

Thank you Co-facilitators

I am speaking on behalf of the Pacific Island Association of NGOs and other Partner CSOs from Oceania, WWF and the MPA Action Group members including the Waitt Foundation, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, Oceana and Rare.

We commend the Fijian and Swedish Government and the Office of the Pacific Oceans Commissioner, and conference organisers for engaging the stakeholders from civil societies in the Pacific and other parts of the world in preparations for the Oceans Conference.

We are people of Oceania, and the Ocean is our home and provider; and we are equally concerned alongside our governments and determined that this Conference will enhance the partnerships that matter to protect our people, our lands and our oceans.

We would like to re-emphasise the need for inclusiveness, transparency and sense of urgency to guide the deliberations here at the preparatory meeting especially on the themes and method of the partnership dialogue but also over the coming months up to and beyond the Ocean Conference including the link to SDG17 especially 17.7 and the SAMOA Pathway. We also suggest that the partnership dialogue focus on cross-cutting themes that will help implement the targets in an integrated fashion such as building resilient oceans, sustainable blue economy and integrated ocean planning and management.

Co-facilitators – we are extremely concerned that most of the SDG14 indicators are still in tier 3. Their finalisation must be a matter of urgency for governments over the coming weeks, in particular those members of the UN Statistical Bureau, as well as the UN Agencies.

On 4th to the 8th of December 2017, CIVICUS and PIANGO will co-host International Civil Society Week Pacific in Suva, Fiji, with the theme “Our Planet Our Struggle Our Time.” We look forward to welcoming the partnerships launched at the UN Ocean Conference to continue their dialogue about the implementation of Goal 14 at this key global gathering for civil society.

Finally, Business as usual will not help us achieve the Ocean goal. All stakeholders should support a shift towards improved management of ocean resources, healthy ocean ecosystems, and a sustainable Blue Economy.

For our part, we stand ready to assist in any effort to implement SDG14 and related goals.

Thank you.