



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT
Excelling Together for the People of the Pacific

**2019 CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE WITH
PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM LEADERS**
Funafuti, Tuvalu
14 August 2019

SUMMARY RECORD

**2019 CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE WITH
PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM LEADERS**

Funafuti, Tuvalu

14 August 2019

Securing the Future Wellbeing of our Blue Pacific Household

SUMMARY RECORD

The 2019 Civil Society Dialogue with Pacific Islands Forum Leaders was held in Funafuti on 14 August 2019. Forum Member Countries represented were Australia, Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

2. Civil Society was represented by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) – Te Ipukarea Society (TIS) of Cook Islands, the Fiji Council of Social Services, the Kiribati Association of NGOs (KANGO), the Niue Association of NGOs, the Belau Association of NGOs (BANGO) of Palau, the Pacific Youth Forum Against Corruption Solomon Islands, the Tonga Family Health Association, the Pacific Conference of Churches, the Pacific CSO Coordination Mechanism, the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO), and the Pacific Islands Climate Action Network.

3. A full list of participants is at [Annex A](#) and the Agenda is at [Annex B](#).

4. The Dialogue was chaired by Honourable Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, and supported by the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Dame Meg Taylor.

OPENING REMARKS

5. In his opening remarks, the Chair welcomed Leaders and CSO delegates and noted that the 2019 dialogue was the 5th dialogue of Leaders with civil society since 2015. The dialogue demonstrated Leaders' genuine commitment to greater inclusivity and their desire to ensure that the benefits of regionalism accrued to all Pacific peoples and communities.

6. The Chair recalled that the dialogue with civil society in 2018 in Nauru generated highly productive discussions on key issues. Accordingly, and to optimise the utility of the dialogue, it was important that Leaders meaningfully took on board the voice and perspectives of civil society.

7. The Chair firmly believed that more could be achieved together, and that increased engagement with civil society put Leaders on the right trajectory towards addressing the key challenges that faced the region. Climate change was just one example where this partnership was vital, noting that community groups were on the front line of the effects of climate change.

8. The Chair was pleased to see representatives from the three sub-regions, and was confident of full representation of all of the region's civil society and their communities.

9. The Chair wanted to ensure that the dialogue remained an opportunity for innovative regional solutions that would have an impact on the lives of the Pacific people. The Chair looked forward to civil society perspectives and advice on collectively securing our future in the Pacific.

PRESENTATION BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

10. CSOs noted with appreciation that since 2015, under the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* (FPR), Pacific communities, youths, women, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQI community, public and private sector workers, sporting organisations, and faith communities were being included as strands of the mat of an inclusive Blue Pacific that the Forum was weaving, as our own Pacific narrative of geo-politics.

11. CSOs presented a joint statement focused on the issues of regional security, climate change, ocean health and governance, and West Papua. A summary of the statement on each of the issues are provided below and the full statement is at [Annex C](#).

Review of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism

12. Pacific CSOs urged Leaders to ensure the voices of civil society, their communities and citizens were considered within the regional policy architecture, and that existing mechanisms under the FPR were provided the necessary support to carry out its role in an independent and visionary way.

Regional Security

13. As a way to promote regional security and gender justice for women, girls and children, CSOs called for Forum Leaders to appoint a Forum Eminent Persons' group to report and to monitor regional, collective actions aimed at minimising these intersecting human security threats that were exacerbated by the climate crisis, illicit drugs, cyber violence and violence against women, girls and children. CSOs also asked that the group report to Leaders annually on this issue.

14. It was envisioned that the Forum Eminent Persons Group could promote inclusivity in its arrangements and conduct, and suggestions were raised for civil society and women's organisations to be part of this group.

15. The call was further made for Forum Leaders to have a coordinated response in strengthening national policy on border and customs control, and to provide dedicated expertise and resources for drug rehabilitation.

Climate Change, Ocean Health and Governance

16. CSOs called for Leaders to support efforts to resolve nuclear testing legacy issues in the Pacific and to sign and ratify the 2017 United Nations (UN) *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*.

17. CSOs urged Leaders to establish transparent and accountable governance and management of high-level coastal fisheries species, in particular beche-de-mer, and to support a CSO mechanism within the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Forum Secretariat.

18. CSOs encouraged Forum Leaders to endorse a ten-year moratorium on seabed mining within the UN Decade of Oceans Science for Sustainable Development (2021 – 2030) to allow for the generation of scientific data and information to better inform the governance and conservation of our ocean.

19. CSOs urged Leaders to call the UN General Assembly to adopt a resolution requesting the International Court of Justice to provide an Advisory Opinion on the obligations of States under international law to protect the rights of present and future generations against the adverse effects of climate change.

20. CSOs requested that schemes by Pacific Islands Forum countries which addressed forced climate displacement and relocation, including internal and external migration, would treat families with dignity and be inclusive of persons with disabilities.

West Papua

21. CSOs urged that Forum Leaders call on Indonesia to immediately allow access of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN special mandate holders in to West Papua.

22. CSOs asked Forum Leaders to request Indonesia to immediately restore the access of independent journalists to the region so that the international community could better assess the ongoing human rights situation in West Papua.

23. CSOs asked that Forum Leaders immediately support a UN Resolution to list West Papua on the UN Decolonisation List.

FORUM CHAIR RESPONSE TO THE CSO STATEMENT

24. The Chair thanked the CSOs for their statement and encouraged responses from Leaders. The Chair acknowledged civil society positions and perspectives on the review of the FPR, and noted the call to ensure that the voices of Pacific communities and citizens were considered within the broader process of regional agenda setting and policy making.

25. In addition, the Chair noted concerns on the emergence of illicit drug trafficking in some member countries, which would escalate if it was not urgently addressed.

26. The Chair highlighted, for Leaders' consideration and response, the three key issues of West Papua, Oceans governance and the urgency to end violence against women and girls.

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES FROM LEADERS; AND CSO RESPONSES

27. Honourable Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, thanked the CSOs for the salient issues raised and acknowledged the role of civil society at national, regional and global levels in complementing the efforts of Governments. Prime Minister Bainimarama also thanked all CSOs in the region for the contributions to nation-building, and the great work in ensuring that no one was left behind in our sustainable development aspirations. CSO presence in communities throughout the region ensured the voices of all Pacific citizens, from all walks of life, are heard within national, regional and global discourse.

28. In this regard, Fiji fully supported the call for CSOs to be involved in regional discussions on important issues affecting our region, at the same time cautioned that special attention was given to prevent duplicating or compromising national actions and processes in the respective efforts to support the needs and priorities of the region.

29. In saying this, Prime Minister Bainimarama also noted that the region was at an important juncture for reviewing the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* (FPR) and meeting processes that would determine the modality in which the Forum would engage with CSOs and private sector within the regional policy architecture. Fiji's position was that the space allowed for such engagement should be done in a manner that brought more meaning to the partnership and collective efforts as a region. For this reason, Fiji acknowledged the work that was done in strengthening this position.

30. On the issue of West Papua, Prime Minister Bainimarama heard the position of CSOs loud and clear, and reaffirmed that Fiji would continue to be guided by the Leaders' previous decisions on the matter. Fiji fully respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, including Indonesia, and would will always uphold the principles of the UN Charter.

31. As the sitting Vice President of the UN Human Rights Council, Fiji was committed to the protection of human rights for all. Fiji itself had its own concerns on the alleged reports of human rights violations in West Papua, and was continuing to advocate for the protection of the human rights of all West Papuans. Prime Minister Bainimarama welcomed the invitation by Indonesia for the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights to visit West Papua, and remained committed to finding an amicable resolution to this pressing matter – but most importantly, one that was in line with international law and practice.

32. Prime Minister Bainimarama acknowledged the cries of CSOs, saying that this was in fact a matter of life or death to many West Papuans, and urged Leaders to tread boldly – but thoughtfully – in moving forward as a region. Territorial disputes had fuelled war and chaos since the beginning of time; Leaders were urged to approach this situation with both caution and hope in finding a resolution.

33. On securing the health of our oceans, Prime Minister Bainimarama thanked the CSOs for their position on this. Fiji lend its support to the 10-year moratorium on seabed mining to allow

for a decade of proper scientific research of our economic zones and territorial waters. Prime Minister Bainimarama reiterated Fiji's call to Members during the opening of the Climate Change Sautalaga to step up and support this ambitious venture.

34. On the issue of ending violence against women and children, Prime Minister Bainimarama reiterated that only by taking this problem head-on and pursuing real solutions that embody the truth can women and girls be given the opportunity to live free from the lurking threat of violence and abuse.

35. Prime Minister Bainimarama also saw the urgent need for the region to tackle the issue of illicit drugs trafficking that was affecting Pacific communities. There was a clear need for some regional collaborative action at all levels on this. Prime Minister Bainimarama was glad that both these issues were in the draft *Boe Declaration* Action Plan to be discussed by the Leaders during the Retreat. Fiji looked forward to being fully engaged in these discussions.

36. Honourable Alex Hawke, MP, Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Defence Minister of Australia, noted the complicated issues raised, particularly drugs and the influence of criminal gangs bringing drugs to the Pacific, including through youth. Australian agencies were working closely with CSOs and the governments of Samoa, Fiji and NZ in addressing this issue. Australia recognised the support CSOs could provide with more up to date trends and patterns on the current situation. The Pacific Fusion Centre would also help agents across the region. Australia was also having major problems with drugs, including new drugs. Australia also acknowledged the role of the Pacific Council of Churches in addressing trafficking of illicit drugs.

37. Honourable 'Akilisi Pohiva, Prime Minister of Tonga, noted the repeated discussions on West Papua and felt that there was lack of progress due to lack of capacity. Honourable Pohiva felt that the region had lost its sense of responsibility and self-reliance in maintaining solidarity on the West Papua issue, resulting in the dependence on other countries. Honourable Pohiva felt that Indonesia did not care for the concerns raised on this matter by the Pacific Islands, even when Forum countries stood together through solidarity. Honourable Pohiva questioned better ways to address Indonesia on this matter, including consideration of the utility of the UN being relied on to solve the issue. Honourable Pohiva felt that the long and ongoing search for a solution would be in vain until there was regional unity and solidarity on the issue.

38. Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa, expressed deep appreciation for the CSO statement, noting it was by far the best presentation of all CSO dialogues over the years. Samoa was especially thankful to Biblical messages delivered by the General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, which were relevant for consideration. Recognising the strong faith of Pacific Islands, being students as well as preachers of the Word, Honourable Malielegaoi welcomed the well-known story of King Solomon who, despite being gifted with wisdom and having governed with justice, committed an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. This demonstrated the power of evil, which affected even the spiritual leaders who had become perpetrators of violence. Undoubtedly, all of these issues had been addressed with different degrees and the usual challenges faced were the capacity challenges to carry through a lot of the guidelines that ought to be pursued to ensure that the inexcusable crimes faced today could be controlled.

39. Honourable Malielegaoi recalled the Pacific Islands Forum Meeting of 2018 in Nauru where Leaders questioned the US Secretary of State regarding cybercrime and cyber violence. Leaders had queried the work of the Central Intelligence Authority (CIA) regarding the proper control of cyber violence and the extreme damage it was doing to destroy peace and harmony because of cybercrime. The response was that the CIA had been compromised by technology. This was an admission that even the US and Scotland Yard had failed badly in the use of systems today to control the crimes committed through cyber technology.

40. The recent mosque shooting in Christchurch had prompted more urgent action in the region with regards cyber security. New Zealand and Australia enacted legislation to control the spread of cybercrime. Samoa was seeking expert assistance from New Zealand and Australia to assist with its own legislative reforms. There were also in-depth discussions in Commonwealth meetings in 2018 focused on cyber violence.

41. A lot was learned from the exchange with CSOs, which enabled Leaders to work in cooperation with more advanced countries like Australia and New Zealand to develop Samoa's own system. It required cooperation of everyone, including civil society.

42. Noting that more in-depth discussion on West Papua would be undertaken during the Retreat, Honourable Malielegaoi agreed that the challenges facing West Papua had not reduced. Despite the reliance on the UN process, there seemed to be lack of movement. Honourable Malielegaoi encouraged Leaders to take another look at addressing this issue, which involved suffering of people, with courage.

43. Honourable Charlot Salwai, Prime Minister of Vanuatu, highlighted the important role civil society had in ensuring the Forum met the needs of our people as expressed by our people.

44. Honourable Salwai acknowledged Fiji's leadership on deep-sea mining and supported the call for the 10-year moratorium on deep-sea mining.

45. On the issue of West Papua, Honourable Salwai acknowledged the plea and recalled Vanuatu's attempts at the Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting (FFMM) to come up with compromise language that would set specific outcomes and targets which could be a way forward. Honourable Salwai urged Leaders to consider the FFMM recommendations and reiterated that a Forum resolution on West Papua should be the position in all fora. Vanuatu should not have to speak alone.

46. Honourable Salwai supported the call to eliminate violence against women and children, which was a scourge on our region.

47. His Excellency Taneti Maamau, Beretitenti (President) of Kiribati, acknowledged the good partnership and support of civil society and the private sector to the Kiribati Government.

48. President Maamau noted the issue of domestic violence and informed of the established and active units on violence against women in Kiribati. President Maamau thanked the church and partners for their ongoing support to address this matter.

49. President Maamau recalled the issue of the 10-year moratorium on seabed mining being raised in Samoa and noted the importance of data.

50. Regarding West Papua, President Maamau acknowledged the recurrence of the issue on the Pacific Islands Forum agenda over the last few years, and the issue being crucial and difficult. While political will was crucial, other means such as economic strategies were lacking in the region, unlike other powerful nations. President Maamau felt the responsibility to act, noting the question of “who is my neighbour”.

51. Honourable Faustina K Rehuher-Marugg, Minister of State of Palau, also acknowledged the important role of civil society in the region, recalling personal experience in the PIANGO. Minister Rehuher-Marugg agreed with the CSO statement and shared Palau’s work in ratifying the CEDAW and putting in place legislation for protection against domestic violence, although there continued to be views that the CEDAW conflicted with Palau culture. Minister Rehuher-Marugg recalled Palau’s support on this issue in previous Leaders’ meetings.

52. Her Excellency Hilda C. Heine, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, expressed appreciation to civil society for the excellent statement and for ensuring governments were doing the right thing. The Republic of the Marshall Islands conducted regular dialogue with its CSOs and the issues raised were not new.

53. With regards to alleged human rights abuses in West Papua, President Heine was prepared to discuss this matter further with Leaders.

54. On violence against women, women and girls continued to face significant challenges. President Heine queried whether another declaration with stronger language and commitment was needed. The issue required more proactive action, noting that more than 50% of the Republic of the Marshall Islands’ population was affected by domestic violence. Part of the solution was economic empowerment for women. If women felt they needed the economic support of their partner, they would remain in a violent relationship. Women needed to be employed or have business opportunities to escape bad situations.

55. Honourable Manasseh Sogavare, MP, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, recognised the recurring issue of West Papua and called for an agreed way forward. Prime Minister Sogavare questioned the utility of the Pacific Islands Forum on this matter if the issue was to be raised again in 2020.

56. Honourable Aupito William Sio, Minister for Pacific Peoples, New Zealand, reported that work in New Zealand had started to address the issue of gender violence under the umbrella of the well-being budget. This was a significant issue for Pacific peoples in New Zealand, with one of the goals identified being health, including mental health, rape, and suicide; such issues being kept in the shadows or such issues being the ones no one wanted to talk about it. Women were often afraid to raise them. New Zealand encouraged the need for more open discussions on these issues, and for a transparent and warm, loving forum. These were similar issues shared around the region that needed to find ways to be linked together.

57. Minister Sio welcomed collective action and more dialogue. Regarding climate change, New Zealand appreciated the vital information that came from different quarters, highlighting the role of the Pacific Islands Forum in making the important but difficult decisions. Recognising our homes being under threat, New Zealand queried how to determine protecting our homes, noting it was a fight about life, our homes, and about protecting all of our resources. New Zealand felt confident by the presence of the CSO representatives, and questioned what Leaders would give and pass on to CSOs to ensure they are thriving and resilient.

58. Honourable James Marape, MP, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, noted that Papua New Guinea's comments would be reserved for the Retreat.

59. CSOs expressed appreciation to Leaders for their responses and support, and looked forward to ongoing partnership with Leaders and Forum governments.

SUMMARY AND CLOSING REMARKS

60. The Chair thanked fellow Leaders as well as civil society representatives for the robust and interactive dialogue, noting the key issues that required further thinking and discussion during the Leaders' Annual Retreat, being West Papua, Oceans governance, and ending violence against women and girls.

Funafuti, Tuvalu
14 August 2019

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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Funafuti, Tuvalu
14 August 2019

PROGRAMME AND WORKING PROCEDURES

**2019 CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE WITH
PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM LEADERS**

Funafuti, Tuvalu

14 August 2019

Time	Session	Facilitator
11.25am	Arrival of Forum Leaders	
11.30am – 11.35am	Welcome and opening remarks by the Chair	Forum Chair
11.35am – 11.40am	Introduction of the panel & format by the Secretary General	Secretary General
11.40am – 12.00am	Chair invites representatives of Civil Society Organizations to deliver their statement	Chair CSO representatives Reverend James Bhagwan, Teina Mackenzie, Tarita Holm.
12.00am – 12.10am	Chair acknowledges the presentation by CSOs and provides a summary of the key issues and makes his response	Forum Chair
12.10am – 12.30am	Chair invites Forum Leaders to respond to the CSO statement	Forum Leaders
12.30am – 12.50am	Chair thanks Leaders for their responses and contributions and invites CSOs to respond to the interventions by Leaders	Chair and CSO representatives
12.50am – 1.00pm	Summary and closing remarks	Forum Chair and host
1.00pm	End of formalities	

**Civil Society and Non-State Actors Statement
to the 50th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting
Wednesday 14th August, 2019 Funafuti, Tuvalu**

Securing the Future Wellbeing of our Blue Pacific Household

God, give the king your justice; your righteousness to the royal son. He will judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. The mountains shall bring prosperity to the people. The hills bring the fruit of righteousness. He will judge the poor of the people. He will save the children of the needy, and will break the oppressor in pieces... He will have pity on the poor and needy. He will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their soul from oppression and violence. Their blood will be precious in his sight. (Psalm 72: 1-4 , 12-13)

Honourable Chair, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, your Excellencies Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum member countries:

We acknowledge with gratitude the warm and open heart of the Fenua of Tuvalu that has welcomed us as sisters and brothers of the Pacific.

We join you at this table with deep humility and respect of the significance of the responsibilities you hold as elected leaders of government and the responsibility we hold as we amplify voices from our Pacific Islands communities, many of whom who are your constituents.

We gather here as people of the land and sea – on behalf of people of faith, on behalf of some of the most vulnerable communities on this planet, on behalf of your Pacific family.

Our voice includes the voice of those of us who have passed on. We remember the late Fuimaono Falefa Lima, C.E.O. of the Samoa Umbrella of Non-Governmental Organisations who was part of our original CSO Forum team.

Honourable Chair and Leaders, what we share with you today is based on the lived and recorded experiences of our people at the grassroots. It is informed by research, including our traditional knowledge, and reflects common Pacific values of spirituality, family life, traditional economy, culture, mutual care and respect, which celebrates quality of life and values human beings and creation over the production of things.

We all share in the vision of a just, inclusive and peaceful Pacific: a secure Pacific, a resilient Pacific; a Pacific that will not only survive the Climate Crisis but can still flourish.

We gather with you in recognition that Pacific Regionalism is rooted in Pacific Solidarity.

We are all part of this Blue Pacific household. There are many rooms in this household but all who wish to live in this Pacific Household must accept their responsibilities as members of the household, be it working to achieve the 1.5 degrees target; challenging the forces of economic domination; and ensuring the security and wellbeing of our ocean, land and people.

That you, as Pacific Island leaders, have supported this space for dialogue with Church and Civil Society and Non-State Actors is an affirmation that we are indeed part of the common work to secure the future of the Pacific. Thank you for affirming that we are part of the Blue Pacific Household.

We note with appreciation that since 2015, under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, our communities, youths, women, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQI community, public and private sector workers, sporting organisations and CSOs and faith communities are being included as strands of the mat of an inclusive Blue Pacific that the Forum is weaving, as our own Pacific narrative of geo-politics.

In this regard, Pacific CSOs urge Leaders to ensure the voices of civil society, their communities and citizens are considered within the regional policy architecture and to ensure the existing mechanism under the FPR is provided the necessary support to carry out its role in an independent and visionary way.

REGIONAL SECURITY

Honourable Chair and Leaders, as we seek to secure our future in the Pacific, we bring to you our concerns on current and emerging peace and security issues for Pacific people and places, beginning with the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls.

Honourable Leaders:

We thank you leaders for the vision of a secure Blue Pacific and for the 2009 Forum Cairns Communique that drew attention to sexual gender -based violence as a risk to human security and its potential for destabilizing our communities and Pacific societies.

We also thank you for the 2012 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration that recasts a vision of a society where our women and girls live safely and with a strong sense of security; and the Boe Declaration on Regional Security that reminds us that the violence faced by our women and girls is compounded by the climate crisis in the Pacific and heightened during disasters.

Gender based violence is a human security issue as recognised in the BOE Declaration Framework.

However this declaration is not enough to secure the future of all our diverse groups of women, girls and children.

Women’s crisis centres report an increase in the types of domestic violence cases linked to ice and methamphetamine. These emerging intersecting forms of violence are being exacerbated by contributing factors such as the increase in the accessibility and use of illicit drugs particularly methamphetamines or “ice” as it’s commonly referred to in the Pacific.

The Oceania Customs Organization reports that there is increasing border detections and widespread prevalence of street-level possession and distribution of methamphetamine, and that it presents the highest risk to the Pacific community for drug related and associated harm.

The transiting of these hard drugs from countries outside of our region draws an ominous dimension into the vulnerability of our Pacific island nations whereby drugs are increasingly being sold and distributed leaving increased levels of addiction and violence in many of our island states.

There is also a growing increase in cyberviolence throughout the Pacific and current data shows that once again women and girls make up the majority of the victims to this type of violence.

This new form of violence is compounded by multiple factors and is harder to manage in times of conflict and in during climate crisis.

These new forms of security threats have reached a crisis point for women and girls and the failure to take action now will lead to grave consequences in the future as women make up approximately 50 percent of our populations.

These issues require urgent action and special commitment by our leaders.

As a way to promote regional security and gender justice for our women, girls and children, we CSOs call for Forum Leaders to appoint a Forum Eminent Persons' group to report and to monitor regional, collective actions aimed at minimizing these intersecting human security threats that are exacerbated by the climate crisis, illicit drugs, cyber violence and violence against women, girls and children. We also ask that this group report to Leaders annually on this issue.

We call that this Eminent Persons Group promote inclusivity in its arrangements and conduct, and that civil society and womens' organizations be part of this group.

We call on Forum Leaders to have a coordinated response in strengthening national policy on border and customs control and to provide dedicated expertise and resources for drug rehabilitation.

Honourable Leaders, we believe that securing the future of the Pacific, with the communities of the Pacific will ensure the future wellbeing and ecological biodiversity of our Blue Pacific.

CLIMATE CHANGE, OCEAN HEALTH AND GOVERNANCE

Honourable leaders:

As we gather here in the fenua of Tuvalu, in the midst of a Climate Crisis and Ocean health crisis, our Civil Society kainga (family) would like to make some recommendations for your consideration.

Securing our future in the Pacific requires securing the health of our shared Ocean. Reversing her current decline from the myriad of cumulative pressures she endures, and supporting initiatives that will see her productive health return, is what all of us stakeholders must strive for. To invest in the health of the Ocean is to invest in the health of our Pacific people.

The nuclear testing legacy has been an outstanding agenda and poses a threat of nuclear contamination to the health and security of the entire Blue Pacific. Promoting the status of the Pacific as a nuclear free zone, adopting modalities to foster meaningful international cooperation under the framework of the Treaty of Rarotonga and calling for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons globally would be a sign of true regionalism, supporting, in the first instance, our Micronesian families.

Therefore, we call leaders to support efforts to resolve nuclear testing legacy issues in the Pacific and to sign and ratify the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

In 2017, Forum Leaders recognised that increasing demands for fisheries resources across the region and globally would require coherent and coordinated approaches to address a range of issues. In addressing this, Leaders' in 2018 endorsed a Fisheries Ministers recommendation at the annual meeting of Regional Fisheries Ministers (RFMM) to ensure that they have effective oversight across the multidimensional issues that impact our region's fisheries. Fisheries Ministers, in their recommendation, saw the need for this multi-sectoral/dimensional approach and the involvement of CSOs in all aspects of the fisheries space.

As such, CSOs urge Leaders to establish transparent and accountable governance and management of high-level coastal fisheries species in particular beche-de-mer and support a CSO mechanism within the SPC and PIFS.

The upcoming UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) is a neutral initiative for Leaders to align with and a positive goal to aspire to that would have the support of communities.

Requesting Leaders to support a ten-year moratorium on seabed mining is asking leaders to prioritize the health of our communities and recognize values beyond economic gain.

Recommending a moratorium, in order to support the research that will be taking place as part of the Decade of Ocean Science, will allow leaders to be well-informed on how to progress with the DSM industry - if they choose to do so. This is truly utilizing a precautionary approach. As well, the resourcing for scientific research will come from a more independent source as opposed to mining companies who have vested interests in progressing their industry.

Another opportunity to be gained by supporting a Moratorium is to ensure a strong focus on supporting, involving, and empowering Pacific youth in the development agenda, especially with regards to the custodianship of natural resources.

A commitment to build the capacity within, foster greater interest in, and provide more options for careers in S.T.E.M. will align with the UN Decade of Ocean Science initiative as youth have been identified as the future leaders whom will deal with the challenges we, and those before us, have created.

Finally, a moratorium will support the reduction of rapid acceleration of climate change, protect coastal and deep-water fisheries from the negative impacts to the seabed and allow for the necessary science to be obtained.

By supporting the Ocean, we solidify the principles of traditional custodianship for nature and, in turn, for our people by enabling good health and secure and enjoyable livelihoods.

Pacific CSOs encourage Forum Leaders to endorse a ten-year moratorium on Seabed mining within the United Nations Decade of Oceans Science for Sustainable Development (2021 – 2030), to allow for the generation of scientific data and information to better inform the governance and conservation of our Ocean.

This week, we are meeting in a country at the frontlines of climate change, the effects of which threaten the wellbeing of our Pacific. We DO need to Save Tuvalu to Save the World.

The global community must recognize that people have been, and are being, displaced by climate change and their rights need protection. Countries who are major polluters and are historically responsible for the acceleration of climate change have an obligation under international law to protect those on the frontlines of climate change.

For that reason, *we urge leaders to call the UNGA to adopt a resolution requesting the International Court of Justice to provide an advisory Opinion on the obligations of States under international law to protect the rights of present and future generations against the adverse effects of climate change.*

Loss of territory due to climate change should not compromise our maritime boundaries, and Climate Migration should not affect the sovereignty of large ocean states in the Blue Pacific. Countries that are displaced due to climate change, and keep their citizenship, should still be able to manage their ocean territories, for climate justice and for those who will come after us.

Climate change intrinsically impacts on human rights by creating the eventuality of forced migration, displacement and relocation which impacts negatively on physical and mental human health.

CSOs request that schemes by PIF countries which address forced climate displacement and relocation, including internal and external migration, treat families with dignity and be inclusive of people with disabilities.

Larger, developed countries may be responsible for the accelerated rates of climate change impacts affecting our islands but we, the people of the Pacific, are responsible for the manner in which we continue to engage – let us uphold our cultural values of truly nurturing our lands, seas and each other.

WEST PAPUA

Honourable Leaders:

We join together as Civil Society Organisations to express our concern about the escalating human rights violations and abuses in West Papua. Since the 49th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders’

Communique included West Papua as a ‘regional priority’ for ‘collective actions’ towards ‘a Strong Pacific’ in September 2018, the situation in West Papua has continued to deteriorate.

In February 2019, the World Council of Churches took the largest-ever delegation visit to West Papua and raised serious concerns over the continued systematic marginalisation of the West Papuan people. The World Council of Churches visited West Papua and learnt of the displacement of a growing number of people from remote communities, in response to the perceived threats from Indonesian authorities in the region.

On February 21, 2019, the largest group of independent experts within the UN human rights system issued an unprecedented statement condemning a ‘culture of impunity’ around human rights abuses in West Papua. The statement calls for ‘those who have committed human rights violations against the indigenous population of Papua’ to be ‘held to account’.

We also draw Leaders attention to the recent release in March 2019 of the U.S. State Department annual ‘country reports’ on local human rights in Indonesia. The report detailed arrests of self-determination advocates, targeting of local NGOs operating in West Papua and intimidation of the press. The report also notes the severe and widespread violations of the cultural, social and economic rights of Indigenous West Papuans.

Together, the World Council of Churches visit and the US State Department report show evidence of the serious human rights abuses that are taking place in West Papua.

Indonesia has agreed in principle to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit West Papua. We remind Forum Leaders that Indonesia is a party to all major International human rights conventions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Honourable Chair and leaders, none of us can speak of an inclusive and peaceful Pacific and remain silent on the serious human rights issues for West Papuans. We call on Pacific Leaders to observe the importance of human rights in all parts of our region.

1) We urge that Forum Leaders call on Indonesia to immediately allow access of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN special mandate holders to West Papua.

2) We ask that Forum Leaders request that Indonesia immediately restore the access of independent journalists to the region, so that the international community can better assess the ongoing human rights situation in West Papua.

3) We ask that Forum Leaders immediately support a UN Resolution to list West Papua on the UN Decolonisation List.

Honourable Leaders of the Pacific:

There are many stories in the Bible of when the King has hated the words of the prophet. We acknowledge that there may be things in our presentation that you may not agree with or find too

strong or perhaps not strong enough. In this 21st century, the Church shares the prophetic task with Civil Society and News Media and we will encourage the truth to be spoken in love.

We are grateful to this esteemed forum for receiving our message from the community and we look forward to your responses and the opportunity to talanoa together today.

We also express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary General and the PIFS Non-State Actor programme and facilitation team for their support.

May God's blessings be with you and our Pacific Household. May God's wisdom, strength and protection be upon you as you seek to serve and lead our Blue Pacific.

Fa'afetai Lasi. Vinaka Vakalevu.