



2016 PACIFIC ISLAND DEVELOPMENT FORUM LEADERS' SUMMIT
12th & 13th July 2016, Kitano Mendana Hotel, Honiara, Solomon Islands

Stewardship for Healthy Oceans & Healthy Nations

PRIME MINISTER MANNASSEH SOGAVARE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE CLOSING OF THE PIDF PRE-SUMMIT
MENDANA HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM
Tuesday 12th July, 2016

Hon Josiah Voreqe Bainimarama

Chief Guest & Prime Minister of Fiji Islands

His Excellency Peter M Christian

President of the Federated States of Micronesia

Honourable Dr Teue Toatu

Special Envoy of His Excellency Beretitenti of the Republic of Kiribati

Hon Aisake Valu Eke

Minister of Finance of the Kingdom of Tonga

Hon Taukelina Finikaso

Minister of Finance of Tuvalu

Her Excellency Kim Aroi

Acting High Commissioner of Nauru to Fiji Islands

His Excellency Albon Ishoda

Special Representative of the Republic of Marshall Islands

Madam Margeret Sapolu

Planning Advisor Tokelau

Mr Siotame Drew Havea

Chairman of Pacific Islands Association of Non Government Organization

Mr Bruce Saunders

Representative of Pacific Islands Private Sector Organization

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

All Protocols Observed:

I am honoured once again on behalf of my good people and the government of Solomon Islands to close this PIDF Pre-Summit.

I sincerely believe that you have had a wonderful opportunity to engage and deliberate together on issues of concern to us, more especially on the agenda items that were discussed today. At this juncture, allow me to extend my deep appreciation to all the distinguished facilitators and panellists who have taken us through the important topics of today.

I must reiterate that our theme for this summit “**Stewardship for Healthy Oceans and Healthy Nations**” is commendable in all aspects, as it captures the importance of our oceans in this present day and beyond our lifetime as we safeguard the health of our ocean and nations. I gathered that you have had the opportunity to share your intellectual thoughts on the significance of oceans in our sustainable development aspirations and the formulation of our oceans policies and regulations.

I hope that you were able to share innovative and integrated ways for us to address the health of our oceans. Unsustainable fishing methods, improper waste disposal into our waterways, detrimental and unregulated development operations along our shorelines are also key challenges to the stewardship of our ocean.

Together our vaka has travelled from Suva to Paris, through the rough seas of our oceanscapes. The Suva Climate Change Declaration recognizes the contributions of humankind on climate change. Though minimal in global terms we also contribute to global carbon emissions.

That being said, Paris Agreement requires a global response by all parties, including you and me as citizens of our small island states. We are part of this global solution on climate change. The Agreement has a temperature goal that requires our genuine commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. It spells out adaptation measures that we must do with support from developed countries.

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

I said that we are small islands states with a big oceanscape. Others have also said that we are big ocean states with small islands. If we lose our small islands due to the adverse effects of climate change – who then is responsible? Or, if we lose the productivity of our big ocean due to global warming – who then is accountable? Who compensates the loss of our small islands and pays the damage done to our big ocean? Someone surely is responsible?

We have a common but differentiated responsibility. Developed countries are responsible for big emissions. Small Islands States are feeling the impact of climate change. Our common responsibility is to cut down on big emissions. Our differentiated responsibility is on the levels of our emissions. Our common responsibility is to compensate small island countries for the loss and damage. Our differentiated responsibility is on the level of our compensation. We are all responsible for harnessing the ocean wealth and guaranteeing ocean health.

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

I concur with our experts that harnessing the wealth of the ocean and guaranteeing the health of the ocean, would require zone based management of our oceans resources. I further concur with them that this outrightly means the empowerment of Pacific Islands Countries and promotion of self-reliance of coastal states, and people are key to harnessing ocean wealth and guaranteeing ocean health.

Taking this forward, from Honiara to Marrakesh, let us agree that our ocean must be properly managed for the betterment of our present and future generations. In saying this I mean that we must stand tall and take ownership in the management of our oceans and resources because we are the people of the ocean, we are the people of the Pacific, we are the guardians of the largest ocean in the world. It is by no mistake we were rightfully chosen to protect this largest portion of creation and we have an obligation to take charge of this responsibility.

I wish to close by reflecting that the Ocean is so vast and our vakas are so small, *but living with our oceans and from our oceans in a sustainable way can be achieved through stewardship of this gift and cooperation with the neighbour.* The momentum you have created will carry forward to tomorrow as we will gather once again to reflect the outcomes of your discussions in the strategies of PIDF for the next 2 years.

Thank you.