



PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES **United Nations Member States**

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations
800 Second Avenue, Suite 400A, New York, N.Y. 10017

Phone: 212-937-0074
Fax: 212-937-0079
E-mail: nauru@un.int

Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Second intersessional meeting

Statement by H.E. MR. ROBERT G. AISI
Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the UN

on behalf of the
Pacific Small Island Developing States

New York, 15 December 2011

Check against delivery

Co-chair,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (Pacific SIDS) represented at the United Nations, namely Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country, Papua New Guinea. We are honored to also be joined by the Republic of Maldives and Timor-Leste.

We note the statements delivered by Argentina on behalf of G77 and China and by New Zealand on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Co-chair,

I would first like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretariat for preparing the Compilation Document of all submissions. We also want to thank the High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability under the chairmanship of the Presidents of Finland and the Republic of South Africa for its important work and encourage the panel to continue. In particular I want to convey our gratitude to the Prime Minister of Barbados and the Foreign Minister of Australia for their advocacy of island issues. In addition, we acknowledge the role of Monaco as a true advocate, under the leadership of His Serene Highness Prince Albert the Second, in ensuring that critical issues relating to the global health and the vast wealth of our global oceans are continuously addressed in order to protect and sustain them for future generations. We strongly commend Monaco's continued advocacy for the Blue Economy within the Rio plus 20 process.

The Second intersessional meeting of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development presents a timely opportunity to highlight some of the issues of critical importance that warrant attention and space in the Rio plus 20 agenda which we hope will be duly reflected in the zero draft. Specifically, there are three critical elements for a successful outcome from Rio plus 20 for our island nations:

First, we believe that the Blue Economy is an essential component of Rio plus 20 and should be included in its outcome across three priority areas, namely, (1) enabling the development aspirations of SIDS in relation to the utilization of marine and coastal resources; (2) reducing and eliminating overfishing and destructive fishing practices and in particular Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing; and (3) addressing the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification on marine ecosystems and the protection of coral reefs.

For Pacific SIDS, the “Blue Economy” is complimentary to the “Green Economy” as it adopts the same principles and applies them to the health of our Oceans but it needs to be better articulated in the Rio plus 20 process. Marine, ocean, coastal and fisheries resources are the foundation of the economies of the Pacific SIDS and represent a critical pathway to our sustainable development. However, current benefits to the Pacific from the utilization of these resources are inadequate. We therefore seek specific targets to gain an increased share of the benefits from the utilization of our marine resources through direct participation and capacity building.

Co-chair,

IUU fishing is not a new issue in our region and remains one of the gravest threats to the sustainability of our marine resources and marine environment. Innovative approaches, renewed commitment and urgent implementation of strategies to combat unsustainable and destructive fishing practices must be at the forefront of building a resilient Blue Economy, thereby safeguarding food security and a sustainable future for the Pacific SIDS.

Co-chair,

In terms of the UN institutional framework, we are concerned about the current fragmentation of Oceans issues in the United Nations system. It is important to reduce the number of agencies dealing with Oceans’ issues to streamline delivery to all countries concerned.

Co-chair,

The transboundary impacts of climate change are the biggest threat to the health of our Ocean. Coral reef ecosystems are particularly susceptible to climate change and ocean acidification, and may be the first marine ecosystem to collapse without urgent increased mitigation action. Over 275 million people worldwide, mostly in developing countries and island nations, depend directly on coral reefs for food, livelihoods, ecosystem services and economic opportunities. We

welcome the adoption of the resolution on the *Protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development* in the Second Committee by consensus, which shows the willingness by international community to protect, manage, and monitor coral reefs.

In addition, an issue that we consider will emerge as topical in the post-Rio plus 20 period in connection with the Blue Economy is deep seabed mining. Although deep seabed mining and related activities maybe a fairly new frontier for some countries, we see the developments in this area as one which will closely involve the Pacific Ocean and the Pacific SIDS. It will thus be important to include deep seabed mining in our consideration on the road to Rio.

Co-chair,

In addition to the Blue Economy, the Pacific SIDS are also looking to Rio plus 20 to advance the sustainable development agenda of Small Island Developing States, so that SIDS can serve as a model for sustainable development. During recent international negotiations, unfortunately there is a clear trend indicating that issues important to SIDS have been sidelined. The special attention required by SIDS in international affairs is under threat and concerted efforts are required to ensure that the issues important to SIDS remain on the global agenda. It is very important that the international community seriously considers new, measurable, and concrete ways of addressing the unique and particular vulnerabilities of SIDS, including the establishment of a formal UN SIDS category. Additionally, the Pacific SIDS are calling to convene the Third Global Conference on Sustainable Development of SIDS to review the progress in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI).

Co-chair,

For the Pacific SIDS, climate change is the single greatest factor that is undermining our sustainable development. There can be no sustainable development if the very existence of our countries is in jeopardy. Any Rio plus 20 outcome must acknowledge that there is a major gap in the implementation of the outcomes of the sustainable development summits in relation to climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise and the adverse impacts of climate change are undermining food and water security, efforts to eradicate poverty, sustainable development and threaten our territorial integrity and even survival. Progress to date in responding to climate change is shamefully inadequate. Rio plus 20 is an opportunity for the international community to renew its political commitment to responding to the climate crisis in order to ensure the right of all countries to sustainable development and existence as equal sovereign nations is maintained.

I thank you.