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Statement delivered by Fiji on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States
2020 UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14:
Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable
development

Preparatory Meeting

4-5 February 2020
UNHQ, CR4

Co-Facilitators,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Members of the Pacific Small Island Developing States.

We also associate ourselves with the statements of the distinguished representative of Guyana on behalf of G77+China, Belize on behalf the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) and Tuvalu on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

We first like to congratulate the co-facilitators, the distinguished Ambassadors of Palau and Denmark

Co- Facilitators,

As has been highlighted by speakers before me, the theme for the 2020 UN Ocean Conference,
14:

is indeed a timely theme as we also launch the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. When the Secretary-General highlighted his priorities, he rightly pointed to the importance of the Ocean Conference in Lisbon later this year.

We are entering both an *International Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development* and a *Decade for Action* to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. The Conference has a pivotal role to play for both.

Plastic pollution, overfishing, overheating and acidification from climate change and other adverse effects of rampant anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are driving a crisis in the Ocean. Marine science and innovation go hand in hand and are needed if we are to achieve SDG14 and its targets. Accurate scientific data will help Governments and all stakeholders make better policy decisions which in turn will help us meet our development goals in a more efficient but also sustainable manner.

benefit. Such an effort should include robust capacity building to ensure that potential recipients of such data and technology are able to utilize them fully to better understand and manage the Ocean.

Co-facilitators,

Secondly, with the adverse impacts of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions on the Ocean, including the rise in Ocean temperatures, Ocean and coastal acidification, deoxygenation, and sea level rise to name a few; climate change and related natural phenomena are perhaps the most monumental threats to the Ocean and the appropriate science and innovation need to be developed that help to study their effects further but also to help boost existing mitigation efforts.

Pacific SIDS want to see the same reflected in the political declaration this year as we along with other SIDS are at the frontlines of climate-change fighting for our lives and at times our very existence.

Reference must also be made to highlight current efforts taking place within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to synergize climate change and the Ocean. The world met in Madrid last year at COP25 in an attempt to advance this work further and took a decision to establish a formal dialogue this year on the matter, however more needs to be done. The political declaration must acknowledge and encourage these efforts further; you cannot have a healthy Ocean without first addressing climate change and related natural phenomena, as they are interlinked.

Co-Facilitators,

There is no doubt on the key role Ocean science and technology play in informing decision makers. This role emphasizes the need for the best available science to inform the adoption of effective conservation and management measures.

In connection to this, however, we wish to underscore the role of traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities; we believe that traditional knowledge systems are a complement to science. We are encouraged that the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea (A/74/70) issued last year acknowledges the need to strengthen the integration

of the traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples and local communities as a complement to Ocean science. We also note that several recent major reports and processes reflect the relevance of such traditional knowledge for the Ocean, including the 2015 High Level Panel of Experts Report (A/70/L.62) and the 2016 High Level Panel of Experts Report (A/71/L.62).