The Second Oceania First Voices Regional Forum with the theme “One Voice, One People, One World” was held on the 26th and 27th of March, 2024, bringing together 98 First Voices Representatives, and partners from across Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Australia and Aotearoa, New Zealand. The second regional forum was an important opportunity with an URGENT CALL, as representatives of INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF OCEANIA to:
• recall and reflect the outcomes of the inaugural 2022 Oceania First Voices Conference, the 2023 Kauwai Communiqué, the outcomes of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change CoP27 and CoP 28, Convention on Biological Diversity CoP15 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.
• recognise the role and function of our governments in acknowledging the rights and engagement of our communities; creating an enabling environment to empower communities in national decision making processes and in the co-design and delivery of grassroot actions to achieve local, national, regional and global priorities beneficial to all its collective citizens.
• reaffirm the significance of our traditional and cultural values, wisdom, knowledge systems, world views and languages as the different threads of the woven magimagi (coconut sinew) that spiritually connects us as one with each other, our land, waterways and ocean
• celebrate our solidarity as Indigenous people across Oceania; our leadership, our guardianship innovation, and resilience in the face of accelerating climate and biodiversity crises
• safeguard our traditional knowledge and practices by enacting appropriate national laws and policies and incorporate these knowledge systems and practices into the formal educational curricula and ensure the registration of our intellectual property rights.
• collectively chart a way forward as one voice to influence key decisions at various levels and in spaces that matter, to galvanise and catalyse community-driven climate and nature based actions that are just, equitable, culturally appropriate, and rooted in the traditional wisdom and values entrusted to us by our ancestors, to be passed on to our children and those still to come.

As the traditional custodians of Oceania, we are proud of our heritage as the First Stewards of the largest ocean and biodiverse regions of the world. We acknowledge Oceania First Voices Regional Forum as a platform to meaningfully share and amplify our stories our way, through our languages, songs, dances, arts and stories. We acknowledge that in order to move forward, it is crucial for us to recognize our roots and embrace our identity as the peoples of Oceania.

Our Commitment:

Through a shared spirit as One voice, One people, One world, with a vision of “inspiring all people to action through our protection and restoration of our Oceania”, we collectively pledge to:
• enhance our traditional knowledge and value systems as key components of the solutions to address the current climate, ocean and biodiversity crises.
• reaffirm our commitment to safeguard and preserve our traditional knowledge and value systems, fundamental to our collective identity and as the foundation for mitigating and restoring nature loss and enhancing our socio-ecological resilience and adaptability.
• commit to actively listening to the voices and integrate the wisdom of our elders, women, youths, children, people with disabilities and the most vulnerable within and amongst our communities.
• continue our collaborative spirit, reinforcing our traditional relationships through ongoing storytelling, learnings and exchanges that are mutually supportive.
• develop a framework to actively seek opportunities to chart a course to advocate our collective priorities and needs at local, national, regional, and global levels.
• establish and expand the Oceania First Voices Alliance as a unified platform to include additional voices and stories from across the Pacific Ocean
• forge connections between Oceania First Voices Alliance and other existing bodies and platforms at the local, national, regional and global level through better coordination to foster valuable collaborations and partnerships to strengthen our collective impact and resolution.

We note with utmost concern the continuous loss of our indigenous languages leading to the erosion of our traditional knowledge, values and cultural identities of our people. We also express deep concern over the insufficient progress in fully implementing our indigenous rights particularly those contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This lack of progress hampers our communities’ ability to effectively combat the pressing nature and climate crises.

Our Collective Call:

We stand in solidarity, calling on our Governments, CROP agencies, development partners and the global community to urgently translate commitments into action and:

• ensure the full and urgent implementation of the agreements and decisions adopted by UNFCCC CoP27, CoP28 and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) CoP15 Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in true partnership with indigenous people and local communities of Oceania.

• take decisive actions to safeguard our rights as indigenous peoples of Oceania, along with our traditional values, knowledge systems and languages, through enactment of appropriate legislations and policies, while adhering to the principles of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and the principles and values of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
• facilitate meaningful actions to eliminate the barriers that impede the equitable, inclusive and impactful participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making processes through fostering ongoing capacity building initiatives, as well as providing sustainable and adequate technical and financial support. This shall include recognizing and promoting the use of indigenous languages in formal spaces that promotes meaningful, inclusive and effective participation of our diverse voices in decision-making processes.
• ensure that national and regional preparation for key national, regional and global events such as future CoPs must be inclusive of the diverse voices of indigenous communities, and community groups, every stage from the initial planning to execution and in the formal negotiations.
• support the call for a just transition towards a fossil fuel free Pacific and world in line with the goals and targets of the Paris Agreement and keeping 1.5 alive.
• Expedite the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) climate finance agenda that is equitable, adequate, sustainable and easily accessible, that supports and strengthen urgent actions led by indigenous peoples and local communities of Oceania to protect our livelihoods;
• to ensure meaningful partnerships that are inclusive of leadership of indigenous people and local communities of Oceania in the Australia and Pacific CoP31 bid.
• to work with Indigenous People and Local Communities to define a partnership structure for a Pacific and Australia co-hosted CoP31 that centers the leadership and knowledge of the Pacific and Indigenous communities of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. This must include formal platforms for Indigenous and Pacific civil society to engage with the CoP President Designate, negotiators and other non-state actors.