

# ASIA-PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (APPF)

## 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

### RESOLUTION APPF25/RES.17

#### **Promotion of Conservation and Sustainable Use of Ecosystems, Oceans and Marine Resources**

*(Sponsored by Chile, Thailand, Indonesia and Fiji)*

The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum;

**Recalling** the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and APPF Resolution APPF24/RES.03 on Conserving and Sustainably Managing Our Shared Ocean;

**Recalling** in this respect previous APPF Resolutions, specially the 6<sup>th</sup> Resolution (2008) which stressed the need for international cooperation to prevent marine pollution, and the 9<sup>th</sup> Resolution (2011) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Resolution (2012) which confirmed the over-exploitation of certain marine resources, specially the straddling and high seas activities, which requires a regional reply to preserve these resources, and sustainable management aimed at food safety and environmental aspects;

**Noting** the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the legal framework guiding activities in the ocean and its related agreements;

**Recognising** the UN General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 on “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, particularly SDG 14 (Conserve and sustainable use of the oceans and seas and marine resources for sustainable development) and SDG 15 (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems) as contained in resolution 70/1;

**Conscious** of the importance of the Pacific Ocean, as a source of great wealth and opportunities but also a source of potential risk, to our countries which are all part of the Asia-Pacific region;

**Considering** the degradation and loss of marine and coastal habitats due to depleted fisheries, IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing, over-development and mismanagement of the tourism industry as well as emerging impacts of global warming;

**Remembering** the Valparaiso Declaration issued during the 9th Annual Meeting of the APPF where a commitment was agreed to care for and conserve the Pacific Ocean for the continuity and progress of the region;

**Acknowledging**, as credited by scientific research, that the oceans of the planet are interconnected by marine currents constituting, one Ocean;

**Bearing** in mind that this Ocean also has a key role to play in economic terms as a source of food, transport and employment for millions of people, especially for all the local coastal communities along the Pacific Ocean. It also has an invaluable role in regulating the weather, as a carbon sink, as well as in preserving the enormous biodiversity contained in the marine and coastal ecosystems;

**Concerned** about the large challenges the oceans face today due to threats mainly caused by human activity, such as the increase of marine pollution, the over-exploitation of marine resources, in particular the IUU fishing activities, the risk of marine ecosystem destruction and the ocean acidification due to climate change;

**Considering** that according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimations, more than 30% of the global fishing resources are over-exploited and subject to non-sustainable use;

**Alarmed** by the enormous marine pollution caused by diverse sources mainly of anthropogenic origin and specially by the plastic waste pollution that has created true “garbage patches” in all oceans around the world (two of them in the Pacific) which have turned into a global problem that demands global solutions;

**Noting** the annual “Our Ocean” Conferences held in the United States in 2014 and 2016, and in Chile in 2015 where representatives of a large number of countries met, calling for an important alliance with private and public agents to foster volunteer commitments on conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and marine resources, and the preservation of coastal and marine ecosystems;

**Stressing** the fact that during the first three “Our Ocean” Conferences, agreement valued in US\$9.2 billion have been generated, and the protection of 9.9 million square kilometres of marine areas has also been agreed;

**Valuing** the important fact that the oceans conservation and sustainable use has been fully incorporated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through SDG 14 and praising the work carried out by the United Nations through its agencies like UNDP and FAO to promote the oceans international governance to enable compliance with such a goal;

**Highlighting** the importance of international tools like the 1995 United Nations Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stock and the 2009 Port State Measure Agreement for the sustainable management of fishing resources, especially to prevent IUU fishing activities;

**Celebrating** the next UN High Level Conference on Oceans and Seas to be held in June 2017 as well as the decision to create a report on the role of the oceans in the

climate system by an Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for the year 2019;

**Considering** the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) of His Majesty the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, in line with and mutually supportive of the concept of sustainability, as a practical approach, toward balanced development, in respect of the environment with full consideration for future generations; and

**Supporting** the works of regional initiatives such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reef Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF);

#### **RESOLVES TO:**

1. **Urge** APPF Member States to make all efforts, even at the domestic parliamentary level, to make all those who are not yet part of this to ratify the 1995 UN Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stock and the 2009 Port State Measure Agreement and seek the authorities to fully implement them;
2. **Exhort** the competent authorities to take the most appropriate measures to ensure a sustainable use of the fishing resources, especially to avoid IUU fishing activities and increase the initiatives of international cooperation on this matter in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond;
3. **Stimulate** the parliaments of APPF Member States to encourage their governments to establish mechanisms in the region to exchange best practices in relation to the prevention of the over exploitation of marine resources and especially to stop IUU fishing activities and, in particular, to favour the identification of the criteria aimed to implement a seafood traceability mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region that discourages such illegal practices;
4. **Generate** an updated record of the protected marine areas in the Asia-Pacific countries by the APPF, as a first step, in order to detect unprotected and, especially risky marine and coastal ecosystems;
5. **Encourage** the creation of transnational protected marine areas across borders within the legal framework of UNCLOS that jointly safeguard Asia-Pacific biodiversity through bilateral and multilateral collaboration amongst countries in the region;
6. **Enhance** regional academic and research cooperation among APPF Member States, to exert their endeavours for the conservation and sustainable use of our oceans, seas and marine resources;
7. **Promote** formal, non-formal and informal education, on conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources, to effectively raise public awareness and social responsibility on the issues;

8. **Advance** toward regional efforts to pursue a policy framework in promoting the sustainable management and use of marine and coastal resources, protecting the critical marine habitats and biodiversity hotspots, as well as restoring degraded marine ecosystems;
9. **Call upon** development partners to support capacity building efforts in developing countries, including through the provision of financial resources (Global Environmental Facilities), capacity building, environmentally sound technologies and know-how on mutually agreed terms, as well as the exchange of relevant scientific, technical, socio-economic and legal information, to enable developing countries to take all necessary action for the protection of terrestrial ecosystems, oceans, seas and marine resources;
10. **Encourage** competent national authorities and the Asia-Pacific regional agencies to exchange experiences and identify good practices to reduce the flow of waste to the oceans, define a set of actions to combat marine waste and other sources of pollution and explore options to process the waste so that it can be economically and sustainably used;
11. **Request** the APPF Member States to pursue the UN and other pertinent agencies to conduct studies on the acidification of the oceans and on the close link between the oceans and climate change, and set the mitigation and adaptation lines of action in view of the consequences of these phenomena in the countries of the region, especially in small island states, in order to reach higher resilience;
12. **Urge** the parliaments of the APPF Member States to promote the sustainable use of marine resources in close relation with the needs and traditions of local coastal communities, helping to spread “blue economy” strategies that can provide jobs, food safety and sustainable development for everybody living in the region; and
13. **Encourage** the active participation of Asia-Pacific countries, their governments, parliaments and civil society as well as the regional instances in the different forums where these measures on conservation and sustainable use of the oceans are promoted, such as the “Our Ocean” Conference and the UN High Level Conference on Oceans and Seas to be held in June 2017, amongst others.