

5 June 2014

**Message of H.E. John W. Ashe  
President of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly,  
for World Environment Day**

As we look to advance discussions on the creation of a Post-2015 Development Agenda, positive and sustainable environmental action will be an absolute imperative. On this World Environment Day, I encourage Member States, civil society and other stakeholders to raise global awareness on this issue by promoting this year's theme: "Raise Your Voice, Not the Sea Level."

The year's global commemorations focus on the Caribbean, where Small Island Developing States have been deeply impacted by climate change. Home to 62.3 million people, SIDS countries play a crucial role in protecting our oceans while contributing little to climate change - emitting less than one per cent of global greenhouse gases. SIDS countries suffer disproportionately from the effects of climate change owing to their small size, remote locations, and limited economic resilience. Research shows that by 2100, global warming could lead to a sea-level rise of up to two meters, making many SIDS, especially in the Pacific region, uninhabitable.

Together, we must issue a global call to action to people across the world to support SIDS and low-lying coastal States that are endangered by rising sea levels, and disproportionately impacted by climate change, the loss of biodiversity and forests and overfishing. Only a robust and sustainable environmental policy which prioritizes the development of renewable energy and an ocean-based green economy can translate into collective action on the ground.

This year let us raise our voices in solidarity with one another, and particularly with the citizens of SIDS. Only by transitioning together to a green economy can we ensure a sustainable prosperous future for all countries threatened by rising sea levels.