FORUM CHAIR’S SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

On the eve of the five-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders met with their 18 international Forum Dialogue Partners to emphasise the urgency of more ambitious action to combat the climate change crisis facing Pacific Island nations; to drive action and ambition on the Paris Agreement and the related ten calls of the Kainaki II Declaration; and to call for COVID-19 financing for recovery to advance the goals of the Paris Agreement. A list of Forum Member and Forum Dialogue Partner participants is at Annex A.

Background

2. Five years ago, on 12\textsuperscript{th} December 2015, Pacific leaders joined with global leaders to adopt the Paris Agreement on climate change. It was a watershed moment for multilateralism and for protecting all people and the planet. It charted a new course for global climate change action; one in which world leaders committed to raise the ambition on climate change, with enhanced support for developing countries to adapt to its effects. Critically, for the Blue Pacific, the Paris Agreement also delivered an agreement by Parties to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

3. Five years on, we must all ask ourselves: are we keeping our commitments? Are we raising our ambitions? Are we making the necessary behavioural changes to protect our planet for our children, and our generations to come?

4. For the Blue Pacific region – our great ocean continent, our thousands of islands, our strong and resilient people – time is running out. Climate change is the single greatest threat to the livelihood and wellbeing of the Blue Pacific region. We need to move faster. We need urgent climate change action now. The future of our Blue Pacific, and indeed our great Blue Planet, depends on it.

5. The latest scientific evidence shows that the world is already at 1.2 °C, which is the cause of our rising sea levels, our oceans warming and the increasing intensity of extreme weather events inflicting damage and destruction on our peoples, ecosystems, economies, and countries. The significant damage and loss of life caused by Cyclone Harold on some Forum Island Countries early last year was a stark reminder of the need for urgent climate change action.

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\footnote{The Kainaki II Declaration is available \url{here}.}
6. Yet, we note with grave concern that carbon dioxide levels are at record highs – and rising. In 2020, this upward trend continued despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Current policies and actions put us on a trend to exceed 1.5 °C as early as 2030 and to reach 3 °C or more, by the end of this century. The shared prosperity and security of our Blue Pacific can only safely exist if the international community pursues efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 °C.

7. We must decisively change course. All Parties must meet their commitments to the Paris Agreement and take decisive and transformative action to reduce global emissions, and assist developing country Parties with respect to both mitigation and adaptation. This is especially true for those Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and have significant capacity constraints, such as the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

8. Steps must also be taken to recognise the threat posed by climate change and sea-level rise, including to ensure that states' existing maritime boundaries, once delineated, will not be impacted by sea level rise.

9. The COVID-19 pandemic must not be a reason to delay action. Rather, it should serve as motivation to the global community to better prepare for shocks, adopt policies based on science and bolster multilateral efforts to tackle common threats, including climate change. It should further encourage Pacific states to strengthen regional protocols and systems to build a stronger and more resilient region.

10. In 2019, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders issued the *Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Change Action Now* – the most comprehensive and ambitious climate change declaration issued by all eighteen Forum Leaders. The ten calls of the Declaration are relevant for 2020 and in the lead up to COP 26 in November 2021.

**Opening**

11. In opening the Roundtable, the Forum Chair urged all participants to collectively raise their ambition to translate climate change commitments into reality and meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. Together, as the Pacific Islands Forum, and Dialogue Partners, we must act now. The United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) emphasised the importance of ambitious multilateral action in addressing both climate change and COVID-19. The UNSG announced that the central objectives of the United Nations for 2021 include building a global coalition for carbon neutrality in 2050 and advocating for an increased share to at least 50% of global climate finance for adaptation and resilience. The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) climate envoy and poet, Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, delivered a poem titled *Midnight* to highlight the challenges faced in an atoll island from the impacts of climate change and the need to translate commitments into concrete action, now.

**Raising ambition on Nationally Determined Contributions and long-term strategies**

12. As we reach the 2020 milestone for action, Forum Leaders reaffirmed their call for all Parties to the Paris Agreement to meet or exceed their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in order to pursue global efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 °C. Forum Leaders also called on all Parties to formulate and communicate mid-century, long-term low emissions development strategies by 2020. This may include commitments and strategies to achieve net zero carbon by 2050.

13. Pacific Islands Forum Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the Paris Agreement and the calls of the *Kainaki II Declaration*. At the regional level, Forum Leaders
have endorsed the development of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent – in order to safeguard the people, place and prospects of the Blue Pacific. Action on climate change will be central to this Strategy, as the strategy will be driving and empowering the region’s development future, and nation building aspirations. The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific 2017 – 2030 promotes a low carbon development pathway for the Blue Pacific by 2030.

14. At the Roundtable, RMI, Fiji and New Zealand announced commitments to achieve net zero carbon by 2050, supported by relevant strategies and legislation. New Zealand has recently declared a climate change emergency and commitment for its public service to be carbon neutral by 2025. Tonga is currently developing a long-term Low Emissions Development Strategy, which will be submitted to the UNFCCC in 2021, prior to COP 26. RMI became the first country globally to submit its revised NDC, committing to a quantified economy-wide reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) to at least 45% below 2010 levels by 2030 and 58% below 2010 levels by 2035. Tonga also submitted its revised NDC in December 2020, committing to 13% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 compared to 2006 levels and 30% of land to be utilised for agro-forestry and forestry by 2025 as an adaptation measure.

15. Australia affirmed its commitment to achieving its 2030 target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26% to 28% below 2005 levels by 2030, and its confidence it can do so without drawing on overachievement of its previous targets. Australia announced the appointment of a new special advisor in international low emissions technology partnerships. Other Forum Members are reviewing their NDCs with support from the Regional NDC Hub and aim to submit prior to COP 26. In terms of renewable energy targets, Samoa has reaffirmed its commitment to 100% renewable energy by 2025, Vanuatu 100% renewable energy by 2030, Tonga 70% renewable energy by 2030 and RMI 100% renewable energy by 2050. French Polynesia committed to a 50% reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Countries like Tuvalu have also developed national polices to maintain their sovereignty and maritime zones in the face of sea level rise and climate change.

16. Forum Leaders welcomed the commitment and announcements from Forum Dialogue Partners to achieve carbon neutrality by mid-century. The European Union has committed to become the first carbon neutral continent by 2050, supported by the Green Deal for Europe and efforts to enshrine this in legislation. The United Kingdom, Japan, Republic of Korea, Canada, Spain, France, Chile, Germany, Italy and the United States President-elect have committed to achieving net zero carbon by 2050. The People’s Republic of China announced its goal to reach net zero carbon before 2060. Indonesia has integrated the Low Carbon Development Initiative into its medium-term development plan 2020-2045, to shift towards a greener growth pathway.

17. Forum Leaders also welcomed enhanced NDC commitments from Forum Dialogue Partners. The European Union has recently approved a new NDC goal to reduce emissions by 55%, based on 1990 levels, by 2030 (increase from 40% by 2030). The United Kingdom has committed to reducing emissions by 68% based on 1990 levels by 2030 (increase from 53% by 2030). France has committed to phasing out coal by 2022 and has been supportive of the European Union’s new NDC target of emissions reduction by 55% by 2030. Spain supported the new European Union NDC goal of 55% by 2030 and has a national commitment to decarbonising its economy with carbon dioxide reductions to 33.3% by 2030 and increasing its share of renewable energy in electricity to 74% in 2030 and 100% in 2050. Norway submitted its revised NDC earlier this year with a target to achieve economy-wide emissions reductions of at least 50% and towards 55% compared to 1990 levels by 2030. Italy supported the new European Union NDC target of 55% by 2030. Chile’s updated NDC aims to achieve absolute economy wide emissions reduction of 95 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, which translates to an NDC ambition increase of 3% from its original NDC target. The People’s
Republic of China, Canada, Republic of Korea and Japan aim to submit updated NDCs prior to COP 26. Cuba reaffirmed its plan to have an energy matrix with 24% electricity generation from renewable energy sources; reduce the use of fossil fuels in land vehicles by 50% and increase forest cover by up to 33% by 2030.

*Raising ambition on climate finance, climate-ocean nexus and Pacific assistance*

18. Forum Leaders emphasised the centrality of the ocean to the identity, culture and economies of the Blue Pacific region. Indeed, 96% of the region is Blue Pacific Ocean and revenue from marine resources is a critical source of government revenue. However, record-high carbon dioxide levels are causing seas to rise, oceans to warm, coral reefs to bleach and are altering the migratory patterns of tuna in Pacific waters.

19. Forum Leaders called for immediate action to prevent the irreversible impacts of climate change on our oceans, to ensure clean, healthy and productive oceans for generations to come. Forum Leaders also called for a collective effort with the aim of ensuring that once a Forum Member’s maritime zones are delineated in accordance with the 1982 *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, the Member’s maritime zones and entitlements derived from such zones, cannot be challenged or reduced as a result of sea-level rise and climate change.

20. At the Roundtable, Vanuatu, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia reaffirmed their commitment to conserving 30% of their marine and ocean ecosystems by 2030. French Polynesia listed its 5 million square kilometre EEZ as a Marine Managed Area.

21. Forum Leaders noted Norway’s support, through the High-level Panel on Sustainable Ocean Economy (jointly chaired by Norway and Palau), to drive greater action on the ocean-climate nexus. Chile introduced the ocean as a focus of COP 25 negotiations, and at the domestic level, 42% of the Chilean sea in the Pacific Ocean is under special environmental protection. The United Kingdom is leading the 30by30 Challenge with the aim to conserve 30% of the world’s ocean by 2030.

22. Forum Leaders emphasised the critical importance of climate finance to assist developing country Parties with respect to both mitigation and adaptation, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing country Parties. Forum Leaders called on developed country Parties to continue to take the lead in mobilising climate finance from a wide variety of sources, instruments and channels to help meet the global climate finance commitment of USD 100 billion per year by 2020.

23. Forum Leaders called for greater climate financing flows to the Pacific region, noting that over the past decade, only about two per cent (USD 2 billion) of the global climate finance target expected to be mobilised by 2020 was approved for the Pacific region. Climate finance to the Pacific needs to be made more accessible for all Pacific Island Countries regardless of their development status, with simplified procedures that take into consideration the special circumstances of the Small Island Developing States of the Pacific. It also needs to involve a greater allocation for adaptation, build national public financial management systems and institutional absorptive capacities, and enable Pacific innovation and home-grown solutions to adapt and build resilience.

24. Forum Leaders highlighted their national commitment to invest in addressing climate change using their domestic resources. Cook Islands noted that 16% of its national budget will be appropriated directly to support mitigation and adaptation measures. Noting the climate finance obligations under the Paris Agreement, Forum Leaders welcomed the commitments from Forum Members and Dialogue Partners to scale up climate finance. Australia has
announced a 50% increase in its international climate finance commitment to AUD 1.5 billion between 2020 and 2025 to support developing countries in the region (inclusive of the AUD 500 million announced for renewable energy, climate change and disaster resilience in the Pacific over five years from 2020).

25. The European Union remains the largest provider of climate finance with €21.9 billion being mobilised in 2019, translating to an increase of 7.4% compared to 2018. The European Union’s investment in climate, resilience and environmental programmes in the Pacific in the past few years has totalled over €200 million. The United Kingdom has committed to double its international climate finance to at least £11.6 billion between 2021 and 2025, inclusive of USD 1.85 billion contribution to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) from 2020 to 2023. Germany had pledged to mobilise €4 billion annually by 2020. France committed to mobilise €5 billion by 2020, including €1.5 billion for adaptation. In 2019, France doubled its contribution to the GCF to USD 1.7 billion. Japan pledged to mobilise USD 11.8 billion of public and private climate finance by 2020, including a USD 1.5 billion contribution to the GCF from 2020 to 2023. Canada reaffirmed that its climate finance commitment of USD 2.65 billion by 2020 will not waiver in the face of COVID-19. Spain has committed to double its climate finance commitment to €900 million by 2020, including a USD 150 million contribution to the GCF and a USD 2 million contribution to the Adaptation Fund. The Republic of Korea has pledged to double its voluntary contribution to the GCF to USD 200 million from 2020 to 2023.

26. To secure the future of our Blue Pacific, Forum Leaders emphasised that they are pursuing innovative solutions to combat climate change and build resilience. The Pacific region has demonstrated global leadership through the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific, and its inclusive Pacific Resilience Partnership, as an integrated approach to address climate change adaptation and disaster risk management. Forum Leaders have endorsed the development of the Pacific Resilience Facility – the first Pacific designed, led and owned initiative to provide communities with access to finance to ensure that existing and/or new community-level projects consider and prepare for the increasing risks of climate-induced disasters and other natural hazards, risks and disasters. Forum Leaders called for increased partner support for the Pacific to build its resilience.

Closing

27. Forum Troika member Nauru and the United Kingdom (COP 26 President designate) stressed the urgency of climate change action to combat the climate change crisis facing Pacific Island nations and the international community. Nauru emphasised that for the Blue Pacific region, the situation is dire. The 2020 commitments to the Paris Agreement must be met and the outcomes of COP 26 in November 2021 must keep us on the 1.5 °C pathway including through delivering revised, enhanced NDCs and mid-century low emissions development strategies; achieving access to climate finance and the global finance commitment of USD 100 billion per year by 2020; enhancing access to financing for loss and damage associated with climate change impacts; and progressing work on the ocean-climate nexus under the UNFCCC. The United Kingdom reaffirmed its support to the Pacific to ensure COP 26 delivers a strong outcome. In closing, Nauru stated that this generation of world leaders, business leaders, and citizens have the opportunity to make the necessary policy and behavioural change to safeguard the future of our planet and way of life. We must act now. We must raise our ambition. We must act with conviction. This must be our legacy.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Suva
21 January 2021
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