



FRENCH POLYNESIA

**KAINAKI II TO COP 26 - PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE ON URGENT
CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION**

Friday December 11, 2020, 6.30pm - 8.30pm (Fiji Time)

Virtual

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. EDOUARD FRITCH
PRESIDENT OF FRENCH POLYNESIA**

“Climate-Oceans nexus”

Honourable Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, Dear Kausea Natano,

Honourable Prime Ministers of Pacific Islands Forum,

Honourable Ministers, Ambassadors and Representatives of the Pacific Islands Forum and
Dialogue Partners,

Dear Heads of Delegations

Dear friends, Ladies and Gentlemen, Ia ora na and Bula Vinaka to all,

It is an honour and a privilege for me to participate in this round table on such an important
subject.

1 / French Polynesia's contribution to the Paris Agreement

Our goal in French Polynesia is to achieve a 50% reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

To this effect, we will implement a new Climate-Air-Energy Plan including the public and private sectors and citizens. So, French Polynesia will, from 2021, promote the large-scale production of solar energy by hybrid power plants.

At the regional level, French Polynesia has chaired and will keep its involvement in the *Pacific Resilient Partnership Taskforce*.

oOo

For this round table I will address the topic of Climate-Ocean Nexus.

2 / Collective measures for the preservation of the Pacific Ocean

98% of our Pacific region is a 40 million square kilometres Ocean.

We are collectively committed towards the sustainable management of our ocean through the *2002 Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy*; the *2010 Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape*; and the *Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries*.

In addition, the Blue Pacific continent has shown strong leadership on the international scene in calling for action on oceans. This enabled the adoption of SDG14 within the UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

We welcome the recent Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue initiated at COP25. We request the outcomes to be discussed at COP 26 in order to develop a work programme on Ocean within the UNFCCC.

oOo

3 / The threat to the Ocean persists

Unfortunately, despite the efforts undertaken, the IPCC Special Report on Oceans and Cryosphere confirms the threats of climate change to the Ocean, including a decline in biodiversity, lower attractiveness of coral reefs for tourists and negative impacts on Pacific indigenous knowledge and cultures.

As custodians of the largest ocean and carbon sink, we call for action to prevent the irreversible impacts of climate change on the oceans.

So, dear Dialogue Partners, we count on your support to finalize and adopt an ambitious international legally-binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

oOo

4 / Pacific initiatives to support

In 2018, French Polynesia listed its 5 million square kilometre EEZ as a Marine Managed Area, TE TAINUI ATEA.

With the support of France, we are working towards its recognition at the international level by UNEP.

We also acknowledge the initiatives of the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Palau, and New Caledonia. With my Minister of the Environment, we wish to initiate a real network of Marine Managed Areas in the Pacific in order to pool our common know-how and jointly face the challenges of good management of the sea.

Furthermore, in terms of food security and in order to preserve the stock of natural marine resources, we would like to focus on two strong work guidelines:

- The development of sustainable fishing throughout the Pacific, by promoting low-impact fishing techniques and by banning purse seine fishing throughout the Pacific and drifting fish aggregating devices that pollute our islands.
- The development of sustainable aquaculture based on native species. Aquaculture allows to limit fishing pressure, reduce imports, and develop a circular economy aiming at energy self-sufficiency. Recently, our aquaculture programmes have also moved towards species with a low carbon footprint, such as herbivorous fish, algae, oysters, sea cucumbers, sponges and cone shells.

Finally, with the help of Météo France and with funding from the French Development Agency, a regional study will be carried out in 2021 in order to better understand and forecast climate change in the Pacific, in terms of cyclones, extreme rains, ocean water temperature and possibly sea level rise.

oOo

Calls for action to the Forum Dialogue Partners

Dear Partners, we would like to send you the following calls for action:

- Support the examination of the outcomes of the recent Ocean-Climate Dialogue convened in early December to inform the COP26 negotiations, with a view to develop a work programme on oceans within the UNFCCC;
- Provide financial support to improve the understanding of Ocean-Climate nexus in the Pacific;
- Finalize and approve the BBNJ instrument within the UN;
- Support sustainable fishing, in particular the ban on purse seine fishing and on drifting fish aggregating devices throughout the Pacific.
- Support the development of aquaculture in the Pacific to ensure food security for all.
- Support the development of ecological agriculture in order to avoid chemical pollution which destroys and degrades the natural resources of our ocean.

Thank you.