



SPEECH



Mr Oscar Manutahi TEMARU
President of Tahiti Nui



43rd Pacific Islands Forum



Wednesday August 29th 2012

Rarotonga

Mr prime minister of Cook Islands,

Mr Secretary general of the Forum,

Members of the Forum and all associates and members,

To the organizing staff,

And to the fantastic People of Rarotonga,

kia ora, talofa, fakalofa, alii, bula vinaka, Kam na mauri,
iakwe, Gaoi, Ran Allim, Kotaka, Tiabo, Malo e lelei, Yokwe, Halo
olgeta, la orana, ...

On **July 5th and 6th, 2012**, Members of the Club de Madrid – all
democratic former Heads of State and Government from various

regions of the world – met in Tahiti, with renowned policy-makers, political and business leaders, scholars, and representatives of international organizations and civil society bringing their knowledge and experience to bear in the consideration of the challenges to a more resilient Pacific in the 21st century world order.

This **Asia Pacific Forum**, jointly organized by the Club de Madrid and my Government, with the significant and effective collaboration of UN ESCAP, was an important watershed for the Pacific, and as such the most important regional gathering to take place immediately after the Rio+20 Summit.

It is with great pleasure, and a sense of being complementary to our Pacific Islands Forum, that I present you with the conclusions of this Asia-Pacific Forum.

The first conclusion is that the **international context** is key to understanding the options ahead.

Pacific Island countries are located between two giants and Pacific leaders have been acutely aware of the shift in power and influence that the world order has been undergoing from the Atlantic to their very own Pacific. The challenge that awaits Pacific leaders is to take advantage the opportunities offered, for instance, by the growth of China or new South-South models of cooperation.

At the same time, the rest of the international community must understand that while Pacific countries have very old ties and relationships, some of them colonial, some of them regional, their leaders are ascertaining **the right to look North, South, East and West**, to trade and work with the people of their choice, with renewed confidence and legitimacy.

In this context, Pacific leaders must move forward towards a **greener economy**, while the world must also acknowledge the 'blue' feature of the Pacific economies.

More than 'small islands developing states', Pacific nations are indeed '**large oceans states**' that account for some of the world's largest economic zones. We must contribute and fight for a healthy Pacific Ocean with effective renewable energy strategies and better waste management, among others.

Seen as an issue of security across the Pacific, **climate change** must effectively be fought together with the rest of the international community. While there is fatigue in the negotiations processes, the imperative of 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' is ever present. This is particularly relevant for some of the major industries active in the Pacific, most importantly **tourism**.

Connectivity should be pursued, fostered and exploited, and communication systems be strengthened in order to take the Pacific out of isolation and peripheral reality.

This Asia Pacific Forum, organized by teams located in Madrid, Brisbane and Tahiti, separated by a 12-hour time difference and more than 6,000 km, yet virtually connected and able to work together through modern technology has been a great example of how these can serve communities and democracy well.

Since knowledge is never more relevant than when it is shared, and modern technology allowing, we have video-recorded all the sessions of this Asia-Pacific forum and made it available to everyone along with the presentation material, on our website,

www.presidence.pf. I am sure many of you have already noted down the U.R.L ...

The Pacific has a very rich **cultural diversity** and we must fight to preserve it. **Education** will play a vital role in this process, and while Pacific Islands' children must be taught the languages of commerce, they must also learn to cherish and shield their identity, the languages and traditions that make their history rich and colorful.

On a general basis, we need to develop **Pacific solutions to Pacific problems**. Bottom-up programs responding to Pacific issues and approaches need to be encouraged. We need to build on traditional systems of management while always looking forward, keeping future generations in mind.

Communities in the Pacific must feel confident about, engage for and own their future.

This will require strengthening **institutional capacities** at all levels of government and recognizing **democracy as a set of values** rather than a set of rules.

While participants acknowledged that there was no single blueprint for this, leaders will have to find ways of making their national ideas coexist with the realities and demands of global society, and develop a clear and effective message about who they are and what they seek to accomplish.

They will need to learn how to manage diversity and gradually transform their communities into **shared societies** – socially cohesive, stable, safe societies where all those living there feel welcome; societies that respects everyone's dignity and human rights while providing every individual with equal opportunity.

We must advance integration, implementation and coherence in the decisions we make at the international level, whether it is in sustainable development or fiscal consolidation. This means the Pacific ought to increase its level of **regional and sub-regional cooperation**, sharing best practices **with others regions and actors** that have tackled similar challenges, such as the Caribbean.

Building a more resilient Pacific also means that the old ‘aid’ model must be seen as yesterday’s story. International development cooperation must evolve into schemes of **investment and reciprocal partnerships**, already in place in some countries.

Finally and most importantly, a sustainable future built with dignity in the Pacific will require **vision and leadership**. Whatever the region – be it the Pacific or anywhere else – while it is the people who decide how they view who they are and what their future ought to be, leaders have a responsibility to bring this vision into genuine and concrete action.

While the Pacific does have a history of leaders with a vision, Pacific communities must own that vision and encourage their leaders to shape their future accordingly.

For this purpose, while vision cannot be brought by a group like the **Club de Madrid**, this organization stands ready, as a group of democratic former Heads of State and Government, to work with the Pacific leaders to address the challenges that decision-making and leading pose in the current world order, and thus contribute to attaining the sustainable future with dignity we all want and deserve.



Speaking of vision, all of you know how important the right of all Peoples to self-determination is one of the corner stones to my political engagement.

I started this quest back in 1977, but before me others had already started. In fact, our forefathers have never stopped reclaiming freedom, and our children will continue, if this generation does not succeed.

Freedom is the way. Like droplets of water can ultimately break even the strongest rocks, true perseverance shall overcome all obstacles.

Hiding, or shying away from this quest to self-determination and freedom is just not in my Maohi DNA.

To this regard, I cannot but pay a sincere tribute to the Hon. Henry Puna, the Hon. Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, and all leaders from the new Pacific Leaders Group who, on Saturday 25th august 2012, here, in Rarotonga, have asserted the PLG support to the Maohi People's quest and it's first step : Reinscription on the UN list of non-self-governing territories.

This support adds up to an ever growing list of supports, gathered since last year, which I would like to briefly recall.

In March and June 2011, the majority of the members of the Assembly of French Polynesia signed a joint petition seeking re-inscription on the U.N. list of non-self-governing territories

In June 2011, our council of Ministers subsequently expressed their official support for the joint petition.

In August 2011, a resolution was adopted by the Assembly further expressing the political will to have the territory re-inscribed on the UN list.

In August 2011, in Piula, SAMOA, the Pacific Conference of Churches provided their unequivocal support.

In September 2011, The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom expressed their support.

In September 2011; in FIJI, Heads of States or Government of the Second "Engaging with the Pacific" regional meeting specifically endorsed the re- inscription of French Polynesia.

In November 2011, in SAMOA, The Heads of Government of the Polynesian Leaders Group (PLG) at its inaugural meeting reiterated its support by inserting the issue of the « right to self-determination » for the Polynesian states and territories including French Polynesia, amongst their goals.

More recently, in May 2012, in SHARM EL SHEIKH (EGYPT), the Ministerial Meeting of the Non Aligned Movement Bureau meeting adopted a formal recommendation in the specific chapter of its final document on Self-determination and Decolonization, stating the inalienable right of the people of French Polynesia-Ma'ohi Nui to self-determination in accordance with Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations and the UN General Assembly resolution 1514

In August 2012, back home, A resolution was adopted by the ruling Protestant Church at the end of its annual synod (Conference of the Board), also clearly supporting our quest.



However, I would like to invite all of us, to take a new perspective on this issue fundamental to the natural evolution of territories and their historical colonial power.

I invite you to see this process through a new prism:

- Rather than seeing opposition, we should see cooperation.
- Rather than seeing divisive positions, we should see true dialogue
- Rather than seeing a threat to colonial powers, we should see an opportunity for them to fulfill a sacred mission to which they have committed themselves before the United Nations since 1946.

Indeed, yesterday's opening ceremony of this forum was a true example of this perspective, in many ways.

One could not but be impressed to hear, see, and feel, the crowd cheering upon arrival of leaders of former colonial powers. These powers have proven that intelligent, compassionate, and peaceful decolonization is indeed possible.

But thinking about it, what is the common denominator to Niue, Cook Islands, Western Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Fiji, Nauru, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands?

They were all on the United Nations list of non-self-governing territories, from which they have been removed, only after becoming fully independent or gaining self-rule free association statute.

At the end of the day, was the process beneficial to all parties, including the former colonial powers? Cook Islands, and others are proof to that assertion. They are making progress in all fields of social, economic, and cultural life.

At the same time, they have now established loyal, efficient, partnerships with their former ruling power.

This, my friends, the mere opportunity to be able to engage on this path is what we are seeking for.



Maohi Nui is a big country, of 5 million square kilometers. Its People, economy, and values have been greatly shaken by its colonial History.

Tackling the key issues of health, employment, transportation, energy, environment and general well-being of our 280 000 people is no easy task.

We are facing challenges that cannot be addressed by isolating oneself from the rest of the world.

Since 2004, and our first accession to government through the wakeup call that will go in History books as the “TAUI ROA”, or “GREAT CHANGE”, the right wing ruling government of France was determined to keep a stronghold on “French Polynesia”, and its former President Nicolas Sarkozy went as far as ignoring France’s own constitution, and commitments to the UN, by drawing a red line that should never be crossed.

But was this really France? Was this really the country of human rights speaking?

When we started our quest, we were forbidden access to the media.

It took a Socialist President, François MITTERAND, in 1981, to finally be able to do so, and create the first independent radio station.

On May 6th 2012, after 17 years of right wing ruling France, a new Socialist President, François HOLLANDE, was elected. I have known this man for a long time. He is a true man of dialogue, a democrat in the best possible way.

Such a man can understand that the decolonization process is not an act of defiance, but instead, an act of confidence.

We are not asking anyone here to state the independence of French Polynesia, Maohi Nui.

That is not your decision to take. In fact, it’s neither mine, nor Mr HOLLANDE’s decision to take. That, when time will come, will be a choice given to the People of our country.

What we are asking for, through being put back on the UN list, is the very right to a consistent, relevant, respectful self-determination process that can only bring dignity to all parties involved.

That is exactly what is happening in New Caledonia, since it's reinscription on that list in 1986, after this Forum endorsed its request in 1985.

We all have to tell the truth, for it is the only way to justice. Truth and justice have been driving my life throughout all these years.

The Pacific Islands Forum expressed support for the principle of French Polynesia's right to self-determination at its 35th meeting in Samoa in 2004, at its 36th meeting in Papua New Guinea in 2005, and at its 42nd meeting in New Zealand in August, 2011.

Today, in 2012, after all the supports gathered since 2011, and especially after PLG's strong support, we call upon the Pacific Islands Forum not to stay still but to embrace the momentum.

I am confident that it will to the least go one step further. And as we all know from one Hero who just passed away, one small step can be, in fact, a giant leap to true democracy.

Mauruuru, Te aroha ia rahi.