

Tonga

H.E. Mr. Samiuela 'Akilisi Pohiva, Prime Minister

24 September 2016



UN Photo / [Download](#)

Statement Summary:

SAMIUELA 'AKILISI POHIVA, Prime Minister of [Tonga](#), said that his country continuously advocated for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its natural resources. Tonga attached great importance to Sustainable Development Goal 14 and believed it could be attained through set targets and indicators. In that regard, the country looked forward to the first United Nations conference on Goal 14 as an opportunity to see where the international community stood in terms of conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources. Regarding the exploitation of biological diversity, he said that regulation of areas beyond national jurisdictions was yet to be realized. In accordance with the 2014 decision of Pacific Island Forum leaders, Tonga supported the ongoing process of preparatory meetings.

He said that his country paid close attention to the interaction of the ocean with climate, noting that Tonga had signed and ratified the Paris Agreement. “We cannot face the challenges of climate change alone,” he emphasized. Calling attention to his country’s clear and unambiguous links to international peace and security, he called upon the Special Representative on Climate and Security, as well as the Security Council, to raise the issue in the necessary platforms. “Tonga is the third most vulnerable country in the world to the adverse impacts of climate change,” he said, stressing that their seriousness could not be underestimated.

Noting that the maintenance of international peace and security would be determined by the issue of disarmament, he said the proliferation of weapons in all their forms not only threatened international peace and security, but demonstrated the sheer waste of financial resources. Those funds might be better spent on international sustainable development initiatives and improving people’s lives, he pointed out. Part of the challenge of ensuring equitable development was preventing unfair economic dominance by one country over another, which had resulted in the suffering of innocent people, and was not acceptable. In that regard, he congratulated the United States on its incremental easing of restrictions on its economic interactions with Cuba. Among other things, he expressed concern about the welfare of the Pacific peoples in West Papua Province of Indonesia. Regarding human rights abuses in that province, he called for an open and constructive dialogue with Indonesia on the status and welfare of West Papuans.