



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

United Nations Member States

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Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marlene Moses
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on behalf of the

Pacific Small Island Developing States

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Chairperson,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (Pacific SIDS) represented at the United Nations, namely the Fiji, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, Vanuatu, and my own country Nauru.

The Pacific SIDS align themselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States and the statement delivered on behalf of the Pacific States.

The Pacific is the world's largest ocean – covering over 30 percent of the earth's surface and greater in size than all of the continents combined. It is also the basis of our countries' livelihoods, our food security and our economies. Our sustainable development truly depends on a healthy and sustainably-managed Pacific Ocean.

Chairperson,

For the Pacific SIDS, the "green economy" is in fact a "blue economy." Accordingly, in our view, oceans and fisheries issues must be featured prominently on the Rio plus 20 agenda.

The Pacific SIDS have shown global leadership in marine conservation, for example through the creation of marine protected areas and adopting innovative solutions such as vessel day trading schemes. Yet, our efforts cannot succeed without the cooperation and assistance of the international community. The Pacific SIDS would like to see Rio become a turning point in our commitment to protect and sustainably manage the world's oceans in a way that provides equitable benefits to the people and nations relying on ocean resources as their primary source of development.

Rio must include a sober assessment of why existing agreements are failing to protect the world's ocean resources. More importantly, we must find the political will to urgently address the problems. The way forward must include specific and measurable commitments so that progress is real. To that end, we have set out in Appendix One preliminary priorities for advancing the blue economy in the Rio context. Such priorities include reducing fishing overcapacity while also addressing our development aspirations, establishing a global network of marine protected areas to meet the World Summit on Sustainable Development objective; ending our use of the oceans as a global dumping ground; and sharing the benefits of our greatest shared resources equitably among all nations.

Chairperson,

In addition to calling for a blue economy, the Pacific SIDS are also looking to Rio to advance the sustainable development agenda of small island developing States. The Barbados Programme of Action was born out of the First Earth Summit, and the recent high-level review of the Mauritius Strategy highlighted the need for further work to respond to the unique and particular vulnerabilities of SIDS. We look to Rio to take the next substantive and concrete step in ensuring that SIDS are in fact a model of sustainable development.

Chairperson,

We must raise the level of ambition for Rio. This is a once in ten year opportunity to make significant progress in addressing poverty, global resource inequity and the very survival of the planet – encompassing both the earth and the ocean. Let us go to Rio not exhausted from debates about definitions, but with a bold agenda for progress.

I thank you.

Appendix: Oceans Issues for Rio plus 20

Equitable Share of Economic Return from Fisheries and Related Industries – The sustainable development of the Pacific SIDS depends on them receiving an equitable share of the revenues and other means of active economic participation from their fisheries and other marine resources. Firm and measurable commitment at Rio is expected to more fully address the legitimate development aspirations of SIDS as contained in the UN Fish Stocks Agreement.

IUU Fishing – Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing is a major contributor to fish stock depletion in the Pacific and elsewhere, affecting both subsistence fishing by Pacific people, as well as causing severe negative impacts on biodiversity.

Overcapacity of World's Fishing Fleet - Current capacity levels are not sustainable and should be reduced to levels commensurate with scientific evidence to ensure sustainable management and development.

Pollutants - Pollutants in the form of sewage, agricultural and urban run off, and oil spills are creating large dead zones and contaminating food supply in the Pacific. Plastic debris and discarded fishing gear is fouling coastal areas and needlessly killing marine life.

Destructive Fishing Practices and Bottom Trawling - Destructive fishing practices, including bottom trawling, should be prohibited.

Fishing Bycatch and Discards – More global action is needed to reduce the occurrence of bycatch and discards which have serious negative effects on inter alia, food security and biodiversity.

Climate Change - The impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise and severe storms, as well as ocean acidification must be mitigated to prevent what may be the largest threats to the health of marine ecosystems.

Coral Reefs – Protecting coral reefs is essential for sustainable livelihoods and development.

Barbados Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy – The imperatives in the BPoA and MSI require mainstreaming into the global oceans governance framework.

Implementation of Existing International Law - States and regional fisheries management organizations must fully implement their obligations under the fish stocks agreement and other international measures.

Regional Fisheries Management Organisations - RFMOs must be regularly reviewed and accountable for the health of the fish stocks under their jurisdiction. RFMOs must also ensure the more effective participation of the Pacific SIDS.

Marine Protected Areas - Greater efforts are required into expanding a global network of marine protected areas (MPAs) and marine reserves as a key contribution to safeguarding the ocean's natural capital and ensuring food security.

Delineation of Continental Shelves - In order to realize the benefits of the extended continental shelf, delineation of continental shelves is a critical issue for the Pacific SIDS. It is

imperative that resources be allocated to ensure that the Pacific SIDS can complete the delineation process.

Marine Invasive Species - Regional and international coordination is needed to protect native ecosystems from invasive alien species.