

# PACIFIC MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT PORT VILA DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Pacific Members of Parliament Dialogue on Human Rights, Good Governance and Development was held from 5 - 7 November 2019, Port Vila, Vanuatu. The Dialogue was attended by Members of Parliament from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The following are the outcomes as endorsed by the Members of Parliament who attended the Dialogue, and which build on the 2015 Denarau Declaration on Human Rights and Good Governance ('the Denarau Declaration').

## Building on the 2015 Denarau Declaration on Human Rights and Good Governance

We affirm the Denarau Declaration and recognise that human rights, good governance and sustainable development can be achieved when we embrace our cultures and faiths.

We further reaffirm the Denarau Declaration and its promulgation of the following:

*"As [Members of Parliament], we embrace the opportunity to draw upon, and localise to our context and cultures, the international human rights treaties, conventions and laws which serve as tools for policy, legislative and normative change to enhance good governance and the realisation of human rights for all Pacific peoples."*

We recognise the importance of our responsibilities as duty bearers of human rights to:

- ensure that legislation is human rights compliant and fosters a human rights based approach;
- foster a culture of human rights including through raising awareness and understanding among constituencies;
- approve budgets necessary for the protection and promotion of human rights;
- be aware of treaty body reports and recommendations and follow up on implementation; and
- use Parliamentary procedures to ensure compliance of human rights treaty reporting requirements.

We recognise the importance of promoting our cultures and faiths as an enabler of human rights given our growing understanding of their mutually reinforcing nature.

We recognise that the promotion and protection of human rights needs to take into account the lived realities of our peoples and our national contexts.

## Cultures and Faiths

We acknowledge that human rights can enhance our spirituality and that Pacific spirituality encompasses our cultures and faiths.

We recognise that addressing the problem of family violence requires being open-minded to the complementarity of our cultures and faiths and human rights.

We acknowledge the role of Churches in shaping the international human rights framework so as to facilitate national conversations on implementation of human rights standards.

We recognise that our cultures and faiths and human rights work together to promote the recognition of human dignity and we support the development and adoption of legislation to facilitate this. Adopting legislation that incorporates Pacific spirituality will enable the contextualised application of human rights standards.

We acknowledge that human rights protects vulnerable people from all forms of misuse of power.

## National Human Rights Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up

We recognise that National Mechanisms for Implementation Reporting and Follow up ('NMIRFs') take a systematic and effective approach to the implementation and reporting of human rights obligations and development commitments, as opposed to an ad hoc approach.

We acknowledge that the systematic approach of NMIRFs makes best use of limited resources and

therefore such bodies should be adequately resourced.

We recognise that NMIRFs are a platform for the national conversation on the relationship between human rights, our cultures and faiths.

We acknowledge the role of NMIRFs in tracking national development plans and ensuring they are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

We acknowledge that technologies can be used by NMIRFs for effective and coordinated implementation, tracking and reporting of human rights obligations and development commitments.

## National Human Rights Institutions

We recognise that National Human Rights Institutions ('NHRIs') and Parliaments are important to one another for their effective functioning.

We acknowledge that NHRIs bring evidence-based information to Parliament which can be used for legislative decision making processes and policy scrutiny.

We acknowledge Parliamentarians' important role in the establishment of NHRIs and in ensuring their adequate funding and ongoing independence, including through the appointment of independent and credible members.

We acknowledge that Parliamentarians should promote a culture of respect for human rights in collaboration with NHRIs.

We recognise that NHRIs can strengthen efforts at the national and international level to address climate change.

## Climate change

We call on Pacific Leaders to stand together to fight climate change.

We recognise the need for unilateral political support for addressing climate change within each Pacific Island Country.

We recognise the need to depoliticise climate change by addressing it as a human rights issue and further

recognise that it is a justice issue at the national, regional and international levels.

We acknowledge that Parliamentarians can contribute to climate change efforts through:

- scrutiny of government policies;
- development and review of relevant legislation; and
- allocation of adequate funds to address the effects of climate change.

We recognise the need for a collective and consistent Pacific voice to influence the global climate change agenda.

We recognise the important role of Parliamentarians in ensuring international commitments strengthen national efforts and understanding on climate change.

We recognise the role of human activity in the current climate change crisis.

We acknowledge that these outcomes may form the impetus for continuous engagement with our Parliaments and commit to raising awareness about them at the national level to support their implementation, including through dissemination.

We therefore call upon our Parliaments and the Pacific Community's Human Rights Programme (SPC RRRT) to proactively engage with each other regarding the pursuit of further actions to progress human rights, good governance and sustainable development including as set out in this Declaration.

We acknowledge the attendance of senior Parliamentary staff at the Dialogue.

We express our deep appreciation to the Honourable Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Charlot Salwai Tabimasmas MP, the Government and people of Vanuatu for their warm hospitality.

**Signed by Members of Parliament at the Pacific MPs Dialogue on Human Rights, Good Governance and Development, Port Vila, Vanuatu on 7 November, 2019.**



Cook Islands

*[Signature]*

Hon. Tereapii Kavana  
Hon. Wesley Kareroa



Federated States of Micronesia

*[Signature]*

Hon. Derensio S Konman  
Hon. Victor S Gouland



Nauru

*[Signature]*

Hon. Timothy Ika  
Hon. Jason Bingham Agir



Palau

*[Signature]*

Hon. Floor Leader Kerai Mariur  
Hon. Phillip Reklai



Samoa

*[Signature]*

Hon. Tapulesatele Esera  
Hon. Ili Setefano Tafli



Solomon Islands

*[Signature]*

Hon. Stanley Festus Sofu



Tuvalu

*[Signature]*

Hon. Ampelosa Tehulu  
Hon. Samuelu P Teo



Vanuatu

*[Signature]*

Hon. Silas Bule  
Hon. Jerome Ludvaune  
Hon. Kenneth Natapei