

Our oceans face an unprecedented crisis. For the approximately 10 million inhabitants of Pacific Small Island Developing States who depend upon the health and sustainability of our oceans, this crisis demands attention at the highest level.

Distinguished co-facilitators, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to speak to this forum. Living Islands is a regional NGO working on scientific research and sustainable development throughout Micronesia and places strong priority upon the conservation of our oceans.

In shaping the Call to Action, we want to ensure that three key priorities are highlighted as demanding the attention and immediate action of our global community through this conference in support of SDG 14.

First: We suggest that the call to action reflect the need highlighted by many national representatives and stakeholders to provide SIDS the necessary financial and technological assistance to fully utilize and sustainably manage marine resources.

As described in the excellent background note “Most developing States are inadequately equipped to be able to fully benefit from ocean activities and resources and to deal with impacts on the marine environment ...”

In line with Target 14.7, we therefore suggest that the call to action explicitly prioritize concrete financial and technological support for SIDS in developing their ocean resource management abilities.

Second: We suggest that the call to action reflect the need for advanced support for scientific research and dissemination at all levels to ensure sustainable, fact-based policy development.

As was well detailed in the background note, “Most developing States are inadequately equipped to be able to fully benefit from ocean activities and resources and to deal with impacts on the marine environment and continue to express the need for transfer of technology and technical assistance.”

In line with Target 14a, we therefore suggest that the call to action explicitly prioritize implementing financial and political support for scientific research and dissemination, including greater connections between academic research and key local, national and regional stakeholders to enable tangible policy outcomes to build upon this work.

Finally, we suggest that the call to action reflect the statements made by the representatives of Nepal, Chile, Honduras, and many other nation states and stakeholders earlier in this preliminary meeting calling for the explicit inclusion climate change in both the agenda and call to action for this conference.

The impacts of climate change are compounding an already dire situation for our oceans. To not make explicit acknowledgement of this cross-cutting issue would be a failure to address one of the key challenges facing low-lying island states in the Pacific and beyond.

We therefore suggest that the call to action place explicit emphasis upon concrete commitments to address carbon emissions and climate change in pursuing solutions to ocean acidification and sea level rise as a critical element of ocean conservation and aims of this conference.

Thank you