

Cluster 6 – Oceans and Seas
10th Session of the OWG on Sustainable Development
Intervention Statement for Alliance of Small Island States
2 April 2014

Co-Chairs,

We take the floor today to underscore that healthy, productive, and resilient oceans and seas are a critical source of livelihoods and are an important element of our identity.

Oceans and seas are critical not only to ourselves, but to the whole global community. And, we believe that oceans and seas are a priority that should be prominently reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 agenda, including through consideration of a thematic Sustainable Development Goal.

Co-Chairs,

The IPCC report published on Monday gave a stark picture of the state and future of oceans for humanity. Among the conclusions:

- The ocean is warming because it's absorbing more than 90 percent of the energy increase in our climate system.
- Marine organisms sensitive to temperature are following warming systems, and fish and plankton are moving rapidly towards the polar regions at a rate of 100km per decade.
- The migration of key food species like tuna creates a potential crisis for many small island states dependent on the species for food and income.
- In the western Pacific, for example, tuna have migrated hundreds of kilometers in an easterly direction in the past few decades.
- Additionally, the absorption of carbon dioxide is acidifying our seas making it more difficult for species like coral to build skeletons, and disorienting fish due to neurological impacts.

Co-Chairs,

Healthy oceans and seas contribute to poverty eradication by creating sustainable livelihoods and decent work in fisheries and marine aquaculture, shipping and shipbuilding, ports, tourism, oil, gas, mining, and maritime transportation industries.

They are crucial for global food security and human health. They are the primary regulator of the global climate and an important sink for greenhouse gases. They provide us with water and the very oxygen we breathe.

Oceans and seas are indeed a topic of universal importance and should have a prominent place in the SDGs and post-2015 agenda. Indeed, failure to address oceans

and seas in the SDG process will hamper efforts to meet development goals, especially those related to poverty eradication, food security and health efforts.

Co Chairs—

In line with the importance of oceans and seas to SIDS, we believe the following targets should be reflected:

Target 1. Marine ecosystems are restored and safeguarded, marine biodiversity is effectively protected and fish stocks, are rebuilt and maintained at healthy and productive levels

Target 2. Coastal and marine areas critical to food security and livelihoods are protected and restored through area-based conservation measures, including effective and equitably managed systems of marine protected areas (MPAs), consistent with international law

Target 3. Oceans and seas are sustainably managed through the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach

Target 4. All types of maritime uses are effectively managed and controlled and all types of marine environmental impacts, (including the effects of climate change and the different types of land-based pollution) are assessed, understood, and mitigated.

Target 5. The effects of climate change and ocean acidification to the marine ecosystems are effectively addressed and the rate of investment to strengthen the resilience and security of all countries, particularly of the most vulnerable including SIDS, against the adverse impact of climate change and natural disasters is increased.

Target 6. Increase the rate of investment in environmentally friendly infrastructure that strengthens the resilience and security of all countries.

Target 7. Build human and institutional capacities to conserve, sustainably manage, and realize the benefits of sustainable fisheries.

Co-chairs,

For oceans and seas, the issues are known. What is needed is political will to take the actions necessary. We are at a historical juncture and we need a paradigm shift. We look forward to working with all of our partners in this process to ensure that it provides a framework for the delivery of sufficient means of implementation and effective partnerships to allow for us to go beyond the rhetoric of sustainable development and make real, measurable progress on the ground in the post-2015 development framework.

I thank you.