



**PERMANENT MISSION of the  
KINGDOM of TONGA to the  
UNITED NATIONS**

**Statement by:**

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Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga to the  
United Nations

**Zero Draft of the Political Declaration for 2020 United Nations Ocean Conference.**

Informal Consultations

19 March 2020

[Check against delivery]

**Co-Facilitators,**

I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the ongoing commitment and the valued efforts rendered in drafting the proposed political declaration for the 2020 United Nations Ocean Conference, despite the state of calamity the COVID-19 has brought about. Tonga encourages the use of any means to move negotiations on the political declaration forward while top priority is given to the health and safety of our colleagues.

In that regard, may I submit herewith, as instructed, our comments on the substance and elements of the proposed text:

**1. Propose amendments to paragraph 8**

As it stands, it does not refer to which Convention - this could be read to mean that it is with regard to the Convention on Biological Diversity, for instance, but the proposed amendments hereunder are for more clarity:

8. We recognize the importance of the work undertaken by the Intergovernmental Conference ~~to elaborate the text of~~ on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the

**Law of the Sea** on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. [New language + A/RES/72/249]

2. Propose new paragraph to insert under revised paragraph 8

In view of the ongoing important processes at the International Seabed Authority (ISA) pursuant to the 1994 Agreement, and Part XI and Annex III of UNCLOS, it is pivotal to mention the work of the ISA in terms of the development towards adoption of the draft exploitation regulations.

Accordingly, the following text drawn from a decision of the Assembly of the ISA at the 25th Session on point is proposed for inclusion to follow under revised paragraph 8 above:

**8bis** We also recognize the importance of the work of the International Seabed Authority on the adoption of rules, regulations, and procedures for the conduct of activities in the Area and progress towards the adoption of the associated standards and guidelines necessary for their effective implementation. [from Annex I of the decision of the ISA Assembly in ISBA/25/A/15 of 24th July 2019]

3. Propose amendment to paragraph 9

To delete at the first line the word “also” and replace with “further” while the remaining text remain as is, which shall be read as follows:

9. We **also further** recognize the importance of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021 -2030) and its vision aimed at achieving the science we need for the ocean we want. We support the Decade’s mission to generate and use knowledge for the transformational action needed to achieve a healthy, safe and resilient ocean for sustainable development by 2030 and beyond. We fully support the work of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO in preparing and implementing the Decade and commit to supporting these efforts. [New language]

4. Propose [amendments](#) to [paragraph 11. d.](#)

This paragraph refers to capital market instruments (CMIs) – these CMIs must have explanatory notes to give everyone the same understanding. Understanding and interpretations of such by Small Island Developing States may not be the same with that understood and interpreted by Developed UN Member States. Therefore, the words “clearly outlined” are proposed to be inserted after the words “capital market instruments”.

Also, under the same paragraph, it is proposed that the words “and financial” be inserted between the words “technical” and “assistance”, noting Pacific Small Island Developing States must need financial assistance and not just technical assistance. Therefore, the proposed amendments to paragraph 11.d. are to read as follows:

11.

- d. Explore, develop and promote innovative financing solutions for the development of sustainable ocean-based economies, including through public-private sector partnerships and capital market instruments **clearly outlined**, and providing technical **and financial** assistance to enhance the bankability and feasibility of projects, [\[New language\]](#)

5. Propose [amendment](#) to [paragraph 11. f.](#)

To insert the words “and youth” after the word “women” at the beginning considering women and young people tend to be excluded from formal and informal socio-political and economic spaces. Proposed amendment is to read as follows:

11.

- f. Empower women **and youth**, as they play a critical role in progressing towards a sustainable ocean-based economy and are key to achieving Goal 14, and mainstream a gender perspective in our work to conserve and sustainably use the ocean and its resources, [\[New language\]](#)

The opportunity afforded to contribute at this juncture is much appreciated.

I thank you.

END