



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM



KINGDOM OF TONGA
Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum

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STATEMENT BY

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Summit of the Future: Plenary Session

*Monday, 23 September 2024
General Assembly Hall
United Nations Headquarters*

Mr. President
Distinguished Heads of State and Government
Secretary General
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

Mālō e lelei. Greetings from the Blue Pacific Continent.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum, as we gather to agree on a new global consensus at this Summit of the Future. We acknowledge with gratitude the skillful and able leadership of the esteemed Co-facilitators from the Republic of Namibia and the Federal Republic of Germany, who have steered us through a difficult feat over the past 18 months, right up until a few days prior to this much-anticipated summit. The commitment, the spirit of compromise, and the immense flexibility displayed by many delegations and regional groups in getting the Pact for the Future to a consensus, have strengthen our hope in multilateralism.

The Pact for the Future, while intricate, arrives at a critical time as we propel our efforts toward a future that is equitable, secure, and sustainable for generations to thrive. And more importantly to forge a pact that recognizes the need to safeguard our planet's resources and foster an international order reflecting our highest values of human dignity and justice. The decisions we make today will determine the future of our common humanity. The 18 members of the Pacific Islands Forum are determined not to leave our future to chance.

In 2022, the Pacific Islands Forum launched the **2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent**, guided by the vision of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity. This is not just a vision - it is our solemn commitment to our peoples and future generations to build our common resilience, sustainability, and prosperity.

In realizing that vision, we rely on a stable, open, prosperous, and rules-based international order founded on the UN Charter, that has promoted peace among our global family for over

half a century. We are committed to reforming our regional architecture to be fit-for-purpose, not only for today, but also for tomorrow. Similarly, our global governance system needs to be effectively structured and equipped to address the multitude of challenges we face today and to secure our common future.

The current multilateral system must evolve to address the unique and often overlooked vulnerabilities of regions like the Blue Pacific. We will ensure our active inclusion and role in shaping a global governance framework that reflects fairness, equity, and justice for all nations, large and small. Global institutions must step up to reflect the realities of Small Island Developing States, including through greater representation in decision-making bodies such as the United Nations Security Council.

We have witnessed in recent years the alarming increase in conflicts due to political instability, economic disparities, social tensions, and climate crisis. There is no security without peace, and peace within our Blue Pacific continent is something that we do not take for granted. The Pacific Islands Forum is committed to the principles of peace, democracy and human security. Over the course of the coming months, we will develop an **Ocean of Peace Declaration** that further emphasises our commitment to advancing peace within our region, in support of the rules-based international order and peaceful resolution of disputes.

Climate change remains an existential threat to the lives, livelihoods, security, and wellbeing of the peoples and communities in the Pacific. The increasing frequency, intensity, and scale of the adverse impacts of climate change, in particular on developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, require pertinent means of implementation and support.

We reaffirm the importance of accelerating action on climate change in this critical decade on the basis of the best available science, reflecting equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances and in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

We call for urgent and transformative global action to limit warming to 1.5°C. We also call for stronger commitments from industrialised nations to cut emissions and to also ensure climate finance commitments are accessible for Pacific Island nations.

In the face of this stark reality, the Pacific Islands Forum has innovated to build our regional resilience, including through the:

- **Pacific Resilience Facility**, the first Pacific-led and managed climate and disaster response initiative;
- 2023 Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on the Continuity of Statehood and the Protection of Persons in the Face of Climate Change-Related Sea-Level Rise;
- 2021 Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the Face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise;
- The development and endorsement of the **Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility**; as well as
- the **Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific**, the first regional framework in the world connecting the nexus between climate change and disaster risk.

The Pact for the Future is not perfect but is a positive impetus to the 2030 Agenda as it provides an ambitious and reinforcement of commitments towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Speaking of which, we recognize the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence which, if managed carefully, could drive economic growth and potentially address global challenges thereby accelerating the progress in achieving SDG targets. The Global Digital Compact aptly introduced is critical as such, while promoting a safe, inclusive, and sustainable digital environment.

The Pact of the Future stands as a testament to our collective commitment to equitable, secure and sustainable future for generations to thrive. For the peoples of the Blue Pacific region, our intergenerational responsibility is more than policy. It is a sacred duty.

Our deep spiritual connection to our ocean, land, and culture has been passed down for generations. As custodians of nearly 20 percent of the earth's surface, we have committed to make impactful and mindful decisions today that will provide for the security and well-being of those to come.

The future is not just ours to envision. It is ours to build, with urgency, courage, and unwavering resolve.

Mālō 'aupito.