

## **Open Working Group Meeting, OWG9:** **Final Statement on Climate Change, Oceans, Seas and Marine resources**

**Thank you co-chairs. I am Noelene Nabulivou of Diverse Voices and Action for Equality, Fiji and also DAWN speaking on behalf of Major Groups of Women, Children and Youth, Indigenous peoples, and NGOs.**

Major groups strongly affirm State and non-state recognition at this OWG9 meeting and prior, on the need to include focus on restoration, conservation and sustainable use of oceanic and marine resources, due to importance of economic, social and ecosystem services to humankind. To this adding explicit focus on restoration and repair of already severely damaged marine ecosystems in all goals, targets and indicators.

However, this is still not enough. Calling explicitly for a stronger ecosphere approach to oceans and seas, and standalone goals on Oceans and also on Climate Change, due to the degree of globalised importance, and levels of current loss and damage.

Recalling that health of Oceans and seas are not only important to SIDS, many LDCs and coastal states, but important to all states. Oceanic systems drive global atmospheric, water cycle systems and even the snow belts in the Himalayas, and influence already-threatened glacial systems, and overall planetary boundaries. As one scientific expert rightly put it at OWG8, if we all like breathing (and I would add drinking and eating), then with strongest political will, we must urgently protect our oceans and seas.

**Therefore, toward SDG goals, targets and indicators specifically reiterating as follows:**

**\*In relation to Equal attention to urgent action and slow-onset targets on climate change, DRR and oceans;**

Inclusion of attention to global sea level rise, ocean acidification and 'dead zones', eutrophication and nuclear radiation; strongest monitoring of POPs, toxins, and plastics; effects and responses to natural disasters; over-exploitation, including overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; and already destroyed ecosystems. To build sustainability, SDGs must emphasize long-agreed Agenda 21 commitments including technology sharing, and production and dissemination of knowledge products and best practices; AND integration of all SD, CC and DRR plans, with equal attention to urgent and slow-onset climate change and oceanic issues. The sustainable development agenda must reflect coherence between SDGs, P2015DA and the UNFCCC processes, including strongest mitigation commitments by all states.

**\*With regards to a Biosphere and integrated ecosystem approach to land-ocean management:**

The new sustainable development framework should place most stringent regulations on land-based activities, focusing on their impact on oceans and seas. As well as regulations on land including attention to sustainable and safe cities, subsidising renewable safe industrial materials, and protection of biodiversity areas; Marine protected Areas or MAPS must be strong and secure, with timed targets on MAP size and strongest protection of communities in line with UNHR, CEDAW, ICPD, COB, UNDRIP and other human rights normative agreements and programmes of action. MAPS must not just protect biodiversity hotspots, but also reflect connectedness to the whole oceanic system, and importance to local communities including indigenous people. One cannot protect a significant area, and also institute deepsea mining, overfishing and illegal catches, or otherwise pollute and harm marine ecosystems for supposed economic gain. Environmental and social costs are not externalities. Otherwise as many have stated through the OWGs, this is not really economic gain at all.

**\*On sustainable, human rights based and just marine economic activities:**

Given that approximately half of all international tourists travel to SIDS and coastal areas, and that such countries heavily rely on the tourism industry, more stringent regulations should be enforced in order to address unsustainable and destructive tourism. Tourism, as with all economic activities that affect oceans and seas, must be designed and monitored in accordance with human rights normative agreements, with specific attention to gender equality and women's and children's human rights including SRHR, rights of indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees, and other at-risk and marginalised groups. This is just one example of the need for cross-cutting targets and indicators on GE and women's rights across all goals, along with a standalone goal on Gender Equality and Women's rights.

There is also a need for **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs)**, including national biodiversity inventories, as 1 in 4 fish species depend on the disappearing coral reef ecosystems, upon which many poor citizens depend for survival. From such good policies we see will positive flow-on and co-benefits, in that biodiversity protection is also good for tourism, and therefore for overall economic gain. Relatedly, one cannot sustain pristine areas for tourism, while also pursuing heavily resource-oriented activities such as deep-sea mining, etc. We need greater congruence and consistency of state policy, including urgent moves from extractivist economic activities to those built on the longterm health of oceans and seas.

**\*Finally, on Oceanic and Maritime Governance\***

The new sustainable development framework must include strengthening and accountability of UNCLOS and International Seabed Authority in line with Agenda 21 and human rights principles, as part of global efforts to strengthen the unfinished business of MDG8, on effective and just global governance systems. Also recognition of Maerstricht Principles on Extraterritoriality, and toward greater resources for recognition and implementation of multilateral global maritime governance, including in territorial waters and areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The Major Groups welcome widespread support by member States in these critical upcoming OWG meetings.

**Thank you.**