

FIFTY-FIFTH PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

KOROR, REPUBLIC OF PALAU

31 August – 3 September 2026

FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

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The Fifty-Fifth Pacific Islands Forum was held in Koror, Republic of Palau from 31 August – 3 September 2026 and was attended by the Heads of State and Government of Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Naoero, New Zealand, Niue, the Republic of Palau, the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Kingdom of Tonga and Tuvalu. The Republic of Fiji, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Samoa were represented at Ministerial level, and the Republic of Kiribati at Senior Official level. The Forum Leaders Retreat was held at Tab, Ngarchelong in Palau.

2. American Samoa, Guam and Tokelau attended the formal session as Associate Members. The Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) in attendance were: Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO), Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Island Development Program (PIDP), Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Pacific Power Association (PPA), Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner (OPOC) was also in attendance. Forum Leaders also welcomed the opportunity to engage with the broader Forum family, including representatives from civil society and the private sector during the formal session of Leaders.

3. Leaders **expressed** their warm appreciation to His Excellency Surangel Whipps Jr., President of the Republic of Palau and the Government and people of Palau, for the kind and generous hospitality extended to all delegations. Leaders **commended** the outstanding preparations and facilitation of the 2026 Leaders and related meetings which enabled Leaders and all participants to engage in inclusive and constructive discussions, and contributed to the overall success of the 55th Pacific Islands Forum.

4. Leaders also **acknowledged** the outgoing Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, the Honourable Matthew Wale, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands and his predecessor the Honourable Jeremiah Manele, and the Government and people of Solomon Islands for their exemplary leadership since the 54th Pacific Islands Forum, and during their chairing tenure.

B.E.L.A.U - BUILDING ECONOMIES: LIFE. ACTION. UNITY

5. Leaders **commended** the Republic of Palau for the 55th Pacific Islands Forum theme, **B.E.L.A.U. - Building Economies: Life. Action. Unity.**, recognising its vision for a resilient, inclusive and sustainable region. Leaders **welcomed** the theme's emphasis on investing in people, cultures and communities, advancing Pacific regionalism and regional integration, accelerating implementation of regional priorities, and strengthening unity and collective action in response to shared challenges and opportunities. Leaders **affirmed** that through stronger regional cooperation and solidarity, the Blue Pacific can build economies that expand opportunities for all while protecting the region's people, environment and cultural heritage for future generations.

6. Leaders further **affirmed** the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* as the region's overarching long-term vision for advancing a resilient, integrated, secure and prosperous Blue Pacific. Leaders **endorsed** the Third Annual Report on the Implementation of the 2050 Strategy

and **welcomed** progress across its thematic areas and Regional Collective Actions. Leaders **underscored** the importance of sustained political leadership, strengthened regional coordination, and effective partnerships to accelerate implementation and deliver tangible outcomes for Pacific peoples.

REGIONAL AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

7. Leaders **acknowledged** that the Blue Pacific continues to face a period of growing uncertainty, marked by intensifying geopolitical competition, economic volatility, climate threats and rapid technological change. Leaders **noted** that these global developments increasingly affect Pacific economies, societies and development pathways, reinforcing the importance of a united and strategic regional response. Leaders **reaffirmed** that regional priorities and aspirations must remain at the centre of the region's engagement with international partners and institutions.

8. Leaders **emphasised** that a stronger and more integrated Blue Pacific is essential to navigating an increasingly complex world. Leaders **reaffirmed** their commitment to regionalism as the primary vehicle for advancing collective priorities, strengthening resilience and amplifying Pacific influence on the global stage. Leaders **underscored** that Pacific regionalism is strengthened by the sovereignty of Members and their collective right to determine their own priorities, shape their own agenda and choose their own partnerships. Leaders **called** for sustained political leadership and cooperation to ensure the region remains united, capable and responsive to the needs of Pacific peoples **acknowledging** the Forum's expanding coordination role and **underscoring** that the regional architecture, and the resourcing available to it must keep pace with that role. Leaders also **acknowledged** the need to continue to advocate for and support the Smaller Island States (SIS), including the advancement of the SIS priorities in partnership with CROP agencies.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND REGIONALISM

9. Leaders **reaffirmed** that strong political leadership and effective regionalism were essential to advancing the collective interests of the Blue Pacific. Leaders **welcomed** progress in the implementation of the *Review of the Regional Architecture* (RRA), noting its contribution to strengthening regional governance, enhancing coordination across the regional system, and improving the capacity of Pacific institutions to deliver on the priorities of Leaders. Leaders also **endorsed** the revised Communiqué drafting procedures as an important measure to reinforce Member ownership of Forum decision-making and to strengthen transparency and consistency.

10. Leaders **underscored** the importance and value of partners to the region and reaffirmed that the delivery of the 2050 Strategy rests on partnerships that are genuine, durable, and accountable, which strengthen Pacific leadership, voice, and engagement to ensure recognition and alignment with Pacific cultures, values, priorities, and collective interests.

11. Leaders **reaffirmed** the 2025 Leaders Policy on Partnerships, and in progressing the operationalisation of the new partnership mechanism, **agreed** on the placement of partners in the two partnership streams, subject to a periodic review in one year that is informed by an accountability and reporting framework, which is to be implemented from 2027. Leaders **further agreed** that the Secretary General would communicate the decision to Partners in line with the endorsed communication approach.

12. Leaders **welcomed** the comprehensive report of the Troika Review Committee which built on the 2025 High-Level Political Talanoa Report. Leaders **endorsed** the recommendations of the Troika Review Committee for integration into the Regional Reform Agenda emerging from the RRA and endorsed the phased approach of all the related RRA decisions to support the sequenced consideration, resource implication, and ensuring the management of implementation in a manner that does not disrupt regional processes. Leaders **further agreed** to consolidate these reforms and the wider RRA decisions into a single transition and implementation pathway through to 2030 under the operational oversight of the Forum Troika, with periodic reporting to Forum Leaders.

13. Leaders **recognised** the importance of strengthening engagement between the Pacific Islands Forum and regional parliamentary groupings, including the Pacific Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, to promote greater political continuity and broader understanding and advocacy of shared Pacific challenges. Leaders **agreed** that opportunities to strengthen this connection should be considered through the ongoing RRA.

14. Leaders also **recognised** the importance of investing in the next generation of Pacific leaders and strengthening links between regional governance and the Pacific's academic, policy, technical, and scientific communities. Leaders **welcomed** Tonga's ARISE 2050 Initiative (Advancing Resilient, Innovative and Sustainable Solutions for Emerging Leaders) pilot, aligned with the 2050 Strategy and *Pacific Centred Leadership Initiative* (PCLI) endorsed by Leaders in 2025, and **acknowledged** its potential to strengthen the pipeline of emerging Pacific Public Sector Leaders. Leaders **recognised** the value of merging ARISE and PCLI and directed the Secretariat to progress this in the design of PCLI for consideration by Leaders in 2027.

15. In recognition of an increasingly complex regional and global environment, Leaders **emphasised** the need for a more coherent and strategic approach to advancing Pacific interests internationally. Leaders **welcomed** the ongoing work to develop the *2050 International Engagement and Advocacy Strategy* as a framework for strengthening regional advocacy, partnerships, development cooperation, and resource mobilisation, in support of Members' priorities for Leaders' consideration in 2027.

16. Leaders **recalled** the global energy crisis which emerged in the first half of 2026 and **welcomed** the agility of the regional system in responding collectively to resulting challenges through the *Regional Response Mechanism* (RRM) under the Biketawa Declaration. Leaders **recognised** the RRM's value as a member-led mechanism strengthening regional preparedness, resilience, and timely political decision-making, with technical and operational support from the CROP taskforce. Leaders **emphasised** the importance of delivering tangible and timely results for Members.

17. Leaders **welcomed** progress made to operationalise the Rarotonga Treaty and the upcoming second Meeting of States Parties to be held alongside events to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Treaty's entry into force in December 2026. Leaders **reaffirmed** the Pacific's longstanding commitment to a peaceful and secure nuclear-free region, in particular one that is free of nuclear weapons and nuclear testing. Leaders **welcomed** progress on the *Preliminary Independent Review on Nuclear Contamination in the Pacific, including at the Runit Nuclear Test Site*, and **recalling** the 2024 Leaders decision to assist the Republic of the Marshall Islands in its engagement with the United States of America (U.S.) towards a just resolution of the U.S. Nuclear Testing Programme, Leaders **agreed** to issue a joint letter to the U.S. taking into account the information presented by the Preliminary Review.

18. Leaders **further reaffirmed** maintaining regional and international engagement on the discharge of the Advanced Liquid Processing System treated water, including with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and advancing long-term regional approaches to nuclear-related contamination and discharge issues.

19. Leaders **expressed** deep concern at rising global nuclear risks, including expanding nuclear arsenals, increasing tensions among nuclear-armed states, and the erosion of international disarmament and arms control frameworks. Leaders **noted** with concern the inability of the 2026 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to reach a substantive outcome.

20. Leaders **congratulated** the Kingdom of Tonga on its accession to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), completing the universalisation of the CTBT in the Pacific, and **reaffirmed** their unwavering commitment to the CTBT as underpinning the global norm against nuclear weapons testing across the Pacific region. Leaders also **expressed** their grave concern about growing nuclear weapons stockpiles and called on all states to advance the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

New Caledonia

21. Leaders **welcomed** the update on the recent political development provided by New Caledonia. Leaders **reaffirmed** the Forum's continued support to New Caledonia, and Leaders **further reaffirmed** the Forum's attentive role in continuing to engage with New Caledonia on its political, economic and social situation and on monitoring the self-determination process in New Caledonia.

22. Leaders **recalled** the process of self-determination in New Caledonia and **further reaffirmed** the support for sustained inclusive dialogue among all stakeholders towards a peaceful political transition. Leaders **noted** the outcomes of the Melanesian Spearhead Group Special Session convened in Koror on 31 August 2026.

West Papua (Papua)

23. Leaders, **recognising** Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua (Papua), **called** on all parties to protect and uphold the human rights of all residents. Leaders **recalled** their decisions of 2023 and 2025 on the appointment of Special Envoys, including the 2018 invitation by Indonesia to the UN Human Rights Commissioner, and **agreed** to facilitate a dialogue with Indonesia on areas of shared interest for mutual understanding. Leaders **further agreed** to facilitate a mission with interested Leaders, in consultation with the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat, and report back to Forum Leaders in 2027.

Pacific Ocean Commissioner

24. Leaders **appointed** Dr. Filimon Manoni as the Melanesian nomination for the Pacific Ocean Commissioner position from 1 August 2026 to 31 July 2029 in accordance with the spirit of the Suva Agreement, and in recognition of the importance of sub-regional rotation, further noted that Polynesia will be the next holder of the position. Leaders **agreed** that future contractual and performance management arrangements for the Pacific Ocean Commissioner be administered by

the Secretary General, with the position accorded status equivalent to a Deputy Secretary General within the Forum Secretariat, and **directed** the Forum Officials Committee to review the Secretariat's Regulations to align its procedures with the Leaders' decisions.

PEACE AND SECURITY

25. Leaders **reaffirmed** the Boe Declaration on Regional Security and the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration as the region's principal frameworks to advance a comprehensive and people-centred approach to peace and security. Leaders **further reaffirmed** the expanded concept of security and that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of Pacific peoples and communities. Leaders **underscored** the importance of collective action to address traditional and non-traditional security challenges, including geopolitical tensions, transnational organised crime, climate change, economic disruption and emerging strategic risks. Leaders **endorsed** the *Regional Peace and Security Action Plan 2026-2030* to advance regional peace and security priorities and **emphasised** the importance of Member-led implementation that is responsive to differing national circumstances and capacities, appropriately prioritised, and adequately resourced.

26. Leaders **endorsed** the Pacific Humanitarian Response Coordination Mechanism (PResCoM) Policy and Operating Guidelines, recognising their importance in strengthening regional humanitarian preparedness and response arrangements. Leaders also **agreed in principle** to the *Waq Moana Concept* as a regional mechanism to strengthen cooperation against transnational organised crime and illicit drug trafficking through enhanced intelligence sharing, coordination and maritime security cooperation, while noting that further national consultations will be undertaken. Leaders **further reiterated** the need to address the social impacts of illicit drugs and broader transnational crime through integrated approaches that encompass prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and community resilience.

27. Leaders **reaffirmed** the centrality of Member-led regional governance processes and recognised the diverse circumstances and competencies of Members. Leaders **agreed in principle** to the inclusion of the Pacific Police Ministers Meeting within the Forum architecture, as well as recognition of the Joint Heads of Pacific Security meeting within the regional peace and security architecture. Leaders **noted** that further consultations will be undertaken on the associated governance, institutional arrangements and composition, including through the RRA, and emphasised that final arrangements should strengthen coherence, take account of the capacity and resource implications for Members, complement existing regional mechanisms, and avoid unnecessary duplication.

28. Leaders **recognised** the importance of strengthening regional preparedness and response arrangements and **noted** ongoing discussions on the proposed *Integrated Regional Response Mechanism and Regional Operations Deployment Framework*, acknowledging the need for further consultations. Leaders also **noted** the proposal by the Government of Solomon Islands on the establishment of a Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Regional Security Treaty, **encouraged** its further consideration by Members, and **acknowledged** the need to undertake further consultations.

29. Leaders, in **recalling** the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration, **registered concern** on the recent intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) test which overflew a number of Members without adequate notice. Leaders **called** on all States undertaking ICBM testing to ensure transparency and reassurance including through the provision of advance notification of at least

24 hours in accordance with international practice. Leaders **emphasised** the importance of all States conducting ICBM tests to do so consistently with the Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration, Treaty of Rarotonga and in respect of the sovereignty of Forum Members¹.

RESOURCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

30. Leaders **reaffirmed** the *Pacific Roadmap for Economic Development* (PRED) as the region's principal framework for advancing economic integration, recognising that stronger, more diversified Pacific economies are essential to strengthening resilience, sustaining sovereignty, and improving the prosperity and wellbeing of Pacific peoples. Recognising an increasingly uncertain global economic environment, Leaders **emphasised** the importance of deeper regional cooperation, greater economic diversification, improved connectivity, and stronger collective capacity to respond to external shocks. Leaders also **called** for stronger recognition of the United Nations Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index by International Financial Institutions, **reaffirming** that gross national income alone does not reflect the true vulnerability of Forum Island Countries. Leaders **welcomed** progress across key regional initiatives, including climate and disaster risk finance, fisheries development, trade, labour mobility, and private sector development, as important contributions to a more resilient and prosperous Blue Pacific.

31. Leaders **welcomed** and **endorsed** the KAVA Declaration, recognising KAVA as a unique Pacific cultural and economic asset and reaffirming the importance of protecting its Pacific origins, associated traditional knowledge, cultural identity and heritage. Leaders **recognised** the Declaration as an important step towards strengthening Pacific ownership, enhancing value addition and market opportunities, and safeguarding the long-term interests of Pacific producers and communities in international trade.

32. Leaders **welcomed** the entry into force of the *Agreement to Establish the Pacific Resilience Facility* on 6 May 2026 and **acknowledged** the convening of the inaugural Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) Council Meeting hosted and chaired by the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Leaders **welcomed** progress towards the operationalisation of the PRF, **supported** the timely appointment of the PRF Board, and **further welcomed** progress on community-impact initiatives.

33. Leaders **reaffirmed** the PRF as the region's pre-eminent climate finance investment priority and **called** for enhanced regional advocacy to support the capitalisation, including through engagement at UNGA81, Pre-COP meetings, and COP31.

34. Leaders **commended** the substantial progress towards the initial USD500 million capitalisation target, including through existing pledges to the PRF valued at USD 162 million up to the 54th Pacific Islands Forum. Leaders **welcomed** further pledges from: Solomon Island (USD 1m), Republic of the Marshall Islands (USD1m), Norway (USD1.05m), Palau (via GCF readiness), Papua New Guinea (USD 4.5million), and the United Kingdom (USD14m), and called on the international community to build on this through new and additional pledges that match the ambition of the PRF that delivers for the Pacific communities now and into the future. Leaders **agreed** that the full list of PRF pledges will be released immediately by the interim Board and displayed prominently on the PIF-PRF website and updated at each Board meeting.

35. Leaders **agreed** that the Forum Troika Leaders, together with the Kingdom of Tonga and Papua New Guinea, will lead the capitalisation efforts for the PRF.

¹ The Republic of Naoero disassociates itself with this paragraph.

36. Recognising fisheries as a strategic asset of the Blue Pacific, Leaders **supported** a phased, Member-led consideration of the Regional Fisheries Development Fund feasibility assessment and broader East New Britain Initiative-related work, informed by the Forum Fisheries Agency process. Leaders **emphasised** the importance of increasing Pacific participation across the fisheries value chain and maximising sustainable economic returns and benefits for Members, while ensuring national ownership, economic accountability, equitable access, sustainability and consistency with existing fisheries governance arrangements.

37. Leaders **endorsed** the establishment of a regional *Labour Ministers Meeting* as a dedicated ministerial mechanism within the Forum architecture and associated Business Case and Ministerial Charter, taking into account the ongoing review through the RRA. Leaders **recognised** that labour and workforce governance have emerged as strategic regional priorities with increasing implications for economic resilience, labour mobility, skills development, workforce sustainability and inclusive growth. Leaders **further recognised** the complementarity of a Labour Ministers Meeting with the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM) and the Forum Trade Ministers Meeting (FTMM), noting that FEMM provides oversight of regional economic policy and integration, FTMM provides oversight of regional trade and labour mobility policy, and the Labour Ministers Meeting would provide dedicated leadership on labour and workforce priorities. Leaders **emphasised** that together, these ministerial mechanisms will strengthen policy coherence, regional coordination and implementation of the *Resources and Economic Development* thematic area priorities under the 2050 Strategy.

PEOPLE-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT

38. Leaders **reaffirmed** that people-centred development remains at the heart of the 2050 Strategy, recognising that investments in health, education, gender equality, disability inclusion and human development are essential to the region's long-term resilience, prosperity and wellbeing. Leaders **reaffirmed** the importance of human capital in the Pacific region and the need to build capacity to support our development aspirations. Leaders **welcomed** progress across the People-Centred Development thematic area and **emphasised** the importance of coordinated and multi-sectoral approaches to address persistent development challenges and ensure that no one is left behind.

39. Leaders **endorsed** the refreshed *Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, **reaffirming** their commitment to advancing disability rights, equity and inclusion across the Blue Pacific. Leaders **recognised** the importance of strengthening the leadership and participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes and **emphasised** the need to remove structural barriers, strengthen inclusive systems and services, and translate regional commitments into practical outcomes for persons with disabilities and their communities.

40. Leaders **endorsed** the outcomes of the 5th *Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders Meeting* and **reaffirmed** that gender equality remains fundamental to achieving the ambitions of the 2050 Strategy. Leaders further **affirmed** the need for sustainable financing for National Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention Frameworks as the primary constraint on scaling GBV prevention progress and committed to ensuring that GBV prevention priorities should be reflected in national planning, gender-responsive budgeting, and public investment decisions. Leaders further **recognised** the opportunity to leverage climate and green finance to strengthen GBV prevention efforts and called for the inclusion of gender responsive and inclusive measures in climate finance proposals and resilience planning.

41. Leaders **recognised** the persistently low representation of women in national parliaments across the region, reaffirmed the *Revitalised Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration* and **agreed** that inclusive leadership and in particular increasing women's political participation and representation is needed to achieve progress across the 2050 Strategy. Leaders **urged** members to adopt national policies and laws to increase women's political participation and representation. Leaders **welcomed** the announcement by Australia on the investment of \$195million in the Pacific Women Lead Program, which has supported women's leadership and entrepreneurship and combatted gender-based violence.

42. Leaders **recognised** the development of an *Early Childhood Development and Status of Pacific Children Report* in 2027 as an important opportunity to strengthen the evidence base for child wellbeing and human development across the region. Leaders **acknowledged** that investment in early childhood development delivers long-term social and economic benefits and contributes to stronger and more resilient communities.

43. Leaders **acknowledged** the continuing burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) as one of the Pacific's most significant human development challenges and **reaffirmed** their commitment to a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response to the Pacific NCD crisis. Leaders **called** for accelerated implementation of the Pacific NCD Roadmap, recognising the growing impact of NCDs on health outcomes, public expenditure, productivity and human capital across the region.

44. Recognising that NCDs remain a significant development challenge with impacts on health, productivity and economic resilience, Leaders **reaffirmed** support for strengthened implementation of the Pacific NCD Roadmap, including through investments in prevention, early intervention, health promotion and healthier communities. Leaders **expressed** concern over the growing prevalence of emerging nicotine products, including e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches, particularly their targeting of young people, and **encouraged** regional solutions to protect public health and prevent the circumvention of existing safeguards.

45. Leaders **reaffirmed** the role of the Conference of Pacific Education Ministers to be hosted by the Republic of Marshall Islands in 2027, as the oversight mechanism for the Review of the Regional Education Architecture and **welcomed** ongoing efforts to further develop and implement the second phase of the *Pacific Regional Education Framework*. Leaders **recognised** the importance of strengthening regional education cooperation to address emerging challenges, including climate change, technological transformation and workforce development, and **supported** closer collaboration between the education and health sectors to promote the wellbeing of Pacific learners.

46. Leaders **also noted** an update by the Government of Tonga on its whole-of-Government approach in strengthening the reintegration of returning nationals including Tonga's encouragement of the need for broader regional implications of these policies, and to explore practical cooperation on information sharing, reintegration support, and community resilience.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER

47. Leaders **reaffirmed** that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the security, livelihoods and wellbeing of Pacific peoples and **underscored** the urgency of ambitious global action consistent with the best available science. Leaders **endorsed** the continued implementation

of the COP31 Pacific Partnership and the work of the Pacific COP31 Envoys to advance regional priorities across the strategic pillars of keeping 1.5°C within reach, enhancing access to climate finance, elevating the ocean-climate nexus, and amplifying Pacific voices and leadership. Leaders **further noted** the importance of a focused, high-level declaration from the Pacific Pre-COP31 Leaders Meeting to build political momentum towards COP31.

48. Leaders **recognised** the unique opportunity presented by hosting of the Pacific Pre-COP 31 meetings by Fiji, Tuvalu, and Australia to recognise the special circumstances of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries, and to reaffirm the region's collective resolve for ambitious climate action.

49. Leaders **welcomed** and **endorsed** the [*BELAU Declaration for Urgent and Inclusive Climate Action to Keep 1.5°C Within Reach*](#), reaffirming their collective commitment to keeping the 1.5°C Paris Agreement temperature goal within reach and strengthening international action on climate change. Through the Declaration, Leaders **reaffirmed** the importance of urgent climate action, greater recognition of the ocean-climate nexus, accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels towards a renewable energy future, and improving access to climate finance for Pacific Island countries. In line with this, Leaders **stressed** the need to prioritise climate mitigation and **recognised** the region's ocean and forests are essential global carbon sinks. Leaders **noted** Tuvalu's hosting of the 2nd International Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in April 2027.

50. Leaders **affirmed** the leadership of Pacific women in driving climate action and **endorsed** the [*Pacific Pact on Gender and Climate Action*](#) as the region's public political commitment to lead and accelerate implementation of the Belém Gender Action Plan in the Pacific. Leaders **further endorsed** the Pact as a commitment for delivering gender-responsive climate action, financing and implementation across the region.

51. Leaders continued to recognise the Green Climate Fund as a key climate partner and called for an adequate and timely third replenishment and improved SIDS access to climate finance, alongside strengthened engagement with regional financing mechanisms, including the PRF, to meet the region's climate needs.

52. Leaders **discussed** the opportunity to accelerate the region's renewable energy transition through strengthened regional coordination and practical investment partnerships and called for increased investment in renewable energy across the Blue Pacific. To strengthen regional leadership and implementation, Leaders **approved** the Terms of Reference for the Renewable Energy Commissioner and **supported** the placement of the role within the SPC, with dual reporting arrangements to SPC and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) reflecting its regional mandate.

53. Leaders also **commended** Vanuatu for its leadership in securing the adoption of the historic United Nations General Assembly Resolution welcoming the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States in Respect of Climate Change and encouraging States to operationalise it. Leaders also **reaffirmed** the importance of continued collective advocacy to protect the rights, interests, sovereignty, and future of Pacific peoples in the face of climate change and sea-level rise.

54. Leaders **noted** the increased likelihood of a strong El Niño event and underscored the importance of strengthening regional preparedness and resilience, particularly in relation to water

security, drought and other extreme weather impacts. Leaders **recognised** the value of Pacific-owned initiatives, including the PRF and Weather Ready Pacific, in enhancing forecasting, early warning systems and anticipatory action, and **reaffirmed** the importance of a comprehensive multi-hazard approach to resilience and disaster risk management. In this regard, Leaders **recognised** that geohazards, including earthquakes, volcanic activity and tsunamis, pose significant risks across the Blue Pacific and **called** for their strengthened integration within regional early warning systems, preparedness frameworks, and resilience financing arrangements.

55. Leaders **noted** the deployment of the Pacific Climate Mobility Initiative to support Members in their national efforts to implement the Pacific Regional Framework for Climate Mobility, through delivering knowledge and data to inform national policies and planning for translating regional commitments into practical national action, and enhanced readiness to access international climate finance to address climate mobility.

OCEAN AND ENVIRONMENT

56. Leaders **reaffirmed** that the ocean remains central to the sovereignty, security, prosperity, culture, and identity of Pacific peoples. Leaders **endorsed** the [2026 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Ocean Statement](#) to frame the region's advocacy and action on Pacific Ocean priorities and **reaffirmed** the importance of coherent and coordinated regional engagement across international processes relating to oceans, climate change, biodiversity, fisheries, pollution and sustainable development. Leaders **further tasked** the OPOC to convene regional preparations ahead of the first Conference of the Parties to the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) in January 2027 and **encouraged** continued mobilisation of resources to support ratification and implementation of the Agreement across the region.

57. Leaders **reaffirmed** the 2021 Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise and the 2023 Declaration on the Continuity of Statehood and the Protection of Persons Affected by Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise, and further **reaffirmed** the importance of safeguarding the sovereign rights and jurisdictions of Members in the face of sea-level rise. Leaders **committed** to urgently conclude outstanding maritime boundaries delimitation treaties, bring maritime boundary agreements into force, and deposit relevant coordinates and charts with the United Nations, consistent with international law and previous Forum Leaders' decisions.

58. Leaders **reaffirmed** the critical importance of fisheries and aquaculture to the prosperity, food security, livelihoods, culture, economies and ocean stewardship of the Blue Pacific. Leaders **endorsed** the *Vakamanu Regional Pacific Fisheries Strategy 2026-2035* as the region's overarching fisheries and aquaculture framework and **underscored** the importance of sustainable management, protection of Members' sovereign rights, climate resilience, and securing greater economic and social benefits from fisheries resources for Pacific peoples.

59. Recognising the importance of informed and inclusive regional dialogue on deep sea minerals, Leaders **endorsed** the recommendations contained in the *Implementation Plan for Member-Led Regional Approach to Deep Sea Minerals* and the *Paper on Regional Repository for Deep Sea Mineral Data and Knowledge*. Leaders **reaffirmed** that regional cooperation on deep sea minerals should continue to be guided by Member leadership, without prejudice to the sovereign rights of Members over natural resources within their national jurisdiction, equitable

access to science, data and knowledge, and adherence to international law, including the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*.

60. Leaders **noted** the offer by Vanuatu of its Global Scientific Assessment of Deep-Sea Ecosystems as an independent scientific contribution that can support the Pacific Deep-Sea Knowledge Partnership and the wider implementation of the regional approach.

61. Leaders **reaffirmed** the need for an ambitious comprehensive and legally binding global agreement that addresses the full life cycle of plastics from production to waste, including existing plastic pollution in the marine environment, and **reiterated** the region's commitment to preventing marine litter and plastic pollution, and protecting the health of the Pacific Ocean and its peoples.

62. Leaders **reaffirmed** the 2021 Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on the Prevention of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution and **called** for collaboration on a Regional Extended Producer Responsibility Framework tailored to Pacific import-dependent economies.

63. Leaders **reaffirmed** their collective commitment to the East New Britain Initiative, recognising its pivotal role as a regional hub for tuna processing and services that enhances our sovereignty over marine resources. Leaders **emphasised** the necessity of increasing the meaningful participation of SIDS across the entire tuna value chain. Leaders **further called** for the urgent strengthening of management measures on the high seas to eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, while demanding that such measures are designed and implemented in a manner that avoids transferring a disproportionate conservation or administrative burden onto SIDS, thereby securing a sustainable and equitable blue economy for the region.

64. Leaders **acknowledged** the signing of the Pacific Blue Shipping Partnership (PBSP) Charter on 12 June 2026 by Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Naoero, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, and the subsequent signing by Tonga, and the convening of the inaugural PBSP Ministerial Council meeting, which formally committed to a coordinated approach to shipping decarbonisation through the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

65. Leaders **acknowledged** the Kingdom of Tonga's concern regarding the protection of migratory humpback whales, noting their ecological connection between the Pacific and Southern Ocean. Leaders **recognised** that their protection requires attention across migratory corridors, including to the impacts of climate change and **called** for further attention on the protection of Antarctic krill and the wider marine ecosystem.

66. Leaders **welcomed** the successful convening of the Melanesian Ocean Summit hosted by Papua New Guinea on 11 to 14 May 2026, and further **welcomed** the Polynesian Leaders Group's intent to convene a Polynesian Ocean Summit in 2027 with the support of partners and CROP agencies. Leaders **noted** that the Summit would provide a Pacific-led platform to elevate ocean governance, protection, and the blue economy; strengthen the region's collective voice on ocean rights and marine conservation; recognise the role of traditional knowledge, voyaging societies, fishers and coastal communities as custodians of the Pacific Ocean; and bring greater attention to the critical connections between Antarctica, the Southern Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.

67. Leaders **recognised** traditional navigation and voyaging as an enduring expression of Pacific culture, identity and traditional knowledge, connecting Pacific peoples across the Blue Pacific Continent. Leaders **welcomed** the Declaration on Traditional Navigation as a Cultural

Heritage of the Blue Pacific Continent endorsed on 2 September 2026, as presented by the Great Council of Chiefs of the Republic of Palau and the Micronesia Voyaging Society.

TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY

68. Leaders **recognised** that technology and connectivity are increasingly important enablers of economic development, regional integration and resilience and **reaffirmed** the importance of strengthening regional cooperation to harness the opportunities of digital transformation while addressing emerging governance, security and connectivity challenges. Leaders **welcomed** progress under the *Lagatoi Declaration on Digital Transformation of the Pacific* and **endorsed** the *Pacific Digital and Artificial Intelligence Technology Principles* as the Pacific's first collective regional position on artificial intelligence and responsible digital technologies. Leaders **highlighted** the importance of the Principles in enhancing cybersecurity, protecting digital assets and digital resilience, while strengthening national digital capabilities.

69. Leaders **emphasised** that Artificial Intelligence (AI) must remain human-centred, inclusive and aligned with Pacific values, and underscored the importance of ensuring that technological advances narrow rather than widen inequalities. Leaders **further stressed** the need to strengthen Pacific capacity, skills and digital sovereignty, safeguard Pacific languages, cultures and traditional knowledge, and ensure that AI governance promotes transparency, accountability, safety and meaningful human oversight. Leaders **agreed** that the Principles should inform the development of a Pacific AI Governance Framework for consideration in 2027 and **recognised** the importance of addressing the growing energy and environmental implications of digital infrastructure and emerging technologies as part of a sustainable digital future for the Blue Pacific.

70. Leaders **acknowledged** progress in advancing regional action on safer digital spaces and **supported** the development of a phased Pacific regional approach to address online harms, including the impacts of social media and technology-facilitated violence on children, youth, women and other vulnerable groups. Leaders **further recognised** the close relationship between technology and the broader regional peace and security agenda and **reaffirmed** the importance of promoting the responsible use of technology and innovation for peaceful purposes.

71. Leaders also **supported** the establishment of an International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Area Office in the Pacific, noting the importance of addressing the needs and circumstances of the SIS and ongoing consultations ahead of a final decision at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in November 2026. Leaders **welcomed** the achievement of all Members being connected to undersea telecommunications cables for the first time and **recognised** the importance of reliable digital connectivity in reducing isolation, expanding economic opportunities, and improving access to essential services across the Blue Pacific.

72. Leaders also **supported** the continued implementation of the Pacific Regional Aviation Action Plan, the ongoing development of a Pacific Regional Aviation Framework, and strengthened cooperation between the aviation and tourism sectors to improve regional connectivity, resilience and sustainable development opportunities, particularly for SIS. Leaders **noted** that the 5th Regional Aviation Ministers Meeting will be hosted by Tuvalu in 2027.

UPCOMING FORUM LEADERS MEETINGS

73. Leaders **recalled** their endorsement of New Zealand as the host of the 56th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and Related Meetings in 2027, the Republic of Naoero as the host of the 57th Pacific Islands Forum and Related Meetings in 2028 to coincide with its 60th Independence Anniversary and French Polynesia as the host of the 60th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and Related Meetings in 2031.

74. Leaders **endorsed** the Republic of Marshall Islands as the host of the 58th Pacific Islands Forum and Related Meetings in 2029 to coincide with its 50th Independence Anniversary. Leaders **also endorsed** the Republic of Vanuatu as the host of the 59th Pacific Islands Forum and Related Meetings in 2030, to coincide with its 50th Independence Anniversary Golden Jubilee.

DIALOGUE WITH REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

75. Leaders **welcomed** the rich and robust exchanges had in their Dialogues with the Heads of the CROP; the Private Sector and Civil Society Organisations; Associate Members and Observers as well as the Forum Dialogue Partners.

OTHER MATTERS

76. Leaders **noted** the Kingdom of Tonga's nomination of Ambassador Ivonne Baki of Ecuador for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations and **acknowledged** that she was the first candidate for this position to address Forum Leaders.

*Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
Koror, Republic of Palau
3 September 2026*

BELAU DECLARATION FOR URGENT AND INCLUSIVE CLIMATE ACTION TO KEEP 1.5°C WITHIN REACH

Preamble

1. **Reaffirming** that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the security, livelihoods, wellbeing and future of the peoples of the Pacific,
2. **Reaffirming** that as a Blue Pacific Continent, we stand united in confronting an existential crisis that is already causing severe and irreversible impacts across our region, including loss and damage, displacement, ecosystem degradation, threats to food and water security, and growing economic and fiscal pressures,
3. **Recognising** the impacts on our region of fossil fuel dependency and the current fossil fuel crisis threatening our energy security,
4. **Recalling** the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*, *Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Change Action Now*, the *Boe Declaration*, the *Blue Pacific Ocean of Peace Declaration*, and other regional commitments, that urgent climate action is fundamental to Pacific survival, resilience, security, sustainable development and prosperity,
5. **Reaffirming** our unwavering commitment to keep 1.5°C within reach in accordance with the Paris Agreement, and underscoring our strong concern that current global actions and the aggregate ambition and implementation of NDCs are insufficient to halt a 1.5°C overshoot,
6. **Recognising and** reaffirming the historic *Advisory Opinions of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)* relating to the protection of the marine environment in relation to Climate Change and the *International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the Obligations of States in Respect of Climate Change* as landmark opinions on States' responsibilities under international law, providing powerful contributions to global efforts to protect the climate system and safeguard present and future generations,
7. **Recognising** the United Nations General Assembly Resolution which welcomed the unanimous ICJ Advisory Opinion and affirmed its importance as an authoritative contribution to the clarification of existing international law,
8. **Reiterating** that Pacific peoples contribute least to global emissions yet bear among the gravest impacts of climate change,
9. **Acknowledging** the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and girls and reaffirming our commitment to gender-responsive climate action,

We, the Leaders of the Pacific Island Forum, therefore:

10. **Recognise** that Pacific leadership must be demonstrated through action and thereby commit to:
 - i. submitting and implementing ambitious NDCs and National Adaptation Plans in this critical decade to keep the 1.5°C pathway within reach,

- ii. affirm our responsibility and leadership in protecting the Blue Pacific Continent, recognising the vast and shared ocean spaces held through our collective Exclusive Economic zones,
 - iii. accelerate development of a Regional Renewable Energy Transition Strategy and implementation of the renewed Framework for Energy Security and Resilience in the Pacific (FESRIP 2.0), to accelerate transition away from fossil fuels to progress towards a 100 percent renewable energy future for the Blue Pacific, including with support from the new Pacific Renewable Energy Commissioner once established, recognising differing national circumstances and pathways.
 - iv. elevating the importance of improving access to finance at COP31 and preparing the Access to Finance Declaration and Action Plan for SIDS and Least Developed Countries,
 - v. implementing the Pacific Pact on Gender and Climate Action in line with the Belem Gender Action Plan,
 - vi. strengthening regional monitoring, reporting and existing accountability mechanisms for climate commitments, with the support of relevant CROP agencies,
 - vii. amplifying Pacific leadership and voices at the Pacific Pre-COP leaders' events in Fiji and Tuvalu, at COP31 and beyond, including on keeping 1.5°C within reach, enhancing access to climate finance, and elevating the ocean-climate nexus, Pacific youth leadership and intergenerational equity in climate decision-making,
11. ***Call upon the International Community for urgent climate action now across the following areas:***

Urgent action to Keep 1.5°C Within Reach

12. ***Reaffirm*** our call on all countries to pursue efforts and implement measures to hold the increase in global average temperatures to 1.5°C degrees in accordance with the Paris Agreement, taking into account their different national circumstances and approaches, including by:
- i. submitting and implementing ambitious NDCs aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5°C
 - ii. supporting adequate means of implementation, including through regional and multilateral programs, for Pacific Islands Forum Members to submit and deliver their NDCs;
 - iii. affirming unequivocally that the best available science, as reflected in the IPCC's work and enriched by Pacific Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge, must continue to guide global climate action, including as a critical input to the second Global Stocktake;
 - iv. accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 consistent with 1.5°C aligned pathways.
 - v. taking collective action to reduce near-term warming by addressing short-lived climate pollutants, including through strengthened action to reduce global methane emissions,
 - vi. giving effect to States' respective obligations under international law to ensure the protection of the climate system and other parts of the environment from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, as identified by the Court in the ICJ Advisory Opinion,
 - vii. encouraging all States to act consistently with UN General Assembly Resolution 80/263 of 20 May 2026 in implementing their respective obligations nationally and internationally. Consistent with the resolution we urge States, in the context of the Paris Agreement and their different national circumstances, pathways and approaches, to implement measures to achieve the collective temperature goal of holding the increase in the global average temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and call upon States to act in accordance with their respective international obligations, noting the Court's finding in its advisory

- opinion that a breach by a State of any of the obligations identified by the Court in relation to climate change constitutes an internationally wrongful act entailing the responsibility of that State,
- viii. strengthening cooperation in implementing States' obligations to protect the climate system and future generations,
 - ix. Member States of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to support the full implementation of the IMO's climate commitments, including through the adoption of measures that facilitate a just and equitable maritime transition for Pacific States;

Greater Recognition of the Ocean–Climate Nexus

13. ***Recognising*** the ocean as a critical climate regulator and the foundation of Pacific economies, cultures, livelihoods and security, reaffirm the commitments in our 2026 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Ocean Statement and recognising the opportunity of the Pacific's role in Pre-COP31 and COP31, we call for:
- i. the expedited and meaningful integration of ocean considerations across the UNFCCC and related climate processes, moving beyond dialogue towards implementation;
 - ii. greater recognition of the role of integrated ocean management in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, radioactive waste and other pollution;
 - iii. scaled-up and fit-for-purpose ocean finance that supports ocean stewardship, sustainable livelihoods and resilient blue economies;
 - iv. stronger international support for Pacific-led ocean initiatives, including regional mechanisms and innovative financing approaches developed by Pacific Small Island Developing States;
 - v. All Parties to the Paris Agreement to support oceans-aligned and 1.5°C-aligned NDCs, National Adaptation Plans and other climate strategies and to accelerate collective action to implement these plans, and
 - vi. stronger advocacy across international legal and ocean governance mechanisms to consider Indigenous knowledge and traditional resource land and sea management systems and therefore the need for adequate financial and technical investment and support for these systems.

Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels towards 100% Renewable Energy

14. ***Acknowledging*** the transition to renewable energy as an urgent 1.5°C aligned climate imperative, a means of achieving energy security, and a critical development priority for the Pacific, we welcome the significant global momentum towards accelerating electrification toward 35% of global final energy use by 2035, as a key enabler of the clean energy transition, as well as renewable generation, and we call for:
- i. Tripling global renewable energy capacity and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030, including through accelerated electrification;
 - ii. Increased region-wide investment in renewable energy deployment, electrification, energy storage and climate-resilient energy infrastructure, enabled through partnerships and collaboration.
 - iii. Just, inclusive and equitable transition pathways that protect workers, Indigenous peoples, women, youth, marginalised groups and other communities, and ensure that all peoples benefit from the shift to clean, affordable and secure energy.
 - iv. Strengthened regional renewable energy supply chains, including manufacturing partnerships and technology transfer.

- v. Accelerated decarbonisation of maritime and land transport, including wind-assisted propulsion, green fuels and electrification

Improving Climate Finance and Implementation for the Pacific

15. **Expressing** grave concern at the lack of adequate, predictable and sustainable climate finance for Pacific Island countries, and that despite being among those least responsible for climate change, this shortfall exacerbates the exposure of our already vulnerable populations to increased loss and damage and other global shocks, we call for:
 - i. the provision, mobilisation and delivery of adequate, predictable and accessible climate finance to help meet the Paris Agreement goals, recognising the special circumstances of SIDS.
 - ii. the international community, Multilateral Development Banks and International Financial Institutions, to give due recognition to the unique vulnerabilities and special circumstances of SIDS and ensure these are appropriately reflected in eligibility, allocation and access to climate and development finance.
 - iii. the effective delivery of Article 9 of the Paris Agreement and the New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance, including the provision of grants and non-debt creating instruments with simplified and direct access modalities.
 - iv. urgent action to close the adaptation finance gap, including through the timely response to the call by the UNFCCC to at least triple adaptation finance.
 - v. scaled-up finance to avert, minimise and address loss and damage, including through the adequate and timely replenishment of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage and other relevant financing arrangements.
 - vi. scaled up, predictable finance, including grant-based finance that is directly accessible to Pacific SIDS to support renewable energy transition and adaptation without increasing unsustainable debt for climate vulnerable states.
 - vii. the international community and all multilateral and bilateral partners to provide financing to operationalise a fully capitalised Pacific Resilience Facility as the cornerstone of our financial architecture to build resilience through Pacific community-led and Pacific community-owned interventions on scale.

PACIFIC PACT ON GENDER AND CLIMATE ACTION

1. We, the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, reaffirm our commitment to leading the effective implementation of the Belém Gender Action Plan, consistent with national priorities, capacities and circumstances, and recognising the diverse needs of Forum Island Members, as reflected in our Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans.
2. We resolve to strengthen regional cooperation through three complementary areas of action:
 - i. promoting Pacific women's leadership in climate decision-making;
 - ii. strengthening gender-responsive climate data and evidence; and
 - iii. advancing gender-responsive approaches to climate finance.
3. We reaffirm that our climate leadership is inseparable from our stewardship of the Blue Pacific Continent. We recognise the vital leadership, knowledge, agency and contributions of Pacific women in sustaining resilient communities, healthy oceans and sustainable livelihoods. Pacific women are acknowledged as custodians of traditional and Indigenous knowledge systems, customary marine tenure and resource management practices, and play critical roles across ocean-based economies, food systems and community resilience.

Pacific women's leadership in climate decisions

4. We commit to advance women's leadership and voice in climate action at every level. We will strengthen women's representation in our national climate delegations, ministerial portfolios and climate governance bodies, and we will sustain a network of Pacific women climate negotiators with continuity across negotiations.
5. We will place women in the governance of how our climate responses are designed and delivered, in our national climate finance entities, and in our engagement with the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage and other climate funds. We will carry Pacific women's leadership into the ocean-climate forums where our future is decided.
6. We recognise Pacific women's traditional knowledge and leadership as climate leadership in their own right. In our communities, women lead the everyday work where much of our adaptation actually happens, and they hold deep knowledge of our seasons, waters, marine and food systems. We commit to value this knowledge and leadership alongside formal qualifications and titles, and to ensure it shapes the climate decisions taken in our countries and our region.

Building Pacific evidence on women's resilience

7. We commit to build the gender and climate evidence grounded in Pacific realities to strengthen our gender appropriate climate response, while recognising existing data constraints and capacity gaps.
8. We will advance implementation of our Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans, while strengthening the wider ecosystem of Pacific gender responsive climate action through regional cooperation, community-led initiatives and national development efforts that build resilience and support a climate-resilient future.
9. We will develop Gender Country Profiles with a climate and disaster lens, refreshed on our own national timelines, and we will build indicators grounded in what is measurable and meaningful in our contexts — including the realities global data systems miss: women's adaptation work,

traditional ocean knowledge, customary marine tenure, and gendered ocean livelihoods such as reef gleaning, near-shore fishing, post-harvest processing and coastal cultural economies.

Making climate finance reach women

10. We commit to ensuring that climate finance contributes to equitable and inclusive outcomes and supports the resilience of communities, particularly for women, girls and those most vulnerable to climate change.

11. We will press for climate finance to reach communities and civil society organisations directly, including women-led organisations and women’s community groups who carry much of the everyday work of resilience and reach women in places no national mechanism does.

12. We will commit to tracking gender outcomes reported and verified across the multilateral Climate Funds, bilateral funding, private sector and other sources of climate financing.

13. We will direct attention to where Pacific women’s livelihoods, food security and knowledge are most concentrated — coastal and reef-dependent communities — in how adaptation finance is accessed and used.

Our Call

14. We, Pacific Leaders, call on our partners, on the climate funds, and on the international community gathering at pre-COP31 and COP31 to recognise this Pact and the PRF as the Pacific’s own contribution to gender-responsive climate action, and to align their support with what we, the Pacific, commit to lead.

2026 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Ocean Statement

Preamble

1. **Knowing** that our ocean is at the heart of Pacific identities, cultures, livelihoods, food security, health, and economies,
2. **Guided by** our ocean priorities set under the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* (2050 Strategy), the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Ocean Statements of 2014, 2016, and 2021, and other relevant regional frameworks and instruments,
3. **Reaffirming** our shared commitment to the rules-based international order founded on the *Charter of the United Nations* and adherence to the *1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS) and its implementing agreements, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the ocean and seas must be carried out,
4. **Embracing** our Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge to continue to guide and shape our relationships with the ocean, grounding our ways of living, knowing, and stewarding,
5. **Deeply concerned** that the ocean is in crisis from the ongoing harm from the Triple Planetary Crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, as well as from overfishing and Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities, while recognising that our stewardship of the Blue Pacific ocean combats these harms by contributing to global planetary climate stability, global food security, and conservation of some of the world's richest marine biodiversity, including globally significant coral reef ecosystems that underpin Pacific cultures and livelihoods,
6. **Recognising** fisheries as a cornerstone of food security, livelihoods, economic development, public revenue and cultural identity across the Blue Pacific Continent with our sustainably managed tuna fisheries demonstrating that collective action can deliver both sustainability, increased economic returns and self-reliance for Pacific peoples,
7. **Underlining** the centrality of peace to the health and resilience of the ocean as outlined in the *Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Ocean of Peace Declaration*,
8. **Acknowledging** the enduring nuclear legacy faced by Pacific communities and reaffirming our shared commitment to a Pacific free from nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons testing, and the dumping of radioactive waste, as set out in the *1985 South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty* (the Rarotonga Treaty),
9. **Recognising** that ocean action at all levels must be inclusive of all Pacific peoples, including women and girls in all their diversity, persons with disabilities, youth, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and other persons in vulnerable situations, by ensuring their full, equal, inclusive, effective and meaningful participation, leadership, protection, accessibility, and benefit,
10. **Positioning** this Statement to guide and propel urgent and sustained implementation of ocean action towards the upcoming UNGA81, Pacific Pre-COP and COP31 to the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC), COP17 to the *United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD), COP1 to the *Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction* (BBNJ Agreement), the fourth United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC), and beyond,

WE, THE LEADERS OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM, THEREFORE:

Strengthened Political Leadership

11. **Commit** to responsible stewardship of the Blue Pacific ocean in the interests of current and future generations,
12. **Commit** to strengthened political leadership by convening a Pacific Ocean Ministerial Meeting in advance of the fourth UNOC, as part of a regional preparatory process led by the Pacific Ocean Commissioner and supported by CROP, and the Pacific Ocean Alliance in collaboration with the hosts of the fourth UNOC,

Ocean-Climate-Biodiversity Nexus

13. **Seek** to strengthen and elevate the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus across multilateral processes including UNFCCC and the *Paris Agreement*, the CBD, and UNCLOS and its implementing agreements, and in national and regional ocean, climate, and biodiversity policies, recognising the importance of integrated ocean governance across sectors,
14. **Call** on States to join Pacific Islands Forum countries in taking bold and decisive action to close the ambition gap and meet the goals of the *Paris Agreement*, reiterating the vital importance of keeping 1.5°C within reach,
15. **Call** for the UNFCCC Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue to be strengthened into a more actionoriented implementation forum with more direct connection to UNFCCC decisions,
16. **Call** on States to take action to address the escalating threat of harm and loss arising from climate change-related sea-level rise, including supporting the *2021 Pacific Islands Forum Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate Change-Related Sea-Level Rise* and the *2023 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Declaration on the Continuity of Statehood and the Protection of Persons Affected by Climate Change-related Sea-level Rise* and cooperating to achieve their purposes, and utilising, as appropriate, the 2024 Advisory Opinion by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea clarifying obligations of all States relating to protection of the marine environment in relation to climate change, and the 2025 Advisory Opinion by the International Court of Justice in respect of States' obligations in relation to climate change,
17. **Call** for timely ratification and effective implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, ensuring that its operationalisation fully respects the sovereign rights, special circumstances, and capacity constraints of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and is guided by the principle of equity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits, and encourage members to utilize the established regional BBNJ coordination mechanism led by the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner with support from CROP and the Pacific Ocean Alliance, and to support joint initiatives to raise financing for implementation,
18. **Commit** to the progressive implementation of the *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* under the CBD, and ensure and enable effective conservation and management of at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, marine and coastal areas of the Blue Pacific Continent by 2030, through ecologically representative, well-connected, effectively governed and equitably managed protected and conserved areas, including through marine spatial planning,

19. **Call** on the remaining non-Parties to ratify or accede to regional ocean-related multilateral agreements (the *Noumea Convention*, the *Waigani Convention*, and the *Rarotonga Treaty* and its Protocols), and to join State Parties in achieving their timely and effective implementation across the Blue Pacific Continent,

Fisheries

20. **Commit** to strengthening the sustainable management and resilience of Pacific fisheries through the *Vakamanu Regional Pacific Fisheries Strategy 2026 – 2035*, while recognising the special circumstances and sovereign rights of SIDS, and calling for the elimination of harmful subsidies, stronger action against IUU fishing activities, and sustained investment in fisheries science and management,

Maritime Transport

21. **Commit** to advancing a safe, secure, resilient, inclusive, affordable, connected and environmentally sustainable maritime sector through the implementation of the *Pacific OneMaritime Framework 2026–2050*, while recognising the special circumstances and connectivity needs of Pacific SIDS and calling for coordinated and sustained investment in maritime safety and security, resilient infrastructure and services, clean and green shipping, digital transformation, capacity development and equitable maritime connectivity across the Blue Pacific Continent,

Marine Pollution

22. **Commit** to ambitious action to prevent and eliminate marine pollution, while calling for the timely conclusion and effective implementation of an ambitious, comprehensive, and legally binding global instrument on plastic pollution that addresses the full life cycle of plastic, including existing plastic pollution in the marine environment, alongside sustained international support to address legacy wastes and environmental hazards, including marine debris, abandoned or lost drifting Fish Aggregating Devices, unexploded ordnance, shipwrecks and relics of war, and the Runit Dome in the Marshall Islands, consistent with the 2050 Strategy,

Maritime Boundaries

23. **Commit** to urgently conclude all remaining maritime boundary and extended continental shelf work across the Blue Pacific Continent, and reaffirm that maritime zones, once established in accordance with UNCLOS, shall continue to apply and not be reduced notwithstanding climate change related sea-level rise, thereby securing and protecting our sovereignty, jurisdiction, rights and entitlements for present and future generations,

Deep Sea

24. **Commit** to member-led regional approaches to deep-sea minerals to strengthen understanding of the deep sea in adherence with UNCLOS, and enhance regional dialogue guided by Pacific values of consensus and respect for national sovereignty, to be informed by ongoing regional consultative processes,

Science, Knowledge, Technology, Innovation and Capacity Building

25. **Commit** to ensuring our collective understanding of the ocean is based on the best available science and knowledge for informed decision making by strengthening and sustaining long term capacities in relation to science, technology, knowledge, policy and finance, to implement our ambitions for the Blue Pacific Continent,
26. **Urge** partners to invest in programmes, including the Weather Ready Pacific Programme, that build Pacific capacity and capability in ocean and climate science, drawing on traditional knowledge,

Ocean Finance and 2050 Strategy Means of Implementation

27. **Urge** that ocean finance in our region be Pacific-led, additional, predictable, long term, flexible, accessible, fit for purpose, equitable, and explicitly reflect the Special Circumstances of SIDS, including direct access modalities, simplified procedures, and financing approaches that uphold national sovereignty and community benefit,
28. **Call** on international partners to meet their development finance commitments and support Pacificled financing mechanisms, including the Pacific Resilience Facility, the Unlocking Blue Pacific Prosperity initiative, and the East New Britain Initiative's Regional Fisheries Development Fund under development,
29. **Commit** to piloting ocean conservation and ecosystem service financing instruments that recognise the value of healthy ocean ecosystems for biodiversity, climate resilience, food security, livelihoods, disaster risk reduction and economic prosperity, are aligned to our 2021 commitment to sustainable management of 100 per cent of the Blue Pacific ocean both within and beyond national jurisdiction, and designed in ways that ensure Pacific Island countries and communities are clear beneficiaries and that their development aspirations and sovereign rights are supported rather than undermined,
30. **Call** for sustained investment in sustainable blue economy activities such as fisheries, ocean renewable energy, maritime connectivity, aquaculture and tourism, to reduce emissions and accelerate the clean energy transition, mitigate against losses due to climate change, reduce harmful extraction, provide alternative livelihoods, and support economic development, and
31. **Call** for greater partnership and coordination through the 2050 Strategy Ocean and Environment Thematic Advisory Group (TAG) and the Pacific Ocean Finance Group under the Pacific Ocean Alliance to strengthen national ocean finance capacities and track ocean investments towards implementation of the 2050 Strategy.