



KIOA CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION

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SUMMARY OF THE PRIORITIES OF PACIFIC CIVIL SOCIETY BASED ON THE KIOA TALANOA 17-19 OCTOBER 2022

“Toku fenua se tifa samasama kae ko se ile nei ne te tuigala. Fakalaga ake la” (My island is a mother of pearl that now no longer glows from the rays of the sun. We seek its restoration).

Preamble

We the Pacific civil societies gathered at the Alofi¹ of Kioa Island, uphold the civic values and rights of our respective peoples, villages and neighbourhoods, including;

Values and qualities such as spirituality, reciprocity, compassion, love for people, ecosystems: *te fenua* [land], *te lagi* [sky] and *te moana* [ocean]; and

With collective aspirations, for a just and dignified legacy for our families and future generations.

Our Stories

We present six of the many stories about climate change impacts across the Pacific:

1. Cogeia, Fiji

Cogeia village prepared for Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Yasa, but did not expect the devastating flooding that ensued. To our surprise, at 8pm 17th December 2020, the two neighboring rivers broke their banks, and floodwaters began to rise, we watched our homeland with a heavy heart knowing that the pieces of land that we call home were no more. A total of 18 houses were washed away.

2. Rabi, Fiji

The history of the Banaba people is a lesson to the world. We were forcibly relocated, by Australian, British and New Zealand governments, from our island home in modern day Kiribati to an island in Fiji. Our relocation was a direct result of extractive industry and global trade. We bear testimony to the zhuman cost and trauma borne by a community. We are what non-economic loss and damage looks like. We do not want any other community to go through what we experienced.

3. Republic of Marshall Islands

Marshallese have always been a people of the sea, navigators sailing from one island to another, over the vast blue ocean. Always moving today. They have become nomads, wandering in foreign lands, lamenting over their loss.

¹ Alofi is where the land meets the sea or the sea front.

Today, the threat of climate change puts us on the verge of displacement once again.

But this time we are putting our foot on the door. Never again do we want to be put in that position. We are adapting, we are mitigating, we are staying, “even if it means we are swimming in our own homes”.

4. Torres Strait

We are a speck in the ocean between two major continents, Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Our people are fighting, fighting against climate change. While people are sitting in their lounge room enjoying life, me and my people are picking up the bones of my ancestors like shells off the beach.

We are in a fight for survival. As the time is ticking, and our home is being washed away, the greediness of this world, hungry for money, shows it is neglecting a very ancient race of people.

We appeal to the Leaders of the world to have remorse and save what you can. Our future can be preserved for our future generations, not only our generations but your generations too.

5. Tuvalu

Loss and Damage, such as loss of burial grounds, ancestral land, shorelines, fishing grounds and culture, is a lived reality for our people. We are surrounded by water but do not have enough to drink. Rising sea levels, have contaminated the ground water, and have affected agriculture and water sources. The changes in rainfall pattern have resulted in prolonged dry season leading to extreme water shortage. Rising temperatures are causing severe heat stress leading to significant health impacts. People are not able to do outdoor activities such as working on plantations and fishing for long periods because of the intense heat, which is also affecting the marine environment which is a major source of daily food supply for our people. As we say in Tuvalu, “if we can save Tuvalu, we can save the world from climate change”, Tuvalu depicts all the impacts of climate change and is also an example of the resiliency of her people.

6. Kioa

As a migrant community on the frontlines of the climate crisis, we have called our sisters and brothers of Pacific civil society to talanoa here, on our island, because it is about the fate of our very own people. Kioa is a story of planned relocation. However, today we carry the dangerous futures of our homeland Tuvalu who face forced relocation due to sea level rise. Ours is a story about our ‘tears of resilience’.

We acknowledge these and all other Pacific communities fighting for climate justice and the struggles of other marginalised groups and indigenous communities, including from Aotearoa, Australia, Taiwan, Torres Strait, and many others across the world.

We make this **Declaration** recognising that everyone has a role and responsibility in ensuring just, equitable and secure futures for Pacific peoples.

We acknowledge the roles played by Pacific Leaders in championing climate action through previous statements, including the Suva Climate Change Declaration (2015), Boe Declaration (2018), Kainaki II Declaration (2019) and 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy (2022).

We make this declaration to ensure our communities' access to resources for climate adaptation, mitigation, relocation, resettlement and human security amidst the climate emergency.

In this spirit, we call on Leaders of Pacific nations to support and act on this Declaration on regional and international platforms, and continue the struggle for urgent and effective climate action by State Parties. We call on Leaders to do this through:

- Strengthened cooperation, collaboration and co-implementation with civil societies;
- Greater coordination and coherence of policies and programs at all levels;
- Endorsement and support for the Kioa Pledge including the Kioa Finance Mechanism² ;
- The appointment of Pacific Civil Society Special Advocates³.

Through this Declaration we demand urgent and decisive actions through:

1. Greater action on mitigation, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to align to the 1.5°C temperature goal, to ensure survival of small island communities.
 - This will be realised by completely phasing out fossil fuels, including no new fossil fuel projects, ending subsidies and financing of fossil fuel and other carbon-emitting extractive industries;
 - Through safe and just transition to renewable and sustainable energy by 2050; and
 - Achieving actual emissions reductions at source rather than through the use of 'blue' carbon credits and other carbon offset schemes.
2. Urgent action on adaptation including financing and support for community-led initiatives.

² See Annex

³ One each from the subregions of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia as well as one from the First Nations of Australia and one from tangata whenua of Aotearoa New Zealand)

3. Urgent progress on the issue of Loss & Damage (L&D) by:
 - a. Securing separate, new and additional financing;
 - b. Establishing a Global Civil Society Taskforce, under the Warsaw International Mechanism, for Non-Economic Loss and Damage;
 - c. Establishing a Regional Civil Society Taskforce to ensure the Pacific voice in this process.
4. Ensure the just, dignified and safe movement of peoples, in the context of climate change, especially:
 - a. Migration with dignity is protected by law and promoted in policy;
 - b. Planned relocation and resettlement programs are community-focussed, consultative and based on free, prior and informed consent;
 - c. Utilise technology for collection and upkeep of data in the service of Pacific people.
5. Guaranteed access to finance, and the creation of more equitable finance arrangements, beginning with a review of regional and international financial architectures, with inputs from civil society organisations and other stakeholders.
6. Ocean policies that are compatible with the climate goals, including:
 - a. Ban on deep sea mining;
 - b. Ban on discharge of wastes, including nuclear;
 - c. Protect the oceans for the survival of small island communities and ecosystems;
 - d. Recognise, respect, uphold and value the contributions traditional knowledge, culture and faith have played and continue to play in sustaining the unique relationship between the oceans and the environment.
7. Achieve inter-generational equity, ensuring we leave a better world for our descendants, by cancelling climate debt and a commitment to a debt-free future.

As Civil Society Organisations of the Pacific, we hear the resounding response from our people that telling our stories is no longer enough. For far too long, the realities of our people have been used to highlight the urgency of the climate crisis. Fatigue from the constant retelling of stories and the burden of reliving the trauma connected to them without seeing any tangible changes has placed a heavy weight on the communities we serve.

Gathered on Kioa Island we call on our leaders to champion The Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration.

Signing onto the Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration is only the beginning of the journey.

ISSUED ON THE ISLAND OF KIOA, FIJI, 19 OCTOBER 2022



Annex 1: Kioa Pledge

As CSOs working on climate change in the Pacific, we acknowledge our access to different streams of funding and resources. Our responsibility to our people is to clear a pathway to these resources, to facilitate the quality of life of their communities.

We pledge to work together, to mobilise and allocate resources, whether they be monetary, technical or technological, to run and sustain the development of a Kioa Finance Mechanism.

The Kioa Finance Mechanism will be a platform that brings together the resources and expertise of our organisations to support our communities to access funding and resources for the projects needed in their homes, villages and islands.

The Kioa Finance Mechanism will exist as a user-friendly process that communities can access upon request. This request can range in scale, including but not limited to capacity building, community adaptation projects, utilities access, planned relocation and more.

We pledge to support this Mechanism and work together to connect communities with the resources necessary to meet their requests. This ensures the burden of access does not fall back on affected communities.

We call for national and subnational recognition and support for this community-responsible initiative.

Annex 2

1. RMI

Marshallese have always been a people of the sea, navigators sailing from one island to another, over the vast blue ocean. Always moving...today. They have become nomads, wandering in foreign lands, lamenting over their loss.

Today, the threat of climate change puts us on the verge of displacement once again.

But this time we are putting our foot on the door. Never again do we want to be put in that position. We are adapting, we are mitigating, we are staying, “even if it means we are swimming in our own homes”.

However, in 1954, displacement was introduced when the US military used our islands as a nuclear weapons testing ground.

Deceived and misinformed, the people of Enewetak and Bikini migrated to a land that was not theirs, giving up their homes “for the good of mankind”. The neighboring atolls of Rongelap and Utrik, were then contaminated by the radioactive fallout that was deliberately scattered by the winds. The people of those atolls, too, had to relocate.

Today, many of these people are unable to return home, as scientists proclaim the islands inhabitable.

2. Cogea, Fiji

Cogea village prepared for Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Yasa, but did not expect the devastating flooding that ensued. To our surprise, at 8pm 17th December 2020, the two neighboring rivers broke their banks, and floodwaters began to rise. Our evacuation centre was at the level of rising waters, and as youth, it was our responsibility to move people from our village church to one of the houses built in an elevated area in our village, at the very height of the category 5 cyclone. We could only watch with horror from the houses we were sheltering in that night as we saw houses moved from their foundation and washed away by the strong currents of the flooded rivers. On the morning of Dec 18 2020, we watched our homeland with a heavy heart knowing that the pieces of land that we call home were no more. A total of 18 houses were washed away.

3. Torres Strait

Before time began, we were navigators. The star constellations our ancestors followed, has always and always remain the same. We have a part in our journey to take. Our ancestors have followed this journey. Our fathers and our forefathers. The journey lies a mystery for our future generation for what's going to happen in the future of our children. The world knows that we are navigators.

What climate change for us and our people has confused an ancient practice. We are in tune, and we are one with nature. We are the only race of people, that we see a particular plant, we know that this particular fish. We monitor our livestock by looking at plants, by looking at birds tells us when the wind picks up or drop. We are the only race of people that when we look at a mango and knows rain didn't come, and its confusing mother nature now.

You and I both know climate change has affected that particular part of our culture, our tradition but it never changes that star above.

As we are here preparing our vaka to sail, as we are doing this for our future generation. ALL of us here have an obligation in life. That is to save what belongs to us. Our fathers, our forefathers, our ancestors fought for our survival. We here today are living proof – we have to do the same. We follow this particular star, for our future.

KIOA CLIMATE EMERGENCY

