



“Accelerating actions for a resilient Blue Pacific”

Chair Summary

Talofa and thank you to my Pacific colleagues for engaging today in our frank and open talanoa on issues that are of importance to our Pacific islands people in our strive for resilience.

Today our ocean was at the core of our talanoa on climate change, pollution and deep-sea mining.

- Our Leaders have continuously recognised Climate Change as the greatest existential threat to our Blue Pacific Continent. The detrimental impact of climate change on our oceans and its resources casts immense uncertainty on our survival as people and cultures of the Blue Pacific Continent.
- As a measure to ensure protection of our oceans and our existence as a region our continual call for actions on climate change must reference its intrinsic relationship to our oceans and integral links to SDG-13 Climate Action and SDG14 – Life Below Water.
- Marine litter and plastic pollution impacts continue to be of grave concern to the Blue Pacific. Notwithstanding that the Pacific island countries contributes less than 1.3% of global plastic pollution, we are grossly and disproportionately affected by its impacts.
- The Pacific island region continues its leadership on this issue at home and abroad and calls for a new binding global agreement on the prevention and reduction of new plastics and management of plastic pollution already in our environment and support for the **“Pacific Regional Declaration on the Prevention on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution and its Impacts”**
- We recognise SIDS challenges in recycling and lack of in-country facilities to address recyclable waste streams such as plastics and used oil.
- We recognise the need to address the legacy of nuclear waste in Runit Atoll in the Marshall Islands.
- The impacts of oil spills from ships and World War 2 wrecks are a major issue that are often beyond the capability of states. Regional oil spill response mechanisms such as the PACPLAN and Oil Spill Response Limited Membership arrangements are essential to support national marine spill contingency plans.
- As an emerging industry the impacts of the emerging industry of deep-sea mining, despite its potential benefits, now requires leaders to consider the marine seabed as part of the connected seascape of Pacific oceanic and coastal ecosystems across our Blue Pacific Continent.

- The inadequate level of knowledge of deep-sea marine ecosystems, habitats and their species, and connectivity to other marine ecosystems, is a major concern that must be addressed to ensure that their values, and opportunities for achieving SDG 14 – Life Below Water, are protected.
- While countries have the sovereign right to develop mineral resources in sea waters for social and economic benefits, the impacts of DSM on the marine environment still need to be comprehensively investigated. The lack of national capacities is a major concern that must be addressed to ensure these impacts are understood, minimised and/or avoided.
- Further scientific research is required to understand deep sea life better in our region.
- There is a need to build capacity in the region to address deep sea mineral understanding.
- In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach is to be applied by countries in order to assist in decisions.

And on that note, I encourage us all to continue to navigate the challenges our ocean faces, together as stewards of our world's greatest resource. Onwards, let's accelerate actions together, for a resilient Blue Pacific Continent.

Thank you.