



(Check against delivery)

**Statement by H. E. Jose Gonçalves, Minister of
Economy and Employment of Cabo Verde, on the
occasion of the 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**

**United Nations, New York City
5-9 June 2017**

**Mr. Co-President, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,
All Protocol Observed,**

It is an honor and a pleasure for me to take the floor, on behalf of Cabo Verde, at the plenary of this important Oceans Conference.

At the outset, let me commend all those who made this conference possible, namely the President of the General Assembly, Sweden and Fiji as Co-Presidents and Portugal and Singapore as Co-facilitators for the *Call for Action*.

Cabo Verde, is a small archipelago of only 4.033 Km², surrounded by almost 900.000 Km² of sea and Ocean, including its Exclusive Economic Zone – EEZ, which is some 200 times greater than the country's landmass.

The Ocean represents an essential element of the history, geography politics and culture of Cabo Verde, by its strategic location between four Continents: Africa, Europe, South America and North America, at the crossroads of shipping lanes that crisscross the mid-Atlantic Ocean.

In this regard, the sea is our bounty and the main resources of our country. The promotion of initiatives for the sustainable use of our Ocean is part of our daily lives for not only the present but also future generations.

Indeed, our maritime vocation unequivocally creates both challenges and opportunities. Challenges to provide adequate oversight and control over the threats throughout the vast seas and ocean that surround our small landmass and confront our small population, given limited means and monitoring resources. Opportunities for strengthening our identity as an archipelago nation in the Atlantic Ocean, further cooperation in the region and the international community while promoting sustainable development and economic growth of our marine resources.

Cabo Verde congratulates the organizers of this Conference for bringing the concern of the sustainable use of the oceans in the framework of the implementation of SDG14, in a perspective that opens the possibility to steward the rich and varied resources contained therein and generate economic wealth.

It should be noted, however, that the World's Oceans face serious threats that can jeopardize that goal, including marine pollution, resource overexploitation of live resources, habitat destruction, environmental degradation and the threat of biodiversity disappearance, among others.

The sustainable use of the Oceans is not just an environmental issue, it is also a political one. Thus, we are advocating the adoption of policies that promote:

1. Conservation and sustainable use of the marine and aquaculture resources;
2. Sustainable management of marine and coastal resources to mitigate adverse outcomes, including through strengthening resilience and measures to ensure sustainable and healthy oceans;
3. Mitigation of the impacts of coastal tourism in the ocean, including strengthening scientific capacity in the study and use of the ocean;
4. Conservation of coastal zones, in accordance with applicable national and international law, establishing, in particular, protected marine and estuary areas;
5. Prevention of over-exploitation of fishery resources by the application of provisions on fishing prevention, specifically, illegal, unreported and unregulated – IUU fishing;
6. Exploitation of economic resources available and generated by the Oceans, based on the Sustainable Development Objectives (ODS) 14 that include, among others, fishing, aquaculture and coastal tourism;
7. Scientific knowledge, research capacity and the adoption of benign blue technologies in the maritime area, taking into account criteria and guidelines that improve the health of the oceans and increase biodiversity and maintain balance of the marine ecosystem;
8. Access to and development of artisanal fisheries, including support to fishermen and fish mongers, the majority of who are women by providing technical assistance, training and access to finance, including microfinance.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In 2015, the Government of Cabo Verde adopted a Charter on Blue Growth and Economy. This landmark Charter places the Ocean and Blue Economy at the core of national development. A strategy that promotes resilience and sustainable

marine resource utilization, in terms of economic, social and environmental sustainability. As a result of this initiative, other responsibilities have emerged which the country is gladly shouldering.

In December 2016, Cabo Verde hosted the First Conference of the African SIDS + Madagascar in the capital City of Praia. This important Conference was organized with the support of the United Nations Joint Office in Cabo Verde. Currently, Cabo Verde presides the group for the 2017 annual period.

This year, on May 3, 4 and 5, in the city of Mindelo, in the Island of S. Vicente, we hosted an International Conference Dialogue on Blue Growth and Economy. This major event was organized with the support of FAO and the African Development Bank as part of FAO "Blue Growth" initiative and the "Blue Economy" Network. At this Conference, all the major recurring cross-cutting themes of great importance to the African continent were addressed, amongst which responsible fisheries, aquaculture, food security, marine environment, climate change, fight against poverty, all major themes that support sustainable development.

The Mindelo Conference produced a Declaration adopted by the 7 Ministers and Representatives of 24 countries present, whose main guidelines follow:

- Recognition of the central role of Oceans in economic, social and environmental development at the global level;
- Reaffirmation of firm commitment with UN SDG 14;
- Coordination to prevent marine pollution, over-exploitation of marine resources, degradation of marine biodiversity, and degradation of marine ecosystems that compromise the health of the Oceans.

Finally, and to conclude, Cabo Verde was recently designated at the Ministerial Conference on West Africa Sub-Regional Commission on Fisheries SRCF/CSRP as the next presiding Minister whose mandate should begin with the next 90 days. During our tenure, in addition to strengthening governance, we intend to give a strong voice and participation of the private sector in the business affairs of the Commission as key partners in managing sustainably the marine resources of our sub-region to benefit the present and future generations.

I thank you for your kind attention.