



AUSTRALIA



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SDG 14 Conference Preparatory Meeting 15-16 February 2017

Statement on the 'call to action'

**Statement by Caitlin Wilson
Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia to the United
Nations**

Thank you Ambassador,

Australia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the Federated States of Micronesia on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum.

Australia is an ocean nation, surrounded by the Indian, the Southern and Pacific oceans.

Our links to the Indian Ocean are strong. As a member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association, we have worked with our regional partners to enhance stability and prosperity.

In the Southern Ocean, Australia is committed to the Antarctic Treaty system. Protecting Antarctica's fragile environment is invaluable for globally significant scientific research.

Australia is also a Pacific nation. We have deep and longstanding ties in the Pacific. With other Pacific Islands Forum members we are working to ensure economic growth, sustainable development and good governance in the region.

As an ocean nation Australia is a strong supporter of SDG14 and the 2017 Oceans Conference – a goal and a conference that are vital to our collective future, and critically important to our neighbourhood.

Underlining our commitment, I am please to announce that Australia will provide A\$50,000 to the SDG14 Trust Fund. We want our contribution to help support Pacific Small Island Developing States to engage in the conference.

The Call to Action

We take seriously our responsibility to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

In this context, Australia strongly supports a concise and focused ‘Call to Action’ – and we make the following points for the co-facilitators to consider in their drafting.

First, the ‘Call for Action’ should, true to its title, catalyse action, and help the conference to deliver real practical outcomes. These outcomes need to focus on:

- managing fisheries sustainably;
- protecting and preserving our marine environments;

- investing in the future of our oceans and seas; and
- generating and maintaining long term momentum and partnerships to help achieve Goal 14.

Second, the ‘Call to Action’ should complement, not undermine, other international frameworks. These include the annual open-ended informal consultative process on oceans and the law of the sea and sustainable fisheries and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement.

These, as some others have already noted, also include emerging initiatives such as the development of an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Third, the ‘Call to Action’ should also emphasise the centrality of international law, especially UNCLOS, to oceans governance, economic growth and development, and international peace and security. UNCLOS is the basis of national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector. It underpins trade and supports growth – and must remain the foundation of our efforts.

In closing, Australia notes that this is the first UN conference to be held which sheds light on the importance of oceans and seas for sustainable development. We should capitalise on the political momentum generated to demonstrate the real progress that can be made on the SDG Agenda.

Thank you.