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At the second SIDS conference which was held in Mauritius in 2005, commitments were made by SIDS in the protection of Oceans, seas and Biodiversity.

Fiji had made a declaration to effectively protect 30% of its seas by the year 2020. Since then, some progress has been achieved in the management of inshore areas through the efforts of the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area (FLMMA) network, the Department of Fisheries, and other partners.

The head of the Fijian delegation at the Samoa SIDS conference, Permanent Secretary Pita Wise, today announced a unique and durable partnership with civil society groups, particularly the FLMMA network and development partners, to achieve its SIDS goal to protect 30% of its seas by 2020. Mr Wise was making the announcement at today's multi-stakeholder Partnership dialogue on Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity.

He also said that the new area of Fiji's focus for marine protection is offshore. The intention is to take on board lessons learnt from the partnerships forged over the years prior to recommitting to areas of mutual interest in offshore management. This will also include new partnerships with the private sector.

Wise added that this partnership announcement would be complemented by the provision of seed funding from the Waitt Foundation through the World Conservation Society (WCS) to support the establishment of offshore marine managed areas.

On the implementation modality, he pointed out that two Ministries, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics and Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, will lead a Fiji SIDS 2020 Commitment Working Committee, in partnership with civil society (World Conservation Society (WCS), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Conservation International (CI) and other interested FLMMA partners) and with the support of development partners.

That same commitment has been reflected in the recently approved Green Growth Framework for Fiji, where a key outcome is the establishment of "deep water Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) or Marine Managed Areas (MMAs) targeting offshore areas to achieve the 30% marine managed areas by 2020."

The Oceans, Seas & Biodiversity partnership dialogue session was attended by senior government personnel, development partners, academia and members of civil society groups.

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