

**Pacific Islands Forum
with United Nations Missions**

Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji,
Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau,
Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands,
Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.



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PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM STATEMENT

Delivered by Permanent Representative of Tonga to the UN,

H.E. Ambassador Viliami Va'inga Tōnē

Monday, 22 January 2024

Salutations

Distinguished Co-chairs

- *H.E. Ms. Carolyn Schwalger, New Zealand*
- *H.E. Mr. Ali Naseer Mohamed, Maldives*

**Secretary-General of the Conference (Under-Secretary-General for
Economic and Social Affairs)**

- *Mr. Li Junhua*

**Special Adviser for the Conference (High Representative for the Least
Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island
Developing States)**

- *Ms. Rabab Fatima*

Representative of the Host Country of the 4th SIDS Conference

- *H.E. Mr. Walton Webson, Antigua and Barbuda*

1. I have the pleasure to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Members of the Pacific Islands Forum with presence at the United Nations, namely,

Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. We also acknowledge the guidance and support of the Cook Islands as Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum.

2. We thank the Co-Chairs of the Preparatory Committee for convening us and for presenting the draft outcome document: New Zealand, a fellow member of the Forum, and staunch supporter of SIDS, and the Maldives, as a SIDS. Forum Members view this draft as a solid basis for discussion.

Excellencies,

3. Ten years ago, we collectively gathered in Samoa to launch the SAMOA Pathway. Much has changed in the world, but many of the core challenges which SIDS face remain the same.
4. We must ensure that the new framework contains ambitious targets, supported by concrete actions, if we are to chart a new sustainable development pathway for SIDS. In this respect, I wish to highlight the following priorities of PIF.
5. First, taking urgent action on the climate change front – making drastic cuts in greenhouse emissions, with accelerated action in the current critical decade to transition away from fossil fuels; increasing support towards disaster risk reduction; and scaling up climate financing and simplifying access requirements.
6. Second, taking urgent action to increase SIDS access to finance – including operationalizing the MVI Framework, strengthening the financial ability of SIDS to withstand shocks, including economic shocks, and reforming the governance structure and working of the international financial architecture to better respond to SIDS' needs.
7. Third, taking urgent action to increase the mobilization of partnerships for SIDS, a fundamental element from the SAMOA Pathway where more work

is required. We look forward to consideration of how the Steering Committee on partnerships for SIDS, under the able leadership of Palau and Ireland, can be utilised towards this aim.

8. Fourth, we welcome the concrete commitment to the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework at an early stage. The ability to assess progress against the programme of action is crucial, including to share examples of best practice and collectively identify areas for increased investment.
9. Finally, recognising our role as custodians of the Blue Pacific, we must ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources; acknowledging our own 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent as well as our Leaders' Declarations in 2021 and 2023 on the relationship under international law between climate change-related sea-level rise and maritime zones, statehood, and protection of persons in the face of climate change-related sea-level rise, we look forward to discussions on how best to interlink SIDS regional strategies, initiatives and agencies with the next programme of action, including through its outcome document.

Excellencies,

10. We can achieve these goals and reflect our common aspirations through the text of this document. But if the outcome is to hold any weight with our constituents, then it simply must reflect a sense of commitment by all who sign up to it.
11. The Members of the Pacific Islands Forum will continue to actively engage in the forthcoming processes to ensure these priorities are met.

Excellencies,

12. Let me assure you of our support and the commitment of our group.
Thank you.