



Pacific
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SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme



2025 UN Ocean Conference Political Declaration

Political declarations from UN Ocean Conferences serve as key global commitments for ocean action. Previous declarations - "[Our ocean, our future: call for action](#)" (2017) and "[Our ocean, our future, our responsibility](#)" (2022) - have helped shape international ocean policy and provided frameworks for voluntary commitments. For Pacific nations, these declarations represent critical opportunities to advance regional ocean priorities and reinforce the importance of ocean action for Large Ocean States. Through these declarations, nations have collectively affirmed their commitment to sustainable ocean use and governance.

The 2025 declaration "Our ocean, our future: accelerating action" will be adopted as part of the "Nice Ocean Action Plan" and aims to accelerate implementation of SDG14 through concrete, action-oriented commitments.

Timeline and Process

The development of the political declaration follows an established UN process of consultation and negotiation. The President of the General Assembly has appointed two co-facilitators, H.E. Ms. Tania Serafim Yvonne Romualdo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cabo Verde to the United Nations, and H.E. Mr. James Martin Larsen, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, to lead intergovernmental consultations, which will continue through early 2025. This process allows for input from all Member States to shape the final text, which must be adopted by consensus. These negotiations are undertaken in New York.

Key dates in the process include:

- Zero draft released: 13 December 2024 (see Annex for Zero Draft)
- 27 January: First round of consultations
- 30 January: Release of the first revised draft of the text
- 10 February: Second round of consultations and new language deadline
- 13 February: Release of the second revised draft of the text
- 24 February: Third round of consultations
- 27 February: Release of the third revised draft of the text
- 10 March: Fourth round of consultations
- 17 to 19 March: Silence procedure
- 20 March: Text provided to the secretariat for editing and translation
- 1 May: Deadline for adoption set by the modality's resolution
- 9-13 June 2025: Formal adoption at UNOC3

Pacific nations are still able to engage in this ongoing process through their New York Permanent Missions and through regional coordination mechanisms. The Office of the Pacific Ocean

Commissioner is coordinating regional positions and ensuring Pacific priorities are reflected in the declaration.

Key Elements in the Zero Draft: A Pacific SIDS Perspective

Defending Ocean Ecosystems

The declaration contains several provisions explicitly recognising Pacific leadership and SIDS concerns. It specifically commends Pacific leadership in addressing sea level rise challenges and references the Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on Maritime Zones (para 8). The text explicitly acknowledges that sea level rise disproportionately impacts SIDS and least developed countries (para 7).

More broadly, the declaration includes provisions that align with Pacific priorities without specific regional reference, including: recognition of the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus (para 6), acknowledgement of the 2024 ITLOS Advisory Opinion on climate obligations (para 10), commitment to ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions (para 13), and emphasis on the precautionary approach for deep sea mining (para 14).

Sustainable Ocean Economies

The declaration explicitly recognises SIDS in relation to sustainable ocean-based economies, noting the "tremendous opportunities" they offer particularly for SIDS (para 15).

Other provisions that align with Pacific priorities include: the call for sustainable fisheries management and combating IUU fishing (para 18), support for the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (para 19), commitment to conservation targets aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (para 17), and recognition of maritime transport decarbonisation (para 20).

Accelerating Action

The declaration includes provisions particularly relevant to SIDS regarding implementation support and financing, though with limited explicit Pacific references. Key elements include: recognition of Indigenous Knowledge systems (para 24), commitment to increased ocean finance (para 25), and support for implementing the BBNJ agreement (para 21).

Priorities for Strengthening the Declaration

The Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner (OPOC), in accordance with the mandate from the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Communique (August 2024), has coordinated with the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) and the Pacific Ocean Alliance (POA) to compile regional inputs on the Zero Draft Political Declaration. These inputs represent technical suggestions from regional stakeholders to support Pacific Island members in their negotiations, while not constituting official regional positions. See Annex 2 for the inputs.

On 17 January 2025, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) provided a detailed intervention on the zero draft declaration, emphasising the need to advance from broad commitments to specific, measurable actions that address the scale of current ocean challenges. Drawing on existing elements in the draft, AOSIS identified several critical areas requiring strengthened language:

Finance and Implementation

- More ambitious language on adequate, additional, accessible and sustained financing
- Enhanced focus on capacity building and implementation support for SIDS

- Increasing investments in data collection, management and sharing.
- Inclusion of reference to the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS)

Ocean-Climate Nexus

- Strengthened language linking ocean and climate action
- Explicit references to the Paris Agreement, latest IPCC findings and 2023 Global Stocktake outcomes
- Enhanced focus on SIDS' disproportionate vulnerability to climate impacts

Maritime Resources and Monitoring

- Concrete commitments to combat IUU fishing through enhanced monitoring, control and surveillance
- Stronger measures that account for SIDS' capacities and capabilities
- Enhanced provisions for scientific cooperation and data sharing

Traditional Knowledge and Rights

- Stronger recognition of Indigenous Peoples and local communities
- Clear language on rights beyond free, prior and informed consent
- Recognition of traditional knowledge as complementary and equally relevant to scientific knowledge

International Frameworks

- Maintained centrality of UNCLOS as the legal framework for ocean activities
- Broader recognition of BBNJ Agreement's transformative potential beyond conservation targets
- Support for rapid entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement

The following additional areas could be considered for strengthening the declaration to further reflect Pacific priorities and contexts:

- More explicit commitments on loss and damage financing for SIDS
- Stronger language on climate change adaptation support specific to Pacific needs
- Specific provisions for building SIDS regional capacity
- Stronger safeguards around deep sea mining activities in the Pacific region
- More detailed support mechanisms for Pacific small-scale fisheries
- Enhanced provisions for technology transfer to Pacific SIDS
- Specific measures for protecting traditional Pacific fishing rights
- More concrete support for sustainable tourism development in the Pacific
- Greater emphasis on regional cooperation frameworks
- Encourage the use of ocean accounting approaches to integrate all knowledge types, including indigenous and local knowledge, to inform policies and actions across economic, environment and social dimensions of the ocean

Annex: Current zero draft

Our ocean, our future: accelerating action

- 1 We, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives, meeting in Nice from 9 – 13 June 2025 at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the full participation of civil society and all stakeholders, affirm our strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use our ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development [*based on previous declarations*].
- 2 We share one ocean, and we remain gravely concerned with the global emergency it faces from the impacts of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Action is not advancing at the speed or scale required to meet SDG 14. A healthy and resilient ocean is essential for a sustainable ocean economy and underpins cultural and social connections to the ocean. We must act with urgency to face this challenge with bold, ambitious, just and transformative action, and ensure all people, including women and girls, people with disability, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalised groups are empowered and included in ocean-related decision-making [*based on UNSG background note*].
- 3 We emphasize that our actions to implement Goal 14 should be in accordance with, reinforce and not duplicate or undermine existing legal instruments, arrangements, processes, mechanisms or entities. We affirm the need to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want. We recognise the importance of UNCLOS to advancing sustainable development and its near universal adoption by States, as recalled in paragraph 159 of The Future We Want, and in this regard we urge all its parties to fully implement their obligations under UNCLOS [*based on previous declarations and The Future We Want*].
- 4 We recall the Pact for the Future and our decision to take ambitious action to restore the ocean and its ecosystems, and to improve its health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience [*based on the Pact for the Future*].

Defending ocean ecosystems

- 5 We note the ocean plays an essential role in addressing climate change, and are deeply alarmed that the ocean's ability to act as a climate mitigator has been weakened due to

the adverse impacts of climate change including ocean warming, ocean acidification, eutrophication and deoxygenation, compounded by marine pollution and biodiversity loss [*based on UNSG background note*].

- 6 We underline the importance of the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus and call for concerted global action to minimise the impact of climate change on ocean biodiversity [*based on UNSG background note and KMGBF*].
- 7 We affirm our commitment to continued cooperation to address climate change-related sea level rise and its effects, and acknowledge the High-Level Meeting on Sea Level Rise held in New York on 25

September 2024. We recognise sea level rise due to climate change disproportionately impacts Small Island Developing States (SIDS), least developed countries, and coastal communities, and acknowledge the urgent need for collective action to enhance their adaptive capacities and resilience while mitigating climate change. Marginalised groups bear the brunt of many of the negative consequences of climate change and sea level rise [*based on ABAS and High-Level Meeting on Sea Level Rise modalities*].

- 8 We commend the leadership of SIDS in managing the challenges associated with sea level rise, and note in particular the Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate Change-Related Sea-Level Rise and the Alliance of Small Island States Declaration on Sea Level Rise and Maritime [*new language*].
- 9 We welcome the contribution of the International Law Commission (ILC) to our understanding of the relationship between sea level rise and international law through its study on “Sea-level rise in relation to international law” and encourage States’ continued engagement with the ILC on this topic [*new language*].
- 10 We acknowledge the 2024 Advisory Opinion of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea on the Request for an Advisory Opinion submitted by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law. We encourage all States to meet their obligations to prevent, reduce and control the pollution of the marine environment and to protect and preserve the marine environment in relation to the impacts of climate change [*new language*].
- 11 We remain concerned the high and rapidly increasing levels of plastic pollution represents a serious environmental problem at a global scale, negatively impacting the environmental, social, health, and economic dimensions of sustainable development. We recognise the transboundary nature of plastic pollution and efforts to address this

crisis through trade, including through the WTO Dialogue on Plastics Pollution [*based on UNSG background note and KMGBF*].

12 We reaffirm our shared commitment to accelerate action to prevent, significantly reduce and control marine pollution of all kinds. We support the work of the IMO in further addressing ship-sourced pollution and dumping in the marine environment, including biosecurity risks, and encourage members to address the issue of ghost gear [*new language*].

13 We reaffirm the need to strengthen integrated coastal zone management, marine spatial planning and climate intervention and adaptation strategies to enhance the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems. We commit to ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions to protect natural buffers such as mangroves, seagrasses, and coral reefs, while supporting sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity and pledge to support the implementation of the Early Warnings for All initiative to ensure coastal communities vulnerable to hazardous weather, water or climate events have equitable access to timely, accurate, and actionable information [*based on UNSG background note*].

14 We reiterate the need to increase scientific knowledge on deep sea ecosystems and emphasise the importance of a precautionary approach, including for deep sea mining. We welcome the work of the International Seabed Authority towards the development of robust rules, regulations and procedures in accordance with the UNCLOS [*based on role of the International Seabed Authority*].

Sustainable ocean economies

15 We recognise the tremendous opportunities offered by sustainable ocean-based economies for States, particularly SIDS, to achieve economic growth and social development while safeguarding the health, resilience and productivity of marine ecosystems for present and future generations [*based on UNSG background note*].

16 We recognise the essential role of sustainable ocean plans in achieving sustainable ocean economies and call on all coastal and ocean states to commit to the 100% Alliance, ensuring 100 per cent of ocean areas under national jurisdiction are sustainably managed by 2030. We commit to supporting capacity building, knowledge exchange, and financial mobilisation to enable countries, especially SIDS, to develop and implement sustainable ocean plans, [*new language*].

17 We will ensure by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, marine, and coastal areas are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected, and equitably governed systems of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures, and at least 30 per

cent of areas of degraded ecosystems are under effective restoration (30x30). These efforts should align with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, prioritise areas of critical importance for biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services, and recognise the integral role of Indigenous Peoples, and of local communities, including their traditional territories [*based on KMGBF*].

- 18 We underscore the central role of a healthy and resilient ocean in sustaining life on Earth, ensuring global food security, and supporting billions of lives. We are deeply troubled by the escalating depletion of many global fish stocks through overfishing and call for decisive and collective action to accelerate transition to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture systems, through enhancing marine spatial planning, science-based management, promoting, scaling up and replicating successes, and working together to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. [*based on UNSG background note*].
- 19 We encourage World Trade Organization (WTO) Members to deposit their instruments of acceptance of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies to accelerate its entry into force and implementation. We call on members to conclude negotiations as soon as possible on additional provisions that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing to secure a comprehensive fisheries subsidies agreement [*new language*].
- 20 We recognise the critical roles of maritime transport in the global economy and the challenges to transition the sector to sustainability. Decarbonisation of shipping remains an urgent priority. We welcome the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) adoption of the 2023 Strategy on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Ships and its enhanced common ambition to reach net-zero emissions from international shipping by or around 2050 [*based on IMO 2023 Strategy*].

Accelerating action

- 21 We welcome the adoption of the Agreement under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity Beyond National Jurisdiction, and encourage States to sign and ratify the Agreement to ensure its early entry into force. We welcome resolution 78/272 of the General Assembly establishing the Preparatory Commission to prepare for the entry into force of the Agreement and for the first Conference of the Parties and call upon States to engage in the Commission. We recognise the important role the Agreement will play in achieving 30x30 [*new language*].
- 22 We encourage states to take advantage of the updated modalities for describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and explore potential synergies with the future implementation of the BBNJ [*based on decision 16 of CBD COP 16*].

- 23 We recognise the importance of the ongoing work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, reaffirm our commitment to preventing, reducing and eliminating plastic pollution by taking effective measures throughout the lifecycle of plastics, and call upon participating delegations to work together to reach an ambitious agreement without delay [*based on UNSG background note and UNEP background document*].
- 24 Ocean action must be based on the best available science and knowledge, including Indigenous Knowledge, and that of all members of local communities. To that end we:
- a. Affirm the value of strengthening sharing of knowledge and expertise, including, where there is free, prior and informed consent, the knowledges and practices of Indigenous Peoples, traditional knowledge of local communities, and local knowledge systems.
 - b. Support new scientific research to meet the multiple challenges of climate change, food security, energy transitions and biodiversity loss.
 - c. Commit to improving the scientific understanding of the ocean and supporting science-based measures to accelerate action, including through the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, and its World Ocean Assessments.
 - d. Support a strong science-policy interface to provide timely, credible and salient scientific information to inform policies and actions.
 - e. Commit to strengthening coordinated international, regional, subregional and national scientific observation and data collection efforts, including the development of integrated information management, infrastructure and systems that provide access to reliable, timely and high-quality marine data.
 - f. Prioritise investments in the creation, expansion, and effective management of MPAs to support the health and resilience of ocean ecosystems and the communities that depend on them [*based on UNSG background note*].
- 25 We recognise accelerating ocean action requires significantly increased finance. In this regard, we:
- a. Promote the recognition of the sustainable ocean economy as an attractive investment opportunity among mainstream financial institutions through instruments such as Blue Bonds and Blue Loans.

- b. Encourage the private sector, including banks, insurers and investors, to redirect their products and services towards the transition to sustainable ocean-based economies by finding innovative solutions to support the health and resilience of the ocean.
- c. Encourage the creation of financial instruments such as microfinance, payments for environmental services, credit mechanisms, grants, and subsidies.
- d. Encourage collaboration on blended finance mechanisms to de-risk investments in developing countries, facilitating a just transition.
- e. Ensure the mobilisation of resources, including concessional financing, from Multilateral Development Banks, sovereign wealth funds, and governments with a view to overcoming financial barriers, especially in developing countries.
- f. Support small-scale fishers, women and girls, youth, and Indigenous communities.
- g. Highlight that charities, philanthropies and other donors will be essential, including in providing grants and enabling capital and through concessional financing [*based on UNSG background note*].

26 We value the voluntary commitments made to implement SDG 14, including at UN Ocean Conferences, and encourage partnerships to expand initiatives and increase their impact. We support the inclusive nature of voluntary commitments and underscore the need to implement a simple monitoring and reporting process to provide a collective metric for progress [*based on UNSG background note*].



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OFFICE OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN COMMISSIONER

Our ocean, our future: accelerating action

Introduction

With reference to Para 52 of the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Communique, agreed to in Vava'u, Tonga in August of 2024¹, calling on the Pacific Ocean Commissioner to coordinate closely with the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) and the Pacific Ocean Alliance (POA) in supporting Members engagement at the 3rd UN Ocean Conference, below is a table providing some of the coordinated inputs received from CROP and POA.

Purpose

These coordinated inputs are being put together to aid Members in their negotiations of the 3rd UN Ocean Conference Zero Draft Political Declaration.

*Note: The comments provided herein do not represent official positions of the region, however, these are suggestive proposals received from regional stakeholders of the CROP and POA. Members are requested to exercise their wise discretion on these coordinated inputs and have the opportunity to choose from the range of comments provided in this document.

¹ [53rd Pacific Islands Forum Communique FINAL.pdf](#) (Para52) "In relation to the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference, Leaders endorsed the proposed coordinated regional approach towards preparations for UNOC3 and tasked the Pacific Ocean Commissioner to coordinate closely with the CROP agencies and the Pacific Ocean Alliance (POA) to ensure that regional preparations are as inclusive as possible to support Members' efforts at UNOC3, and to provide regular updates through the relevant mechanisms."

UNOC3 Declaration Zero Draft	Comments
<p>General reflections on Zero Draft Text from POA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, the zero draft text looks acceptable with some level of ambition. • It is reasonable and well considered. • We welcome the first draft of the Political Declaration as basis for further deliberations and improvement. Great to see emphasis on the importance of healthy oceans under the section on Defending Ocean Ecosystems and sustainable ocean economy under the section on Sustainable Ocean Economies. <p>However, there is a need to strengthen language on whole of society approach including rights-based approach in the current draft. The section on Sustainable Oceans Economy can be improved with strong reference to recognizing and supporting the role, traditional knowledge, perspectives, and needs of IP&LCs, small scale fishers, women and youths and those most vulnerable in the sustainable ocean economy space and ensuring their effective inclusion and participation in Ocean Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sustainable Development Goal 14 works to set policy directed toward conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources through the engagement of global civil societies and stakeholder participation. The document captures the voices of those who are often marginalized, underrepresented, and often the most impacted in matters related to impacts of the triple planetary crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution). With climate change impacts in the region to include rising sea level, warmer temperatures, coral bleaching, coral erosion, and increased intensity, our island continues its efforts to create a sustainable pathway to safeguard our natural resources for future generations to enjoy. Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Governor Lourdes Leon Guerrero of Guam promulgated Executive Order 2019-23 establishing the Guam Green Growth (G3) working group of public and private partners tasked with developing tangible solutions and advance measures for a green and sustainable Guam. <p>The declaration's focus on conserving marine resources and addressing climate change supports the Bureau's mission and efforts to ensure sustainable development and environmental stewardship on Guam. We recognize how coastal management, marine spatial planning, and conservation and land use planning can be a useful tool in building resilience and addressing climate related impacts at the local scale. The policies, themes, and actionable statements in the draft PD provide statements so that as a collective community, we can ensure that our oceans and marine ecosystems and the functions they provide are not only sustainable, but also thrive in the future. The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) in 1972, is a United States framework for preserving, protecting, developing, and where possible, restoring or enhancing the resources of the USA's coastal zone.</p> <p>The Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans extends its support for the UNOC3 Draft Political Declaration and the immediate efforts to protect our oceans, coastal communities, and marine</p>

ecosystem especially for Small Island Developing States. As such, support for the declaration will continue the work and progress being achieved in helping to develop sustainable practices to preserve the environment, reduce pollution and protect both human health and fragile ecosystems.

The Declaration needs commitments that are quantifiable and time bound
Ensuring equitable, sustainable, sufficient, easily accessible finance, capacity and technical support to the small-scale fishers, women, girls, youths, indigenous people and marginalised groups in the sustainable ocean economy is important in this declaration. Increased investment from all sources towards ocean positive action; Early entry into force of the BBNJ agreement; effective monitoring, reporting of all SDG14 Voluntary commitments to keep track on progress including commitments in Ocean Finance; strong integration of Climate-Ocean Biodiversity actions and commitments; etc

Effective and sustainable ocean conservation practices require both global cooperation and comprehensive strategies. A key principle of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) is developing policy that protects public access to coastal resources. We request continued work to establish Marine Protected Areas, to be done in a way that does not disparage and marginalize indigenous people from their traditional hunting grounds and fishing practices. Establishing marine protected areas, enforcing sustainable fishing practices, eco-tourism, reducing carbon emissions, and curbing plastic pollution will benefit the preservation of these valuable ecosystems. The Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans commend the continued work of the United Nations in this international collaboration to address the unique challenges that the Pacific Island territories face and adopt measures to promote coral reef resiliency and protect our ocean and marine resources.

Recommendation for a new Chapter – **Thriving Ocean Economies**: which would guide inclusive and equitable action to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, seas, and marine resources, and the advancement of SDG goal 14. This suggestion is inspired by the United Nations' commitment to a three-pillar approach to sustainable development, encompassing the environment, economy, and society. This inclusion of all three dimensions of sustainability would align the Declaration with the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and elevate its impact.

Thriving Ocean Economies

1. We reaffirm our commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights - including marine tenure rights - and attention to the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and girls, small-scale fishers, people with disability, youth, and other historically marginalized groups [*based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNHR)*].

2. We emphasize the need to uphold the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable coastal and marine environment, encompassing a safe climate, clean air, healthy ecosystems and biodiversity, sustainable food systems, and a non-toxic environment *[based on United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/76/300]*.
3. We emphasize the importance of recognizing and respecting all ocean actors, their institutions, knowledge systems, values, and worldviews, particularly those of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and girls, small-scale fishers, people with disability, youth, and other historically marginalized groups *[based on KMGBF, Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)]*.
4. We commit to inclusive and transparent ocean-related decision-making that ensures all ocean actors have the opportunity for full and effective participation, with timely access to information in accessible formats and upholding of free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples and local communities*[based on KMGBF, UNDRIP]*.
5. We call for clear definitions of responsibilities of all ocean actors, mechanisms for holding actors accountable for their ocean actions, and the establishment of fair, effective, and accessible conflict resolution systems to address both current and historical disputes *[based on KMGBF, Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)]*.
6. We affirm the importance of identifying the monetary and non-monetary benefits and harms arising from ocean actions. We emphasize the need for contextually appropriate mitigation processes to avoid, minimize or compensate for harms. We further emphasize the need to establish mechanisms for the fair distribution of benefits across all ocean actor groups *[based on UNCLOS, UNBBNJ, KMGBF]*.

No.	PARAGRAPHS FROM DRAFT POLITICAL DECLARATION	Pacific Ocean Alliance (POA)	Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP)
1	<p>We, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives, meeting in Nice from 9 – 13 June 2025 at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the full participation of civil society and all stakeholders, affirm our strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use our ocean, seas and marine resources for sustainable development [based on previous declarations].</p>	<p>While we agree and “affirm our strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use our ocean,” we recommend further expansion to promote effective management and foster a balance on protection with the use of our ocean, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development and community livelihoods.</p>	
2	<p>We share one ocean, and we remain gravely concerned with the global emergency it faces from the impacts of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Action is not advancing at the speed or scale required to meet SDG 14. A healthy and resilient ocean is essential for a sustainable ocean economy and underpins cultural and social connections to the ocean. We must act with urgency to face this challenge with bold, ambitious, just and transformative action, and ensure all people, including women and girls, people with disability, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalised groups are empowered and included in ocean-related decision-making [based on UNSG background note].</p>	<p>Inclusivity and Representation: The emphasis on including women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and marginalised groups is commendable. However, I suggest incorporating concrete frameworks to ensure equitable participation in decision-making processes, such as quotas or participatory structures.</p>	<p>Suggest stronger wording about the role of women, youth, indigenous peoples and marginalised groups – e.g. “...ensure all people, including women and girls, people with disability, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalised groups <i>[have full, equal, and meaningful participation and leadership in ocean related planning, designing, management, decision-making and implementation]</i>”</p> <p>A healthy and resilience ocean is essential for a sustainable ocean economy and climate stability and underpins cultural and social connections to the ocean.</p>
3	<p>We emphasize that our actions to implement Goal 14 should be in accordance with, reinforce and not duplicate or undermine existing legal instruments, arrangements, processes, mechanisms or entities. We affirm the need to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want. We recognise the importance of UNCLOS to advancing sustainable development and its near universal adoption by States, as recalled in paragraph 159 of The Future We Want, and in this regard, we urge all its parties to fully implement their obligations under UNCLOS [based on previous declarations and The Future We Want].</p>		

4	<p>We recall the Pact for the Future and our decision to take ambitious action to restore the ocean and its ecosystems, and to improve its health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience [based on the Pact for the Future].</p>	<p>Recommended new para. after 4:</p> <p>We recognize the universal human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as formalised by the adoption of the resolution A/RES/76/300 by the United Nations General Assembly in 2022.</p>	
<i>Defending ocean ecosystems</i>			
5	<p>We note the ocean plays an essential role in addressing climate change and are deeply alarmed that the ocean’s ability to act as a climate mitigator has been weakened due to the adverse impacts of climate change including ocean warming, ocean acidification, eutrophication and deoxygenation, compounded by marine pollution and biodiversity loss [based on UNSG background note].</p>	<p>There should be inclusion of more climate change mitigation ambition, but the current paragraphs do not really lend themselves to such language. Suggest using language on renewable energy and energy efficiency from UNFCCC COP28</p>	<p>Suggestion to include Marine invasive species as another threat impacting the marine environment and contributing to biodiversity loss.</p>
6	<p>We underline the importance of the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus and call for concerted global action to minimize the impact of climate change on ocean biodiversity [based on UNSG background note and KMGBF].</p>		
7	<p>We affirm our commitment to continued cooperation to address climate change-related sea level rise and its effects and acknowledge the High-Level Meeting on Sea Level Rise held in New York on 25 2 September 2024. We recognize sea level rise due to climate change disproportionately impacts Small Island Developing States (SIDS), least developed countries, and coastal communities, and acknowledge the urgent need for collective action to enhance their adaptive capacities and resilience while mitigating climate change. Marginalised groups bear the brunt of many of the negative consequences of climate change and sea level rise [based on ABAS and High-Level Meetings on Sea Level Rise modalities].</p>	<p>Strengthening Support for SIDS and LDCs: Recognising the unique vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the declaration should provide explicit commitments for capacity building, financial support, and technology transfer to empower these nations in implementing ocean-related actions.</p>	<p>Agree that there could be explicit commitments for capacity building, financial support and technology transfer, especially for SIDS and LDCs.</p> <p>Suggest the sentence about marginalised groups could be strengthened to: <i>Marginalised groups [are disproportionately affected by] [bear the brunt of many of] the negative consequences of climate change and sea level rise [and require specific consideration in action].</i></p> <p>Marginalised groups bear the brunt of all of the negative consequences of climate change and sea level rise</p>

8	<p>We commend the leadership of SIDS in managing the challenges associated with sea level rise, and note in particular the Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate Change-Related Sea-Level Rise and the Alliance of Small Island States Declaration on Sea Level Rise and Maritime [new language].</p>		<p>Suggest striving for stronger language than “note” the PIF Declaration and AOSIS Declaration.</p> <p>We commend the leadership of SIDS in addressing, highlighting and managing the challenges associated with sea level rise...</p>
9	<p>We welcome the contribution of the International Law Commission (ILC) to our understanding of the relationship between sea level rise and international law through its study on “Sea-level rise in relation to international law” and encourage States’ continued engagement with the ILC on this topic [new language].</p>		
10	<p>We acknowledge the 2024 Advisory Opinion of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea on the Request for an Advisory Opinion submitted by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law. We encourage all States to meet their obligations to prevent, reduce and control the pollution of the marine environment and to protect and preserve the marine environment in relation to the impacts of climate change [new language].</p>		<p>We urge all States to meet their obligations to prevent, reduce and control the pollution of the marine environment and protect and preserve the marine environment in relation to the impacts of climate change.</p>
11	<p>We remain concerned the high and rapidly increasing levels of plastic pollution represents a serious environmental problem at a global scale, negatively impacting the environmental, social, health, and economic dimensions of sustainable development. We recognise the transboundary nature of plastic pollution and efforts to address this crisis through trade, including through the WTO Dialogue on Plastics Pollution [based on UNSG background note and KMGBF].</p>	<p>Mention the plastics INC which is in para 23</p> <p>We remain concerned that the high and rapidly increasing levels of plastic pollution represent a serious environmental problem at a global scale, negatively impacting the environmental, social, human health, and economic dimensions of sustainable development. We recognise the transboundary nature of plastic pollution and efforts to address this crisis through the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, as well as the WTO Dialogue on Plastics Pollution [<i>based on UNSG background note and KMGBF</i>].</p>	

12	<p>We reaffirm our shared commitment to accelerate action to prevent, significantly reduce and control marine pollution of all kinds. We support the work of the IMO in further addressing ship-sourced pollution and dumping in the marine environment, including biosecurity risks, and encourage members to address the issue of ghost gear [new language].</p>		
13	<p>We reaffirm the need to strengthen integrated coastal zone management, marine spatial planning and climate intervention and adaptation strategies to enhance the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems. We commit to ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions to protect natural buffers such as mangroves, seagrasses, and coral reefs, while supporting sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity and pledge to support the implementation of the Early Warnings for All initiative to ensure coastal communities vulnerable to hazardous weather, water or climate events have equitable access to timely, accurate, and actionable information [based on UNSG background note].</p>	<p>There is a lack of climate mitigation in the Chapter on Defending Ocean Ecosystems. Securing marine carbon sinks, promoting marine NbS, inclusion of ocean action in NDCs. This can be integrated into Paragraph 13.</p> <p>We reaffirm the need to strengthen integrated coastal zone management, biodiversity inclusive marine spatial planning and climate mitigation and adaptation strategies to enhance the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems. We commit to ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions to protect natural carbon sinks and buffers such as mangroves, seagrasses, and coral reefs, while supporting sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity and pledge to support the implementation of the Early Warnings for All initiative to ensure coastal communities vulnerable to hazardous weather, water or climate events have equitable access to timely, accurate, and actionable information [<i>based on UNSG background note</i>].</p>	<p>Suggest inclusion of implementation and capacity building/knowledge sharing too – e.g. “<i>We reaffirm the need to strengthen [and effectively implement] integrated coastal zone management, marine spatial planning and climate intervention and adaptation strategies to enhance the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems.</i>”</p> <p>Suggest inclusion of commitments for capacity building, financial support, and technology transfer to deliver these approaches and solutions, in particular for SIDs and LDCs.</p> <p>We commit to ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions to protect natural buffers such as mangroves, seagrasses, and coral reefs, while supporting sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity. (In line with Para 3)</p> <p>The pledge to support the Early Warnings for All initiative could be separated and put as a standalone sentence or paragraph, so to emphasise the critical need for healthy and resilient coastal and marine ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods and well-being of billions of people worldwide (going beyond just coastal communities).</p> <p>Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is highlighted as a key mechanism for achieving integrated coastal management and enhancing climate resilience, particularly in vulnerable Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). Operationalising MSP could involve capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and developing evidence-based frameworks tailored to</p>

			small island developing states (SIDS). Collaboration among regional and international partners, alongside integrating indigenous knowledge and scientific approaches, would ensure inclusive, ecosystem-based solutions that protect critical habitats and enhance resilience to hazardous weather and climate events.
14	We reiterate the need to increase scientific knowledge on deep sea ecosystems and emphasise the importance of a precautionary approach, including for deep sea mining. We welcome the work of the 3 International Seabed Authority towards the development of robust rules, regulations and procedures in accordance with the UNCLOS [based on role of the International Seabed Authority].		
<i>Sustainable ocean economies</i>			
15	We recognise the tremendous opportunities offered by sustainable ocean-based economies for States, particularly SIDS, to achieve economic growth and social development while safeguarding the health, resilience and productivity of marine ecosystems for present and future generations [based on UNSG background note]		
16	We recognise the essential role of sustainable ocean plans in achieving sustainable ocean economies and call on all coastal and ocean states to commit to the 100% Alliance, ensuring 100 per cent of ocean areas under national jurisdiction are sustainably managed by 2030. We commit to supporting capacity building, knowledge exchange, and financial mobilisation to enable countries, especially SIDS, to develop and implement sustainable ocean plans, [new language].	We recognise the essential role of sustainable ocean plans in achieving sustainable ocean economies and call on all coastal and ocean states to commit to the 100% Alliance, ensuring 100 per cent of ocean areas under national jurisdiction are sustainably managed by 2030. We commit to supporting capacity building, knowledge exchange, and financial mobilisation to enable countries, especially SIDS, to develop and implement inclusive and sustainable ocean plans that recognise and respect the needs, perspectives, and rights of all stakeholders and right-holders, particularly Indigenous Peoples and other marginalised people. [<i>new language</i>].	Suggestion to include at the end of 2030, respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities [similar language to the KMGBF].

17	<p>We will ensure by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, marine, and coastal areas are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected, and equitably governed systems of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures, and at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded ecosystems are under effective restoration (30x30). These efforts should align with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, prioritise areas of critical importance for biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services, and recognise the integral role of Indigenous Peoples, and of local communities, including their traditional territories [based on KMGBF].</p>	<p>Clarity and Specificity: While the document articulates ambitious goals, it would benefit from more specific, measurable, and time-bound targets. For example, detailing action plans for achieving the 30x30 conservation target and reducing plastic pollution could provide clearer direction.</p> <p>We will ensure by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, marine, and coastal areas are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected, and equitably governed systems of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures, and at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded ecosystems are under effective restoration (30x30). These efforts should align with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, prioritise areas of critical importance for biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services, and recognise and respect the integral role and rights of Indigenous Peoples, and of local communities, and other rights holders, including over their traditional territories [<i>based on KMGBF</i>].</p>	<p>The target to conserve and restore at least 30% of ecosystems by 2030 aligns with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). Effective implementation requires context-specific approaches to avoid 'paper parks,' focusing on integrating conservation into broader spatial planning, measurable outcomes, and capacity-building initiatives. Recognising the role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, alongside addressing socio-economic trade-offs, would ensure conservation efforts are equitable and aligned with sustainable development goals, such as those outlined in the Blue Pacific 2050 Strategy.</p> <p>Suggestion to the text Marine Protected Areas, to just read as “governed systems of Protected Areas” as this would cover both terrestrial, marine, coastal areas noting that the start of the sentence refers to 30% of terrestrial, inland water etc.</p>
18	<p>We underscore the central role of a healthy and resilient ocean in sustaining life on Earth, ensuring global food security, and supporting billions of lives. We are deeply troubled by the escalating depletion of many global fish stocks through overfishing and call for decisive and collective action to accelerate transition to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture systems, through enhancing marine spatial planning, science-based management, promoting, scaling up and replicating successes, and working together to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. [based on UNSG background note].</p>	<p>We underscore the central role of a healthy and resilient ocean in sustaining life on Earth, ensuring global food security, and supporting billions of lives. We are deeply troubled by the escalating depletion of many global fish stocks through overfishing and, guided by the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible</p>	<p>Suggest more specificity on how to work together on IUU – e.g. through collaboration, capacity building, knowledge and technology exchange, and financial mobilisation.</p> <p>We are deeply troubled by the escalating depletion of many global fish stocks through overfishing, as well as the impacts of climate change, and call for decisive and</p>

		<p>Fisheries, call for decisive and collective action to accelerate transition to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture systems, fishery stock conservation and rebuilding, through enhancing marine spatial planning, science-based management, promoting, scaling up and replicating successes, and working together to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. <i>[based on UNSG background note]</i>.</p>	collective action to accelerate transition to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture systems...
19	<p>We encourage World Trade Organization (WTO) Members to deposit their instruments of acceptance of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies to accelerate its entry into force and implementation. We call on members to conclude negotiations as soon as possible on additional provisions that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing to secure a comprehensive fisheries subsidies agreement [new language].</p>	<p>We encourage World Trade Organization (WTO) Members to deposit their instruments of acceptance of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies to accelerate its entry into force and implementation. We call on members to urgently conclude negotiations as soon as possible on additional provisions that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing to secure a comprehensive fisheries subsidies agreement <i>[new language]</i>.</p>	
20	<p>We recognise the critical roles of maritime transport in the global economy and the challenges to transition the sector to sustainability. Decarbonisation of shipping remains an urgent priority. We welcome the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) adoption of the 2023 Strategy on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Ships and its enhanced common ambition to reach net-zero emissions from international shipping by or around 2050 [based on IMO 2023 Strategy].</p>		
<i>Accelerating action</i>			
21	<p>We welcome the adoption of the Agreement under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity Beyond National Jurisdiction, and encourage States to sign and ratify the Agreement to ensure its early entry into force. We welcome resolution 78/272 of the General Assembly establishing the Preparatory Commission to prepare for the entry into force of the Agreement and for the first Conference of the Parties and call upon States to engage in the Commission. We recognise the important role the Agreement will play in achieving 30x30 [new language].</p>	<p>We welcome the adoption of the Agreement under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and encourage States to sign and ratify the Agreement to ensure its early entry into force. We welcome resolution 78/272 of the General Assembly establishing the</p>	<p>Suggest there could be a paragraph on accelerating action on ocean-climate nexus, specifically the outcomes that came out of the UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue – e.g. <i>“We welcome the continued strengthening of the UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue, and encourage states to utilise sustainable ocean-based climate mitigation and adaptation actions, including financing of such</i></p>

		Preparatory Commission to prepare for the entry into force of the Agreement and for the first Conference of the Parties and call upon States to engage in the Commission. We recognise the important role the Agreement will play in achieving 30x30 [<i>new language</i>].	<i>activities for developing countries, in particular SIDS and LDCs”</i>
22	We encourage states to take advantage of the updated modalities for describing ecologically or biologically significant marine areas and explore potential synergies with the future implementation of the BBNJ [based on decision 16 of CBD COP 16].		
23	We recognise the importance of the ongoing work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, reaffirm our commitment to preventing, reducing and eliminating plastic pollution by taking effective measures throughout the lifecycle of plastics, and call upon participating delegations to work together to reach an ambitious agreement without delay [based on UNSG background note and UNEP background document].	We recognise the importance of the ongoing work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, reaffirm our commitment to preventing, reducing and eliminating plastic pollution by taking effective measures across the full lifecycle of plastics, and call upon participating delegations to adopt an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution without further delay [<i>based on UNSG background note and UNEP background document</i>].	
24	Ocean action must be based on the best available science and knowledge, including Indigenous Knowledge, and that of all members of local communities. To that end we: a. Affirm the value of strengthening sharing of knowledge and expertise, including, where there is free, prior and informed consent, the knowledges and practices of Indigenous Peoples, traditional knowledge of local communities, and local knowledge systems. b. Support new scientific research to meet the multiple challenges of climate change, food security, energy transitions and biodiversity loss. c. Commit to improving the scientific understanding of the ocean and supporting science-based measures to accelerate action, including through the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of	Collaboration and Innovation: Establishing regional hubs for research and innovation, particularly in vulnerable areas like the Pacific, would facilitate the sharing of best practices and resources. Encouraging partnerships to accelerate the development of sustainable marine technologies could also be emphasised. Integration of Science and Traditional Knowledge:	24.b. Support new scientific research to meet the multiple challenges of climate change, food security, energy transitions and biodiversity loss, in particular for SIDS. 24.e. Commit to strengthening coordinated international, regional, subregional and national scientific observation and data collection efforts, including the development of integrated information management, infrastructure and systems that provide access to reliable, timely and high-quality marine data, including through urging the WMO Systematic

<p>the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, and its World Ocean Assessments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Support a strong science-policy interface to provide timely, credible and salient scientific information to inform policies and actions. e. Commit to strengthening coordinated international, regional, subregional and national scientific observation and data collection efforts, including the development of integrated information management, infrastructure and systems that provide access to reliable, timely and high-quality marine data. f. Prioritise investments in the creation, expansion, and effective management of MPAs to support the health and resilience of ocean ecosystems and the communities that depend on them [based on UNSG background note]. 	<p>The inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge is a significant strength of the draft. To build on this, I recommend frameworks that respect intellectual property rights and sovereignty, coupled with investment in marine science education to develop future capacities.</p> <p>Respecting and protecting the rights of IPLCs, women youths and other rights holders in line with international Human Rights Laws and UNDRIP, etc and ensure their meaningful inclusion on ocean governance, actions and the important role of traditional and local</p> <p>Ocean action must be based on the best available science and knowledge, including traditional and Indigenous Knowledge, and that of all members of local communities. To that end we:</p> <p>24.e. Ensure the mobilisation of resources, from all sources including concessional financing, from Multilateral Development Banks, sovereign wealth funds, and governments with a view to overcoming financial barriers, especially in developing countries.</p> <p>24.f. Guarantee sufficient, sustainable, and easily accessible financial means to support small-scale fishers, women and girls, youth, and Indigenous communities and other marginalized groups in sustainable ocean economy.</p>	<p>Observations Financing Facility to focus more attention on marine observations.</p> <p>Suggestion to include text in 24 f. “effective management of MPAs and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)</p>
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25	<p>We recognise accelerating ocean action requires significantly increased finance. In this regard, we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promote the recognition of the sustainable ocean economy as an attractive investment opportunity among mainstream financial institutions through instruments such as Blue Bonds and Blue Loans. b. Encourage the private sector, including banks, insurers and investors, to redirect their products and services towards the transition to sustainable ocean-based economies by finding innovative solutions to support the health and resilience of the ocean. c. Encourage the creation of financial instruments such as microfinance, payments for environmental services, credit mechanisms, grants, and subsidies. d. Encourage collaboration on blended finance mechanisms to de-risk investments in developing countries, facilitating a just transition. e. Ensure the mobilisation of resources, including concessional financing, from Multilateral Development Banks, sovereign wealth funds, and governments with a view to overcoming financial barriers, especially in developing countries. f. Support small-scale fishers, women and girls, youth, and Indigenous communities. g. Highlight that charities, philanthropies and other donors will be essential, including in providing grants and enabling capital and through concessional financing [based on UNSG background note]. 	<p>Financial Mechanisms: The promotion of innovative financial instruments like Blue Bonds and blended financing mechanisms is encouraging. To enhance this section, consider advocating for a dedicated financial facility for SIDS and LDCs, as well as incentives such as Blue Carbon Credits to support marine conservation efforts.</p> <p>“Increase interest and opportunities for youth” as stipulated in the Micronesia Challenge. The NOAA Fisheries Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy also highlights access to education and technical training programs for underserved communities that can also lead to pathways for employment. Thus, increase efforts to promote outreach, education and training programs for underserved communities and the youth on the management, conservation and sustainable use of our ocean resources. Public awareness and education campaigns are key to driving conservation efforts and fostering stewardship of our ocean resources.</p>	<p>Alignment (or safeguards to ensure alignment) of new and innovative financial mechanisms with countries and beneficiaries’ needs and priorities could be included.</p>
26.	<p>We value the voluntary commitments made to implement SDG 14, including at UN Ocean Conferences, and encourage partnerships to expand initiatives and increase their impact. We support the inclusive nature of voluntary commitments and underscore the need to implement a simple monitoring and reporting process to provide a collective metric for progress [based on UNSG background note].</p>	<p>Monitoring and Accountability: A robust mechanism for tracking progress on SDG 14 commitments is essential. The draft could propose an annual progress review process and designate specific entities to oversee monitoring and reporting.</p>	<p>Prior to monitoring and reporting, the draft could include a global call for action so that these voluntary commitments can be successfully supported and implemented towards achieving SDG 14.</p>

-ENDS-