
Securing our future in the Pacific



Pacific Islands Forum
with United Nations Missions
*Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji,
Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau,
Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands,
Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu*

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**PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM
STATEMENT FOR COMMEMORATION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST NUCLEAR TESTS**

DELIVERED BY

H.E MR. SAMUELU LALONIU

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TUVALU

ON BEHALF OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

Mr. President.

I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum with presence here at the United Nations, namely; Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Tuvalu.

I would like to thank you for your efforts in organizing today's occasion in commemoration of the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

First, allow me to extend our deep condolences and sympathies to all member states for the loss of lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. President,

The use and testing of nuclear weapons is one of the most serious threats to the community of nations and future generations. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and their long-lasting effects remind us of the devastating consequences of nuclear weapons.

The end of World War II saw the Pacific become the theatre for some of the most powerful nuclear tests ever conducted. Due to a design flaw, the

Castle Bravo test of March 1 1954 reached a yield of 15 megatons, making it 1,000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. Radioactive fall-out was estimated to have spread over an area of approximately 11,000 square kilometers, with radio-active material detected in Australia and as far away as Europe. This is a phenomenon that the Pacific and the community of Nations should not have to endure again.

The Marshall Islands, Kiribati, French Polynesia and others have suffered the scourge of nuclear testing in the Pacific, and our people and communities continue to bear the burden of the transboundary and intergenerational devastation left behind by nuclear weapons testing and radioactive contamination.

In an effort to put an end to nuclear testing, and to safeguard the bounty and beauty of the Blue Pacific, our leaders in 1985 adopted the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. This is commonly referred to as the Rarotonga Treaty.

Last year, at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Tuvalu, the leaders reiterated the importance of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and acknowledged the devastating consequences of the use and testing which remains an existential threat to peace and global security.

Therefore, our collective global goal must be to strive for a world that is free of nuclear weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction.

But by doing so, it is important for every member of the global community of nations to take all necessary steps within its competence to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to help bring that treaty into force.

The CTBT is an effective measure for promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by “constraining the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons” through a global network of monitoring facilities that allow for on-site inspections. However, despite 184 signatures and 168 ratifications, it has not yet entered into force.

We strongly urge and encourage the eight Annex 2 States that have yet to sign and or ratify the CTBT to do so in view of its overwhelming and near universal support and role in achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

To conclude, the Pacific Islands Forum group reiterates our support on every effort that ends nuclear tests in order to avert devastating and harmful effects on the lives and health of people and the environment.

I thank you.