

## **Australian Government statement on the 2020 UNOC declaration**

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Australia fully aligns itself with the statement made by Tuvalu on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

As I noted in my statement on the interactive dialogues, as we commence the SDG decade of action, it is incumbent upon us to assess whether we are on track to achieve our targets – and, if we are not – to examine the reasons why and how we can correct course.

The declaration should acknowledge that we are likely to miss some if not all of the four targets that are due to mature this year, and to grapple with the difficult but important questions about the sufficiency of current actions, and barriers to success.

We agree that solutions lie in **science and innovation**. All fields of science will be required, and we need innovation across the board – innovation in data and technology, in our policy and governance approaches, in finance, and in our partnerships.

**Data and technology** can play a major role in overcoming barriers and unlocking opportunities. The declaration should note that the explosion in new data about the ocean has the potential to reshape how we understand and manage the ocean. Ocean management has long been impeded, and often defeated, by a lack of timely, accurate and relevant information on the condition of ocean resources and on human activities and their impacts.

New technologies are vastly increasing the collection of data, but the urgent challenge is to ensure these data are available and useful to ocean management.

The declaration should recognise the importance of a **sustainable ocean economy** for the achievement of SDG 14 and many of the other SDGs including those relating to poverty, hunger, decent work, climate, biodiversity, and gender equality.

There are significant opportunities for growth in the ocean economy, which are particularly important for small island developing states and least developed countries. Production, protection and prosperity go hand in hand. Overuse or misuse of ocean resources puts the health and resilience of the ocean, and the growth of the ocean economy and human wellbeing, at risk.

The declaration should articulate clearly that harnessing the huge potential of the sustainable ocean economy and achieving SDG 14 – and the 2030 agenda as a whole – will require a transformation in humanity's relationship with the ocean. The work of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy – which will hand down its final report and recommendations in June – will be critical in this respect.