

PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES
United Nations Member States



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Statement delivered by Ambassador Dr. Satyendra Prasad, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States
at the Closing of the Second Substantive Session of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international 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

Friday, 5th April 2019

Madam President, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues and Friends,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the 12 Pacific Small Island Developing States with Permanent Missions to the United Nations, namely; the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Fiji, and we are pleased to be joined in this statement, once again, by Cook Islands.

We align this Statement with that delivered by the respective Chairs of G77 + China, AOSIS and PIFs.

Madam President, as ‘Children of the Ocean’ honoring our ‘Mother Ocean’, let me start by offering our sincerest appreciation to you, the Facilitators, and to the Bureau Members, for your effective stewardship of this 2nd Substantive Session of the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC-2) on BBNJ, and for the excellent facilitators’ summary, which affords us all a solid basis to plan our work towards the 3rd Substantive Session of the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC-3) in August.

PSIDS also thanks the contributors to the BBNJ Trust Fund which has allowed delegations from developing countries including those in the Pacific to attend the meetings here in New York and we encourage delegations to continue contributions to the Trust Fund to support further participation as this process enters its critical phase.

Madam President,

The PSIDS wishes to commend the positive spirit of our discussions so far, which has been the hallmark of this IGC-2 and we emphasize the importance of maintaining this positive spirit in the coming months, in the lead up to, and during IGC-3.

We are pleased to note and acknowledge the most enriching and constructive discussions amongst delegations, both in the Plenary and in the corridors. These discussions have de-mystified the respective positions of delegations and have led to a greater clarity and better understanding of the unique perspectives on BBNJ that we bring to this complex process.

We also acknowledge with great appreciation the useful guide and options provided through the President's Aid to Negotiations. We commend the guidance provided by the facilitators and we have been pleased with the exchanges of views, that have helped ensure the elements for our discussions – going forward from here – are 'well-watered' as we now have much more clarity on 'areas of convergence' and 'areas of divergence', and areas that will need our targeted and dedicated energies in the immediate future.

Madam President,

The various issues and discussions proposed by distinguished delegates here in this 2nd Substantive Session is a good platform to help the Conference take the next steps.

For the PSIDS, we acknowledge the encouraging and helpful reactions from respective delegations on significant issues and principles pertinent to us as Large Ocean States, including adjacency, fair and equitable sharing of benefits, the special circumstances of SIDS, and the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities. We are also very encouraged to see the negotiation process take into account cumulative impacts including the 'adverse effects of climate change and Ocean acidification' which are a reality for PSIDS.

We wish to reiterate our expectation highlighted in our opening remarks, in that the BBNJ instrument must promote greater coherence with, and shall complement, existing relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional and sectoral bodies, in a manner that does not undermine the effectiveness of those instruments, frameworks and bodies.

Madam President,

I wish to conclude, by reaffirming our commitment to your Leadership in charting the journey ahead.

The PSIDS reiterates its commitment to work constructively with you and other distinguished delegates to ensure that we conclude a ‘fair and equitable’, balanced, universal and practical International Legally Binding Instrument that helps address the ‘tragedy of the commons’.

In this regard the Pacific SIDS wishes you Madam President, your Bureau and DOALOS all the very best in your work to produce a zero draft prior to the start of the IGC-3 to ensure that we maintain focus in our future discussions and sustain the solidarity in our journey forward, keeping the momentum of this canoe and ensuring that we fulfill the aspiration we set for ourselves in finalizing an ambitious BBNJ instrument by 2020.

I thank you.

END