

**Remarks for 5<sup>th</sup> France – Oceania Summit**  
**Minister for Pacific Peoples and Associate Minister for Foreign Affairs,**  
**Honourable Aupito William Sio**  
**19 July, 2021**

Bonjour President Macron;

Talofa Prime Minister Natano of Tuvalu and Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum;

Kia ora tatou katoa and warm Pacific greetings from Aotearoa to your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great honour to take part in the 5th France Oceania Summit. May I convey to you President Macron and all the Pacific leaders present, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's best wishes to each of you.

As we have heard today from the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum and repeated by other Pacific leaders, climate change remains the single biggest threat faced by the region. It impacts on everything. Our lives, homes, lands and our security.

Pacific Island Countries have unique ecosystems and biodiversity that underpin livelihoods, provide food, building materials, protection from storm surges and floods, waste and water filtration, as well as supporting critical industries such tourism. Climate change and biodiversity loss are putting these ecosystems under threat.

The significant economic impacts of COVID-19 in the Pacific amplifies that climate change threat and the prospect of significant social and economic dislocation. And while we roll-out the vaccine for COVID-19, I am reminded that there is no vaccine for Climate Change.

Developed countries need to play their part to reduce emissions and support adaptation – particularly in enhancing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and paying their fair share of the \$100bn goal for financing to developing countries. I acknowledge the significant leadership role that you, President Macron, and France plays in this area.

In the Pacific region, our strength lies in working together collectively. The Kiwa Initiative is one partnership where we seek to better coordinate and support the region in areas that matter. We are pleased to be partnering with France, Australia, the EU and Canada in supporting Pacific resilience.

Therefore, New Zealand is pleased to be tripling our contribution to the Kiwa Initiative from NZ\$1million provided last year to NZ\$3 million.

This forms part of the \$300 million we have committed to climate change related development globally, with \$150 million of this dedicated to building the resilience of the Pacific in the face of climate change.

The indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand has a word, "Kaitiakitanga" which means we are stewards of the environment and have a duty of care to leave the environment and everything therein, in a far better position than when we found it. We all share kaitiakitanga or a duty of care responsibilities for the environment including our Blue Ocean Continent.

New Zealand will continue to listen to Pacific priorities and support increased resilience.

Thank you. All the best to our region.