



Statement by

**H.E. Mr Max Hufanen Rai,
Permanent Representative and Ambassador
of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations
and Head of Delegation**

at the

**Preparatory Meeting of the 2020 United Nations
Conference to Support the Implementation of
Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and
Sustainably use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources
for Sustainable Development**

**Segment on the Themes of the Interactive Dialogues
and the Elements of the Political Declaration**

4 February 2020, New York

"Check against delivery"

Co-Facilitators, Excellencies and distinguished delegates;

I align my delegation's remarks with those made by Guyana as Chair of the Group of 77 and China, Fiji on behalf of the Pacific SIDS, Tuvalu as Pacific Islands Forum Chair and Belize on behalf of AOSIS.

In our national capacity I would like to add a few points confined to issues of a general nature, which we consider important and also on the possible themes for the eight interactive sessions for the Conference. On specific proposals for the Political Declaration we will share this in the subsequent meetings.

We also thank the Secretary-General for his useful background Note for the Conference.

Co-Facilitators, my delegation is a strong advocate for the Second UN Ocean Conference to support SDG 14's implementation and therefore welcomes your respective appointments to lead the preparatory process, including importantly guiding the drafting of the Political Declaration for adoption in Lisbon in June this year.

You have our confidence and trust to deliver a strong, focused and forward-looking outcome document, commensurate with the guidance and support from Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

Your welcome early outreach to groups of delegations and individual delegations in this process is a good omen and stands to benefit all of us and particularly Portugal and Kenya, as co-hosts of this important high-level multilateral event.

I would like to underscore that we are not starting from scratch and therefore not reinventing the wheel, so to speak.

This is given the solid foundation already laid by the successful First UN Ocean Conference nearly three years ago and taken further forward through multiple actions already underway worldwide, including in the Pacific region under the aegis of the vision and narrative of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent endorsed by our Pacific leaders in August 2019 and also through the leadership of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Ocean Ambassador Peter Thomson.

For us at the national level, these includes four voluntary commitments implementation. Firstly, the declaration of a new Marine Protected Area (Bootless Bay MPA). Second, combating IUU fishing through accession to FAO Port-State-Measures Agreement which also entails further development of a national Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Strategy. Thirdly, the establishment of a National Oceans Policy framework and a National Oceans Office for integrated, coherent and effective oceans governance in the country; and fourthly, continuing engagement through WTO for ending fisheries subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing.

It is in this spirit that we view the acceleration of that Conference's "Our ocean, our future: a call for action" outcome must serve as the pivotal guide for the upcoming Conference.

Co-Facilitators, on the possible themes for the eight interactive dialogue for the Conference, first; whilst we note that currently the themes proposed are aligned with the respective SDG 14 Targets, which is well and good.

However, this could be better clustered to tease out with clarity the science- and innovation based and scaled-up action needed to enhance the delivery of the various Targets of SDG 14. In this regard, we view General Assembly resolution 73/292 as one of our touchstones, in particular Paragraph 5 thereof.

What do I mean by this? One possible option, my delegation would suggest is to have an interactive theme on Ocean's Action Partnerships, which at present is clearly missing.

This must be a stand-alone theme given not only the importance of multistakeholder partnerships for oceans action but also because the main theme of the Conference calls for "...partnerships and solutions."

We know that not all governments have the necessary means of implementation for the key actions needed for SDG 14 and therefore the important partnership role of the private sector, academic institutions, the scientific community, philanthropic organisations, non-governmental and civil society organisations cannot be overstated.

This will also be a critical element that will need to constitute the Political Declaration.

To this end, we suggest an interactive theme that could consider "How can we built on the existing partnerships for SDG 14 and stimulate innovative and concrete new partnerships to advance the implementation of SDG 14? This theme tracks precisely the language in Paragraph 5(a) of General Assembly resolution 73/292.

Co-Facilitators, a second proposal on the interactive dialogue theme my delegation proposes for consideration is to have a cluster that focuses on the SDG 14 Targets that are maturing in 2020.

These are Targets 14.2 on marine and coastal ecosystem management and protection; Target 14.4 on regulating harvesting and ending overfishing and IUU fishing; Target 14.5 on conservation of 10 percent of coastal and marine areas; and Target 14.6 on fisheries subsidies.

In this context, we need to ask ourselves how far we have progressed on this respective SDG14 Targets and what science and innovation-based actions are needed the most to ensure their attainment this year.

Failing that, what measures must we take going forward to deliver on them successfully?

In closing, Co-Facilitators, while we are supportive of the overall theme of the Conference, we would however, caution and reiterate the key point made by PSIDS and Pacific Islands Forum respective Chair's that this should not in any way, shape or form downgrade but instead should enhance the importance and relevance of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and communities as it relates to the conservation, management and sustainable use of the oceans and seas.

This is because the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and communities has existed and applied for thousands of years and have only recently been expressly recognized in numerous UN fora and documents, including Paragraph 8(j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Thank you for the opportunity share our thoughts on this agenda.

