



STATEMENT

HON VILIAMI LATU

MINISTER OF FEKITAMOELOA UTOIKAMANU

MINISTER OF MEIDECC

INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY

LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL ACTIONS TO
ADVANCE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN DEEPSEA
MINING RESEARCH TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE OCEAN
GOVERNANCE

Honorable Ministers,
Mr Secretary-General,
Madame Under-Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to join you at this side event co-organized by the International Seabed Authority and the government of Antigua and Barbuda. The event enjoys the sponsorship of Cook Islands, Malta, the UN Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries and the Indian Ocean Rim Association.

Our topic of leveraging partnerships and transformative actions to advance women empowerment and leadership in deep-sea research to support inclusive and sustainable ocean governance, could not be more important.

Let me share with you the importance I personally attach to the subject of our discussion today and the need for collective action in this sphere.

The Kingdom of Tonga is a strong advocate of the need to ensure inclusive participation of women in all aspects of ocean affairs and particularly in the field of marine scientific research.

As a key actor in the development of sustainable blue economies of Big Ocean States, the Authority has been a very strong and efficient advocate but also facilitator of concrete and impactful actions in support of women's empowerment and leadership in ocean affairs.

Its actions are a catalyst to ensure the sustainable use and management of the ocean area resources, particularly in deep-sea research and related disciplines. This, we commend and I am here today to reiterate our full support.

This was achieved thanks to the commitment to fully implement the Strategic Plan and related High Level Action Plan of the Authority. This was further boosted by the groundbreaking launch of the Action Plan for Marine Scientific Research and the Capacity Development Strategy of the Authority. Both do emphasize the key role that women have to play in ocean governance.

So that key strategic direction and outputs can advance, the Authority designed several capacity development activities specifically targeting women in deep-sea science. My country benefited from some of those initiatives.

I am pleased to see that more women from Tonga are being trained to contribute to global ocean governance.

Events like ours are an important platform and moment to jointly discuss the development of additional tailored capacity development programmes and activities to enhance the effective participation of women from developing States. This is especially needed for SIDS in deep-sea research related disciplines.

The presence of so many different stakeholders at this side event is a unique opportunity to share a discussion around many questions. Our discussion can only be further enhanced by our distinguished panellists. Together, let us chart a path towards SIDS inclusive and resilient societies through the development of sustainable ocean economies.

Honorable Ministers,

Mr Secretary-General,

Madame Under-Secretary General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We must work together and I am confident that then we can do so much to enable women scientists to contribute fully to deep-sea related research.

I strongly believe that this requires us to create and advance new partnerships to open up the space to empower and enable women to access to leadership positions in this new frontier for humanity that our oceans are.

You can count on the Kingdom of Tonga to continue supporting this cause and your efforts in this endeavor.

Thank you very much