

The Ocean Conference

Closing remarks by the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr Peter Thomson

9 June 2017

Distinguished Co-Presidents, Secretary-General of the Conference, Under Secretary-General Wu, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

At the conclusion of the Ocean Conference, it gives me immeasurable satisfaction to declare we have now truly begun the work of reversing the cycle of decline that human activity has brought upon the Ocean.

Over the past five days, an entire movement has come together to act decisively to mobilise the necessary commitments to realize Sustainable Development Goal 14.

In doing so, The Ocean Conference has generated broad momentum for the implementation of all 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda.

I am confident the transformation of our World for the better is now well and truly underway through the 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Through your active participation and your great efforts, we have delivered a clear message to the world – the great mass of humanity and the governments that lead us are united in taking Ocean action. That unity extends to combatting climate change for restoring the health of our Ocean and Climate Action are indeed two sides of the same coin.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

I am pleased to say that the Conference's Partnership Dialogues, the Call for Action and the Voluntary Commitments have delivered a comprehensive plan of remedial action for the Ocean's problems.

The tide has turned on marine pollution. Marine Protected Areas are proliferating.

We have brought Ocean acidification to the fore of Climate Change and Ocean challenges.

We have put wind in the sails of those who will seek to reach agreement on fishing subsidies and IUU fishing at the WTO meeting in Buenos Aires in December.

We have seen great resources pledged to help small scale fishers, SIDS and LDCs maximize benefits from a sustainable blue economy

Strong commitments have been entered into for investment in Ocean science, technology and knowledge transfer that will greatly support vulnerable countries and thereby us all.

And lastly, we have seen a broad re-commitment to the adherence to international law and to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The task ahead is clear. We have to hold ourselves accountable to what we have committed to at this Conference in support of SDG 14.

Follow-up to this game-changing conference will now begin rolling forward.

We will fortify the momentum and partnerships announced this week. We will bring together the declared actors for each track of SDG14 to ensure that we all proceed in support of each other's efforts. I am confident that the UN system will rise with great diligence to these tasks.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Global consciousness has now been raised, such that no one can say that they were not aware of the Ocean's problems; neither will they be able to say they have not been alerted to the many solutions that are ours to now deliver on.

We must move forward with determination and with a sense of urgency.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It remains only for me to thank our Co-Presidents, Sweden and Fiji, the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr Wu, the Special Legal Counsel, Mr Serpa Soares, our co-facilitators, the Secretariat and all those who made this Conference such a success.

As I said at the opening of The Ocean Conference on Monday, throughout the long lead-up to The Ocean Conference, our mantra has been, 'human induced problems have human devised solutions'. This Conference has resolutely compiled the required solutions. Friends, now it only remains for us to get the job done.