

Pacific Island Countries Statement for Strategic Goal C

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Thank you Chair,

Palau wishes to speak on behalf of the Pacific Island Countries present here, namely, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

We first would like to thank the presenters and panellists for the very informative presentations.

Madam Chair,

The Pacific Islands Countries have made progress in implementing programmes that focussed on targets 11, 12 and 13 of Goal C. We would like to note the accomplishments that have been made, but also challenges and problems that still need to be addressed to advance the implementation of the targets in our countries.

For Target 11.

- We highlight the commitments and actions taken to promote and support expansion of protected areas network at national, sub-regional and regional levels. Within the Pacific, programs such as: the Micronesia Challenge involving the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia and Marshall Islands, the Phoenix Islands Protected Areas in Kiribati, the Coral Triangle initiative including Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and the designation of vast EEZs as marine protected areas by Cook Islands and New Caledonia, have contributed to the safeguarding of ecosystems through protected areas.
- Our countries note that challenges, problems and issues on protected areas will be discussed at the upcoming Pacific Islands Conference in December that will also highlight our achievements and discuss the way forward. This will provide technical and practical guidance and policy direction on protected areas management in the new Action Strategy for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas for the Pacific Island region for the next 5 years.
- While we note the progress we are making in our island states, it is also important to highlight that we continue to face unique problems, issues and situations that one way or another, continue to impede our national efforts to implement the strategic plan for Biodiversity and achieving the Aichi targets.
- We request additional guidance and tools and technical support that are practical and cost effective and efficient for effective and efficient implementation of national protected areas action plans, the management of marine areas in open oceans and deep sea areas within and beyond national jurisdiction for the effective protection of inland waters ecosystems such as spatial mapping of wetland and marine ecosystems, and for the design of management of protected area systems under climate change in our island nations.

For Target 12

- We emphasize that species conservation is crucial and critical for small island states due to a number of factors including vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change.
- We highlight the number of different activities undertaken on species conservation at national levels. This includes a number of bird surveys conducted on threatened and endangered species, and a number of recovery plans have been prepared and are under implementation.

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- We also highlight complementary activities carried out under CMS especially on migratory species such as whales and turtles that are important to the customs and traditions of many Pacific Island countries.
- However, we stress the challenges faced in carrying out actions: to identify and reduce the direct and indirect pressures on the affected species, to survey and prepare and implement recovery plans, and to monitor progress. As such, our countries here in this meeting urge the Secretariat, donor communities and scientific and research organizations to explore innovative ways and means to engage with our Governments to work cooperatively and collaboratively to develop practical and innovative solutions to address these unique problems and issues.

For Target 13

- The Pacific Island Countries highlight that work has been conducted with SPC in safeguarding genetic resources for the Pacific region. However, we stress that maintaining genetic diversity is a major gap for the Pacific Island Countries that needs to be strengthened and well-resourced

Madam Chair,

Goal C are of great relevance to the Pacific Island Countries and although progress has been seen, there are limitations on capacities, tools and financial resources, needs, all of which were also noted in the opening statement of the Asia Pacific region and the Pacific regional statement made yesterday. We would also like to highlight that the application of tools and methods discussed at the CBD level, for the Pacific Island countries, is also a capacity building need to assist our countries in using and applying them at the country level. We would like to put that forward for Parties and Secretariat consideration as we work together in drafting conclusions for this Goal C and other GOAL discussions.

We look forward to hearing and learning from other parties and participants on how similar limitations were overcome as well as access to resources that could assist Pacific Island Countries in advancing the implementations of Goal C targets.

Thank you