
(Intro)

Dear Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Enele Sosene Sopoaga,

Honorable Heads of Government of the Pacific Island Forum States,

Dear Secretary General of the Pacific Island Forum, Dame Meg Taylor,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:

Talofa (Tah-lo-fa – Hilsen, Tuvalu).

I am truly honored to attend this Heads of Government meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum, with so many prominent leaders. The Pacific Islanders are known around the world for their hospitality – now I have had the privilege of experiencing it.

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Despite the geographical distances between our countries, I believe we share many interests, challenges and opportunities - that we should pursue, meet and realize together.

Two such areas for partnership are climate change and oceans - key words that goes to the core of Norway`s domestic and foreign policy.
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen;

Just as **our** ancestors the Vikings set sail in their long-ships to journey across the cold waters of the Atlantic in search of new land, **your** Pacific ancestors sailed in large double-hulled canoes across this ocean, the biggest in the world, to find additional islands to settle.

Most people – in the Pacific as in Norway - reside close to the sea. We live by, and of; the ocean. More than two thirds of Norway's export revenues come from ocean-based activities – fisheries, aquaculture, shipping and energy production.

The ocean has shaped our history, identity and economy.

Marine resources will be crucial if we are to provide enough food, medicines, energy and minerals for a growing world population. By 2030, the blue economy is expected to double in size, and create 40 million workplaces globally.

But, the oceans are under threat from several sources:

- the effects of climate change
- loss of habitats and biodiversity
- overfishing
- marine litter and pollution

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We already cooperate on many of these issues. We are jointly building capacity for the BBNJ-negotiations (**Biological Diversity Beyond National Jurisdiction**), last through a workshop in Micronesia.

We are fighting IUU-fishing. And Norway, together with Palau, Solomon Islands and Kiribati (uttalt “Kiribas”); has taken the initiative to introduce an international declaration against fisheries crime.
I believe we now need to strengthen our cooperation to stop marine pollution. Every minute an estimated 15 tonnes of litter enter our oceans. We need significant resources to bolster sustainable waste management systems around the world.

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Norway is ready to do its share. We have launched a 200 million dollar program to assist developing states combat marine litter and micro-plastics. We support the initiative “Plastic Waste Free Islands Across the Globe”, where Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu are among the partner countries.

Norway is also one of the initiators of the World Bank’s new multi-donor trust fund, PROBLUE, that supports healthy and productive oceans. Small Islands Developing States is a target group for the fund, and I encourage you to seek support.

But, in addition to resources, we also need the mandate. I believe we should work for a global agreement to combat marine litter and micro-plastics effectively. We would like to work closely with you to make this happen.
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen;

Our future prosperity depends on the international community’s ability to manage the resources of the ocean sustainably and protect marine ecosystems.

We – the countries that depend most on the blue economy – must be at the forefront. We must stake out the path for the future – and make sure the resources are there to ensure action. If we don’t play a leading role in this area, who will?

Norway’s Prime Minister Solberg last year launched The High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy. I believe the panel can play an important role in setting the course for sustainable management of the ocean resources. It is set to deliver a road map for action at the UN Ocean Conference next year.

I am delighted that President Remengesau of Palau is Norway’s co-chair, and greatly value the active participation of Prime Minister Bainimarama of Fiji, which ensures that the voice of the Pacific is clearly heard.

I hope to see many representatives from the Pacific at the Our Ocean conference in Oslo 23-24 October, where we also will be hosting an event with a particular focus on SIDS. I highly value our close cooperation with Palau, who will take over the baton and host next years’ conference.
Ladies and gentlemen;

I know that I am currently visiting what the UN Secretary General has called “the extreme frontlines of the global climate emergency”.

For you, climate change poses a threat to your very existence. Our countries agree that climate change needs to be addressed as a threat to peace and security. Just a few weeks ago, Norway put climate, peace and security on the agenda of the Oslo Forum – the world’s leading retreat for peace mediators.

Norway and Small Islands Developing States have been strong partners and core members of the “High Ambition Coalition” - consistently calling for more ambitious global climate action.

We must now stand together in setting ambitious targets and speak with a unified voice at the forthcoming Climate Summit – as well as at COP 25 this autumn.

We need action, and you are showing the way. I am impressed that so many Pacific island states, including Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Samoa and Tuvalu, have set the ambitious goal of relying solely on renewable energy within the next ten years – or sooner.

In Norway, we have ambitious climate-goals, and we stand ready to support others. We have allocated USD 271 million to the Green Climate Fund over four years, and are the third largest contributor per capita. In the board of the fund, we advocate simplified access for smaller states and their projects, to the benefit of small island states.

In this region, we contribute to the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency located in Nuku’Alofa in Tonga.

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Ladies and gentlemen;

Norway’s Crown Prince Haakon visited Tonga, Fiji and Samoa this April, together with our Minister of International Development. He returned to Norway clearly impressed by the resilience of the Pacific islanders.

Now, as you approach the cyclone season, I can hardly imagine how it must feel to be wondering: Will we be safe? Will my house still be standing? Will my children’s school – or the hospital – still be here when it is over?

You should not have to carry this burden alone. Providing support for climate adaptation is not charity – it is burden sharing.

I am therefore pleased to announce that Norway has decided to make climate adaptation a key pillar in its development cooperation. We have already announced our intention to double our contribution to the Green Climate Fund.

As a development partner and donor country, Norway is playing a leading role in advocating that ODA-graduated countries should be eligible for ODA when their economic base is ruined by a catastrophe. I would like to thank Kiribati and Tuvalu for their kind letters of appreciation for our efforts in the Development Committee in New York.
Ladies and gentlemen;

Norway and the Pacific island states have a long history of working together in the multilateral arena. To give just a few examples, Norway has provided support to the secretariat of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) over the years, and is now supporting the midterm review of the SAMOA Pathway. We are also engaged in structured cooperation with the Pacific SIDS group, led by Fiji, where we coordinate our positions on key issues in the UN.

But today, multilateralism is under pressure. This is of grave concern to us. As small states, we have an interest in maintaining a well-functioning global order where right prevails over might. Where relations between states are governed by binding standards, rules, and conventions that apply to all.

Norway is committed to the United Nations. In spite of a population of only 5 million, we are one of its largest contributors. I hope that we can work together in safeguarding the UN and international cooperation.

We may be small countries, but small countries can also make a difference on matters of international peace and security. Norway has more than 25 years’ experience from peace and reconciliation efforts all over the world. Over the years, we have contributed more than 40,000 peacekeepers, some of whom today proudly serve together with Fijian troops in the Middle East and in South-Sudan.

Our commitment to the UN and to international peace and security is why Norway – after 20 years – has presented its candidacy for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for the period 2021-2022.

As a non-EU member, we have a history of speaking with an independent voice and the credibility to build cross-regional partnerships, bridging gaps between developed and developing countries.
We aim to be a reliable and constructive problem solver, working to find common solutions by consulting with member states, regardless of their size and location. We will push for increased transparency and inclusivity in the work of the Council.

We now seek the support of the members of the Pacific Island Forum to our candidacy.

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(Avslutning)

Dear friends, in closing;

Just a few weeks ago, the world celebrated the 50th anniversary of man`s first step on the moon. What made the strongest impressions on me, was not the pictures of the moon – but the earth. The blue planet. A small island in the vast ocean of space.

We are all living on this island. And it is the only one we`ve got. We will rise – or sink - together. Again in the words of the UN Secretary General; “We must stop Tuvalu from sinking and the world from sinking with Tuvalu”.

When we stand together, small countries like ours carry greater weight and can make a difference on the global stage.

- In meeting the challenges of climate change and marine pollution.
- In reaping the opportunities of the blue economy and renewable energy.
- In creating peace, stability and prosperity.

Our cooperation is for the long haul. [OBS, UAVKLART: I thank you Secretary General Meg Taylor, and all the PIF-leaders present here; for the privilege of having been accepted as a Dialogue Partner to the Pacific Island Forum.]
And as such, I am not only here to speak – but to listen and to learn. I look forward to meet with many of you during my time here.

I wish you all the best for your deliberations in this important forum.

Fakafetai (Tuvalu og likt Samoa)

Kor ab’a (Kiribati)

Malo `aupito (Tonga)

Vinaka (Fiji)

Thank you!