



UNCLOS Meeting of States Parties – 36th Meeting (15-19 June 2026)

18 June 2026

Fiji, Jamaica, Singapore, and Malta Joint-Statement Delivered by Permanent Representative Natasha Meli

Mr President,

I deliver this statement on behalf of Fiji, Jamaica, Singapore, and Malta. Our four nations contributed actively and substantively to the negotiation, drafting, and conclusion of UNCLOS, and we reaffirm our commitment to the continued governance of our global commons.

As stewards of the Convention, we remain unyielding in our obligation to upholding UNCLOS as the constitution for the oceans, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. Its comprehensive scope and provisions, and near-universal application endow it with the status of a living and fit for purpose regime which has continued to develop and adapt to emerging challenges. the history of UNCLOS reminds us that the Convention represents a carefully crafted, indivisible balance of rights and obligations that continues to be applicable today and should be applied holistically.

We are meeting at a moment when the importance of multilateralism in ocean governance cannot be overemphasized. It is precisely through collective action grounded in international law and the principles of UNCLOS that we can ensure sustainability and equity. By enshrining navigational rights and freedoms including the right of transit passage through straits used for international navigation, UNCLOS underpins a just and equitable international economic order, and serves fundamentally as a stabilizing instrument of peace, predictability, and prosperity. For small island nations and developing States, preserving this stable legal order is a fundamental matter of resilience, security, and survival. The international community is better off for its existence and implementation.



Mr President,

We must leverage the Convention's considerable flexibility to adapt to changing global circumstances. We welcome recent multilateral milestones building upon its foundation, notably the BBNJ Agreement. These achievements, alongside other ongoing processes, demonstrate the efficacy of a unified multilateral approach to overcoming differences in our shared and common uses of the seas.

This adaptability is paramount today as we confront the threat of climate change related sea-level rise. In line with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 43/53, we also welcome the work of the ILC, the ITLOS Advisory Opinion delivered on 21 May 2024, the historic ICJ Advisory Opinion delivered on 23 July 2025, and the recently adopted Resolution 80/263. Together, they strongly reinforce that States are under no obligation to update their maritime zones once duly established in conformity with UNCLOS. Consequently, we reiterate that maritime boundaries and the continuity of statehood must be preserved, notwithstanding the physical loss of territory connected to climate change-related sea-level rise.

To conclude, UNCLOS already provides the comprehensive legal framework required to navigate our shared global challenges. What is now required is the active and unified resolve of all States Parties to uphold it in line with their responsibilities and obligations under international law. Maintaining the Rule of Law at Sea is of common concern to humankind that requires UNCLOS to remain effective for the benefit of present and future generations.

Thank you