

**Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on
Sustainable Development
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Statement by the Pacific States

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I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the following Pacific countries: Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Fiji, the Kingdom of Tonga, Nauru and Australia.

For Rio+20 to be a success for the Pacific region, it must deliver a strong outcome on one of our most important resources – the ocean.

The ocean is critical to our economies, our food security and our cultures.

The major sustainable development World Summits have recognised the marine environment as “an essential component of the global-life support systems and a positive asset that presents opportunities for sustainable development”.

For many Pacific States, the health of the oceans and the management of their resources - particularly fisheries - are directly related to development opportunities for their people.

We know the necessity of a “green economy” when it comes to the oceans. We have recognised that there are limits to what the ocean can provide and the importance of managing resources to ensure the benefits can be shared by current and future generations. As has been noted by the Solomon Islands Environment Minister at UNEP recently, for the Pacific the “green economy” is indeed a “blue economy”.

The obstacles to the conservation and sustainable management of our marine living resources are well known. For the Pacific, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing continues to pose a major threat. It reduces revenues and threatens fisheries' sustainability. There are also challenges in implementing monitoring, control and surveillance of large coastlines and areas of maritime jurisdiction. We are also working as a region to address deficits in human resources, technical capacity and assets. Climate change threatens sea-level rise and ocean acidification. It also exacerbates existing problems related to water supply and food security which may be doubly threatened by over fishing and stress on coral reef ecosystems.

Possible solutions to these issues are also known. Numerous reports by the UN have been drafted on how to manage sustainable fisheries. Yet stocks continue to be overfished. And we are still some way from achieving the legitimate development aspirations of Small Island Developing States as contained in the Mauritius Strategy.

What is needed in the case of a depleted resource is action. We need high level political will to implement what has already been agreed.

The Pacific States will be looking to Rio+20 to garner the crucial political will and leadership needed to implement what has already been committed to paper. We also look forward to sharing some of our leadership and best practice from the region on steps taken to "green" our oceans policy.