

## Pacific Leaders' Talanoa

26 July 2018

*Great Council of Chiefs Complex  
Suva, FIJI*

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*Leaders of Pacific Island Countries including Nauru, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Fiji, Palau, New Caledonia, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and the Marshall Islands joined with representatives of Australia, Canada and New Zealand alongside representatives of business (PIPSO), Civil Society (PIANGO) and Science (University of the South Pacific).*

*This report is prepared by the Talanoa Facilitator Fijian Minister and UNFCCC High level Champion for Global Climate Action, Hon. Inia Seruiratu. It is not a submission on behalf of these participants and does not seek to represent their views, but reports on main messages and stories shared in the Talanoa session.*

### 1. Visions in the Pacific

Participants recalled the Pacific's proud visionary leadership, and direct experience, on climate and other issues, e.g. nuclear weapons and the call to avoid 1.5°C warming above pre-industrial levels. All participants supported a long-term goal of safe, sustainable and more resilient nations. Participants emphasised the importance of retaining dignity, as well as other matters like maintaining food and freshwater security. Pacific Island countries and some others directly supported a transition to a net-zero emission society by 2050.

### 2. Call to Action – Getting to a 1.5°C Pathway

- 2.1. Pacific Island countries repeatedly emphasised the importance of keeping global temperatures to within 1.5°C as stated in the Suva Declaration on Climate Change (2015). The science tells us that this is challenging but achievable and the lives of our Pacific Island communities depend on this.
- 2.2. The vulnerability of our Pacific Island countries to the impacts of climate change is intensifying. The impacts are far reaching and impacts every member of community.
- 2.3. It was noted that overshooting 1.5°C will not allow for any sustainable development for many Pacific Island countries. One participant stated “for our communities to be habitable and to prosper, the world must transition to a pathway consistent to keeping global temperature increase to within 1.5°C. Staying within 1.5°C is the best hope for the survival of our people; the best hope for our children and their children and their

grandchildren to be able to prosper in the land that their ancestors call home; the lands in which their ancestors are resting.”

- 2.4. The Pacific will not sit back and wait for lifelines. We are stepping up to the global call to reduce emissions. We are taking action. As stated by one of our Pacific Island countries, “we are already punching above our weight category”. Commitments were made to deliver stronger nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and 2050 strategies for net zero emissions.
- 2.5. BUT, as was noted by the science representative at the Climate Action Pacific Partnership Conference that day and in this talanoa, reaching the 1.5°C pathway will need substantial emissions reduction by all countries. Global emissions need to peak by 2020 and decline sharply thereafter. The need to vigorously pursue reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 or earlier was repeatedly stated.
- 2.6. It was noted that current and future NDCs should reflect increased collective ambition to take us to a 1.5°C pathway. It was highlighted that current efforts and NDCs have the world on a pathway to at least 3°C warming.
- 2.7. There was emphasis on the need for **focussed national plans and strategies** that target a net-zero emission transition by 2050, supported by committed finance. It was noted that the global carbon budgets for temperature goals should be observed in pathways to this target.
- 2.8. The Talanoa Dialogue is recognised as an instrument to kick-start national efforts – to identify what we can each do and do quickly.
- 2.9. The High Ambition Coalition’s [Declaration for Ambition](#) was recognised as sending a strong political signal on the urgency to increase ambition and all countries were urged to support this call.
- 2.10. Pacific Island countries noted they were doing their best within available resources and capacities to develop innovative approaches and strategies to support domestic efforts in the fight against climate change. Some Pacific Island countries have come up with innovative ways to fund adaptation projects and worked hard to achieve enabling environments for investment. HOWEVER, it is clear that Pacific Island countries will need external resources to enable them to achieve mitigation and adaptation targets and there was frustration regarding shortfalls of public and private investment.
- 2.11. Getting to a 1.5°C pathway requires **partnerships** and the engagement of all sectors and actors. Aligning our work with SDG 17 (partnerships, multi-stakeholder and inclusivity) is necessary. It was noted more broadly that the answer to the question of “how do we get there?” is “we get there together”. Examples were given of key partnerships and the importance of consensus building including the powering past coal alliance, the carbon neutrality coalition, the Pacific business resilience network, efforts under the Montreal Protocol and indeed parties to the UNFCCC in achieving the Paris Agreement. The importance of investing in building consensus across national sectors was highlighted as an important investment, not a sunk cost, in the quest to leave no-one behind in the critical transformation required.
- 2.12. **Civil society** actors play a critical role in relaying messages to local communities and amplifying the voice of local communities at national and international stages. Resourcing for their engagement and participation needs to be factored into the

planning and budgeting processes of national governments and development partners including donors. Their role will be critical in winning the “hearts and minds” in the social as well as technical transformations that must take place.

- 2.13. The voice of **youth** needs to be heard as they will be the next generation who will be faced with planning and implementing the plans and strategies that will take us to net-zero emission society.
- 2.14. While there have been enormous advances in renewable energy technology, we need to see similar innovation in **finance**. While increases in multilateral funding was noted, there was a focus on the need to improve the scale and efficiency of finance flow including easier accessibility to multilateral and private funds. Existing funding agencies and institutions that are wrapped in complex policies and procedures, largely set up to avoid certain risks, should be encouraged to accept some risks given that the risk of inaction will most likely be higher than the risk of a mistake. As was noted, the urgency of speed in the necessary transformation entails an acceptance of some risks of some mistakes in implementation but that should not be an excuse for inaction.
- 2.15. There was emphasis given to the importance of the COP decision where the “**Adaptation Fund** shall serve the Paris Agreement”. Small Pacific Island countries have benefited from this Fund and we should ensure that the arrangements that are facilitating accessibility are maintained and improved.
- 2.16. Participants stressed the need for skills, knowledge and technologies to build and strengthen the capacity of Pacific peoples and institutions to ensure a sustainable transition towards net-zero emissions and to ensure overall resilience.

### 3. On mitigation and reducing emissions

- 3.1. Ambitious actions are underway in the Pacific to reduce domestic emissions. These also form the countries’ nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Commitments include - Palau increasing its supply of renewable energy to 45% by 2025; Fiji converting electricity generation to 100% renewable energy by 2030; French Polynesia aiming for 50% renewable energy in 2020 and 75% in 2030; Samoa driving towards 100% renewable energy electricity by 2021; and Marshall Islands targeting a reduction of GHG emissions by 32 percent below 2010 levels by 2025, and 45 percent below 2010 levels by 2030.
- 3.2. Currently renewable energy for electricity generation forms the bulk of the nationally determined contributions from Pacific Island countries. Given that the cost of energy from renewables has fallen so low and will continue to fall, no technical or commercial barrier should prevent us succeeding. However, increasing financial flows and building capacity to deploy and maintain new energy systems will be key to achieving SDG7 (ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all).
- 3.3. In addition, several countries are actively exploring other sectors that can enhance both national mitigation and adaptation targets in preparation for the next round of NDC submissions in 2020. These sectors include sea and land transport, the agriculture, forestry and land use sector and the incorporation of cross-cutting issues like gender and health.
- 3.4. Pacific Island countries will need partners as well as finance to support the development, planning and implementation of NDC targets. The achievement of the ambitious targets set by the Pacific Island countries depends heavily on partnerships with the private sector,

specialist organisations providing needed technologies and capacity building, and funding institutions.

- 3.5. To achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, the UN and partner countries must do more to support SIDS and all developing nations to accelerate the transition to a clean energy future.
- 3.6. We need to promote technologies that involve the participation of local communities and indigenous people and that build on their cultural practices including the strengthening of North-South and South-South exchanges and technology transfer. The private sector plays an important role in upscaling and replicating such technologies.

## 4. On adaptation and resilience

- 4.1. Adaptation will always be the priority to the Pacific. The vulnerability of our Pacific Island communities will only increase as climate change impacts intensify.
- 4.2. Over the last few years, Pacific Island countries have been increasingly taking action. National climate change related policies and strategies have been developed, updated and have formed into actions on the ground. Various adaptation projects and programs are being implemented throughout the Pacific Island countries, addressing various vulnerable sectors and communities.
- 4.3. The issue of **Loss and Damage** is important for many Pacific Island Countries. There was a call for proper space to be allocated to this issue on the agenda of the UNFCCC process. In this regard, the operationalisation of the Warsaw Mechanism on Loss and Damage is essential in making progress and in ensuring that the current and future losses in our Pacific Island communities brought about by climate change are fairly addressed. This includes recognising that relocation, internal and external migration are adaptive measures that will need increasing attention. Examples were given of islands already lost to the seas and communities that have needed to be relocated.

## 5. The Ocean

- 5.1. The importance of a greater linkage between ocean health and climate action was repeated by numerous participants.
- 5.2. The Pacific has a close affinity to the **Ocean**. The resilience of our people is intrinsically linked to the ocean. The science is telling us that the ocean is continuing to warm and the threat of ocean acidification and coral bleaching will be high for our Pacific region, especially in the warmer waters around the equator. Pacific Island countries called for more recognition by the international community and by UNFCCC processes on the alarming threats that now jeopardise the role of oceans as a regulator of climate, as a major carbon sink and reservoir, as a provider of sustenance and livelihoods and as home to a rich biodiversity of plants and animals.
- 5.3. Work on the Ocean Pathway Partnership was highlighted as were visions of the Pacific as a Blue continent of big ocean countries and the importance of a focus on blue economies not just in the Pacific.

## 6. COP24

- 6.1. Participants noted the need for COP24 to finalise the Paris Agreement Work Program implementation guidelines. The interconnected importance of the Talanoa Dialogue to inspire ambition and stronger action, including the completion of the guidelines, and to inform NDCs was also emphasised.