



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE KINGDOM OF TONGA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Mahe 'U. S. Tupouniua,
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga to the United Nations
At the Preparatory Meeting on the Oceans Conference on the Call for Action**

Conference Room 4, UNHQ, New York, Thursday, 16th February 2017

Co-Facilitators,

Thank you for giving me the floor again to speak on the possible elements on the Call for Action.

We align ourselves again with the statements delivered by Nauru on behalf of PSIDS, the Federated States of Micronesia on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum, Maldives on behalf of AOSIS, and Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Co-Facilitators,

A healthy and resilient ocean, ensuring a rich biodiversity, are important to my people and my country, as a small island developing State in the Pacific, as a source of food, livelihood, and culture. Tongans are "people from the sea" and the ocean is our heritage. However, we have seen and have felt the impacts of ocean degradation to our livelihood due to the negative impacts of human activities on our '*moana*' -- our ocean -- combined with the inter-related devastating effects of climate change.

As a result, Tonga, together with our partners, have worked together, at the local, national, regional, and international levels, to urgently act to restore the health and resilience of our ocean. However, we cannot act in isolation as the ocean knows no boundaries, and the ecosystems are interconnected. As such, for an effective implementation of Goal 14, my delegation proposes the following:

First, as discussed in our previous intervention on the Partnership Dialogues, Tonga believes that effective, harmonized, and long-term partnerships are essential. Inclusion of all stakeholders as partners, and creating a platform for genuine and durable collaboration and coordination, will lead to enhanced synergies of efforts and initiatives that will allow us to meet the targets of the Goal on an urgent basis. Tonga has and continues to benefit from partnerships to conserve and

protect our ocean. Tonga is committed to continuing our strong relationship with our partners and also, to explore and engage in new partnerships; and

Second, Tonga believes that the following calls for action are necessary to be included to achieve the successful implementation of the Goal:

Firstly, in relation to the conservation of the marine environment and its biodiversity, 3 concrete actions must be undertaken:

(1) We must implement best practices on waste prevention and reduction programmes, recycling methods, monitoring, reporting and analysis of data and information;

(2) We must implement the Polluter Pays Principle and ensure that contributions are dedicated for funding the restoration and protection of the ocean and marine biodiversity; and

(3) We must implement an ecosystem based approach and measures to support the development of integrated marine protected area networks;.

Secondly, in relation to the environmental, economic, and social benefits derived from the ocean, 2 concrete actions must be undertaken:

(1) We must promote small-scale fisheries through the provision of incentives and ending harmful fisheries subsidies to ensure the sustainable production and consumption of fish; and

(2) We must agree on a unified view on the concept of the "blue economy" and effectively incorporate it into national macroeconomic modeling, resource allocation, planning, and decision-making frameworks.

Finally, on the means for us, to achieve the first 2 calls for action, 4 concrete actions must be undertaken:

(1) Ensure the means, both financial and non-financial, to implement Goal 14 and its targets, through the building of capacity, strengthening of institutions, transfer of technology, and increasing resources to achieve innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms such as using debt swaps and blue bonds that will lead to self-sustaining systems to implement SDG 14, are provided and made available;

(2) Promote public awareness on the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean through educational outreach programs;

(3) Establish a clearing-house mechanism to foster the exchange of scientific data and information locally, nationally, regionally, and globally; and

(4) Implement international law and best practices on ocean management. This includes the timely conclusion of the current negotiations under UNCLOS for a legally binding instrument to conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

I thank you again.