



# OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE ONGOING GOVERNMENT OF TOKELAU

*Ofiha o te Fono a te Malo Fakaauau o Tokelau*



Office of the Council for the Ongoing Government  
Level 1, SNPF Plaza, Beach Road  
Telephone: +685 20 822

P O Box 3298  
Apia, Samoa  
Facsimile: +685 21 761

## **Pasifika Climate Change IPCC Workshop Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016 hosted by Victoria University of Wellington**

### **Tokelau Statement**

*Te Atua fakafetai!* Acknowledge God for bringing us here safely today.

Reverend Nove Vaila'au

Your Honorable Luamanuvao Winnie Laban, *Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika), Victoria University of Wellington*

Prof Jim Skea, recently elected *Co-Chair IPCC Mitigation*

Prof Ralph Sims, *International Consultant and contributor to the IPCC*

Excellencies and Heads of delegations

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Te mamalu o te Kaiga o te Pahefika

Malo ni and greetings to all

*'Ko au he ika tele vale, kae ko au kua hau ko tau tagi kua malie'*. I have wandered aimlessly but the sound of your sweet voice has guided me here.

Please allow me to first express my Government's gratitude for the kind invitation to participate in this unique workshop to *talanoa* (talk and discuss) climate change – an issue that is at the core of our nation's heart as it is about our existence tomorrow.

Like canaries in the coalmines of yore, low lying island like ours in the midst of the world's biggest ocean face the possibility of extinction. Tokelau is the world's canaries in the climate change coal mines – an early warning system of the danger that is about to happen.

But we are no longer just the canaries in the climate change coal mines – we are, already, the victims. We have suffered enough and must not suffer further from a problem we did not create.

The signing of the Paris Agreement last Friday [22 April 2016] by 175 countries brings to our country, hope and belief in humanity, that we, the poor and most vulnerable of communities are recognised.

Friday's signing sets a record for the number of countries signing an international agreement on the first available day, according to the Associated Press.

The old record dates back to the Law of the Sea in Montego Bay, which was signed by 119 countries in 1982, according to AccuWeather. This is an incredible and extraordinary achievement.

But we are in a race against time. The 1.5°C is almost upon us, if not already, given what the world has already emitted to the atmosphere. But we can avoid this 'tipping point' if we change our course now.

And this is where events like today are significantly important and matter in the earthly scheme of things.

Although the Paris Agreement is a non-binding treaty, we believe in the human spirit. We pin our hopes and aspirations on the international community to do their part to limit global warming by 2100 to well below 1.5°C as compared to pre-industrial levels.

To accomplish this, each nation needs to set ambitious nationally determined commitments (not contributions) to reduce their emissions, provides honest and transparent updates and reporting each year.

Tokelau is determined to right the wrongs of the past. We are determined to do our part to steer the world away from fossil fuels and towards a low carbon future.

As the Secretary General of the UN, Mr Ban Ki-moon told the gathering at the UN headquarters in New York last week, "The era of consumption without consequences is over."

We reaffirm our full support to the Paris Agreement.

We welcome the preparations of the Special Report on 1.5°C and the upcoming IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6).

Tokelau strongly recommends that researchers and scientists from Tokelau and other Small Islands must be part of both IPCC assessment reports.

Tokelau is willing to work with other Small Islands and relevant development partners to ensure the participation of our researchers and scientists in the future work of the IPCC.

Due to time constraints, I am unable to provide all our views on issues to be discussed at this meeting. But these additional observations will be given to the IPCC Secretariat, via Prof Skea, after this meeting for consideration as part of the upcoming IPCC reports.

After the signing of the Paris Agreement, the Co-chair of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said, there is 'serious risks' even with minor increases in temperatures, particularly to coral reefs and to coasts from rising sea levels.

We look forward to the IPCC to inform and guide us and the world towards achieving our aspirational goal of 1.5degC world by 2100.

Fakafetai ni, ke manuia koutou ite alofa ote Atua. Thank you.