

## 31<sup>st</sup> Leaders Session with Forum Dialogue Partners, 16 August 2019

### *Securing our Future in the Pacific – Combating climate change, protecting our ocean*

Germany has been and will remain a reliable and close long-term partner of all the states in the Pacific Region. We have always considered bilateral and multilateral relations indispensable – not only due to our shared history with some PIF member states, but also in acknowledgement of a greater global responsibility and in view of our excellent multilateral cooperation with Pacific Island States.

For many of your countries, climate change is an existential threat. Extreme weather events such as devastating storms, flooding and the rising sea level put your islands at constant risk. It is more and more evident that these developments not only constitute environmental and development issues but increasingly pose risks to global security. Therefore, Germany strives to address the impacts of climate change on international peace and security in the relevant multilateral fora. “Climate and security” is one of Germany’s priorities for its membership of the **UN Security Council in 2019/2020**. Given your high exposure to the impacts of climate change, it is particularly important for us to give you an opportunity to be heard in the Council.

To that end, Germany has established the **Group of Friends on Climate and Security** in New York, of which many Pacific Island States are members and Nauru is the co-chair. Our Group of Friends is meant to consolidate the work on climate and security in the UN System, find new solutions to its challenges, and lead to tangible results in New York and – more importantly – on the ground, in your respective countries. In addition to climate change, **related environmental pressures and degradation** have direct and indirect implications for international security and stability, primarily affecting communities in the most fragile and vulnerable situations. These factors contribute to the loss of livelihoods, increased disaster risk, the displacement of people and the potential of social and political unrest. This requires special attention and sustained international engagement in order to achieve sustainable development. Furthermore, geostrategic challenges, security concerns in the Region, geopolitical interest and influences will continue to be of our mutual interest. Germany also actively participates in negotiating an ambitious and well-balanced **Post-Cotonou Agreement** with the so-called ACP States.

Germany became a Post-Forum Dialogue Partner to the PIF at the 2016 summit and participated in the PIF summits in 2016 as well as in 2017 at the level of the Chancellor’s Special Envoy Ambassador to the PIF, Hanns-Heinrich Schumacher. On both occasions, Germany has seized this opportunity to actively express its views in the Post-Forum Session. At last year’s summit in Nauru, Germany participated at the level of Deputy Director General for East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific of the Foreign Office, Ambassador Petra Sigmund, representing Foreign Minister Heiko Maas.

Germany has recently had the honor to become **Permanent Observer to the Pacific Community (SPC)**, another milestone to showcase its commitment to the region. In this context, special mention should be made of the Suva-based branch of the German

implementation organization GIZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH – German Society for International Cooperation) for its remarkable work as project partner to SPC and others in the region.

The nexus of climate and security is one of Germany's priorities for its membership in the UN Security Council in 2019/2020. We intend to continue advancing the issue, in particular the need to address climate change-caused risks and security challenges and to build resilience while fully respecting national prerogatives. It will remain key for us to co-ordinate with those most affected by this issue in the broader UN membership, particularly so with our partners in the Group of Friends. We wish to build on the debate under the presidency of the Dominican Republic in January 2019 and our past initiatives on the Council, notably the Presidential Statement of 20 July 2011 (S/PRST/2011/15), adopted under German presidency of the Council. In particular, we want to help build adequate capacity across UN agencies, UN regional coordinator offices, regional organizations and Member States to better address the climate-security nexus. We need to strengthen the climate-related analytical skills and early warning capacities in the work of all United Nations in the field. And we aim at making it a routine to take the link between climate and security into account when analyzing and addressing conflicts and security risks throughout the UN.

We believe that the Pacific Island Forum is the most significant regional political entity to discuss and bring forward security challenges as well as to serve as geopolitical security policy forum to solve common questions, inquiries and regional geostrategic challenges.

Aside from climate change, sustainable development and resilience tasks, Pacific Island States have always been constructive and reliable multilateral partners. Germany appreciates the ongoing excellent cooperation in international organizations and coordination on global challenges as well as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Germany considers the annual PIF summit an excellent opportunity to bring forward common approaches of the Pacific Island States, reiterate cooperation fields, and identify actual challenges and common tasks.