



# **PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

## **United Nations Member States**

Permanent Mission of the Independent State of  
Papua New Guinea to the United Nations  
201 East 42nd Street, Suite 2411, New York, N.Y. 10017

Phone: 212-557-5001  
Fax: 212-557-5009  
E-mail: [pngmission@pngun.org](mailto:pngmission@pngun.org)

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### **STATEMENT**

## **FOR THE EIGHT SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

### **DELIVERED BY**

**H.E. TOMMY REMENGESAU JR.  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF PALAU**

**ON BEHALF OF THE PACIFIC SDG WORKING GROUP TROIKA**

**AND**

**THE PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES  
REPRESENTED AT THE UNITED NATIONS AND TIMOR-LESTE**

**3 FEBRUARY 2014, NEW YORK**

Co-chairs,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) represented at the United Nations; namely, Fiji, Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country, Palau, as well as Timor-Leste.

While our moniker emphasizes the smallness of our islands and populations, we are in fact, large oceans states. Our borders span vast expanses of water, the size of which is difficult to comprehend outside of our region. Within them, we are custodians of some of the world's richest biodiversity and marine resources.

This natural endowment is our heritage; its vitality is integral to our environment, economy, and culture: our lives as islanders are tied to the oceans. It should therefore come as no surprise that we are advocating for a Sustainable Development Goal on oceans and seas.

Ensuring healthy oceans and seas is not solely an "island" issue, however. Sustainable oceans and seas are universally essential to sustaining life and livelihoods on Earth. Oceans and seas are the common fabric uniting states and continents. They cover two-thirds of the planet's surface and hold 97 percent of its water. Oceans and seas absorb heat and carbon dioxide, generate fully half of the oxygen humans breathe, shape the world's weather patterns, and are a potential source of renewable energy.

Fish are an essential source of food globally. They are the world's single largest source of protein. They are relied upon as a primary source of food by nearly a billion people, most of whom live in developing countries.

Oceans and seas are also a key tool to eradicate poverty. Fisheries and related industries employ anywhere from 660 to 820 million people. That represents fully 10 to 12 percent of the world's population. A majority of workers in secondary industries, such as fish processing, marketing and canneries, are women. Ocean and coastal tourism is also a large, fast-growing industry. Undertaken sustainably, marine eco-tourism presents a tremendous opportunity to create good jobs and preserve the environment for countries around the world.

Co-Chairs,

International efforts to sustain healthy oceans and seas are failing. Once thought to be limitless, more than 80 percent of global fish stocks are now fully or over-exploited. Pollution is saturating our waters. Ocean acidification and coral bleaching are decimating reefs and coastal habitats that once teemed with life. Climate change is causing the seas to rise at unprecedented rates, increasing the intensity of storms and threatening to wipe entire states off the map.

These pressures are interrelated and simultaneously impact our environment, economy, culture, and heritage. Addressing them requires a global framework like the SDGs that spans all dimensions of sustainable development.

Putting oceans and seas at the center of the UN's development agenda will give them focus that is commensurate to their importance.

Through the SDG process, we can deliver on the commitments World Leaders made at Rio+20 in *The Future We Want*. And we can do it in a way that aligns stakeholders around a common framework for action with metrics to measure success.

Here is how: a stand alone SDG to achieve 'Healthy, Productive, and Resilient Oceans and Seas'.

An oceans and seas SDG should aim to meet three main targets.

1) First, we need a healthy and well-managed marine environment.

This requires the development of marine protected areas and other types of ecosystem-based conservation measures, reducing pollution, and addressing the causes and impacts of coral bleaching and ocean acidification. Our focus should be on securing the health of areas particularly important for biodiversity and ecosystem services.

2) Second, we must restore healthy fish stocks.

Fish stocks are a driver of economic growth and a bedrock of food security. They must be restored to sustainable levels. This will require ending destructive fishing practices, eliminating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, building strong monitoring, control, surveillance, compliance, and enforcement systems, and undertaking environmental impact assessments.

Meeting this target also requires measures to tackle over-fishing. Subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and IUU fishing must stop. Science based management plans should be implemented so that fishing effort will be reduced or suspended in line with the status of the stock.

3) Finally, Least Developing Countries, African Countries, and Small Island Developing States should be assisted so that they can realize the benefits of their sustainably developed marine resources.

Too often we speak of our countries' vulnerabilities. But we are not merely vulnerable. Sustainable use of the oceans and seas can unlock our countries' tremendous development potential.

The Millennium Development Goals proved that we can make historic gains by marshaling resources around a common cause and bringing stakeholders – governments, NGOs, the private sector, and local communities – together. The same is true for the SDGs and oceans. Investments in sustainable ecotourism, local fisheries, marine management, and data collection can make a generational, transformative impact. We require only the right tools and the right partnerships to protect our environment, grow our economies, and enrich our people’s lives.

Co-Chairs,

Life itself is said to have emerged from the oceans. They are our origin. They are also our future.

A truly sustainable development agenda must include healthy oceans and seas. The entire planet and its people depend on them. They are essential to food, jobs, health, culture, and the environment globally.

Recognizing their importance and their interconnectivity, the PSIDS propose that the oceans and seas be dealt with as a whole through a stand alone SDG. That is the best way to deliver on the promise that oceans and seas hold for the world and to ensure that they remain healthy, productive, and resilient for generations to come.

## Sustainable Development Goal: Achieve Healthy, Productive, and Resilient Oceans and Seas

| Target                                  | Indicator  | Actionable Measures  |
|---|--|--|
| 1: Achieve a healthy marine environment | <p>A. Proportion of coastal and marine areas effectively conserved, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services</p> <p>i) Address the impacts of climate change, ocean warming and acidification, on marine and coastal ecosystem and resources, in particular coral reefs and mangroves by enhancing the resilience of these marine ecosystems<sup>i</sup></p> <p>B. Reduce pollution impacting marine ecosystems by [X%]</p> | <p>Establish and apply area based conservation measures, including marine protected areas and reserves, and apply appropriate management strategies to areas identified as ecologically or biologically sensitive. Increase protected areas to achieve the Aichi goal of conserving by 2020 10% of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services<sup>1</sup>Significantly enhance international cooperation including via technical and scientific collaboration, monitoring and observation of ocean acidification, and finance and capacity development for conservation efforts</p> <p>New international institutional and cooperative mechanisms are agreed and implemented to address ocean acidification and reduce the rate of acidification, including increased funding for research and implementation of responses to ocean acidification</p> <p>Effective implementation of relevant conventions adopted in the framework of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), as well as relevant initiatives including the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and the adoption of coordinated regional strategies, including enhanced implementation of regional Land-based pollution Protocols and the adoption of such Protocols in regions where they do not exist.</p> <p>Assess new and emerging activities in areas within and beyond national jurisdiction and implement appropriate measures to ensure sustainable management and conservation of the oceans.</p> |

## 2: Achieve healthy fish stocks

A. Proportion of highly migratory and straddling stocks at levels that can produce at least maximum sustainable yield.

i) Eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated (“IUU”) fishing<sup>ii</sup>

ii) Eliminate fishing subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and IUU fishing<sup>iii</sup>

iii) Implement science based management plans, including by reducing or suspending fishing catch and effort commensurate with the status of the stock.<sup>iv</sup>

B. Proportion of coastal fisheries subject to management plans

All relevant agencies undertake Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), including of cumulative impacts, prior to fishing to protect biodiversity, habitat and ecosystems.

Implement national and regional plans to identify vessels engaged in IUU fishing and deprive offenders of the benefits accruing from IUU.

Systematically identify needs and build capacity of developing countries, including support for monitoring, control, surveillance, compliance and enforcement systems.

Port states require prior approval of all vessels before entering port and deny entry to vessels known or suspected to be engaged in IUU fishing.

Strengthen disciplines on subsidies in the fisheries sector, including through the prohibition subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, taking into account special and differential treatment for developing and LDCs

Refrain from introducing new such subsidies or from extending or enhancing existing ones.<sup>v</sup>

Implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the FAO International Plans of Action and technical Guidelines<sup>vi</sup>

Enhance action to manage bycatch, discards, and other adverse ecosystem impacts from fisheries including by eliminating destructive fishing practices<sup>vii</sup>

Assess on [annual] basis the progress and performance of RFMOs under their respective treaties and UNFSA

3: Realize the benefits of sustainable development of marine resources

A. Increase the economic benefit from sustainable development of coastal and marine resources to, in particular, least developing countries, African countries, and small island developing states

Improve access to fisheries and markets for subsistence, small-scale and artisanal fishers, women fish workers, and indigenous people, particularly in SIDS<sup>viii</sup>

Develop approaches and mechanisms to ensure that the burden of conservation and management of ocean resources is not disproportionately transferred.

Support sustainable tourism activities and relevant capacity building that promotes environmental awareness, conserves and protects the environment.<sup>ix</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> A/RES/66/288 Annex, "The Future We Want" (Outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012) (Rio) paras. 166 and 176.

<sup>ii</sup> Rio para 170

<sup>iii</sup> Rio para. 173 and Aichi Target 3.

<sup>iv</sup> Rio para. 168.

<sup>v</sup> Rio para 173.

<sup>vi</sup> Rio para. 169.

<sup>vii</sup> Rio para. 168.

<sup>viii</sup> Rio paras. 174 and 175.

<sup>ix</sup> Rio para. 130.