

COOK ISLANDS POSITION ON THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACTS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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Kia Orana and Greetings to you Chairperson of this Conference, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Norwegian Government, thank you, your honourable Excellency for your leadership and the strong will to take on this agenda as an important one for all societies of this planet, our only world that we have and no other. Your Excellency, I share with you my Government Appreciation from the small Island states of the Cook Islands as well the many Governments of the 22 Small Island States (SIS) of Countries of the Pacific Region. We thank you for your support and your invitation to invite our small Island states to this conference.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentleman the Pacific Island Nations (SIS) have no doubt fully supports the theme of Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and its forum to formulate realistic and rational actions on Humanitarian Impacts as well the proposal for Nuclear Disarmament by the IFRC. In fact Sir, My government supports of the position voiced by the IFRC proposal to support the agenda on the campaign of disarmament of a global nuclear detonation. No doubt we will fully work on these kinds of agenda for more action and good political diplomacy, but we are determined to support the disarmament of nuclear arms which **auspiciously** are in the hands of those who has the power to disarm.

But your Excellency, we in the Pacific do not have the luxury to be suspicious and ignored, the continuous need for more and more scientific proof on the impacts of already detonated tests that were done in the 70s in the Pacific Region is a continuous tedious concern and unaffordable. Ladies and gentleman, the Pacific Region as a whole is already living in the fears of previous detonations of the Pacific, an example of this previous detonation is the nuclear tests held on a Remote atoll Island of Mururoa by the French. The fear and our dilemma on this issue today are very clear and real. Your Excellency, the Pacific, a large ocean state of **166 million square kilometres of Ocean**, a population size of **59.6 million people**, believes the theme of Nuclear Weapons of possible detonation should be expanded on **Recovery of Previous Nuclear Detonations** with the possible impacts on the future of a very fragile environmental eco-system, currently facing climate change of increasing sea level rises, high **frequency** and **intensity** of natural disasters with the capability to collapse similar **underground nuclear testing sites like Mururoa**. Ladies and Gentleman; allow me to present to you all a brief outline of the Pacific issues on our proposed actions and addition to this conference theme:

1. An unconfirmed number of citizens within the Pacific Region are believed to already have been affected by nuclear weapons tests which our partners of the Red Cross Federation can confirm on in the early nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands, Mururoa Islands and others.
2. The nuclear accident on the remote island of Mururoa on the 25th July 1979 has today put the Islands of the Pacific on alert of a possible 2km long crack and 40cm wide of the basalt rock that contains the radiation of Mururoa to already create radiation leakage that will affect a large number of societies, and its cultures and traditions, a society who treasures and relies heavily on the eco-system and diversity of our ocean and land environments in the Pacific Region.

3. With this scenario that truly exist ladies and gentleman, you may ask what is the current radiation density of this site; A total of 181 successive nuclear tests has occurred on the remote Island of the Mururoa Island atoll. I am not the scientist on nuclear weapons, but I can image that the Hiroshima devastation is clearly evidence enough that imagine the share scale of 181 tests can and have the possible impact on the entire Pacific Ocean.
4. The risks however are very clear; our means to prepare for nuclear radioactive leak is limited, but the ability for a collapse of this nuclear test site by a 15m tsunami or a category 5 cyclone destruction of Mururoa is confirmed to be **highly possible**.
5. Why are we worrying? We worry because an 181 nuclear test radiation can and will have the ability to affect the entire Pacific Oceans, but most importantly will have the ability to affect large numbers of over 250 societies, taken with it cultures and traditions who had nothing to do with this problem to start with.
6. Are we prepared? A simple answer is NO! Our preparation for this kind of disaster is limited to nil. And this is why my government is very keen to prepare and work with forums like this one on how can we prepare for this kind of disaster and what actions the international community can contribute in working openly with those responsible.
7. And if you ask us when and how long will it take for it to happen for such disaster to occur in the Pacific, then we are naïve to believe that this is the Pacific Region problem and no one has the answers.
8. To date we cannot confirm whether the nuclear testing operations on Mururoa Island have ceased, but only to assume that this site is still in operation by unconfirmed information by the local native authorities of the Tahitian Islanders.

We request that authorities can help us confirm this assumption, but as I have explained earlier, we do not have the luxury to rely on assumptions and therefore my government and the governments of the Pacific request that maybe this forum can be the vehicle to raise these kinds of issues with the right authorities to explain, to be more courteous with open transparent diplomacy policy to assist the Pacific in answering some of these questions and their issues and help prepare us for a possible radiation leakage **as is our Nations highest priority**.

In Summary Mr. Chairman;

This is not the time to talk about the atoms and its ability and capability to cause havoc as we have seen in the early years of nuclear disasters. This is well known already. We have lived with these affects and know very well the consequences on the long-term impacts experienced in Japan and other countries.

Ladies and gentle, *“like the saying goes”* time for half measures is over, it is time for action to take the debate to Countries of nuclear super powers to have an open and cooperative dialog for immediate and long-term solutions of disarmament and recovery actions for developing appropriate policies, treaties, funding, capacity building and awareness of our small Island states of the Large Ocean State of the Pacific.

As a country who has worked hard in partnership with our Government Partner of New Zealand have experienced first hand political debates with superpower government’s disregard and un-cooperating policy for **Nuclear Free Treaty**. Many of us know very well the sacrifices New Zealand

had to sacrifice for. Free trade agreements were affected, but we still did not deter but continued to maintain our stance for a nuclear free zone.

It is our hope, together with my Pacific Island Colleges and the New Zealand Authorities, for this forum to take a **leadership stand against** nuclear weapons, and therefore support the disarmament policy of the International Federation of Red Cross and the ICRC. I therefore we hope that this forum can help support our proposal of expanding the efforts of this conference for a **recovery detonations of nuclear testings**

Your Excellency, honourable Minister of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, my Pacific Island Colleges jointly thank you once again your Excellency for bringing us together in an united front to work hard on the issues of **“Humanitarian Impacts and hopefully Recovery measures of Nuclear Weapons”** Be assured your Excellency, as a member of the Pacific Island Secretariat Forum of Small Island States of the 22 countries supports the proposal not only the impacts of nuclear weapons but as well the disarmament of nuclear weapons proposal set by IFRC Society.

Kia Orana e kia Manuia..,