**What is the Forum Leaders Meeting?**

Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meet annually to develop collective responses to regional issues guided by the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

The Forum’s membership has increased from the original seven founding members (Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Tonga and Western Samoa – now Samoa) to also include the Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Niue, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The Forum’s agenda is driven by Members and includes reports from the Secretariat and related regional organisations and committees. Decisions by the Leaders are reached by consensus and are outlined in a Forum Communiqué. This informs development of policies and a work programme.

The annual Forum meetings are chaired by the Head of Government of the Host Country, who remains as Forum Chair until the next meeting.

Formalities on 6th August will include Tuvalu Prime Minister Hon. Kausea Natano handing over as Forum Chair to host leader of the 51st Pacific Islands Forum, Fiji Prime Minister Hon. Josaia V Bainimarama.

**Why is Leaders meeting important for the Pacific region?**

We are facing a global pandemic, significant economic challenges and an enduring climate emergency. Working together as one Blue Pacific Continent is more important than ever. The outcomes of this meeting are focused on improving the lives of Pacific people.

**What are the priority issues to be discussed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders?**

- COVID-19 recovery efforts, the high-level political dialogue mechanism for Forum Leaders, and progress on draft procedures for ‘regional institutional/governance related issues’ are on the agenda.
- Leaders will also consider a draft Declaration on preserving maritime zones in the face of sea-level rise related to climate change.
- A range of other issues for consideration, including preparations for COP 26 and new Forum Dialogue Partner applications are being tabled out of session.
- Over the coming months Leaders will hold Dialogues with civil society, the private sector, Forum Dialogue Partners and CROP Heads. A Plenary will be held with Associate Members and Forum Observers.
- A Special Leaders Retreat will be held in the margins of COP 26 and it is hoped that an in-person Leaders Retreat will be held in Fiji in January.

**Our 50th Anniversary 1971-2021**

This meeting will also mark the 50th Anniversary of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Speaking at the first Forum Meeting in 1971, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Prime Minister of Fiji said: “We are glad to have had this opportunity of setting a precedent which we hope our successors will follow. It is a precedent of communicating, learning, and co-operating in the solution of problems that face the region now and will emerge in the future”.

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**FACT SHEET**

51st Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting- 6th August 2021

*Forum Leaders at the 3rd South Pacific Forum meeting held from 12-14 September 1972 at Suva, Fiji.*