

PIFLM53 theme, logo and dates launched

10 April 2024

Tonga Prime Minister Hu'akavameiliku Siaosi Sovaleni says the people of Tonga wants to see more results and action for the Pacific in 2050.

Speaking at the formal launch of the 53rd PIFLM theme, logo, and dates in Tonga, with the Crown Prince, HRH Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala leading the launch as guest of honour, PM Hu'akavameiliku said the focus theme "Transformative Resilient Pasifiki: Build Better Now", reflects the desire to see impacts flow from all the visioning and planning around development.

"As a part of resilience-building, I am also committed to ensuring that the 2024 Forum Leaders Meeting is focused on results. With the 2050 Strategy now in place, we must move beyond visioning and policy deliberation, to a focus on the achievement of tangible results and outcomes at the national level," the Prime Minister said. "It is my ambition that Leader's carefully examine the implementation of all key initiatives that have been put in place over the past few years, with a view to monitoring and measuring the tangible outcomes that have been produced- after all, Pacific regionalism is first and foremost about the countries and the territories of the Pacific working together for the purpose of achieving more effective results and impacts at the national and community levels."

A focus on vulnerability to disasters also spoke deeply to Tonga's own experience, as seen in the video for the Launch event. Alongside the inviting welcome for delegates, the realities, devastation, and recovery from the Hunga-Tonga, Hunga-Ha'apai disaster resonated for the audience.

"With our unique vulnerabilities – we must build resilience into everything that we do: how we address the impacts climate change and environmental degradation, how we build our economies through collective solutions, how we build the capacity of our people through innovation and technology, and in how we address our continued health challenges by working together. We must build better, now", the Prime Minister said.

In earlier scene-setting remarks, PIF Secretary General Henry Puna paid homage to the late Mahe Tupouniua of Tonga, who served as the first SG of what was then the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation, SPEC. His son Mahe Tupouniua today serves in the Office of the Prime Minister.

He also lauded the ongoing leadership of regionalism Tonga provides – this is its fourth Leaders Forum hosting, with previous Leader’s meetings hosted in 1975, 1988 and 2007.

For 2024, he said, the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum “will, amongst other things, consider and decide the trajectory and direction of the regional architecture, that underpins and brings to life Pacific regionalism– Tonga’s leadership, diplomacy, and foresight, as the incoming Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, will be vital.”

SG Puna said the 53rd session provided, “an opportunity for Tonga to reaffirm yet again, the strength of your resilience, the determination of your people, and the warmth of your hospitality. The success of this Forum rests, not only on the shoulders of your government, but on the shoulders of each and every Tongan here in the Kingdom, and across the world.”

He commended the theme for its focus on transformative resilience, as Pacific nations grapple with the impacts of climate change and disasters, “but these challenges, while great, have not and will not

deter us, from our efforts to work together to address them. Because, it is only in our unity, that we can truly overcome adversity,” he said.

Alongside the 53rd PIFLM dates of 26-30th August 2024, the website www.piflm53.to was launched as well as social media platforms for advocacy and engagement.

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