**Live Address from Nekton Submersible
by President Danny Faure
14 April 2019**

From 124 metres below the ocean surface, it is a privilege to address citizens of the world from the beating blue heart of our planet.

I am in the company of my American submersible pilot, Randy Holt. Thank you, Randy.

At this depth, I can see not only the incredible beauty of our ocean, but the care that it urgently needs to stay this way.

This is a historical moment for my country, Seychelles. Together with Nekton and a unique collaboration of over 40 partners combining marine research and state-of-the-art technology, today I have this opportunity to be in a submersible 124 metres below the water surface.

It is not just because I am from paradise on Earth that I have a special relationship with the sea – the sea has a special relationship with all of us. It keeps the planet alive, it keeps us alive – and it is clear to me that it is under threat like never before.

Two-thirds of our planet is blue. This ocean is the world’s largest ecosystem. It generates half of the oxygen we breathe, and absorbs more than 30% of the Carbon Dioxide in our atmosphere. According to a 2015 Report from the World Wildlife Fund, the economic value generated by our oceans is worth at least 24 trillion dollars. But a healthy ocean is important for more than just economic growth – it is crucial for the survival of humanity.

The ocean is huge, covering almost 70% of our planet, but we have managed to seriously impact this vast environment through climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, plastic and other pollution, and other threats. From this depth, I can see the incredible wildlife that needs our protection, and the consequences of damaging this huge ecosystem that has existed for millennia.

Over the years, we have created these problems. We can solve them. We must solve them. And we must solve them together. We need decisive, coordinated international action. We need concrete steps, from expanding marine protected areas, to sustainable fisheries management; from reducing pollution, to preventing plastic waste entering our oceans.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14, the Goal of the Oceans, must be our roadmap to clean, healthy oceans.

My country, Seychelles, has committed 30% of our waters to marine protection by next year, tripling our commitment under Sustainable Development Goal 14 10 years ahead of time. This is an area twice the size of the United Kingdom. We are developing a comprehensive marine spatial plan to ensure future generations of Seychellois can enjoy the incredible marine biodiversity in our waters. Moreover, through this conservation we are improving the resiliency of coastal ecosystems against climate change, and ensuring that pillars of our economy, tourism and fisheries, remain sustainable.

To support our conservation efforts, it is vital that we have more data, more information, to clearly chart our way forward, and explore the full potential of Seychelles’ vast Economic Exclusive Zone and Blue Economy.

The deep ocean is the beating heart of the planet, yet we have better maps of Mars than we do of the ocean floor. This needs to change, as we gather the information available to identify priority areas for protection. This information should be used to take concrete action to preserve our oceans, extending beyond national jurisdictions. This is a global issue, and so it needs a global approach.

Seychelles is 100% committed to the ongoing work by the United Nations to develop a legally binding framework to conserve our oceans, in areas outside national borders. If we want to survive, this is the only way forward.

We must translate the political will of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement into decisive action. Bringing law and good governance to the ocean is the only way we can ensure our collective survival.

We are the guardians of two-thirds of this blue planet’s surface. We must act accordingly. This issue is bigger than all of us, and we cannot wait for the next generation to solve it. We are running out of excuses to not take action, and running out of time.

Today, from 124 metres below the ocean surface, it is a privilege to address the citizens of our world from the beating blue heart of our planet. To save it, the time to act is now.

Thank you for listening, and regards from my country – Seychelles.