



STATEMENT BY

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CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

AT 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

New York, 7 June 2017



Your Excellencies Mr. Bainimarama and Ms. Lövin,

As it is my first time taking the floor, I would like to express my sincere congratulations to both of you for assuming the Presidency roles for this Conference. I am confident that your vision and leadership will steer all of us at this Conference to a successful outcome.

*Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

In the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 14, States have taken a historic and much-needed step towards a more sustainable future for the ocean and the life therein. And, in the organization of this Conference, States have clearly acknowledged that the achievement of Goal 14 will require concerted political will, investment, engagement and collaboration across all sectors and levels of society. Now, we have before us the enormous task of translating these words into action.

Goal 14 addresses the various elements of sustainability of the ocean and its resources. It highlights the main threats to the ocean. It points to the tools to mitigate these threats as well as means to ensure sustainable benefit from the ecosystem services that the ocean provides. However, it is critical that we do not lose sight of the cross-cutting linkages between these different elements of Goal 14, and across the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole.

Biodiversity is an essential cross-cutting element. Marine biodiversity, the variety of life in the ocean and seas, is a critical aspect of all three pillars of sustainable development. It supports the healthy functioning of the planet and provides services that underpin the health, well-being and prosperity of humanity.

Marine biodiversity ensures the foundation for the vast majority of the services that the ocean provides, but it is also the most sensitive and threatened part of the ocean. Pressures that adversely impact marine biodiversity undermine the services that we need to survive and thrive. Furthermore, the consequences of biodiversity loss are often most severe for the poor, who are extremely dependent on local ecosystem services for their livelihoods and nutrition. Thus, in

neglecting biodiversity, we are undermining efforts to address poverty, hunger, health and other basic elements of human well-being.

This is why it is critical that the crucial role of biodiversity across each of the Goal 14 targets and across all of the Sustainable Development Goals is captured in the Call for Action.

Distinguished delegates,

The issues and priorities that we address here are not new. Concerns over the drastic declines in biodiversity are what motivated the development of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 24 years ago. Its three complementary objectives for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources were conceived as a way to ensure that biological diversity is at the heart of sustainable development. With 196 Parties, participation in the Convention is nearly universal, a sign that our global society is well aware of the need to work together to ensure the survival of life on Earth.

Many of the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, reflect the same goals and principles agreed to under the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which were adopted by Parties to the CBD in 2010. The Aichi Biodiversity Targets represent a landmark political achievement, catalysing an enormous amount of support, political will, and investment.

Efforts to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets have helped to advance tools and approaches for conservation and sustainable use, and have demonstrated clear positive impacts. For example, the adoption of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 on protected areas catalyzed the significant expansion of marine protected area coverage, which has doubled in the last 7 years, and, I am pleased to announce that we are on track to achieve the global Aichi Biodiversity Target of 10% conservation of coastal and marine areas by 2020. There is still a need however, to focus on other aspects of the Target, specifically on representativeness, management effectiveness, governance and equity of marine protected areas.

Goal 14 provides a critical opportunity to utilize and build on the political will, commitments and experience gained through progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. In this regard, I am pleased to invite all of you to attend the various side events being convened or co-convened by the Secretariat together with various partners from States and organizations on different themes of Goal 14.

Distinguished delegates,

Biodiversity, very simply, is life. The global community has made great strides to commit to climate action and to ocean action. However, without biodiversity, the ocean has no life. Thus, as we engage in saving the ocean, we must also commit to biodiversity action.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity stands ready to support your deliberations and will continue to support governments and organizations in efforts to achieve a healthy, sustainable and productive ocean for the present and future generations.

Thank you for your attention.