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**Securing our future in the Pacific**

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Pacific Islands Forum  
with United Nations Missions

*Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji,  
Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau,  
Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands,  
Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu*

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**2020 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable  
Development Goal 14:**

**Conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas  
and marine resources for sustainable development**

**Preparatory Meeting**

**11 am Tuesday, February 4th, 2020**

**Conference Room 4**

**to be delivered by**

**H.E Samuelu Laloni**

**Permanent Representative of Tuvalu to the UN**

Thank you, Co-Facilitators.

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Pacific Islands Forum members with presence here in New York, Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Tuvalu.

At the outset, the Pacific Islands Forum countries would like to congratulate you on your appointment and express our appreciation for your hard work and for the letter circulated in January this year, which provided an overview of the Ocean Conference's mandate, as well as posing questions for consideration at this meeting.

Science-based and innovative areas of action are crucial to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 14 and for the Ocean that we want and need. The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders, and generations of the past continue to recognize the inseparable links

between the oceans, seas and Pacific island peoples, their values, traditional practices and spiritual connections. Science-based and innovative areas of action are critical to save our ocean, our people, traditions, cultures and future, when we are facing the greatest challenges caused by the existential threat of climate change and related natural phenomena whilst driving resilient, effective and robust solutions to overcome the risks posed to our ocean.

Science-based and innovative areas of action in mapping of the ocean, observations, ecosystem knowledge, data and information work, modelling and prediction, disaster risk reduction, ocean literacy, education, and other numerous applications of ocean science can all contribute to support clean, healthy, and productive oceans, the sustainable management, use and conservation of marine resources, growth in the blue economy, and for addressing the impacts of climate change on ocean health. In addition, any following new initiatives could also be identified capitalizing on existing systems to support the implementation of the SDG 14.

We are mindful that actions can only be effective if it is based on sound knowledge informed by science. There is an increasing need to find scientific solutions that allow us to understand the changes taking place in our ocean, and to reverse its declining health. The recently released Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change “Special report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate” is one of the science-based examples that calls for very urgent climate change actions and improve the health of our ocean.

Co-Facilitators,

We would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of traditional knowledge to be utilized to promote authentic custodianship of the Ocean. In our view, traditional knowledge is relevant in many circumstances when implementing SDG 14, including as a complement to science as well as when science is lagging. The relevance of traditional knowledge to Ocean management has been repeatedly recognized in multiple international agreements, reports, and processes that feature science, including the CBD and its EBSA process, reports of the IPCC, and the recent IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. In that regard, traditional knowledge of indigenous people and local communities is crucial in terms of facilitating the engagement of Pacific Island countries in the development and implementation of SDG 14.

Having said that, our work in supporting the implementation of the SDG 14 will be difficult when lacking collaborative partnerships that can deliver more effective science-based management of our ocean space and resources. Most importantly, capacity-building partnerships that help address the range of threats we – as others – face as well as harness opportunities to support SDG 14. Building up genuine partnerships is indispensable to enhance the engagement of the Pacific Island countries in the areas of the development and implementation of science-based and innovative areas of action, including enhancing the capacity of Pacific Island countries to access, understand, and make full use of technology, science, and all other relevant knowledge sources and tools for the proper management of the Ocean.

It is also our view that the ten targets listed under SDG 14 readily appear that their realization will be impacted by many factors, both within and outside the “ocean sphere.” The interrelationships that exist among them, as well as with other goals should be deemed as an integrated network to achieve the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, we welcome the eighth theme proposed in the Secretary-General’s background note, which addresses SDG 14 in a consistent way across all SDG targets.

#### Co-Facilitators

The Pacific Islands Forum group stands ready to work in a constructive, cooperative manner. We look forward to working with you and our fellow delegates to conclude an intergovernmental agreed declaration for the 2020 United Nations Conference to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

Thank you.

