



CONFERENCE OF PACIFIC ISLANDS PARLIAMENTS GROUP

– FANGATAPU DECLARATION –

We, Speakers and representatives of the member Parliaments of the Pacific Islands Parliamentary Group (PIPG), meeting in Nuku'alofa on 22 and 23 August 2023 to discuss the theme "Parliaments, climate change and disasters: from impacts and science to action";

1. *Recalling* the essential role played by Parliaments through their legislative and budgetary functions, their role as representatives of citizens, and their scrutiny over governmental actions; and the role of the Pacific Islands Parliaments in the objective of peace, security and prosperity in a resilient Pacific Region, that ensures that all Pacific peoples can lead free, healthy, and productive lives, despite the damaging impacts of climate change;
2. *Recalling* that despite being among the lowest greenhouse gas emitters in the world, Pacific Island countries and territories are experiencing damaging and, at times, irreversible impacts of climate change, and 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;
3. *Recalling* that Pacific States and Territories place a high value on their oceans, seabed and land, and have a deep connection to their communities, natural environment, resources, livelihoods, identities, culture and traditional knowledge;
4. *Acknowledging* that the IPCC 6th Assessment Report March 2023 states that widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere, and biosphere have occurred; That Human-caused climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe; that this has led to widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people; that vulnerable communities who have historically contributed the least to current climate change are disproportionately affected;
5. *Acknowledging* the irreversible effects of climate change as loss and damage for our people on ecosystems, biodiversity on land and in the ocean, livelihoods, and traditional knowledge for both current and future generations, and that the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise endanger the lives, livelihoods and wellbeing of Pacific peoples, communities, countries and territories, and undermine the full realisation of a peaceful, secure, and sustainable future for the Pacific region;
6. *Recalling* that low-lying islands, states and territories are disproportionately and specially affected by climate change and sea-level rise, natural disasters and extreme natural events and are committed to reducing and preventing these impacts, and strengthening the resilience of communities;

7. *Considering* that the report of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) states that, in the absence of immediate action, temperature increases of 1.5°C and 2°C in the Asia-Pacific region by 2030 will increase the risk of disasters pushing resilience beyond the limits of possible adaptation and jeopardise sustainable development; and that vulnerable Pacific island countries and territories will experience increased inequality and devastation in the agriculture and energy sectors, undermining food and energy security;
8. Recalling that the Pacific Islands Forum Blue Continent Strategy 2050 is a long-term plan for the future of the region at the political, development and security levels;
9. *Acknowledging* the Pacific Islands countries and territories efforts at the international level, notably on the adoption at the United Nations General Assembly of the resolution 77/276 of March 29 2023, requesting an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the obligations of States with respect to climate change, and the request of an advisory opinion at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea;
10. *Welcoming* the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ);
11. *Building* on the commitments and momentum of the Taraho'i Declaration adopted on 11 September 2019 in Papeete, Tahiti;

At the end of the proceedings,

- a. **Commit**, within our own capacity and according to our national interests and specificities, and in an inclusive manner to proactively pursue global and regional efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels in order to reduce the risk of disasters such as tropical cyclones and tsunamis;
- b. **Call on** governments to implement policies to adapt to climate change, policies to protect biodiversity and ecosystems, and policies to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to promote resilient development and reduce the risks to populations;
- c. **Urge** governments to define an ambitious and effective strategy, based on scientific data and the needs of island populations, accelerating the energy transition and aiming to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and promote the production of carbon-free energies;
- d. **Commit to actively promote and contribute to** reducing plastic pollution and to call on governments to support the mandate of the UN Environment Assembly to prepare a globally legally binding treaty to address plastic pollution.
- e. **Call on** all countries, Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), International Financial Institutions, philanthropic organisations, the private sector, the public sector and other stakeholders to mobilise more resources and raise awareness of the accessibility of financing for PIPG member countries and their vulnerable communities in a manner that is more concrete, adequate and adapted to country-specific needs and characteristics;
- f. **Protect** our sovereignty, sovereign rights, autonomy and jurisdiction over our territories, maritime zones, and natural resources, including in response to climate change related sea-level rise consequences and the fact that the continuity of statehood in the face of sea level rise is supported by principles of international law, and supporting the action of the Pacific Island Forum on the adoption of a statehood declaration;
- g. **Declare** that protecting persons and communities affected by climate change and disasters involves ensuring the protection, promotion and realisation of their human rights, diversity, health, access to water and sanitation, resilient infrastructure, well-being, cultural identity, and dignity, including economic, social, and cultural rights;

- h. **Foster** new regional cooperation to strengthen national, regional, and international law, including obligations to uphold international human rights standards and to prevent and address harm resulting from climate change, protecting present and future generations, but also in framing international assistance for emergency disaster response and financial and technical infrastructure rebuilding mechanism,
- i. **Call on** PIPG member countries to exchange information and establish cooperation aimed at implementing emergency humanitarian responses to disasters in island countries;
- j. **Commit** to protecting persons affected by climate change by acting locally, nationally, and internationally, particularly in supporting treaties with equal objectives,
- k. **Invite** members to sign and ratify the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ),
- l. **Commit** to establishing a monitoring system of the achievement of the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for greater transparency and accountability in the implementation of the SDGs;
- m. **Commit** to putting in place internal sustainable development measures, strategies or plans to make our Parliaments greener, in support of the fight against climate change;
- n. **Pursue efforts** to incorporate legislative measures about disaster risk reduction to avert and minimise the adverse effects of climate change, as well as collaborate in the development of science-based and traditional knowledge-based tools and technologies, with free, prior and informed consent of its holders;
- o. **Recognise** the PIPG as the pan-Pacific regional parliamentary network meeting to discuss matters of common interest with the aim, in particular, of bringing its conclusions and decisions to the meetings of local parliaments, regional and international organisations;
- p. **Commit** to strengthening collaboration with regional organisations and bodies, as the representative body of Pacific Island Parliaments;
- q. **Establish** close collaboration between the PIPG, as regional parliamentary representation of the Pacific Island States and Territories, and the regional organisation of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and other technical agencies of the Council of the Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP), with the aim of supporting the action of member governments by contributing to the achievement of their objectives;
- r. **Request** the PIPG Permanent Secretariat to i) develop and propose options to members regarding the strengthening of the group and the sustainability of its meetings and ii) engage with the PIF Secretariat in order to envision and conclude a formal partnership between the two organizations;
- s. **Call** upon the international community and the governments of the Pacific Region to cooperate to achieve the purposes of this Declaration, including commitments in regional strategies like the Pacific Islands Forum 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and international commitments such as the Sendai Framework;
- t. **Commit** to taking the Taraho'i Declaration and the Fangatapu Declaration as Pacific action plans and united voices at national, regional and international levels, including at COP28.

Adopted in Nuku'alofa on 23 August 2023.