



New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Te Māngai o Aotearoa

United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

2nd Plenary Meeting

New Zealand statement

Delivered by Hon. Maggie Barry,
New Zealand Minister of Conservation

6 June 2017



Thank you Chair

I join others in thanking the Governments of Fiji and Sweden for championing the proposal for this conference from the outset and for the significant work they have undertaken as co-hosts.

I thank the co-facilitators, Singapore and Portugal, for their work in overseeing the preparatory process including the Call for Action.

I also acknowledge the Heads of State, Heads of Government, Ministers and other distinguished representatives attending the conference this week.

I am pleased that the Ulu o Tokelau could be here this week, as part of the New Zealand delegation.

The high level of attendance from governments, civil society and the private sector, reflects the high stakes we share in realising the critical agenda laid out in Sustainable Development Goal 14.

For Pacific countries, a healthy ocean is vital to our livelihoods, well-being and our economies.

For our peoples, the ocean is a living treasure of great cultural significance and is part of our identities.

New Zealand was a strong advocate for inclusion of a Goal on oceans and marine resources in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We strongly support this conference. Too many indicators of the health of our oceans are tracking in the wrong direction. Business as usual will not reverse these trends. Targets have been set. Now as never before we need to take strong policy decisions. We must forge new partnerships across country, sector and institutional boundaries. We must act - and act together.

We echo the Secretary-General's call for a greater focus on ocean governance. Further consideration should be given to enhancing leadership on this issue at the United Nations.

New Zealand is a country surrounded by oceans. Our closest neighbours are almost 2,400 kilometres away. We have a long history of action to secure the health of our marine ecosystems and of the livelihoods that depend on them. We are a strong advocate of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the framework it sets for oceans.

We have a world-leading fisheries management system and have put in place 44 fully protected marine reserves and a range of other types of MPAs that cover over 30% of New Zealand's territorial sea and exclusive economic zone.

The New Zealand Government is committed to establishing the Kermadec/Rangitahua Ocean Sanctuary. At 620,000 square kilometres, it will be one of the largest and most significant fully protected areas in the world.

Our interest in the ocean does not stop at 200 nautical miles.

New Zealand was proud to have played a leading role in setting up the Ross Sea region marine protected area, which will cover 1.55 million square kilometres of one of the most pristine environments in the world.

We are supporting the ambitious goals and strategies that Pacific leaders have set for the sustainable economic development of their fisheries resources.

New Zealand has committed 54 million dollars to initiatives that will improve the management of Pacific fisheries and reduce illegal and unreported fishing both in our region and beyond. We ask all nations involved in the fisheries of the Pacific to commit to this endeavour. The future and wellbeing of the island states and peoples of our region depends on it.

New Zealand has long been at the forefront of international calls for action to eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies. Fisheries subsidies are a trade issue, a development issue and a serious environmental issue. Sustainable Development Goal 14.6 calls for the prohibition of subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and the elimination of subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing by 2020. We urge countries to heed that call and to cooperate for the establishment of effective disciplines on harmful fisheries subsidies at the World Trade Organization's 11th Ministerial Conference in December. The damage being done to vulnerable fisheries needs to be stopped and we urge action to address that.

New Zealand is also investing in building resilience to ocean acidification in the Pacific region, through the New Zealand Pacific Partnership on Ocean Acidification.

Chair, these are just some of the actions that New Zealand is taking to implement Sustainable Development Goal 14. We have registered voluntary national commitments covering a range of the targets.

We look forward to the remainder of the conference and to making the most of the opportunity it presents for the international community to take practical steps to turn Sustainable Development Goal 14 into reality.