



**The Republic of Vanuatu**

**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**

**National Statement**

**Delivered by the Hon. Seremaiah Matai NAWALU, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock,  
Forestry, Fisheries and Bio-security**

**(New York, 8 June 2017)**

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**Co-Presidents,**

**Excellencies;**

**Distinguished representatives,**

**Happy World Oceans Day!**

**I am honored to deliver this statement on behalf of the people and the Government of the  
Republic of Vanuatu.**

**Allow me at the outset, to join other distinguished delegates to congratulate the Republic  
of Fiji Islands and the Kingdom of Sweden as Co- Presidents of this important conference  
and I express my Government's full support to your stewardship as you guide us through  
the Ocean Conference. I would also like to place on record our profound gratitude to the  
President of the General Assembly, H.E. Peter Thomson and the United Nations  
Secretary General H.E. António Guterres for convening this august conference.**

**Excellencies,**

**At the opening ceremony of the UN Ocean Conference, we were reminded of how significant cultures are intrinsically tied to the ocean. We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the ocean will continue to be the dwelling place of our future generations as it has been for our forefathers. We acknowledge the importance of the ocean principally in sustaining ours and our future generation's livelihood and survival. However, we also take heed of the grave challenges that we ourselves have placed on the ocean and one that has and will continue to compromise our own ultimate survival.**

**Excellencies,**

**My Government supports the *Call for Action* to be adopted at this conference and believes it is a practical way forward to make much-needed collective effort to save our oceans. My Government also welcomes the voluntary commitments declared at this Conference that will further support the implementation of SDG14. Our collective actions must be ambitious and realistic in order to conserve and sustain the oceans so successive generations will continue to enjoy their benefits. Engaging in genuine, durable partnerships that facilitate means of implementation, technology transfer, capacity building and knowledge sharing will enable countries such as Vanuatu remain on track to conserve and sustainably use the ocean and to play its part in reversing the decline in the oceans' health.**

**Excellencies,**

**From 2011 to 2014 my Government through collaboration with donor partners undertook a nationwide oceans policy consultation. The outcome of the nationwide consultation process confirmed that our ocean is increasingly becoming littered with plastics and other wastes, that our coastal resources are diminishing at an increasing rate and that the ever-increasing pressures of unsustainable development and Climate Change will continue to challenge future generations.**

**Excellencies,**

**The impacts of climate change, including the combined effect of increasing temperature, increasing storm intensity, increasing sea level and ocean acidification, are already having a major impact on our marine resources. Vanuatu calls on all states which have committed to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change to remain steadfast and to honour the pledges made as regards to NDCs. Vanuatu remains committed to the Paris climate deal and we encourage other member states to demonstrate the same leadership.**

**Excellencies,**

**Vanuatu gains benefits worth millions of dollars from her ocean each year. These benefits to our people are at risk. We are implementing the Pacific's first National Ocean Policy. This includes strong and clear actions to improve the sustainability of our different maritime sectors, whether fishing, shipping, deep sea mineral exploration or tourism. More innovative, however, is Vanuatu's commitment by 2020 to implementing a national marine spatial plan to harmonize, across our ocean, where different uses, conservation and development will be promoted or controlled.**

**Excellencies,**

**Vanuatu calls for international intervention to save our fish stocks from the scourge of IUU fishing and other destructive fishing practices. Urgent international Action is also needed to control, reduce and eventually eliminate harmful, unfair fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity, overfishing and destructive fishing methods.**

**Excellencies,**

**A large proportion of our people reside in coastal remote areas and islands scattered within our large ocean. Our people will continue to rely on the wisdom of our forefather's traditional management system to implement SDG 14. Therefore, we must continue to provide all the necessary support and engagement to ensure a collaborative arrangement is in place whereby science and traditional knowledge can both be applied to address our marine resource management problems.**

**Excellencies,**

**Vanuatu and many other Pacific Island Countries have challenges in implementing SDG14 that cannot be disregarded. Vanuatu welcomes the partnerships and support that have been offered, to date, to the implementation of our Ocean Policy and we also reach out the hand of friendship to those who may wish to join us in taking a holistic, integrated approach to management of their ocean spaces.**

**I Thank you**