



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY, SIDE EVENT AT THE LDC
5, DOHA, QATAR

Sunday 5 March 2023, 5:15 – 6:45 PM
Auditorium 2, Qatar National Convention Centre

Henry Puna (5mins)
Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum

PANEL 3:

How strategic partnerships can significantly contribute to build and develop the capacities necessary for LDCs to harness the benefits of the blue economy.

- The Secretary General of the International Seabed Authority, Michael Lodge
 - Honourable Ministers
 - Excellencies and Distinguished Representatives
 - Ladies and Gentlemen
 - Good Evening and Warm Pacific Greetings to all.
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- At the outset, I would like to thank the ISA Secretary General, Michael Lodge for the opportunity to speak at this event.
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- The theme of this panel: “*how strategic partnerships can significantly contribute to build and develop the capacities necessary for LDCs to harness the benefits of the blue economy*” cannot be emphasized enough.

- Pacific Leaders reaffirmed the importance of the blue economy, and of strategic partnerships in their endorsement of the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* last year.
- Their endorsement of the strategy is a clear indication as to how deeply we value the ocean and what it offers our respective countries.
- With a combined Exclusive Economic Zone amounting to 42 million square kilometres, we in the Pacific region consider ourselves the Blue Pacific Continent – with a people who depend on the ocean as the main source of livelihoods and vitality.
- At the national level, each of our small island states, some of which are also least developed countries, depend on the ocean as the main resource base for their economic development.
- And it is why we value conversations such as this: so that we can see how strategic and genuine partnerships might help us effectively harness the benefits of our ocean.
- Chair, the blue economy offers significant development potential, and our countries will need to enter the right partnerships to achieve the optimum returns in this relatively untapped area. Furthermore, we need partnerships that are tailored to national circumstances, because clearly the “one-size-fits-all” approach does not work.
- To this end, I call on development partners to do a little bit more. The onset of the Covid 19 pandemic exposed our vulnerabilities as small island states and as LDCs, and to claw back some of the losses, we need our partners to help us

re-establish our economic trajectories – including by tapping into the potential of our ocean.

- And as we look to short to medium term period, it is important that we in the Blue Pacific Continent consider all potential revenue sources available to us. This of course will include traditional sectors such as fisheries, but to my mind it should also include our consideration of non-traditional sectors such as ecosystem services, renewable energy, and deep-sea mining.
- New technologies and improved internet connectivity in small islands states and LDCs have the potential to accelerate progress on the global goals and help countries emerge. Such technologies also offer the potential for us to safely develop our blue and oceanic economy – and in the context of our COVID recovery, I believe that it would be irresponsible of us not to consider all the options, and all the blessings that we as Pacific peoples have been bestowed – including, where it may be the case, deep sea minerals. And on this front, let me say that we must of course do so once we are fully assured through scientific evidence that it is environmentally, ecologically, socially, and culturally safe.
- And as we move forward, we must encourage all partners to support the development of our blue economy in a manner that is equally environmentally, ecologically, socially, and also culturally sound. After all, this approach is in the full keeping with the vision and the ambitions of our 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific continent.
- I wish us well in our dialogue today.
- Thank you.

