



2nd Clean Pacific Roundtable, “*Pathways to a Clean Pacific*”

PIFS, Suva, Fiji.

20 – 25 August 2018

Opening Address by Mr. Kosi Latu, Director General SPREP

Honorable Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji

Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Mr. Joshua Wycliffe, Permanent Secretary, Local Government, Housing & Environment

Distinguished representatives,

Development Partners

Waste and pollution management colleagues and experts from the region

Members of the private sector, civil society

Ladies and gentlemen,

Bula, and Good Morning,

1. It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to Fiji to this 2nd Clean Pacific Roundtable meeting. It was just over 2 years ago that we concluded a very successful, inaugural meeting, of the Clean Pacific Roundtable at the Holiday Inn in Suva.
2. In this short period of time we have witnessed the increase of unprecedented waste and pollution pressures from human induced activities such as industrial and agricultural run-off, marine debris, oil and chemical pollution, population growth, coastal development and modernization, over-fishing and resource extraction. These pressures have been exacerbated by the challenges of climate change (sea level rise, sea temperature rise, Oceans acidification, extreme storms and droughts. The impact of all these activities threaten our environmental, social and economic resilience.
3. Waste and pollution management is a major issue for many Pacific Island countries – often highlighting the current state of poor and inadequate waste management practices for some of our islands in the region. These challenges not only pose a threat for sustainable development at the national level but are also carry negative impacts of a transboundary nature.
4. The issue of plastic pollution which is attracting a lot of global attention at the moment, for example, certainly requires not only a national response but also a combination of regional and global targeted action. Studies for instance show that 40 % of all the marine plastics that end up in the Pacific comes from Asia. Furthermore, a study by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation predicted that on current trends, there will be more micro-plastics in the ocean by 2050 than fish.
5. But plastics is not just a waste issue anymore. It is now a food security issue, and it is increasingly becoming a climate issue as well. A study on fish ingestion with samples from NZ, Fiji, Samoa and Rapa Nui showed that 97 % of all fish species sampled had micro-plastics. This was 30% higher than the global average. This is very concerning for the Pacific where fish is the main source for protein, and where fish consumption is at least approximately 3 or 4 times higher than the global average.

6. The problem with Plastics is that they are synthetic and don't biodegrade like natural products. Rather, they break up into smaller and smaller pieces, known as micro-plastics. These linger in the environment for a very long period of time, they accumulate and don't disappear
7. Like climate change, we are at a crisis situation, where we now need to **ACT**.
8. Many of our countries in the region have taken steps to create an enabling environment to address the problem of plastics. This includes policies and legislation to ban single use plastics and Styrofoam. Here in Fiji, we note that the Government has decided on a pathway that will ensure that Fiji will be a plastics free nation. A clear testament of this policy was the adoption last August of a levy on all single use plastics and Styrofoam.
9. Last year SPREP collaborated with the organisers of the Raka rugby 7s tournament here in Fiji to make it the first tournament that was a plastics free event. The Raka 7s tournament was awarded the Global Green Sports Alliance Award for delivering a clean sporting event. May I commend you Prime Minister for your leadership and for showing the way by adopting a pathway that will ensure a plastics free Fiji.
10. This Roundtable will provide a platform for all stakeholders to dialogue, network and address a broad range of waste management issues including hazardous chemicals; solid waste management; disaster waste management; and explore how to manage tourism generated waste; build a human capacity skills base to manage and capitalize on innovation and technological solutions.
11. At the regional level through the Blue Pacific narrative under the framework of the Pacific Framework for Regionalism, the Pacific Oceanscape, the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, the Cleaner Pacific 2025 which seeks to address waste and pollution, and other relevant regional frameworks are collectively aimed at enhancing the resilience of the Pacific. These regional frameworks need to be resourced to ensure effective implementation at the regional and national levels.

12. The Clean Pacific Roundtable, whilst a fairly new regional forum is an ideal conduit for progressing innovative solutions and capitalizing on new initiatives as we navigate together towards a pollution-free Pacific.
13. The popularity and interest in this event highlights the importance of regional waste and pollution management to the region. This Roundtable coincides with SPREP's celebration of its 25th anniversary this year. At this Roundtable, we celebrate SPREP's commitment to help our Members take effective action to address their ongoing and emerging environmental issues.
14. As you're all aware, the regional waste and pollution management strategy for the Pacific, or the Cleaner Pacific 2025 as it is better known, is a regional Blue print which is critical in bringing together the joint efforts of SPREP's key regional partners' namely (AFD, JICA and EU) to assist Pacific island communities to improve waste and pollution management practices in various waste streams which include municipal waste, asbestos and E-waste, healthcare wastes, and of course wastewaters to mention a few.
15. To achieve the vision of the Cleaner Pacific 2025 it is imperative that Pacific island countries move from a linear economy to a circular economy that **advocates sustainable production and consumption**. The circular economy promotes the whole life cycle of products: from the design of the product and production processes, to better informed consumption choices, to modern waste management, and the provision of secondary raw materials that feed back into the economy. This embraces waste management practices such as – the 3Rs - Reuse, Reduce and Recycle.
16. Funding waste and pollution management effective actions requires identifying and utilizing innovative financial mechanisms. The simple container deposit mechanism which is used in Palau is one good example of this. Our hope is that approach will be adopted in many Pacific island countries and territories soon, to help with resourcing their waste management efforts.
17. Action in this space, also requires a more concerted and coordinated approach to monitoring and reporting on the implementation progress of the Cleaner Pacific 2025. I am pleased that the roundtable includes

a waste monitoring training session on Wednesday. This is vital if we are going to minimize duplication and improve coordination between similar programmes and activities at the local, national and regional levels.

18. The information gathered will add value to the “Clean Pacific Roundtable” which is to facilitate waste and pollution management dialogue and networking in the region, to provide a forum to share experience on waste and pollution management, and to disseminate information on new and existing opportunities.
19. The RoundTable is only its 2nd year and there is an urgent need to improve institutional arrangements of the Clean Pacific Roundtable. We hope to formalize the governance of the roundtable steering committee and its Technical Working Groups. I would like to acknowledge the support of the Government of Fiji and thank Mr. Joshua Wycliffe, the Permanent Secretary for Local Government, Housing and Environment, for accepting the invitation to be the first Chair of this roundtable. The improved institutional and governance arrangements will also provide a platform to better coordinate work on waste and pollution management for our region.
20. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of the Partners who contributed to this Roundtable, and I would like in particular to acknowledge the significant financial assistance of JICA and the EU which has enabled this Roundtable to take place. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions received from Fonds Pasifique, and the UN Environment and the sponsorship by Swire Shipping Co Ltd. I offer my appreciation to PIFS, for providing the Roundtable with this wonderful venue. Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of the Roundtable Steering Committee members in assisting in the arrangement of this event.
21. I would like to finish by encouraging you all to be frank in your deliberations – and to identify the immediate priorities that need addressing over the next 24 months as this is your roundtable. Be critical and adventurous in what you want but be also realistic on what can be done on the ground to help improve the way we all manage waste and pollution.

22.I wish you the best for your discussions over the next 6 days, I know it will be highly productive.

23.VINAKA VAKA LEVU