
Securing our future in the Pacific



Pacific Islands Forum
with United Nations Missions

*Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji,
Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau,
Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands,
Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu*

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11TH CONFERENCE ON THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY

September 25, 2019, New York

PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM STATEMENT

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Pacific Islands Forum is honoured to present this statement. From the outset, the Pacific Islands Forum welcomed CTBTO Executive-Secretary Dr Zerbo's participation in last month's PIF Leaders Meeting in Tuvalu where Leaders urged members to sign and ratify the CTBT. The PIF Leaders also reiterate that the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the devastating consequences of the use and testing remains an existential threat to peace and global security. We all have an obligation today to take concrete steps to address the threat posed by the use and testing of nuclear weapons, and its consequences world-wide. This is perhaps one of the most serious threat to the community of nations and future generations. Our collective global goal must be to strive for a world that is free of nuclear weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction.

The continuing and unchecked proliferation of nuclear weapons by some, and the unfortunate failure of others to commit to their obligations under key arms control treaties no doubt, puts the peace and security of the global community at risk. Apparent increases in military and defense spending, stockpiling, the improvement and development of technical sophistication and the potential acquisition of nuclear weapons by non-nuclear weapons States is a dangerous trend that must be arrested. The risk of acquisition of such weapons and weapons grade material by non-State actors, adds to the dynamics of the threat. It is therefore the obligation of every peace-loving member of the global community of nations to take all steps within its competence to contribute meaningfully to ending the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and to commit to world peace.

Be assured that this is no rhetoric, but we speak with confidence noting the first-hand experience of the Pacific on the devastation of nuclear weapons. The end of World War II saw the Pacific become the theatre for some of the most powerful nuclear tests ever conducted in the history of humankind. The Castle Bravo test in the Marshall Islands, was reported to have a design flaw, resulting in an explosion that reached a yield of 15 megatons, making it 1,000 times more powerful

as the Hiroshima bomb. Radioactive fall-out was estimated to have spread over an area approximately 11,000 square kilometers, with radio-active material detected as far away as Australia and Europe. This is a phenomenon that the Pacific and the community of Nations should not have to endure again.

The Marshall Island was not the only Pacific Island country to suffer the scourge of nuclear testing. Nuclear testing was also undertaken in Kiribati and French Polynesia.

To their credit and in their resolve to safeguard the bounty and the beauty of Pacific, as the heritage for their children and grandchildren, the Pacific Island Forum Leaders, at their 15th annual Leaders Meeting in Tuvalu, and inspired by the provisions of Article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, committed to the establishment of nuclear weapons free zone in the Pacific region, through the adoption of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, commonly referred to as the 1985 Rarotonga Treaty.

But today, the intention is to speak about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which is unfortunately, yet to enter into force – notwithstanding the 184 signatures, and the 168 ratifications. The Treaty constitutes an effective measure for promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by “*constraining the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons*” through a global network of monitoring facilities that allow for on-site inspections. The apparent overwhelming and almost universal support for the mechanism underlines international support for a world that is free of nuclear weapons.

We therefore strongly urge and encourage the eight Annex 2 States that have yet to sign and or ratify the Treaty, to do so, in order to bring the Treaty into force.

I thank you