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Remarks

by

Ms. Fekitamoelea Katoa ‘Utoikamanu

High Representative

and

Under-Secretary General

**Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small
Island Developing States**

at

Associate Member and Observers Dialogue with Forum Leaders

4 September 2018, Aiwo, Nauru

Your Excellency, Baron Waqa,

President of the Republic of Nauru and Chair of the 49th Pacific Islands Leaders Forum

Your Excellencies - Pacific Leaders,

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning/afternoon to you all.

I have the distinct honor to represent the United Nations at the request of H.E. Secretary-General António Guterres.

The Secretary-General extends his warm greetings and his best wishes to Pacific Leaders for a successful meeting. He looks forward to welcoming you to the United Nations in New York in September.

Please allow me to thank you, President Waqa and Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, for convening this important meeting guided by your vision and leadership.

I must express our deep appreciation to the Government and people of Nauru for hosting us and thank you for your warm and generous welcome to all of us.

It indeed is an honor to be with you for this 49th Pacific Islands Leaders Forum, with the telling theme of:

“Building a Strong Pacific: Our Islands, Our People, Our Will.”

The theme resonates with the core of what the United Nations was visioned to be, with our shared Sustainable Development Goals and our work to support you and YOUR visions to build resilient and sustainable island communities.

We look forward to the adoption of the expanded regional security framework which can build on the success of the original Biketawa declaration.

The proposed expanded security vision which includes such critical issues like climate change and cyber security, as well as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and transnational crime, will be key to building a peaceful and resilient region.

The United Nations stands ready to support you in the implementation of your declaration.

We applaud efforts made by leaders on peacebuilding. The United Nations supports the leadership of the Solomon Islands in taking forward peacebuilding priorities, in partnership with the Peacebuilding Fund and Commission, following the departure of the successful Regional Assistance Mission.

We also congratulate the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Autonomous Bougainville Government for your joint progress in implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement which the UN will continue to support.

On humanitarian issues, we wish to encourage Pacific Island countries to continue to implement the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit.

We welcome the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat's observer status in the UN General Assembly.

We extend appreciation to France, Australia and New Zealand for their support to nationally-led responses in the Pacific, and facilitation of UN logistical responses. These are important partnerships in the UN's willingness and our recent efforts to support the Pacific in disaster responses.

The issues of the Pacific nations and the ongoing preparations for the Mid-term Review of the SAMOA Pathway are high on the agenda of the United Nations.

We commend the leadership of the Pacific states for the progress you have individually and collectively made in the implementation of this important agenda.

You truly set an example during the Pacific Regional Meeting in Tonga with the adoption of a strong outcome document: the Nuku'alofa Declaration.

You identified priority areas such as Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building.

These are strong reminders of the risks the region faces and thus the importance of building strong and resilient island communities.

The Nuku'alofa Outcome embodies YOUR perspective for the upcoming Inter-regional Preparatory meeting in Samoa this October, and the Mid-term Review in September 2019 in New York.

In 2019, as you know, a Climate Summit will take place in New York. We will address increasing global efforts to reduce the vulnerability of small island developing States.

The UN Secretary-General also looks forward to your active participation in this year's High-level Meeting on the financing of our shared 2030 Agenda. The meeting is held 24 September 2018—a day before the beginning of the general debate of the UN General Assembly's 73rd session.

Last but certainly not least, the United Nations itself is undergoing one of its most ambitious reforms to be fit for purpose to serve the needs of its member states.

We thank you, Pacific Island countries, for your constructive engagement in this vital process, especially in strengthening the Resident Coordinator system and review of multi-country offices.

These reforms also aim to make the United Nations a more effective partner for regional organizations including the Pacific Islands Forum.

We count on your continued support and active engagement. We wish to thank Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, for her contribution to strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the PIF.

To turn vision to reality, we see a need for coherence to advance your regional approach, priorities and common interests in a way that supports development of all SIDS.

As said by Secretary-General António Guterres, it is our responsibility to address real-world challenges of today and tomorrow.

This will require your continued active engagement and support throughout the United Nations reform process and Member States full implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement.

Thank you.

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