



2016 PACIFIC ISLAND DEVELOPMENT FORUM LEADERS' SUMMIT
12th & 13th July 2016, Kitano Mendana Hotel, Honiara, Solomon Islands

Stewardship for Healthy Oceans & Healthy Nations

PRIME MINISTER MANNASSEH SOGAVARE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE PIDF PRE-SUMMIT
MENDANA HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM
Tuesday 12th July, 2016

Hon Josiah Voreqe Bainimarama

Chief Guest & Prime Minister of Fiji Islands

His Excellency Peter M Christian

President of the Federated States of Micronesia

Honourable Dr Teue Toatu

Special Envoy of His Excellency Beretitenti of the Republic of Kiribati

Hon Aisake Valu Eke

Minister of Finance of the Kingdom of Tonga

Hon Taukelina Finikaso

Minister of Finance of Tuvalu

Her Excellency Kim Aroi

Acting High Commissioner of Nauru to Fiji Islands

His Excellency Albon Ishoda

Special Representative of the Republic of Marshall Islands

Madam Margeret Sapolu

Planning Advisor Tokelau

Mr Siotame Drew Havea

Chairman of Pacific Islands Association of Non Government Organization

Mr Bruce Saunders

Representative of Pacific Islands Private Sector Organization

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

All Protocols Observed:

I am honoured once again on behalf of my good people and the government of Solomon Islands to deliver this opening statement to you all at this PIDF Pre-Summit.

At the outset, allow me to convey my sincerest gratitude to the PIDF Chair Honourable Prime Minister of Fiji Hon. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama for the excellent work that you have done in steering our PIDF organization up until the present.

We acknowledge the milestone achievements under your chairmanship which has defined progress in our region. The Suva Declaration is an iconic example that connected us together as we successfully negotiated the Paris Agreement. While we do understand the security issues and impacts of Climate Change, we must remain vigilant in our regional grouping to ensure that our unity and cooperation drives possible and practical solutions for our countries, communities and our good peoples in the region.

However, building on these important achievements, we need to once again come together and consolidate our efforts in progressing our momentum, since the Suva Declaration and the Paris Agreement and for now, our focus will be from Honiara to Marrakesh. Let us ensure that our developed partners live up to their commitments in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing much needed financial assistance as promised under their pledges. On this note, I make the call for all PIDF members, to put forth ambitious national determined contributions (NDCs) as a possible roadmap towards COP22 in Marrakesh.

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

This pre-summit is timely to discuss issues of concern to us, more especially on the agenda that we will be discussing this afternoon. At this juncture, allow me to extend my deep appreciation to all the distinguished facilitators and panellists who will be taking us through the important topics of today. Your participation will help us achieve what is expected from this pre-summit.

I must reinforce that our theme for this summit “**Stewardship for Healthy Oceans and Healthy Nations**” is commendable, as it captures the importance of our oceans in this present day and beyond our lifetimes. It further holds us to rethink on the significance of oceans in our sustainable development aspirations and the formulation of our oceans policies and regulations.

The PIDF has given us this opportunity to reflect on our immediate challenges and seek practical approaches towards them. Time is of the essence and our discussions here in

Honiara must pave way for a productive outcome that reflects the nature of inclusivity which is the basis of PIDF, and I am pleased to acknowledge our partners from Civil Society and Private Sector who are here with us today.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda puts the whole world on an ambitious path of sustainable development. The unsustainable exploitation of our natural resources has lead us to a point, in which we must stop and re-think the way in which we progress our development aspirations. All of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set the world on the path of transformative change. Climate Change and Oceans are core priorities under the Post-2015 Agenda as Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 14. In our region, these challenges, affect the very existence of our people and communities. As Island States scattered across the largest ocean in the world, our voice on these two goals are of paramount importance.

In closing, allow me to conclude by saying “... *that which binds us is larger and stronger than that which divides us, and the ocean is what binds us all, therefore our oceans and our environment must be preserved and protected for our future generations*”.

I now take this opportunity, to wish you all, a constructive and fruitful discussion in the next two days. I am pleased to now declare that the Pre-Leaders’ summit is open.

Thank you.