



Statement delivered by

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UN Oceans Conference

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Co - President,
Excellencies
Distinguished delegates,
Thank you for giving me the floor,

Allow me to join the previous speakers in offering Solomon Islands' congratulations and support to the co-Presidents of this important conference, Fiji and Sweden. That we are meeting on matters affecting our ocean is already a success. This conference marks a significant milestone for the United Nations in the era of the SDGs. I commend its focus to achieving the targets set out in Sustainable Development Goal 14, which aims to Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

I am pleased, on behalf of my Government, to welcome the Call to Action which underscores the strong political will to address measures that address the deteriorating health of our ocean and its resources. Concrete action on the ground should now be our measure for success.

Solomon Islands along with its neighbouring Pacific Island states fully understand that the Ocean and marine life is the most important resource for our countries and our people. It cuts across the three dimensions of sustainable development. Thus, as I have mentioned in previous fora, this Conference provides us another opportunity for the global community to once again undertake a fresh perspective on ocean governance.

Solomon Islands along with its Pacific neighbours know that we are stewards of the largest expanse of Ocean in the world and its bountiful resource base. The ocean space under our collective jurisdiction is not only important to us. These spaces and their resources have a global significance as well.

As such the Pacific region boasts a number of regional and sub-regional marine and ocean related frameworks, a testament to our strong commitment to improving governance on ocean and marine life issues. These frameworks remain very relevant today. Their implementation will also complement SDG 14.

Mr. President,

Great challenges remain before us, from collapsing fisheries to plastic pollution to ocean warming and ocean acidification. These challenges threaten the integrity of marine ecosystems around the world. We simply cannot survive — let alone prosper — if we do not reverse the destruction of the ocean's natural capital. However, the burden of conserving our oceans and its resources should not disproportionately fall on us. We call for the continued support of our development partners to share the burden associated with effective implementation.

At the national level, I am pleased to inform that the Solomon Islands policy approach on ocean governance is guided by the government's National Development Strategy 2016-2035. The government is working on developing a national ocean governance framework that aims to rationalise and enhance coordination as well as implementation of all ocean related legislations. This framework is spearheaded by Oceans 12 which is made up of our Government's leading ministries responsible for the management of the ocean space that surround our country and marine life that occur therein.

In our efforts to address Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing, Solomon Islands, as a member of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement, has employed the purse seine Vessel Day Scheme (VDS) to monitor fishing efforts within our waters.

As a member of the Coral Triangle Initiative, Solomon Islands has been implementing a coordinated approach to marine and coastal management with the leadership of our

government that focuses on people centered natural resource management. Solomon Islands with the support of the Forum Fisheries Agency, utilised the Vessel Monitoring System to undertake monitoring, control and surveillance activities within our Exclusive Economic Zone.

We must invest in our Ocean. In particular, we need investments in science and research in order to better understand the capacity of our Ocean to provide for our future, including the need to understand and build resilience against ocean acidification. We will also need capacity building and the transfer of appropriate, modern and environmentally sound technologies. We call on the international community and partners, including the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, to ensure that transfer of relevant marine and ocean technologies to SIDS are realized under an appropriate framework.

Mr. President

Genuine and durable partnerships are the key to unlocking the knowledge and the finances needed to meet the SDG14 targets. We need to bring others along if we want to achieve success: government, international institutions, non-governmental organisations, civil society, academia, the scientific community and the private sector.

We must keep the momentum going. Over the last year we have seen a sharper focus on the sustainable development of the Ocean by the international community. We are encouraged by the progress towards a legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on BBNJ. In addition, the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have been significant milestones in addressing Oceans issues.

This Ocean Conference will start the next chapter, namely to accelerate implementation. It is imperative that even when this conference comes to a close, that all of us remain committed to achieving what we have voluntarily committed ourselves to achieving for the sake of our ocean.

I call on all partners and stakeholders for a stronger commitment to improve linkages between local, national, regional and international frameworks on oceans conservation and management. I further call for stronger public-private partnership to address this and in this regard I am pleased to announce Solomon Islands intention to working closely with Parley for the Oceans, Adidas on the A.I.R initiative in terms of recycling plastics and protecting marine wildlife. Solomon Islands also supports the declaration on tuna traceability which brings together partners from governments, and the private sector to crack down on IUU caught tuna making it to the market.

Mr. President

For Solomon Islands and other Small Island Developing States, the interlinkages between climate change and ocean related conservation are strong and clear. The climate challenge demands a global and decisive response that is based on scientific evidence and reality. Indeed, all human induced activities that lead to the depletion of oceanic resources must be addressed. The threat of climate change multiplies and further exacerbates the degradation of the ocean.

Our resolve must remain strong. Now is not the time to waver. The future that we, our children, and grandchildren want is at stake. Let us continue to work together for the sake of our ocean - for the sake of our future.

Co-President, Excellencies and distinguished delegates, I thank you for your attention.

Thank you.