



28<sup>th</sup> of September, 2020.

## **We call for New Clear Ways**

As Pacific Island Leaders join in their commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and on the occasion for the United Nations International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, we the young people of Oceania RECOGNISE the Pacific's storied history as guardians of the world's largest ocean.

We ACKNOWLEDGE that our region has withstood the test of time and pay tribute to those who have endured and withstood nuclear testing by nuclear super-powers in the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and French Polynesia. We ASSERT that the grave exploitation and brutal ramifications of this history are still felt by our peoples, lands and oceans today.

We CALL upon our Pacific leaders to ensure nuclear justice for the Pacific.

The 26<sup>th</sup> of September is the United Nations' International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. On this day, we are reminded of our people who have suffered enormously from the destructive military and nuclear arsenals of the United States, the United Kingdom and France. These three states currently oppose the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and have not taken full responsibility for the harm they have inflicted. The nuclear legacy of 340 nuclear and thermonuclear weapons tests has never been effectively remedied or addressed by those countries responsible for testing them. The consequences of detonating hundreds of nuclear bombs of a much greater destructive power than the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs, are still being felt today by Indigenous islanders manifesting in, among other impacts, debilitating health and intergenerational maladies. This legacy continues to threaten not just Pacific islanders and the Pacific Ocean, but the health and wellbeing of all the planet's oceans and the people who depend upon them.

The Pacific Ocean is also a site of improper nuclear and chemical waste disposal and the passage of nuclear-powered vessels and trans-shipment of radioactive materials. Of key concern is the radioactive materials currently contained in Runit Dome on Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands that are leaking into the surrounding ocean and groundwater. The Runit Dome was a haphazard attempt by the U.S. military to contain 111,000 cubic yards of radioactive waste in an unlined crater. It was never replaced by a safe, permanent structure and instead is currently cracking and polluting the local surroundings.

We URGE all our Pacific leaders to ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), a crucial step towards a world free from nuclear weapons. The Treaty adopted by 122 governments at the United Nations in 2017 is not only a categorical ban on the production, storage and use of nuclear weapons. It also obligates the provision of assistance to victims of nuclear weapons use and testing and remediation of contaminated environments. All states parties must engage in international cooperation and assistance to support such efforts by impacted states parties. The Treaty requires a total 50 ratifications to come into force. There are now 45 countries that have ratified the treaty.

We CONGRATULATE the ratifications and accession of the Treaty by Pacific state-parties: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Samoa and Vanuatu who continue to be anti-nuclear champions

of the Pacific. We ENCOURAGE the remainder of the Pacific states to ratify and be a part of the historic 50 ratifications that bring the Treaty into force.

We also CALL for accountability from our regional leaders for the past promises made in previous Pacific Island Forum (PIF) communiqués around nuclear issues facing our region. In light of the current global COVID-19 pandemic, we DEMAND our leaders to not abandon the nuclear weapons and nuclear testing issues in times of crises.

We EXPRESS concern for our brothers and sisters in Maohi Nui who have also experienced irreversible destruction upon Moruroa and Fanguataufa atolls. The independent Pacific must stand in solidarity with those Pacific Islands that are still colonies, we BELIEVE that political independence of all peoples is fundamental to human rights and also necessary to attain a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific. As young people, like those before us whose shoulders we stand on, we AFFIRM our commitment to ensuring a nuclear free and independent Pacific.

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