

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

DENARAU 2015 DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

We, Members of Parliament (MPs) from Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, and Vanuatu, attending the Pacific Consultation for Regional MPs organised by the Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) at Denarau, Fiji from 28-30 January 2015, recognise the vital role of Parliament and parliamentarians to respect, fulfil, protect and promote the inherent rights of all people in the Pacific.

We affirm Pacific leaders' vision in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (2014) calling for our region to be known for its quality of governance and respect for human rights. We recognise the bold steps that Pacific states have taken to safeguard, fulfil and promote human rights as essential cornerstones of good governance and the social, economic and cultural development of Pacific Island nations.

We uphold our Pacific culture and traditions, noting that human rights and good governance can be achieved when we embrace our culture, engage its evolution and its many values that are linked to principles, treaties and conventions of human rights. We seek to labour within these values for the benefit of all our people.

As MPs, we embrace the opportunity to draw upon, and localise to our context and cultures, the international human rights treaties, conventions and laws which serve as tools for policy, legislative and normative change to enhance good governance and the realisation of human rights for all Pacific peoples.

We note the progressive steps taken by Pacific governments in the ratification of core human rights treaties, inclusive of Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

We acknowledge and assent to our roles as MPs to champion and guide domestication of ratified treaties, and submit treaty reports in compliance with our State reporting obligations.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

We recognise and applaud Pacific Island governments for their engagement in the UPR process, noting that all Pacific Island governments have completed a first cycle of the UPR, and are preparing for the second cycle. We note the importance of implementing accepted recommendations.

The International Criminal Court and the Rome Statute

We note that the most serious human rights violations including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression are crimes against the international order, and that it is important that our domestic legislations reflects our States' concerns on these areas either by way of ratification of the Rome Statute and/or the creation of enabling legislation to address these grave violations.

Domestication of Human Rights

As MPs, we commit ourselves to explore and promote the integration of principles of human rights; participation; empowerment; non-discrimination and accountability into parliamentary systems; and to apply a human rights lens to the formulation of new legislation, review of existing legislation and allocation of adequate financial resources for sustainable implementation.

We affirm the importance of making human rights a reality on the ground, and the obligations of Parliament and MPs to increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of human rights with a view to changing norms and attitudes.

Rights of People with Disabilities

We celebrate the advances made by Pacific governments in RPD ratification and endorsement of the Pacific Regional Strategy on Disability 2010-2015, together with addressing institutional, legislative and practical discrimination for people with disabilities. We are cognizant that access and involving people with disabilities in the decisions that affect them is an important factor in the realisation of the rights of people with disabilities.

We encourage the ratification of CRPD by all Pacific States and urge States that have ratified CRPD to consider implementation of the treaty in domestic laws and policies, and ensure that CRPD reporting obligations are met.

Women's Rights

We recognise the standing of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and urge our fellow parliamentarians and Governments to act boldly to ensure that women's human rights are realised through laws, policies, social and community norms and values that reject all forms of discrimination.

We note that development outcomes can be better achieved with the full participation of women in political, social, cultural and economic spheres; and are challenged to create further opportunities to increase the participation and voice of women in local and national governance.

Children's Rights

We note with concern the alarming data on violence against children perpetrated in the family and community. We recognize the generational cycle of violence and contributing factors such as alcohol, economic hardship and family stress.

All Pacific states have ratified the CRC. The urgent task before us is to translate the CRC into domestic law and norms that guarantee protection for children.

Emerging Human Rights Issues: Climate Change & NCDs

Noting climate change is a real and immediate threat to human and cultural rights, and to the future existence of Pacific people, we affirm our commitment to working collaboratively across sectors of government/society, and to be effective at the local, national and international levels.

Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are a crisis in the Pacific and warrant a whole-of-government approach to arrest the unfolding epidemic. We urge Parliaments to develop conducive legislation, policies and practices that address key NCDs behavioural risk factors – harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and tobacco use.

National MPs Consultations

As MPs from Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, and Vanuatu, we recognize the value of this Consultation in looking at opportunities and challenges on human rights and good governance; and implore regional partners to continue working with our Governments and civil society to advance work on human rights and good governance.

We call upon SPC RRRT to build upon the success of this Regional Consultation with further MP consultations at the national level to progress human rights, good governance and sustainable development.

Signed by
Members of Parliament
at the Consultation for
Human Rights and
Good Governance,
Denarau, Fiji
on 30 January 2015.



Fiji



Kiribati



Marshall Islands



Nauru



Niue



Palau



Samoa



Solomon Islands



Tonga



Tuvalu



Vanuatu