



STATEMENT
HIS MAJESTY KING TUPOU VI
KING OF THE KINGDOM OF TONGA
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 28TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP 28) TO THE
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
(UNFCCC)

1ST DECEMBER 2023
DUBAI EXPO CITY, ABU DHABI
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

Your Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE),
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to add my congratulations to the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates, for hosting COP28.

We congratulate the UNFCCC Secretariat and the hard working staff.

Congratulations to the Government of the UAE for a brilliant celebration to kick-off the conference, coinciding with the UAE national day at “The Human-Centric City of The Future.” The warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to us all has been splendid.

Mr. President, It is painful for the people of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to see that COP28 may not be the milestone moment we had all been hoping for because our slow progress on the Paris Agreement. The far-reaching impacts of climate change and disasters on human security and mobility displaces more than 50,000 Pacific people every year, due to climate and disaster related events.

At the Fifty-Second (52nd) Pacific Islands Forum last month, Leaders endorsed the Pacific Partnerships for Prosperity (PPfP) as a political prioritisation process to mobilise resources to empower Pacific People to bring about transformational change through national and regional development.

I urge all partners to work with us and help us implement the PPfP.

We need a Pacific-led, Member-owned and managed community resilience financing facility. We recognise Australia’s and New Zealand’s commitments and I, therefore, strongly urge all partners to contribute to funding the establishment of a Pacific Resilience Facility.

We are Ocean People; the ocean is our lifeblood. It feeds us, it is our mode of transportation, and part of our deep-seated culture, making COP28 and the themes outlined by the UAE, right in line with the major gaps and challenges that the Kingdom of Tonga and SIDS are experiencing, that is, the areas of technology and innovation, inclusion, frontline communities, and finance.

The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent sees Pacific Island Countries embarking on a blue technological revolution with innovation at the centre, seeking to develop and deploy SIDS-Appropriate technologies such as ocean energy technologies, and looking at ways to improve the climate resilience of the majority of the Tongan population.

Tonga and Palau are Champions of the “Unlocking the Blue Pacific Prosperity Plan”, which articulates the goals of one hundred percent (100%) effective ocean management for the region and thirty (30%) protection of the Blue Pacific Continent, and aligned to Pacific country contexts, priorities, and capacities; robust food systems underpinned by resilient ecosystems resulting in healthy and productive Pacific people; and fit-for-purpose sustainable financing mechanisms that support the implementation of the 2050 Strategy.

The ambitious agenda before us focuses on four paradigm shifts to guide our work under the negotiating mandates and the Presidency’s Action Agenda, but I believe that we can make major progress by placing one of those important shifts at the forefront of our debate. Mr. President, let us put “nature, people, lives and livelihoods at the heart of climate action”.

Thank you.