



# **ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

Permanent Mission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

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## **Statement by**

**Minister Hon. Saboto Ceasar, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and  
Rural Transformation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

## **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**

**June 8, 2017**

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Mr President, Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wishes to congratulate the Secretary General, the President of the General Assembly and the Co-Presidents on the convening and hosting of this very important event.

At the outset, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wishes to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the conservation and sustainable use of our oceans, seas and marine resources and acknowledges the need for a global partnership in realising Sustainable Development Goal 14. As a Small Island Developing State with ocean territory that is over 90 times our terrestrial territory, the importance of the oceans, seas and marine resources for our sustainable development cannot be overstated. This recognition is borne out in the SAMOA Pathway when it states “healthy, productive and resilient oceans and coasts are critical for, among other things, poverty eradication, access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, livelihoods, economic development and essential ecosystem services”. Accordingly, we have instituted policies that contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of our ocean.

Mr President, in the area of conservation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has committed, as part of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative, to effectively conserve and manage at least 20% of the marine and coastal environment by 2020, which goes beyond the 10% stipulated in SDG 14.5. Our commitment in this area underscores the seriousness with which we approach the subject of conservation of our Ocean.

Further to this, my country welcomes the ongoing preparatory process towards the development of an internationally legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Also, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is playing its part in abating marine pollution, small though we may be, we recognize that all actions contribute to the degradation of our global commons. In May of this year we introduced regulations to ban the importation, manufacture and use of expanded polystyrene food service products, that is, Styrofoam containers. The ban on importation has already come into effect and the ban on use will come into effect on the 31st of January 2018.

Mr President, the impacts of climate change and carbon emissions on our oceans threaten to roll back significant yet fragile gains made towards the achievement of the SDGs. Rising ocean temperatures, sea level rise, ocean acidification and coral bleaching, affect the livelihoods of our people who rely on the sea for employment and as a source of nutrition. For us, the ocean and its resources are a developmental tool but can conversely slow our development and reverse gains if the international community allows our most important resource to deteriorate.

For all states globally, especially Small Island Developing States, we have no option but to remain focused to address concretely man-made climate change despite occasional dissonance and set-backs arising from certain quarters.

Finally, we join others in calling for the Secretary General to appoint an Oceans focal point in the United Nations to ensure a coordinated and concerted effort to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Mr President, I reaffirm, on behalf on the government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, our commitment to the full and speedy implementation of SDG 14 and the other 16 goals that represent our ambition in securing a bright future the peoples of our world. All peoples and governments have an obligation to act responsibly to protect the global commons and our common humanity.

I thank you.