

Annex 1: UN Ocean Conference Voluntary Commitments Analysis for the 28th SPREP Officials Meeting

One of the key outcomes from the UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) was a registry of voluntary commitments to be undertaken by Governments, UN and other IGOs, NGOs, CSOs, the scientific community, and other actors. Voluntary commitments were submitted following the SMART Criteria (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Resourced, and Time Bound), and are intended to serve as a measure to ensure that commitments made during the conference are achieved.

In the lead up to the UNOC and the regional preparatory meetings SPREP identified 6 of the 10 SDG 14 targets as priorities that fell within its mandate and current work areas – 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.5, 14.a and 14.c. These targets broadly cover Marine Debris, Conservation and Protection, and Ocean Acidification and the impacts of Climate Change. See Table 1 for the full list of SDG 14 targets. This analysis builds on the work conducted by Anna Bertram and Amanda Wheatley for the August 2017 Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation meeting.

Table 1: SDG 14 Targets

- 14.1** – By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution
- 14.2** – By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans
- 14.3** – Minimise and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels
- 14.4** – By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics
- 14.5** - By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information
- 14.6** - By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation
- 14.7** - By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism
- 14a** - Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries
- 14b** - Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets
- 14c** - Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want

Overall there were 1395 voluntary commitments made by the end of the UNOC, with 36% (443) of those targeting the Pacific Ocean basin (North and South Pacific). For the Pacific Ocean basin the SDG 14 targets with the most voluntary commitments (Figure 1) were 14.2 (marine conservation) and 14.a (marine research), followed closely by 14.4 (IUU), 14.5 (marine protected areas) and 14.1 (marine debris). These voluntary commitments represent commitments made by all groups working/supporting the Pacific, including non-SPREP members (i.e. South America, Philippines, etc.).

Please note that many voluntary commitments focus on multiple targets (i.e. 14.2 and 14.5 are closely linked) and that the distribution of voluntary commitments should be viewed as a measure of priorities only. Also note that this analysis is not comprehensive and some voluntary commitments may have been overlooked.

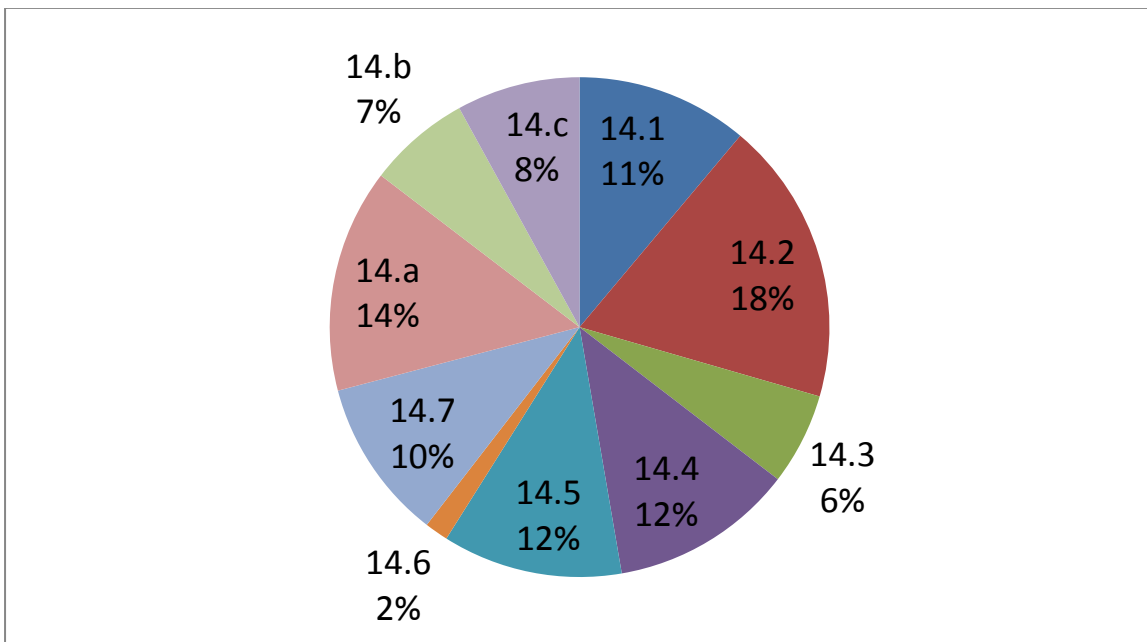


Figure 1: Total North and South Pacific Voluntary Commitments

Overall there were 134 voluntary commitments targeting SPREP member countries with government as a lead or partner (Figure 2). These commitments broadly reflect the priorities and work carried out by SPREP members and partners. Overall, the trends observed here are similar to the basin scale trends, with 14.2 (marine conservation) and 14.a (marine research) being the primary focal areas, followed by 14.4 (IUU), 14.5 (marine protected areas), and 14.1 (marine debris).

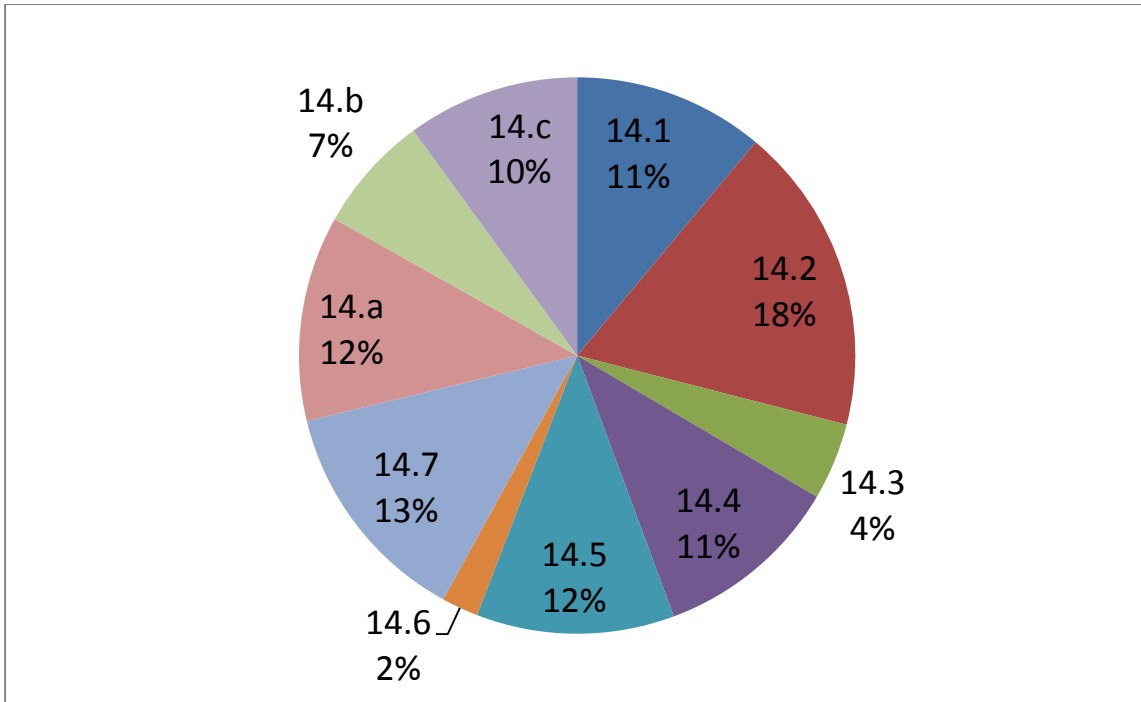


Figure 2: Voluntary commitments in SPREP member countries and territories with government as a lead or partner

There were 74 voluntary commitments with SPREP members as the lead (Figure 3). 47% of the commitments made by SPREP members focused on 14.2 (marine conservation), followed by 14.1 (marine debris), and 14.4 (IUU). The distribution of commitments at this level is markedly different from the distribution of commitments made at the basin scale (Figure 1) and the distribution of commitments made with SPREP members as the lead or partner.

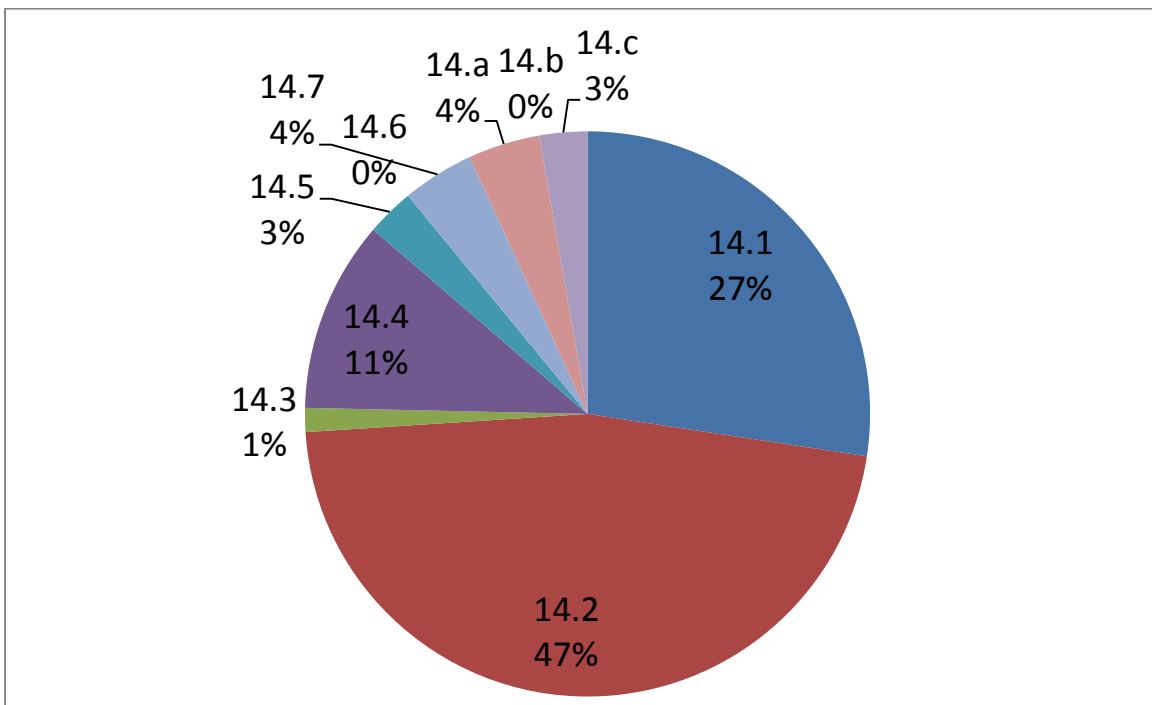


Figure 3: Voluntary commitments led by SPREP member governments

It is difficult to draw conclusions based on the differences in distributions of the voluntary commitments at this point. The differences could reflect differing priorities between SPREP member governments and partners, or they could represent differences in capacity, with governments only committing to actions that they can achieve. Of note is the number of voluntary commitments around target 14.3 (ocean acidification and climate change impacts). This target was noted as a priority by SPREP members in the regional preparatory meeting, the UNOC, and more broadly in regional statements by leaders and officials. The lack of voluntary commitments for this target is likely a reflection of the limited capacity (both globally and locally) to address this target in a meaningful fashion.

Overall, SPREPs priority areas were well reflected in the Pacific voluntary commitments, indicating that we are on track in supporting members in achieving the SDG 14 goals.