



## *Republic of Nauru*

**Remarks of H.E. Baron Divavesi Waqa  
PRESIDENT OF NAURU**

**For the UNITED NATIONS OCEANS CONFERENCE:**

**Partnership dialogue 5: Increasing economic benefits to small island developing States and least developed countries and providing access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets**

**Wednesday, 7 June, 2017, 3:00PM-5:00PM**

*Check against delivery*

- Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, before I begin my remarks I draw your attention to a photograph that has been distributed across the room. The photo is of our island, the Republic of Nauru. The whole of our land territory is depicted in the four corners of this picture, while our ocean territory stretches to the horizon. We have distributed this photograph to give to you a sense of the importance of the ocean to our island, and to our economy, and to give you a sense of the challenges that we face.
- At the heart of this partnership dialogue are two key points for our delegation: 1) Nauru as a small island developing State (“SIDS”) faces significant and unique sustainable development challenges, due to our small population, diseconomy of scale, limited natural resources, exposure to extreme weather events that are exacerbated by climate change, and over-dependence on foreign imports; and 2) the Ocean is Life, and our people rely heavily on the Ocean for subsistence living as well as economic gain, including our small-scale artisanal fishers. Increasing economic benefits from the sustainable use of the Ocean and its resources for Nauru will require addressing the unique sustainable development challenges of SIDS, including those facing our small-scale artisanal fishers.
- For Nauru, our primary source of economic gain from the Ocean is fisheries. Through the Vessel Day Scheme adopted and implemented by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement, Nauru and other Pacific SIDS are able to regulate the exploitation of our tuna fish stocks in a sustainable manner while also generating significant economic returns.
- However, our fisheries efforts are hampered because we labor under the imposition of a disproportionate burden for conservation of our tuna stocks. Nauru supports effective conservation and management measures for our tuna, but *all* the countries that benefit from exploiting that tuna must shoulder a fair share of the burden of conserving and managing the tuna stocks. Otherwise, this disproportionate burden taxes already-constrained financial and technical capacities for Nauru, hampering our ability to properly benefit from the sustainable use of our Ocean resources. We look to our partners to acknowledge this imposition of disproportionate burden and commit to work through relevant regional and international fora to remove the burden.
- One positive consequence of removing the disproportionate burden of conservation from Nauru is the improvement of economic fortunes for our small-scale artisanal fishers. The artisanal fishing carried out by our local communities are key to our food security, providing us with much of our protein nutritional needs. The imposition of disproportionate burden is particularly troublesome because we already conserve and manage our fisheries in a sustainable manner.

- **Still, our partners can contribute in a number of ways to enhance the access of our small-scale artisanal fishers to fisheries resources and markets. Our partners can support the provision of financial and technical assistance as well as capacity-building opportunities to empower and strengthen community management of our coastal fisheries, including through monitoring operations. Such management should be balanced between conservation needs, food security, and economic returns. Our partners can also work to open up export markets for catches of our artisanal fishers, including through sustainability certification initiatives like those for our tuna catches.**
- **As Nauru works to protect and enhance its economic returns from our fisheries, we also seek to benefit from other sustainable uses of the Ocean and its resources. As any respectable investment adviser will tell you, it is important to have a diversified portfolio if one wishes to generate stable returns from investments. The Ocean presents a massive canvas on which we can paint a complex, multi-faceted approach to sustainable development, one that is not overly reliant on fisheries. Aquaculture projects, extraction of rare minerals from the deep seabed, maritime transportation, and renewable energy generation harnessing the waves and geothermal vents are just a few of the many ways in which we can build a sustainable ocean-based economy that makes full use all the Ocean's resources.**
- **Achieving a sustainable ocean-based economy will be a massive undertaking. Our partners can aid us in fully realizing the sustainable development potential of the Ocean by supporting various initiatives at the national, regional, and international levels. Our partners can support national efforts to better educate our communities about the many economic opportunities available in the Ocean beyond fisheries, as well as about how to exploit those opportunities in a sustainable, environmentally friendly manner with full community involvement. Our partners can also support national and regional efforts to build the capacities of our communities to engage in those development opportunities, including through the provision of necessary financial and technical assistance such as grants, loans, equipment, expertise, and promotional platforms such as trade shows to launch and sustain those efforts. Additionally, our partners can work with us in international fora to secure monetary benefits for us from the development of commercial products from marine genetic resources, including from fish, turtles, and other creatures that travel between our waters and areas beyond national jurisdiction. And, our partners can help us promote the concept of a sustainable ocean-based economy in multiple regional and international fora as well as incorporate it in their national legislations and regulations, where applicable.**
- **Ultimately, we seek long-term, consistent, productive partnerships, in which we all work together to unlock the full sustainable development potential of our Ocean and its resources for our benefit and for the benefit of generations to come.**