



## **General Statement**

**by**  
**Mr. Max Hufanen Rai, OBE**  
**Permanent Representative**  
**of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations**  
**at the**  
**First Session of the Intergovernmental Conference**  
**on an international legally binding instrument under the United**  
**Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the**  
**conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of**  
**areas beyond national jurisdiction**

**New York, 4 September 2018**

"Check against delivery"

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**Madame President,**

My delegation aligns itself with the statement Egypt delivered as the Chair of G77 and China. We also subscribe to Nauru and Maldives respective remarks on behalf of the Pacific SIDS and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). We would like to make additional comments in our national capacity for this general segment.

Today marks a watershed moment, under your stewardship, Madame President, as we collectively embark on framing an international binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Let us remind ourselves of the universal high ambition we established under the 2030 Agenda SDG 14 on making our oceans and seas healthy, productive and resilient, for the benefit of this generation and those to come. We would encourage such constructive spirit in this IGC process.

The vulnerability of marine biological diversity in the areas beyond national jurisdiction and the continuing tragedy of the commons is a powerful reminder to the international community of the importance and necessity to end the unbridled plundering of the resources of the ABNJ. The envisioned instrument is indeed a monumental step in the right direction and deserving of our undivided support.

**Madame President,**

For Papua New Guinea, as a maritime and archipelagic developing State, what matters in marine areas beyond our national jurisdiction are as important to activities within our marine areas of national jurisdiction, given the symbiotic relations.

It is also for this reason that in the Pacific region, our Pacific Islands Forum leaders, under the Framework for Pacific Oceanscape, with a motto of "Our Sea of Islands, Our Livelihoods, Our Oceania", recognised, prioritised and mandated us in 2014 to support the establishment of an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of the marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

We are committed to this endeavour and to reach it, international cooperation is pivotal. This was again underscored yesterday by our regional leaders in their 49<sup>th</sup> Summit in Nauru, where it was stressed that "While the Pacific region must drive and forge its own development future we cannot do this in isolation. In our ever growing globalised world and given the transboundary nature of many of the challenges we face – climate change, marine pollution, unsustainable fishing, transnational crime – partnerships and cooperation are vital to for building a strong and secure Blue Pacific continent."

**Madame President,**

We are grateful to you for the transparent, accountable and timely manner in which you have at the outset not only shared your Presidential Aide to guide our preparations but also the welcomed outreach in this process to get us off to a solid start. We would encourage you to continue this constructive practice and pledge our support to work with you and with others.

In this spirit, we congratulate Belize, New Zealand, the Netherlands and Palau on their respective appointments as Facilitators of the Working Groups and also welcome the Bureau members and wish them all the best in their respective mandate.

In closing Madame President, as we set sail together in this uncharted waters, on MV BBNJ, the oceans in ABNJ are choppy, our navigational skills and resilience will be tested, but with our collective resolve, astute captaincy and supportive cabin crew, the final destination is within reach, if we all pull together.

I thank you.