

## PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

*Wednesday, 28th September 2022*

### **First US & Pacific Island Country Summit**

Honorable representatives of the US government and agencies,  
Honorable Fellow Leaders of our Blue Pacific Continent and their representatives,  
Mr. Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum  
Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here this evening at the Coast Guard Headquarters for this historical first Pacific Islands – United States Summit and to share views on the paramount topic of maritime domain.

We, people of the Pacific, are the custodians of the largest oceanic continent on our Blue Planet. We belong to the Ocean and the issue of maritime domain is therefore not only a matter of sustainable development and livelihood but also of Identity. Forum Leaders are committed stewards of the Blue Pacific continent as exemplified by the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Ocean Statement 2021 and other relevant frameworks.

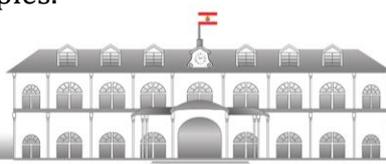
French Polynesia and myself have a longstanding and unwavering commitment to sustainable ocean management, use and conservation. In 1996, I was the then minister of Fisheries and did halt the selling of fishing licenses to foreign fleets to develop our domestic fleet.

In 2002, French Polynesia created the largest sanctuary for the protection of marine mammals worldwide in its Economic Exclusive Zone.

In 2018, my government turned our 4,7 million square kilometers EEZ into a marine-managed area called Te Tainui Atea whilst striving to ensure the sustainability of our local fishing industry. Destructive fishing practices such as purse-seining are forbidden in French Polynesia.

Earlier this year, at the One Ocean Summit, I have committed to additional protective and management measures covering 1 million square kilometer of our maritime domain such as dedicating about 500 000 square kilometers to the sole subsistence fishing.

Our actions have been guided by a vision that puts the human being at the core of the Ocean protection and management. Pacific peoples belong to the land, to the sea and the air. Our vision is comprehensive, global and systemic, and we want it to be enshrined in a long-term perspective. It aims to improve the standard of living and quality of life, to regain ownership of traditional concepts and know-how, and to create solidarity between generations and between peoples.



Our vision revolves around four pillars :

- Mou'a ti'a : the preservation of the Heart of our Islands,
- Tai uta : the restoration of the Land-Sea nexus,
- Tainui ātea : the protection and sustainable management of our EEZ,
- Te Moana nui o hiva : the construction of the Great Blue Wall of the Pacific.

Please allow me to make a few final remarks related to the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing. Last week, the USS Jackson and Rear Admiral Crawford visited my country as part of the US commitment to fight against IUU. It is a plague that endangers the sustainability of our Fisheries and our Pacific Blue Continent economy.

So let us commend the US engagement on this matter and call to bolstering it, not only on IUU but also on scaling up US financial support to the Pacific economies.

I thank you all for your attention.

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