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PACIFIC ISLAND LEADERS UNITE TO PROTECT PACIFIC OCEAN

“No people on earth are more suited to be guardians of the world’s largest ocean than those for whom it has been home for generations.”
‘Eveli Hau’ofa

Auckland New Zealand (4 September, 2011) – This Wednesday, September 7, leaders of Pacific nations will come together at a celebration marking the first anniversary of the Pacific Oceanscape to announce new commitments to the world’s largest government-endorsed ocean initiative.

Among the key speakers at the event will be; Kiribati President Anote Tong; Cook Islands Prime Minister Henry Puna; Ulu of Tokelau Faipule Foua Toloa; Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Neroni Slade; Dr Greg Stone, Conservation International’s Chief Scientist for Oceans and architect of the Phoenix Islands Marine Protected Area; and Kevin Iro, former international rugby league star and now prominent advocate for the southern Cook Islands’ marine park.

The Pacific Oceanscape is a collaborative agreement between 15 Pacific Island nations, covering an area four times the size of continental Europe (38.5 million square kilometres), and providing a framework for the integrated management of the Pacific Ocean. The agreement covers ocean health and security; governance; sustainable resource management; increased research and knowledge investment; and facilitating the partnerships and cooperation needed to support the conservation of these vast and essential ecosystems.

For President Anote Tong ocean conservation is one of the most important issues of our time and region. His government first proposed the concept of a Pacific Oceanscape in 2009. Forum Leaders unanimously agreed and the full initiative was developed and agreed in 2010.

“Time is of the essence and we have not more than a decade to truly agree and address issues of ocean and island conservation and management in order to secure our future,” says President Tong.

“The Pacific Oceanscape fosters a collaborative partnership approach across the region to address common threats to the ocean, a resource that moves between our communities and that we share like the atmosphere we breathe”.

More...

“This is the most important, innovative and forward looking marine conservation initiative that will globally benefit humanity. It will help secure the well being of all people in this region in terms of food security, climate adaptation and economic security, says Dr Greg Stone of Conservation International, one of the Pacific Oceanscape’s founding partners.

Island nations of the Pacific are leading ocean management, and the commitments that countries are making for large scale ocean management are unsurpassed. These include the world’s largest marine protected areas and sanctuaries for whales, dolphins, turtles and sharks.”

Attachments:

Pacific Oceanscape invitation (pdf)

Pacific Oceanscape brochure (pdf)

For information on the goals and principles of the Pacific Oceanscape please visit:

www.conservation.org/FMG/Articles/Pages/marine_pacific_creating_an_oceanscape.aspx

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