPAs is very uneven. According to the document, a significant increase in the rate of creation is needed in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, South and East Asia and Small Island States which are more dependent upon healthy, functioning marine ecosystems.

With a view to contribute to progress in this context, Italy and OSA have launched the 10X20 Initiative that Italy is chairing together with vice-chairs Kenya, The Bahamas, Palau, and Poland and is intended to mobilize action towards achieving SDG 14.5. Within this Initiative, Italy is

proud to support the Ocean Sanctuary Alliance to identify globally significant areas that would be candidates for additional MPA development.

Recently, Italy has also increased its engagement with partner such as small islands developing states focusing on capacity building activities and to the establishment and maintenance of marine protected areas. We are indeed extremely honored to be partner with the Republic of Palau on the implementation of the Palau First Nationwide Marine Sanctuary as well as to contribute to new projects in the Republic of Tonga and in Kiribati, dedicated to spatial planning and to the maintenance of the Phoenix Island Protected Area, respectively.

As a contribution to this Conference and in the context of climate change, Italy stands ready to raise its support, if partner countries wish so, on marine protected areas and on actions to progress towards more sustainable ocean-based economies.

I thank you for your attention and give the floor to Madame Moderator.

I am convinced that the results of this Conference will last and drive us into the kind of transformative shift Agenda 2030 is asking for, especially if we look at the voluntary commitments and at the debate that took place today. Voluntary commitments represent an invaluable contribution to jump decisively in the implementation phase of Agenda 2030 and to progress effectively.