

## **Ocean Champion Statement**

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Ocean Action Panel 7: Leveraging interlinkages between ocean, climate and biodiversity

**Excellencies, distinguished delegates and friends of the Ocean,**

I am honoured to speak today on behalf of the Pacific and its large ocean states, guardians of our Blue Pacific Continent.

Climate change is already having devastating effects on the Pacific, as ocean acidification, eutrophication, marine heatwaves, sea level rise and extreme weather events worsen. Oceans can meet sustainable development needs, but only if they are protected and restored to health.

It is important for the secretariats of the three main global processes to encourage Members to make connections between climate and biodiversity goals and targets, and to provide submissions with practical suggestions on how to do so.

Traditional knowledge brings great value to our region, especially when linked with modern science. Pacific nations have used traditional knowledge in

meteorology, fisheries, navigation, and agricultural planting cycles, to name just a few. I urge financing institutions to respect and understand the value of this approach.

I also want to address ocean-based climate solutions, which is a nebulous term. It could include geoengineering, which is opposed by the region. But there are solutions that we *do* want to pursue: Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion and tidal and wave energy systems are very much of interest, but there's a major finance and technology gap.

National climate targets, or NDCs, need to be more ambitious to ensure we keep the 1.5-degree target alive. They must address the energy commitments, including to transition away from fossil fuels, that we all agreed to in Dubai. We all also agreed to deliver a National Adaptation Plan by this year.

Pacific climate plans are already highly ambitious. Ocean-based adaptation measures and ocean energy systems can be part of these plans. But again, we'll need finance to make this happen.

I encourage this panel to provide guidance to the June UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change dialogue, so it can provide useful recommendations to COP30. This can then be used as a building block for other international and regional fora.

We must collectively enhance our understanding of the ocean; ensure science is driving our policy decisions; and focus on effective implementation of commitments, to ensure a thriving Ocean now, and for the future.

Kommol tata.