



CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS PARLIAMENTS GROUP

- SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY PACT

- TARAHO'I DECLARATION -

Speakers and representatives of Pacific Islands Parliaments, meeting in Papeete on 10 and 11 September 2019, to discuss « A resilient Pacific Ocean » and « Fisheries, a key sector for the Sustainable Blue Economy » ;

Having concluded their work,

1. *Considering* that the Blue Pacific narrative is based on the recognition that the ocean is the lifeblood of the economies and societies of Pacific Islands, that it plays a vital role in the water cycle and the climate system, and that we collectively need to respect, protect, and maintain its ecological integrity for the benefit of current and future generations;
2. *Recognising that* the Sustainable Blue Economy integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, and environmental), and that it requires measured, equitable and responsible management and utilisation of resources and ecosystems by all stakeholders;
3. *Underscoring* the particular importance of fisheries, both coastal and offshore, for the cultural identity of Pacific islanders, their food security, and their economic development;
4. *Recognising* that in order to continue to benefit from the bounties and services of the ocean, management and protection measures must be adapted to the local context and community, address specific objectives, and be based on the best available scientific information and traditional knowledge;
5. *Alarmed* by the acceleration of degradations and pressures on coastal marine resources and habitats, including pollution of all types, overexploitation of resources, and certain destructive extraction methods;
6. *Reaffirming* that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific islands and the Blue Pacific, including the rise of ocean temperature, sea level rise, deoxygenation, coastal erosion and more frequent and extreme weather events, and that cumulated to other human-induced and climate-related pressures, including ocean acidification, it is an impediment to the realization of the Sustainable Blue Economy and to their territorial integrity, including their maritime boundaries;

7. *Underscoring* that the fragmentation of national and international agendas contributes to the incapacity of the international community to address climate change and sustainable development challenges;
8. *Reaffirming that* the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) sets out legal framework within which all activities in the ocean and seas must be carried out, and that it is important to improve synergies in the implementation of international legally-binding and non-binding instruments, in particular the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), include the Paris Agreement, the MARPOL convention against pollutions, the 1995 United Nations Fishstock Agreement (UNFSA), the FAO Port States Measures Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity, including its Aichi Biodiversity targets, and commitments made in The Future We Want, Transforming Our World : the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development, and more specifically the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13 and 14 both initiated and defended by Pacific islands region delegations, the SAMOA Pathway, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, the Sendai Framework on reduction of risks (2015-2030), and the 2017 UN Ocean Conference's adoption of Our Ocean, Our Future: A Call for Action;
9. *Supporting* regional objectives set out in the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP) and in the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape (FPO), as well as the commitments and declarations made by our leaders, including the Delap commitment to secure our common oceanic richness, the Palau Ocean declaration, the Taputapuatea Declaration on climate change, Te Moana O Hiva Ocean declaration, the Amatuku declaration on climate change and the ocean, and the Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Change Action Now;
10. *Supporting* the implementation of regional strategies and plans of action to improve the conservation and sustainable use of our biodiversity, including through the Roadmap for sustainable Pacific Fisheries, A new song for coastal fisheries : the Noumea Strategy, or a Cleaner Pacific 2025;
11. *Expressing their expectation* for the successful conclusion by the end of the year of the World Trade Organization's negotiations to eliminate harmful fisheries subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, overfishing and overcapacity, taking into account the special case and particular interests of small island developing states;
12. *Supporting* efforts by Pacific delegations who, with the support of regional organizations, represent the Blue Pacific's interests in the negotiations for the development of an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond national jurisdiction;
13. *Recalling* the importance to generate and strengthen technical, legislative and enforcement means to honour and execute international law obligations, as well as to continue to benefit from sustainable use of the ocean and its resources;
14. *Recognising* the opportunity of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021 – 2030) to resolve the numerous and entrenched gaps in the domain of scientific and technological capacity so as to improve the health, productivity and resilience of the ocean and support the realization of the Sustainable Blue Economy;
15. *Recalling* the essential role played by Parliaments through their legislative and budgetary functions, their role as representatives of their citizens, and their control of governmental actions;

CALL ON

Every Parliament member of the Pacific Islands Parliaments Group, within their capacity and according to their national interests and specificities, and in an inclusive manner, to:

- a) Integrate climate and ocean agendas in a coherent manner in strategies and action plans, legislation, budgets, funding programs to improve the health, productivity and resilience of the ocean and its ecosystems, including through the promotion of incentives to reduce emissions from maritime activities or by developing nature-based solutions such as marine protected and managed areas;
- b) Pursue the development and implementation of legislative measures to protect the integrity of their maritime territories in the face of climate change, particularly sea level rise, for example by adopting texts that provide that maritime zones delineated in accordance with UNCLOS cannot be challenged or reduced;
- c) Contribute to achieving the international target to conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine zones by 2020 and effectively improve the protection and management of marine resources and areas to ensure their resilience, including through the adoption of enabling legislations that promote an inclusive, participatory and multi-sectoral approach based on the best available scientific information and traditional knowledge, and taking into account ecological connectivity when designating and establishing managed or protected marine areas;
- d) Encourage the valorisation of the fisheries sector in the region in a sustainable manner, through legislative and budgetary incentives for training programs in maritime professions, the promotion of local fisheries, the creation of local jobs, including in the fishing transformation industry, and the promotion of access by small-scale fishers and women to coastal and offshore fisheries, within sustainable stocks limits;
- e) Contribute actively to the reduction of marine pollution of all types, both terrestrial and maritime, by the rapid adoption of incentives offering alternatives to polluting products or processes, or by the promotion of recycling, or binding legislation, such as the prohibition of certain types of single-use plastics, the operationalization of the responsibility of waste producers and of the polluter-pays principle, in consultation with stakeholders;
- f) Actively contribute to the reduction of marine pollution from ships, including through improved implementation of international and regional agreements aimed at preserving the marine environment and its living resources and protecting them from the introduction of harmful aquatic organisms and invasive pathogens, marine pollution from all sources, such as dumping of wastes and other matter, and other forms of physical degradation;
- g) Promote responsible and sustainable fisheries, within the ecological limits of the resource, through a legal framework supporting good practices and the implementation of codes of conduct to develop less impactful fishing techniques, and discourage destructive fishing practices, for example by promoting a reasoned use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) in order to limit their impacts on the resources and the environment, or by giving priority to the use of fishing techniques that minimize bycatch, including of pelagic sharks;

- h) Continue to support the fight against IUU fishing, particularly through better enforcement of binding texts and relevant regional and international measures, including through implementation of Port States Measures and by discouraging the issuance of fishing licenses to fleets that benefit from certain subsidies contributing to IUU fishing, overfishing and overcapacity;
- i) Promote access to science, technology and innovation that is open and responsive to the challenges of the Pacific's Sustainable Blue Economy through legislative measures strengthening research capacity, such as the development of best practices or research agreements with institutions or research teams ensuring fair and equitable benefit-sharing, as well as considering increasing budget allocation to science;
- j) Support the efforts of the representatives of the region to finalize as soon as possible a binding international instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdictions (BBNJ), including through the identification of specific provisions in support of regional interests;
- k) Take stock of relevant international treaties with a view to making every effort to ratify and improve their implementation;
- l) Intensify efforts to progress towards the achievement of relevant regional and international goals, in particular the Aichi Biodiversity Targets expiring in 2020, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Framework for the Pacific Oceanscape (FPO) celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2020;
- m) Call on institutional and private partners to strengthen their support to provide adequate means for implementing financial, technical and technological commitments, in accordance with the commitments of the Addis Ababa 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the SAMOA Pathway;
- n) Collaborate with their respective national government to contribute to the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific;
- o) Meet regularly to report on progress in the implementation of these commitments and continue exchanges between the parliamentary chambers on topics important to the Pacific Islands;
- p) Carry this declaration at the national, regional and international levels, including at the One Planet Summit- Oceania to be held in Papeete in April 2020, the 2020 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (UN Ocean Conference) to be held in Lisbon in June 2020, the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament to be held in Vienna, August 2020, as well as Our Ocean Conference to be held in Palau in 2020.

Adopted in Papeete on the 11 September 2019.