CHAIR'S CONCLUSION
OF THE 7TH SENIOR OFFICIAL MEETING (SOM-7)
OF THE ARCHIPELAGIC AND ISLAND STATES (AIS) FORUM
SUVA, 7TH JUNE 2023

1. The Seventh Senior Official Meeting (SOM-7) of the Archipelagic and Island States (AIS) Forum gathered in Suva, Fiji, co-hosted by the Government of the Republic of Fiji, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Indonesia. The Meeting was attended by representatives of countries from the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Republic of Cabo Verde, the Union of the Comoros, the Republic of Cuba, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Fiji, the Republic of Indonesia, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Madagascar, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Malta, New Zealand, the Republic of Palau, the Independent States of Papua New Guinea, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, the Independent State of Samoa, the Republic of Seychelles, the Republic of Singapore, the Solomon Islands, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Tuvalu, and the United Kingdom. The Meeting was observed by the representatives of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, the Pacific Islands Development Forum, the Pacific Islands Forum, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, UNDP Indonesia, UNDP Pacific, and the Secretariat of the Archipelagic and Island States.

2. The Meeting was held in preparation for the 1st High-Level Meeting (1st HLM) of the Archipelagic and Island States Forum to be organized in Indonesia in 2023, and to strengthen the collaboration activities implemented by the AIS Forum Secretariat, in particular on strategic blue innovative solutions in achieving SDGs.

3. The Meeting notes the significant works of the Archipelagic and Island States Forum Secretariat and acknowledges the tangible outcomes achieved through projects and collaborative efforts.

4. The Meeting acknowledges the concrete collaboration that has taken place among participating countries in fostering knowledge exchange, sharing of best practices, and implementing joint initiatives. Through these collaborative efforts, archipelagic and island states have been able to leverage their collective strengths and experiences to address common challenges and work toward sustainable development.

5. The Meeting recognizes that archipelagic and island states are especially vulnerable climate change and degradation of ocean health. In this regard, the Meeting calls the AIS Forum to explore and identify various emerging threats and potential areas of cooperation, including but not limited to the issue of food security caused by extreme weather events, which have been amplified by the effects of climate change. Further, the Meeting encourages the participating countries of the AIS Forum to engage in stronger collaborative efforts towards addressing pressing development issues faced by archipelagic and island states.

6. Recognizing the successful implementation of projects and tangible collaboration, the Meeting pushes forward the advancement of the AIS Forum Secretariat's work to exchange ideas and best practices among the participating countries. The Meeting acknowledges the importance of replicating and scaling up successful practices and initiatives. The AIS Forum Secretariat can facilitate the identification of innovative solutions that have demonstrated positive outcomes in one country to be adapted and implemented in the other archipelagic and island states.

7. The Meeting highlights the importance of strengthening inclusive development through the participation of local and traditional communities and forging close collaboration with other existing regional and global development initiatives. AIS Forum partnership is also crucial in amplifying the concerns of archipelagic and island states to push for stronger concrete actions to address global challenges.

8. The Meeting encourages the AIS Forum Secretariat to further develop and present the following concrete deliverables before the Heads of States and Government of the archipelagic and island states at the 1st HLM:

    a. Leaders' Declaration for the Solidarity of the Archipelagic and Island States;

    b. Launching of the AIS Blue Startup Hub, a marketplace of innovations and solutions pertaining to the four key areas of cooperation of the AIS Forum;

    c. Launching of the AIS Research and Development Hub;

    d. Launching of the Blue Economy Development Index (BEDI).

e. Demonstration of sustainable business practices to mitigate the main obstacles to long-term sustainable growth (e.g., marine plastic debris, climate change, overtourism, and degradation of the environment and biodiversity);

f. Other relevant programs and commitments.

9. The Meeting appreciates the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia to host the 1st HLM in 2023 as mandated by the 4th Ministerial Meeting of the AIS Forum.

10. Moreover, the Meeting supports the decision of "Fostering Collaboration, Enabling Innovations for Our Ocean and Our Future" as the main themes for the First High-Level Meeting. The draft and modalities of the High-Level Meeting will be discussed in the following Senior Officials Meeting, informal technical sessions, and through consultation and correspondence.

11. Additionally, the Meeting tasks the Secretariat to facilitate the organization of the Eighth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-8) in Madagascar and the Fifth Ministerial Meeting (MM-5) in Indonesia in preparation for the 1st HLM of the AIS Forum.

12. Finally, the Meeting discusses and agrees to consider the input and suggestions made during the general scoping session on the draft of the Leaders' Declaration of the 1st HLM of the AIS Forum. In this regard, the Eighth Senior Officials Meeting is tasked to finalize the deliverables and pending matters.