

REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES



STATEMENT BY

H.E MR. VINCENT MERITON

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE GOAL 14**

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Mr. President,

Excellencies and Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First I would like to express my thanks to the Government of Fiji and the Government of Sweden for co-sponsoring the UN Ocean Conference on SDG 14.

SDG 14 represents a challenge as well as an achievement for islands and the ocean communities. It is a long overdue acknowledgement of the critical role of oceans and ocean health for sustainable development and for addressing climate change.

As Vice-President of a small island country and custodian of an EEZ of 1.4 million square kilometres, the ocean is everything; it brings our daily food, provides us with jobs, and is the foundation of our economy and prosperity. It is also part of our identity as Seychellois.

Whilst oceans brings us amazing development opportunities, it also brings challenges for a small country like ours, with global responsibility for the unique heritage our waters entail.

Seychelles blue economy is our way of tackling the sustainable development of our oceans. Our goals are economic diversification, jobs, food security and the protection and sustainable use of ocean resources. Our approach is to change the business model and mainstream the principles of sustainability, resilience, equity and innovation in our maritime sectors, both existing and emerging ones.

It is an ambitious agenda and we have been proactive. We have registered voluntary commitments on our 2 innovating finance projects - the first one, a debt swap to develop a marine spatial plan of our EEZ and designate 30% as marine protected areas, the second, to issue a blue bond to support the transition to sustainable artisanal fisheries. These projects could not have happened without the commitment and support of our international partners.

We are well aware that many of our challenges require regional and global solutions and cooperation. We have for example argued at the global level for better fisheries information and as such are championing the Fisheries Transparency international inflation and have registered a voluntary commitment to that effect.

The Western Indian Ocean Region has a long history of strong cooperation between governments, non-governmental partners, and inter-governmental organizations such as the Nairobi Convention, the South Western Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission and the Indian Ocean Commission.

From this foundation, the region has agreed on a number of core areas of joint commitment and action towards achieving the SDG-14 Targets; namely:

- Regional collaboration on combating pollution and contingency planning
- Sustainable management of shared fish resources
- Oceans and climate change: transition to a low carbon pathway
- Integrated ocean governance

In the negotiations over the coming week, I would like to remind everyone of the critical role that the ocean plays for islands and this is why Islands continue to demonstrate leadership in oceans affairs. It is a matter of survival.

I trust that the 'Call for Action' will make a strong case to the UNGA of the unique situation of SIDS, like Seychelles, in the implementation of SDG 14 and the sustainable development agenda as a whole.

I thank you.