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## Te Piringatahi o Maungarongo Marae, Auckland, Aotearoa

### **Pacific Indigenous Peoples Declaration on Climate Change to the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties 21, Paris, France**

**We call for an urgent universal and meaningful climate change commitment from leaders of the world,**

We, the delegates of the Pacific Indigenous Peoples Regional Preparatory Meeting for the COP21 as part of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change hosted in Aotearoa, New Zealand from 23 – 26 September 2015, having come together from across the Pacific representing Indigenous Peoples voices from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Hawaii, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Aotearoa, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, Samoa, and Vanuatu hereby declare our purpose and resolve that:

1. Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific, our communities, territories, environments, cultures and traditional knowledge systems are profoundly affected in unprecedented ways by the current climate crisis. In particular, indigenous peoples of our island states are struggling against increasingly severe weather events and a rising ocean that threatens our way of life and our irreplaceable ancestral homelands which have nurtured us for millennia.
2. We declare that Pacific island states, nations and territories have contributed the very least to the ecological crises of the world, but are the most vulnerable to these same crises. Particularly, youth, women, elders and people living with disabilities feel these vulnerabilities the most.
3. We recognize that rising average global temperatures threaten the survival of Pacific Indigenous Peoples and urge all parties to the UNFCCC COP21 to do the same. Among the most noticeable impacts are rising sea levels and coastal erosion, submerging and destroying our homes and cultural sites; Saltwater intrusions into both land and freshwater which destroy food and drinking sources; changing precipitation patterns with specific impacts on fish populations and migration. Ocean acidification is also a major concern with increased coral bleaching, and the consequential loss of biodiversity.
4. We recognize that climate change has resulted in more frequent and intense tropical cyclones, and associated extreme weather events impacting on our already vulnerable indigenous peoples and local communities.
5. We recognize that increasing changes to the local climatic system, such as intermittent torrential rains and salt-water intrusion into freshwater tables, is creating severe water scarcity. These prolonged and devastating droughts are more often and more severe across our Pacific ecosystems. The agricultural loss attributed to droughts threatens food security across the Pacific. This has already severely impacted those, from low-lying atolls and many of our coastal communities.
6. We emphasize that no nation or community should be forced to migrate en-mass due to climate change and call for urgent need for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in the development of an effective and appropriate international plan to address climate change migration. Forced migrations from development activities that contributes to climate change and violates the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples including land theft, environmental destruction, commercial over-fishing and similar activities are comprehensively addressed.

7. We acknowledge that climate change adversely impacts the health and well-being of indigenous peoples and local communities in the Pacific, including but not limited to an increase in vector born diseases like malaria and dengue fever and non communicable diseases.
8. We acknowledge that women are predominantly responsible for food production, provision of household water supply and energy for heating and cooking. As climate change impacts increase, these tasks are becoming more difficult. Women face direct and indirect discriminatory laws and social practices that make them more vulnerable to the impacts of Climate Change. Along with unequal access to land and natural resources, climate change exacerbates already high levels of sexual and gender based violence.
9. We recognize that biodiversity loss and climate change are intimately linked. The loss of native plants, animals, birds and marine biodiversity have a profound cultural significance for our peoples and are crucial to our traditional knowledge and livelihoods.
10. We call for the following actions from the parties assembling for the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on the 11<sup>th</sup> session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 11), Paris 2015:
  - a. Agree on a 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement that will limit global average temperature increase to below 1.5 degrees celsius above pre-industrial levels as noted by the conference of the parties to the UNFCCC decision 1/CP20 and prioritize deep de-carbonization. The 2015 Paris Climate Agreement must be ambitious, comprehensive, forward looking and legally binding.
  - b. Reiterate the stance by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) for a Global Moratorium on New Coal Mines.
  - c. Adopt the Suva Declaration on Climate Change from the Pacific Islands Development Forum – Suva 2015 and affirm strong support for the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Declaration on Climate Change Action 46th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Summit – Port Moresby 2015.
  - d. Recognise that global trade exacerbates the underlying causes of Climate Change; therefore we urge our Pacific Island leaders and other like-minded leaders to oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), Pacer Plus and other transnational trade agreements with industrialized nations that refuse to take the necessary significant and systematic steps to address the global climate crisis;
  - e. Promote existing indigenous Pacific community mechanisms to continuously enhance national, regional and global results-based mitigation action, including the establishment of monitoring mechanisms and the review of mitigation efforts every 5 years, with opportunities to recommit to stronger action as informed by the state of the planet and its species.
  - f. Demonstrate global leadership through ambitious submissions of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), implement commitments under the Majuro Declaration for Climate Leadership in 2013 to reduce emissions and reliance on fossil fuels, promote movement toward deep de-carbonization developments such as safe and renewable energy and support other Indigenous Peoples Initiatives including appropriate technology transfer. Also, the International Maritime Organization(IMO) Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) to commit to a quantifiable and ambitious GHG emission reduction target for international and domestic shipping, consistent with keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees celsius and take necessary measures to implement MEPC 68/5/1.
  - g. Languages and terms in the COP21 Paris outcome to be consistent with past United Nations declarations including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) Outcome Document particularly Para 36 that states “We confirm that Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge and strategies to sustain their environment should be respected and taken into account when we develop national and international approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation” (end of quote), and all international human rights agreements, with specific attention to language on Indigenous Peoples issues and their rights,

the rights of indigenous women, girls and all genders and people living with disabilities. We also call for the protection of biodiversity and the Commons, the health of the air, land, oceans and waterways, and the protection of Traditional Knowledge and language in the outcome document that continues to inform policies and decision making processes across the world.

- h. Establish a specially dedicated climate fund to be directly accessed and managed regionally by Pacific Indigenous Peoples from developing and developed countries to address mitigation, loss and damage, enhance and further develop our mitigation and adaptation capacities and to strengthen our Traditional Knowledge and livelihoods. Parties should also ensure direct access to already existing climate funds including the Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility (GEF), among others. Financial support must also cover compensation for already damaged and lost lands, resources and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples due to the adverse impacts of climate change in the Pacific region, and consistent with the long-established principle of common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR).
  - i. Support the development of our Pasifika Indigenous Network as a mechanism to harness the voices of Indigenous Peoples working across the Rio conventions and other environmental agreements. A regional network committed to the cause of promoting and defending indigenous peoples' rights and articulating issues of relevance to indigenous peoples.
  - j. Commit major emitters (both states and multinational companies) to provide means of monitoring,, climate change finance and technology to island states affected by Climate Change. We call upon the UN Secretary General to convene a panel of experts that include representatives from the Pacific Indigenous Communities, with attention to diverse ages, gender and ethnicities, Indigenous Peoples living with disabilities, and others.
  - k. Provide all kinds of assistance needed by Indigenous Peoples forced from their ancestral homes as a result of climate change, to be able to establish sustainable livelihoods in their new environment, and to migrate with dignity and identity.
  - l. Incorporate the specific needs of Indigenous Peoples including women, youth and people living with disabilities.
  - m. Urge states to exercise the precautionary and polluter pays principle and create mechanisms and instruments to minimize exploitation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and their resources such as land grabbing by states, multi-national companies and extractive industries. Rather, states and multinational companies should pursue genuine collaboration with indigenous communities to promote ecosystem services and disaster risk management in consultation with Indigenous Communities to ensure that they are relevant and appropriate and are central to strengthening community resilience and the delivery of these activities should be a part of the funded core business of states and multinational companies.
11. We urge all parties, the Heads of States and Governments and high-level representatives to recognise that effective partnerships with indigenous peoples are essential for effective action on all aspects of climate change and we envisage a sustainable and resilient future whereby indigenous peoples and local communities thrive throughout the world in spite of the forthcoming challenges.