

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Luke Daunivalu, Charge' d'Affaires/Deputy Permanent  
Representative of Fiji to the United Nations  
Session 12: Review of Implementation – SDG 14  
Thursday, 13 July 2017, 11.00-13.00  
Conference Room 4**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As reiterated by the distinguished speakers before me, the Ocean Conference held last month was truly a remarkable event in that it showed the strong commitment by the global community to protecting our oceans and seas.

As co-president with our friends from Sweden, the high-level turnout was truly astounding and I must thank all delegations here and from their respective capitals for your active participation.

The multi-sectoral participation from governments, private sector and civil society groups accurately indicate how far-reaching and all-encompassing SDG 14 is. This is further reinforced by the 1300-plus voluntary commitments registered at the Conference covering all 10 targets of SDG 14.

This multi-sectoral approach will be used by Fiji as we move forward towards the implementation of our 17 voluntary commitments. 'No man is an island', if I may use that analogy to affirm one thing that we took away from the Ocean Conference: it is the need to engage all sectors and all groups across all areas, noting the wealth of information and best practices that can be shared to better equip Member States in achieving SDG 14 and in doing so also address other closely linked SDGs in a holistic approach to achieve Agenda 2030.

For Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and for us in the Pacific, the convening of the Ocean Conference came at a critical time when the world's oceans are deteriorating at an alarming rate. This is further compounded with the effects of climate change, leading to sea level rise, increase in ocean acidity and warmer waters affecting both reef systems, marine ecosystems and fish stocks. SIDS with LDCs are therefore one of the most vulnerable when it comes to the degradation of our ocean and the Conference helped us show the world, through the various

side-events and exhibitions organized by SIDS and partners, just how our very survival is intrinsically linked and heavily dependent on a healthy ocean.

If there is another thing we can take away from the Conference, it is the need to recognize the 'special circumstances of SIDS' and our limited capacities to adequately address the various threats to our oceans. It was therefore extremely encouraging to see the outcomes of the seven Partnership Dialogues and how all these issues were addressed and comprehensive discussions held on the possible way forward for many of the issues. The Conference provided the proper platform to raise our concerns and engage with partners willing to assist. Partnership remains a vital tool we can use in achieving SDG 14 and the Conference provided a conducive environment to foster those partnerships bilaterally or multilaterally with other States but also with various international and regional organizations.

Speaking of partnerships, it would be remiss of me to not acknowledge and thank Sweden for their willingness to partner with a Pacific Island nation in hosting the first-ever United Nations conference on Ocean. The hard yards put in by both teams during the grueling preparatory phase and the powerful leadership shown by DPM H.E Isabella Lovin and Ambassador Skoog and his team was truly exemplary. The collaboration between our two countries just goes to show that with a common objective and vision in mind, anything is possible, a classic model for North-South cooperation.

Another outcome that we must highlight is the 'Call for Action' outcome document. Its adoption in the GA last week is very much welcomed, ensuring that we maintain the momentum from the Conference. It is of course fitting here for me to commend the excellent guidance and leadership of Ambassador Gafoor of Singapore and Ambassador Mendonca de Moura of Portugal, who expertly presided over consultations of the text. Fiji thanks you both.

I also join Sweden in expressing thanks to PGA Peter Thomson; your championing of the oceans and your call to all member States to come together to address some of the most serious issues facing our ocean is commendable. The passion you showed is something we can all strive for when implementing SDG 14 and Agenda 2030 as a whole.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the national perspective, Fiji has begun its own internal processes for the full realization of goal 14 by 2030. Fiji registered 17 voluntary commitments during the Conference, spearheaded by government and non-government agencies and private sector, showing the collaborative approach we are taking. The commitments cover conservation, management and sustainable use of Fiji's marine resources.

However, as alluded to by the distinguished speakers before me, the process has just begun. The onus is on us to put 'words into actions' and to ensure that commitments made during the Conference are fully realized, we owe this to ourselves and to future generations.

We therefore look forward to fruitful discussions at this review. Any dialogue towards reviewing the implementation of all SDGs including SDG 14 is very much welcome.

I also take this opportunity to convey Fiji's support of Kenya and Portugal in their offer to host a follow-up conference. 2020 will see a number of targets under SDG14 coming up for fulfilment. To ensure that those targets are met, we need to nurture the current momentum so that will all have positive feedback to present by that time and together to again evaluate progress made on the implementation of SDG 14.

Thank you.