



Statement

by

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of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations**

On behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

at the

**United Nations High-level Political Forum (HLPF)
on Sustainable Development**

**General Debate on
*Ensuring that No One is Left Behind***

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**Mr. President,
Excellencies, and
Distinguished Delegates,**

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum members*.

The clarion call by the HLPF theme of “leaving no-one-behind” in the pursuit for poverty eradication for all, particularly in the early stages of the 2030 Agenda implementation, since its adoption last September, is indeed timely. This rallying call to catalyse the delivery of a people-centered, inclusive and transformative global sustainable development agenda must continue to remain at the centre and front of the work of the HLPF and all stakeholders.

Mr President,

Pacific Leaders are committed to the full and integrated implementation of the SDGs as well as the SAMOA Pathway, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Our own Framework for Pacific Regionalism provides the necessary political commitment and roadmap that also recognizes the importance of addressing the unfinished business of the MDGs.

While we have made great progress in access to education and improving child and maternal health, more work is needed in our region to promote inclusive economic growth and create employment, combat climate change, ensure healthy, productive and resilient oceans, strengthen good governance, foster gender equality and empowerment, including reducing violence against women and girls; and to tackle the increasing crisis of non-communicable diseases.

An increasing number of our Forum members are taking ownership and leadership of the 2030 Agenda by integrating these commitments into national and regional policy responses appropriate to our specific challenges and vulnerabilities.

We are heartened by the commendable leadership shown by Forum member, Samoa, for the landmark achievement of being not only the first-ever Pacific Island Forum member but also the first Small Island Developing State to volunteer to report to the HLPF on its SDG implementation. This demonstrates our region’s commitment and leadership on the 2030 Agenda.

Mr President,

The Pacific Islands Forum is mobilizing to develop a Pacific SDGs Roadmap that will guide implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An inclusive Pacific SDGs Taskforce has been established to support this process and is working towards;

- Firstly, addressing trans-boundary issues such as climate change, oceans, fisheries and trade;

- Secondly, identifying common national priorities that can be effectively addressed through collective delivery, monitoring and reporting, such as poverty alleviation, gender empowerment, and addressing Non Communicable Diseases;
- Thirdly, identifying global experiences and best practices that can be adapted for the Pacific region; and
- Finally, identifying national successes that could be shared for possible adaptation regionally.

For the majority of the Forum members, sustainable development challenges are amplified also by their vulnerabilities as Smaller Island Developing States (SIDS), and rising inequalities across and within our region and globally.

Our response to these challenges is to take leadership and ownership and work together at all levels and in partnership with each other and our external development partners to ensure that we leave no-one behind, within our own countries, regionally and at the global level.

In our region, leaving no-one behind means addressing our inherent vulnerabilities to external shocks and events. The ongoing global economic crisis has caused significant contraction to Pacific developing economies. This continues to be compounded by the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters such as droughts, floods and cyclones, which are increasing in frequency and intensity across our region. Two recent unprecedented catastrophic cyclones in Fiji and Vanuatu caused the loss of many lives and significant loss of livelihoods, displaced tens of thousands of people and wreaked economic, social and environmental damage that has significantly setback respective national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda.

For us, leaving no one behind is about making our economies, infrastructure and communities more resilient to global economic downturns, the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

Leaving no one behind also means reducing and mitigating the damage to our Pacific Ocean, which is our home and, for many of us, the main source of our livelihoods. Our coral reefs are dying from ocean acidification, and our fisheries are threatened by illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. We championed SDG 14 on Oceans and Seas and SDG 13 on Climate Action, and remain committed to take leadership because the sustainable development of oceans and seas and action on climate change is also about the security and survival of the Pacific.

Mr President,

To leave no-one behind we must strengthen our national and regional capacities, institutions and systems to support the attainment of the SDGs. This includes enhancing our national capacity for data collation, analysis and its effective application to review, follow-up and successfully deliver the SDGs.

Our national and regional efforts must be effectively supported by the Means of Implementation embedded in SDG 17 on global partnerships and across the goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and in the Paris Agreement. Implementation of SDG 16 on strong institutions for peace, security and prosperity, is also a critical enabler for SDGs achievement.

Leaving no-one behind also means that in addition to mobilizing domestic resources, including through just returns for our fisheries resources, we look to genuine and durable global partnerships, including financing for development that is predictable, reliable and accessible to support our SDGs work. We also value the role of multistakeholder partnership, including from the civil society, the private sector and academia, in supporting governments to deliver the SDGs.

Mr President,

Unlocking the potential of Science, Innovation and Technology is also imperative to leaving no-one behind and to helping to mitigate against the remoteness and vulnerabilities of many of our members. We therefore call for strengthened global partnership through south-south, north-south and triangular cooperation, to help realize the promises of 2030 Agenda for our people.

In closing, we reiterate our commitment to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda at our respective national levels and within our region.

We look forward to engage meaningfully with all stakeholders during this meeting.

Finally, we thank the Secretary-General for his useful report on the SDGs implementation.

I thank you.