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## A MESSAGE DELIVERED FOR HIS EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE TOKE TUFUKIA TALAGI PREMIER OF NIUE

by

Ms Litia Mawi, the non-resident High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji to Niue, at the Presentation of her Credentials on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016

to

## THE HONOURABLE POKOTOA SIPELI THE ACTING PREMIER OF NIUE



The Honourable Pokatoa Sipeli – The Acting Premier of Niue  
Honourable Ministers  
Honourable Members of Parliament  
The Secretary of Government  
The Attorney General  
The Financial Secretary  
The Head of External Affairs  
The Fijian Community Leader and Representatives here today  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Fakaalofa Lahi Atu

Ni sa Bula Vinaka and a very good morning to you all.

It is indeed a great yet humbling honour for me to have been accredited by His Excellency, The President of the Republic of Fiji, to be the first non-resident High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji to Niue.

It is on His Excellency's behalf - in his capacity as Head of State - that I take this great pleasure of conveying to you all the warmest of greetings of the Fijian Government and the Fijian People. Fiji and Niue like any other Pacific neighbours, are long standing friends, sharing common values from our past and charting a common destiny for our future.

**Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen** - As you know, ten weeks ago Tropical Cyclone Winston – the biggest ever to make landfall in the Southern Hemisphere, slammed into Fiji, with a huge devastating effect. Apart from killing 44 Fijians and injuring many dozens more, it damaged or totally destroyed up to 40,000 homes, 229 schools and countless other public buildings and infrastructure, all of which totalled up to an estimated one billion US Dollars. Please allow me to express to you Fiji's heartfelt gratitude and assurance that with all the encouragement, prayers and support that came from all of you in the Global Community, Fijians are recovering well in a resilient spirit of "Stronger than Winston".

The silent yet jolting realization that Winston has awakened, however, is that it was an advance notice of the many extreme weather events attributed to climate change that have yet to come. And the louder call that such a realization should instil on our conscience as servant leaders of our people is how we can build a "Resilient Pacific through Collective Self-Reliance".

In this respect, **Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen**, please tolerate me as I briefly clarify my mandate as Fiji's very first non-resident High Commissioner to Niue.

I serve as Fiji's 18<sup>th</sup> Mission Abroad but am based in Suva to cover Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) in Micronesia and Polynesia along with the CROP (Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific) agencies as well as the Pacific Islands Development Forum.

My primary role , like every other Ambassador, is Representation Abroad ensuring a visible Fijian presence in the PICTs and other locations as necessary, as a mark of good relationships and regional collaboration and solidarity in the underlying spirit of Fiji's declared posture of being " A Friend to ALL and Enemy to None".

My fundamental accountabilities in PICTs, however, are focused on various spheres of Sustainable Development Diplomacy. This is in the deliberate pursuit of what the United Nations Global Family had agreed, at the 1992 Rio Summit that Sustainable Development be the road all nations should travel as Humanity navigates the Planet's future – a decision that has now been concreted by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that was signed by our Global Leaders at the United Nations 70<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in September 2015.

**Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen** - Whilst Niue is not a member of the United Nations, UN organizations have accepted its status as a freely-associated state as being equivalent to independent states for the purposes of international law. As such, Niue is a full member of some UN specialized agencies (such as UNESCO, the WTO, and the WHO), and is invited, alongside the other non-UN member states, such as the Cook Islands, to attend United Nations conferences open to "all states".

In the pursuit, therefore of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, my mandate as Roving Ambassador and High Commissioner is to establish and preserve closer bilateral and multilateral relationships with and amongst the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) through South-South Cooperation in the sustainable development of as many sectors as possible resulting in "A Resilient Pacific through Collective Self-reliance at all levels".

**Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen** - As part of that mandate, I am also required to entice and induce Triangular Partnerships from existing Pacific Development Partners - and the CROP Agencies - that can add value to such South-South Cooperation within specific global frameworks for

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in all the Oceanic Regions of the World – such as the 1994 Barbados Plan of Action, the 2004 Mauritius Strategy and the 2014 S.A.M.O.A. Pathway.

Priority themes for SIDS Cooperation currently are:

- Response and Resilience to Natural Disasters,
- Climate Change Adaptation,
- Sustainable Development,
- Maritime Resources (Fisheries and Deep Sea Minerals),
- Investment and Public-Private Partnerships,
- People-to-People Exchanges and Last but not Least..
- Capacity Building at both Institutional and Human Resources Level..

**Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen** - For the conduct of my mandate, the Pacific Islands Development Forum (or PIDF as it has been codenamed) is currently the major conduit for immediate implementation. This is in open recognition of the impending review of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism that will reassess the role of the CROP Agencies for greater synergies and enhanced efficiencies in ensuring the ownership by PICTs of their progress towards sustainable development outcomes.

The PIDF is Fiji's Framework in Regional Development Diplomacy in the very way that it is a grand coalition of Regional Governments, Regional Civil Society – the genuine voice of the grassroots in the Pacific and the Regional Private Sector - the principal generators of the jobs on which the welfare of our people depend.

This is great for empowerment of our people if they are to take ownership of their development outcomes.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,** Since its inauguration at the 1<sup>st</sup> PIDF Summit in 2013, PIDF has not only successfully forged an important partnership between Pacific Governments, Civil Society and the Private Sector - it has also brought many more Pacific peoples into the fold by embracing non-independent national entities such as New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna. PIDF has furthermore reached out to the Global Community-at-Large and embraced any nation that wants to engage with the Pacific in a constructive manner - a grand coalition of Development Partners - or those who are keen to become so once they have closely observed firsthand what PIDF has to genuinely offer by way of facilitating genuine and durable partnerships.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

PIDF was established under a Legal Agreement at its 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit in September 2015 and that validation now allows Fiji to treat PIDF as the only Forum that will represent the Voice of the Pacific in the promotion of Green Blue Pacific Economies. The PIDF Charter was registered by the UN in February 2016 making PIDF eligible to participate in any UN Activity in a Formal Observer Status.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

The 4<sup>th</sup> PIDF Summit will be from the 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016, hosted in Honiara by the Government of the Solomon Islands, who will also hold the Chairmanship of the PIDF Council of Leaders for the next two years. As with the previous three PIDF Summits, ALL PICTs are welcome to attend.

**In conclusion Your Excellency The Hon Premier - I am available to deliver all aspects of my above stated mandate in a manner that will merit Your Excellency's approbations.**

In so availing myself, I would like, once again on behalf of His Excellency The President of Fiji, to convey to you the assurances of his sincere wishes for Your Excellency's wellbeing and happiness as well as for the prosperity of this awesome Island Country called Niue and deservedly known as "The Rock of Polynesia" and all of its Beautiful People, both here and abroad.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen – May God Bless US ALL wherever we may be on the face of a Planet that we did not inherit from our ancestors, but which we are keeping as its custodians for the next generation of Humanity.**

Fakaue Lahi, Vinaka Vakalevu and Thank you very much indeed.

**END**