

France, a Pacific and Indo-Pacific Partner

“France is an Indo-Pacific power (...). France is fully committed to this part of the world and now wants to endorse its role as an actual Indo-Pacific power alongside with its partners” (President Macron on Garden Island, Sydney, May 2, 2018).

Mr President, Distinguished Ministers and Representatives,

Both history and geography make France a Pacific and Indo-Pacific nation. With six territories and 1.8 million of its citizens living in the Pacific and Indian oceans, France prides itself on being part of both. We belong to this region.

It is with determination and humility that France tries its best to contribute to the progress and well-being of this wonderful but fragile region. We favor concrete actions consistent with a multilateral, rule-based approach. While excluding no stakeholder within or outside the region, we are happy to work with our Indo-Pacific partners such as Australia, India, Japan, New Zealand, the US and others to develop or expand projects for the benefit of the region. The *Pacific Initiative for Adaptation and Biodiversity*, launched with the EU, Canada, Australia and New Zealand in 2018, is an important part of this effort.

As a Pacific and Indo-Pacific nation, France is part of the region’s potential but has first-hand knowledge of its daunting challenges, among which climate change, the state of the oceans and biodiversity loss are the most acute. We remain deeply grateful for the unflinching commitment of Pacific leaders during the negotiation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015. As we prepare for the Climate COP 25 and the Biodiversity COP 15, we are intensely aware that climate change is more threatening than ever. President Macron and his cabinet intend to work with you, leaders of the Pacific, to mobilize the World to protect the climate, the oceans and biodiversity in 2020.

France fully adheres to the *Blue Pacific* narrative and entirely supports the Boe declaration of 2018. Together with Australia and New Zealand, it uses French civilian and military capabilities to assist neighboring Pacific countries affected by natural disasters. French forces based in New Caledonia and French Polynesia also take part in the Quadrilateral Defense Coordination Group against illegal fishing.

It has been a longstanding French policy to unreservedly back New Caledonia’s, French Polynesia’s and Wallis and Futuna’s growing interaction with the Pacific region. France frequently consults elected representatives in Nouméa, Papeete and Mata Utu and respectfully listens to their views and follows their advice as it formulates its regional and global policies.

France highly values the Pacific regional organizations of which it is a member or partner, together with New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna. We extended a warm welcome to Forum Missions which visited New Caledonia during the 2018 Referendum and the 2019 Provincial Elections and appreciate their contributions to the process. France is a proud member of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP), both of which bring invaluable contributions to their members and the people of the Pacific.

A founding member of the European Union, France actively supports an ever greater EU involvement in the Pacific. We work closely with the European Commission and fellow member states as the EU negotiates the Pacific pillar of the new post-Cotonou agreement and a new declaration of association with the Overseas Countries and Territories, four of which are in the Pacific.

As pressing as challenges may be, we strongly believe the Pacific and the Indo-Pacific deserve the best possible future. The 1.8 million French citizens in the Indo-Pacific will be an integral part of it.

Thank you.