

**STATEMENT BY DAME MEG TAYLOR, SECRETARY GENERAL,
PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM**

Submitted to the Climate Vulnerable Forum

Thursday, 22 November 2018

Madam President,

Climate change is an existential threat to many countries in the Pacific. Our Leaders and people support the Republic of the Marshall Islands as the Chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum to raise a strong united voice on the urgent need for action.

2. The IPCC Special Report on 1.5 degrees confirms the validity of raising ambition and seeking action now. It is clear that the difference between 1.5 and 2 degrees of average global warming above pre-industrial levels in terms of human and environmental impact is significant and especially so, if not catastrophic, for all the states represented at this Forum.

3. Our vulnerability and fragility mean that one disaster can undo decades of development progress. This implies that we must seek increasing levels of support, improved disaster risk and response, and climate change financing that is coherent, accessible, and delivered through strengthened national systems at lower transaction costs. This is especially critical in those most fragile and vulnerable countries with limited domestic resources. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, in collaboration with partners, has completed national climate finance assessments in six¹ of the eight Pacific members of the Climate Vulnerable Forum to strengthen country readiness to effectively access and manage international climate finance.

4. The Pacific is also at the forefront of promoting climate change as a security issue. In September, Forum Leaders issued the Boe Declaration, which recognises that climate change remains the single greatest threat, to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the Peoples of the Pacific. Moreover, many low-lying atoll countries face direct and traditional security threats such as the potential loss of sovereignty, self-determination rights, territorial integrity and citizenship.

¹ RMI, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa and Palau (PICs not assessed are PNG and Tuvalu)

5. As Pacific Ocean Commissioner, I also want to emphasise the critical role played by Oceans in regulating the Climate, as well as the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide, and consequent climate change effects and impacts. As stewards of the largest oceanic continent in the world, this service, which benefits the planet and its peoples, needs to be recognised and accepted. In this region, we use the narrative of the Blue Pacific to reflect the shared stewardship of this vital resource but it is threatened by climate change. By not safeguarding the ocean we will irrevocably change the climate and the lives of the people of the Blue Pacific Continent.

6. As we head to COP24 we must continue to work to ensure that the Paris Agreement becomes a living document of higher ambition. It is a duty of all Parties to ensure the Paris Agreement Implementation Guidelines are adopted at COP24 and that the 'Talanoa' Dialogue process recognises the findings of the IPCC Special Report on 1.5 degrees of global warming. In response to Forum Leaders' directive, the CROP Plus team is working tirelessly to prepare Pacific negotiators for COP24.

7. Madam President; We cannot delay: Pacific lives, Pacific cultures, Pacific futures, matter.

Thank you