

**Tuesday 16 May**

**Agenda 2(b): Strengthening Sub regional Cooperation**

Remarks by Cook Islands Prime Minister, Hon. Mark Brown, and Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum - Venue: UNESCAP Hall

**Subregional perspectives on “Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development”**

Under the theme of “Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development”, this session will focus on outlining the climate action priorities in each subregion, highlighting the key areas of cooperation between subregional organisations and ESCAP as well as identifying potential cooperation areas among subregions.

The dialogue will allow heads of subregional organizations to discuss key priorities ahead of the annual meeting of heads of regional organizations to be convened by the United Nations Secretary-General.

- The session will commence with opening remarks by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP followed by a panel discussion that will feature heads of 10 subregional organisations.
- PIF Secretary General, Henry Puna and SPREP Director General, Sefanaia Nawadra are 2 of the 10 panelists.

The moderator will invite interventions from member states following the panellists’ remarks.

- Thank you Moderator
- Kia Orana your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen
- Let me start by thanking the esteemed panelists for their much valuable contribution to the Agenda item in question. Thank you for sharing your views on the priorities of your respective regions and the various initiatives you have embarked on to address these challenges.
- As just highlighted by both our Secretary General for PIFS, Henry Puna, and our Director General for SPREP, Sefanaia Nawadra, an urgent international action on climate change is being called for in our Blue Pacific region.

- Pacific Island Forum Leaders have reaffirmed climate change as the single greatest existential threat facing the Blue Pacific, underscoring the urgency to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees through meaningful, deep and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- To make real progress in addressing climate change, we must strengthen the ways in which we work together. We must keep up our advocacy on ambitious mitigation efforts. And we must continue to hold the great polluters of our world accountable for their actions or inaction that will affect not just us in the Pacific, but the world over.
- The Pacific subregion have a proud history of cooperation on climate change issues – cooperation that we continuously strive to strengthen. The Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP), for which PIFS is the permanent chair, all work on climate change issues as a matter of priority – from the impacts of climate change on our fisheries, to scientific research, to the development of political declarations which help to shape customary international law. The outcomes of the work of our Pacific Islands countries and territories have undeniable global impacts, positioning our region as leaders on these issues.
- In the Pacific, our Forum Leaders have set a collective aim to achieve carbon neutrality in the Pacific by 2050 and we invite development partners, including the wider Asia-Pacific region to support us in reaching this goal. As repeatedly raised, the main challenge for our region is securing the financial support and collaboration required to effectively action our climate policies.
- The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) and its inclusive Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP) is an example of a Pacific regional initiative established by Forum Leaders as an

integrated approach to addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk management.

- The FRDP and PRP encourage innovation, change and genuine and active partnerships, placing climate change and disaster risk at the centre of Risk informed development and we offer these to you, as initiatives to get behind and to support to ensure collective effort in addressing the climate challenges of our region.
- Your Excellencies, Loss and Damage, an ongoing issue for the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) which we have long advocated for over the years is now finally being progressed with the Transitional Committees starting to discuss funding arrangements including a facility that we hope will meet our needs in addressing loss and damage.
- But while we engage in those discussions, let us not forget the people who are impacted the most and those who stand to lose the most – the most vulnerable in our communities and those who have contributed the least to this global crisis. We need to address Loss and Damage with urgency – now.
- To close, I wish to highlight that we in the Pacific now have a North Star, a blueprint to guide us over the next three decades – articulating our regions long-term vision, values and thematic priorities.
- The 2050 Strategy for a Blue Pacific Continent encapsulates how we can best work together to achieve our shared vision and aspirations. It is based on firm recognition of the strategic, cultural, and economic value that our Blue Pacific region holds when we have a shared commitment to protect and leverage this value.

- We seek open, inclusive and enduring partnerships that recognize and support the collective strength of our Blue Pacific region and align to the 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan. We call on the Forum's international partners to support the 2050 Strategy and to align their engagement with our region to its implementation.
- Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you.