

Pacific SIDS Closing Statement

WG2020-4, Closing Plenary

Thank you Co-Chairs,

Palau is speaking on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States who were able to attend this OEWG meeting namely Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and Samoa

We align our statements with the Asia Pacific Region and SIDS as well as add on our appreciation with others for the hard work that the co-chairs, the co-leads, and the Secretariat accomplished for this meeting. We also extend our appreciation to all the delegations here who have worked hard to negotiate goals, sections and targets for a GBF that would be agreeable among the parties.

Co-Chairs, this meeting has been a difficult negotiation for parties and we understand the various concerns on the targets and the implications for countries to implement them. However, the Pacific SIDS are concerned about the rate in which the goals, sections and targets are developed as well as the content of the overall GBF. We worry that we are trying to encompass everything all at once resulting in a GBF with targets that are complex and hard to implement, especially for Pacific SIDS. In seeking clarity on the targets, we have made them increasingly complex and difficult to understand, thus making us question whether the GBF can then have the significant results within the eight (8) years that it would be implemented. Eight (8) years may seem like a long time for implementing the GBFs, but for Pacific SIDS, eight (8) years may be the only opportunity we have for ensuring our survival given the rate in which islands have been impacted.

As big ocean states with small islands, we are conscious of our responsibility to care for the resources that we have been blessed with and therefore we strive to protect as much of the biodiversity in our Ocean as well as our islands' that have some of the highest levels of endemism in the world. And, we cannot forget that as small islands in the middle of the vast ocean, our survival has always been dependent on the limited resources within the constraints of our countries. Losing our biodiversity means losing our ability to survive. We live incredibly close to the reality of loss of biodiversity and adverse impacts of climate change, both of which are a result of global drivers. As small islands, we have nowhere to go when we lose our lands and for our smallest and lower-lying islands, are now at a time where we have to think about being potential refugees as a result of global impacts. Many of the Pacific SIDS are ones which

the average person cannot find on a map, and we have incredibly small populations. For many of us, our entire national population is smaller than the size of a village here in Kenya. This is why we note the special conditions of SIDS because of our increasing need for financial, technical, and capacity building required to ensure our survival not only of ourselves but the very home in which we live.

But we cannot do this alone. We are all part of a world that needs to work together to address the multitude of drivers and pressures that lead to the loss of biodiversity; biodiversity that we **all** need to survive. We all agreed that the GBF needs to be ambitious, but also realistic. It is our hope that in COP15 we can come together to agree on targets that are simpler with a focus on global achievements that we can all work towards nationally and thereby together achieve the transformational change that we have been all advocating for.

We wish everyone a safe journey home and look forward to an efficient, effective and conclusive COP15 in Montreal, Canada that will result in a Global Biodiversity Framework that will implement transformative change at the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels to conserve and protect the world's biodiversity towards ensuring the future of our planet and our survival.

Thank you, Co-chairs