



KIOA ISLAND COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

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A NARRATIVE REPORT OF THE KIOA CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION - *TEARS OF RESILIENCE* 17TH – 19TH OCTOBER 2022

INTRODUCTION

This report is an attempt to encapsulate the Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration (KCED) - a Pacific Civil Society Declaration that was inspired by real stories from affected communities in the region. The report will outline the stern commitment by Pacific representatives, affected communities, displaced and migrant communities such as Kioa and Rabi Island. This is the first ever declaration to come from a community which breaks the traditional bureaucracies of crafting a declaration in a luxury hotel. All participants to the KCED had a taste of “family stay” to experience the struggle and the pain our communities are going through. This is indeed connecting the climate discourse to the real-life situation. The KCED dialogue was officially opened by the United Kingdom High Commissioner, His Excellency Dr. Brian Jones.



The Kioa Coffee Hub - KCED Participants

The KCED is simply a community driven process based on communities' experiences in responding to various disasters they have encountered in the past decades. Youths representatives, Church Leaders, Community leaders, Academics were present at Kioa. The outcome of the KCED is a product of the three-day consultation undertaken on the island of Kioa. The call for climate action including the call for Loss and Damage (LnD) as a stand-alone facility under the UNFCCC and the establishment of the **Kioa Finance Mechanism** (KFM) for easy access by Pacific communities to respond to the significant losses and damages caused by Climate change and natural disaster, is paramount for the KCED. Further, Taiwan Indigenous Communities, People of Aotearoa New Zealand and First Nations People of Australia is well recognised in the KCED.

BACKGROUND

Climate change is the greatest threat humanity has ever faced. For the Pacific region, especially low-lying atolls, global heating is an issue of life and death. Pacific leaders "reaffirm that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific and our commitment to progress the implementation of the Paris Agreement."¹ Vulnerable small island states are literally losing land to the rising seas, severely impacting on our lives and our cultures. The adversity of climate impacts is beyond our capacity to respond due to limited resources available to Pacific nations. Both fast and slow-onset disasters threaten our land's very existence and have forced some of our communities to relocate. In countries like Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands communities and governments are asking 'how further do we have to move inland?'



Kioa Island Community - during the KCED

However, we continue to fight for our sovereign rights and our rights to remain on our islands. Being sidelined and undervalued on the global climate negotiation table does not mean we are weak nor that we have nothing to offer. Pacific peoples continue to lead by example by advocating for a just, moral and equitable response to the threats posed and the message that we all have the right to fight for our survival.



KCED Drafting Committee - Having their drafting session

When it comes to climate change negotiations, Loss and Damage is one priority issue for the Pacific that has been on the table for many years. Loss and Damage occurs when the impacts of climate change are greater than our ability to adapt, be that of our ecosystems, communities or economies. These are impacts of slow onset processes such as sea level rise and temperature increase, or those caused from extreme weather events such as cyclones or flooding.²

The [Suva Declaration](#) on Climate Change (2015) and the [Kainaki II Declaration](#) for urgent Climate Change Action now (2019) are the two strongest collective regional government level statements on climate change. The road to Paris for our Pacific nations was clearly articulated through the 'Suva Declaration' – a declaration that united our leaders on pushing for a Paris Agreement and the 1.5 target.

² South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme: <https://www.sprep.org/news/loss-and-damage-high-on-the-pacific-list-for-climate-change-meetings-in-june> (Accessed 5th July, 2022)

This was followed by the adoption of the Kainaki II in Tuvalu. While these powerful declarations provide the foundations for Pacific leadership in international negotiations, there is a need to ensure future declarations and agreements are grounded in the local realities of Pacific communities. The creation of the Kioa Climate

WHY KIOA?

The island of Kioa is located off the coast of Vanua Levu, one of the two main islands of Fiji. It is located in the Buca Bay and has an area of 18.60 km². Kioa was purchased in 1946 by the “110 Matai” of Vaitupu in Tuvalu as a freehold land. Kioa is a 30 minute boat ride to Rabi another migrant community originally from Banaba – Kiribati. For Kioa and Rabi, the conversation is focused on ‘Loss and Damage’ and future migration. We have chosen the community of Kioa to host and share their experiences of what does it mean to be migrant community on the frontlines of the climate crisis? It is about time we take this dialogue to the ‘coconut roots / grassroots’ communities – as we are discussing the fate of our very own people. Bringing climate change deliberations into *talanoa* with communities is vital in ensuring Loss and Damage decision-making elevates the experiences and aspirations of local and Indigenous communities like those on Kioa and Rabi.



OBJECTIVES FOR THE REGIONAL CSO'S TALANOA

Pacific peoples have a long history of attending COP meetings where they have had substantial influence on negotiations. However, the story of their success lies totally on their “strategic engagement” and collaboration with other parties.

Objectives for a CSO regional *talanoa* is around on unifying collective goals and demands on climate action migration, displacement, planned relocation, Loss and Damage, Non-economic loss and damage and climate finance in order to draft and finalise a “Kioa Declaration – Pacific Regional CSO Pathway to COP27”, which will be taken to Cairo in November. The following areas will be important in achieving success at this regional event:



Kioa Island flotilla to welcome the UK High Commissioner approaching the Shores of Salia, Kioa.

1. Review the Suva Declaration, Kainaki II Declaration, [Boe Declaration](#) by identifying gaps and whereby we can strengthen the language of Loss and Damage;
2. Invite key stakeholders to present papers on key regional issues and identified responders to respond to their presentations;
3. Examine and draw close attention to the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) under the UNFCCC and also the United National Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
4. Ensure that the approach is inclusive, CSOs are well represented, views are well shared in order to craft the Kioa Declaration.

This dialogue will create a platform for CSOs, NGOs, Faith Based Organisations, Academics, Regional NGOs, Youths and Women to freely participate and engage in an informal *talanoa*.

THE APPROACH

It must be noted that the approach used in the KCED is simply a “story telling” approach. KCED changed the way declarations were normally written.

Story telling approach is literally speaking from the heart and connecting it to the ground – the real-life situation. In the declaration, stories from affected communities are included as compelling elements of the declaration.



Story telling session

LAUNCHING OF THE DECLARATION IN KIOA AND AT COP 27 – EGYPT

The launching in Kioa on the last day was a milestone for the Pacific Civil Societies as this is the first ever declaration to come out of the community. It is a joyous moment for our affected communities since their voices are heard and especially the opportunity was given to them to voice out their concerns.

At COP27, the launching was on the 8th of November and it was a moving event. Negotiators from the Pacific felt that the KCED was a gift for them, reminding them that they need to speak from their hearts and tell their own stories on the negotiation tables. Tuvalu had also included some of the language from the declaration in their national statement at COP.



Launching of the KCED at COP27, Egypt



Presenting the KCED to the Australian Climate Change Special Envoy at COP27, Egypt



KIOA CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION

Please find is the copy of the Declaration attached and also visit the website <https://350.org/kioa-declaration/> for more information. Note that one of the significant element of the KCED was the pledge to establish the **Kioa Finance Mechanism (KFM)** to ensure easy access for our Pacific communities.

THE WAY FORWARD

Building up from Kioa, the KCED was presented to the Australian Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy as well as the Australia Special Envoy on Climate Change during COP27. The momentum created in Kioa and Egypt is significantly important in order to socialise the declaration. As of now, the committee will continue to meet and discuss the terms and modalities of the KFM. The meeting will be in May 2023 in Kioa to finalise all terms of the fund and present it to invited donor partners.

Lobbying Strategies - The KCED committee is planning to visit all CROP Agencies, High Commissions, Embassies in Suva, Canberra and Wellington to invest in the fund.

Cost Implications – For the May 2023 Meeting, we need \$40,000 USD to host the meeting in Kioa and 20,000 USD to do our lobbying work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In a very serious note, we wish to acknowledge with great appreciation the financial support rendered to the Kioia Island Community Organisation (KICO) to ensure the smooth implementation of the KCED. We have tried our best to ensure that all the resources given to us are well managed by our team. We are very much looking forward to your future financial support.



The Pacific Youth had their say in the Kioia Climate Emergency Declaration





KCED News Links

<https://350.org/kioa-declaration/>

<https://www.caritas.org.au/news/media-releases/pacific-island-countries-make-historic-grassroots-declaration-on-climate-change-emergency-in-kioa-fiji/>

<https://350.org/press-release/pacific-island-climate-declaration-demands-urgent-progress-on-loss-and-damage/>

<https://icaad.ngo/2022/10/25/advancing-the-kioa-climate-emergency-declaration/>

<https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/news/kioa-declaration-for-cop-27/>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/477249/pacific-news-in-brief-for-october-24>

<https://www.fijitimes.com/climate-change-fight-regional-partners-sign-declaration/>

<https://www.fijitimes.com/declaration-makes-it-to-cop27/>

<https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO2211/S00076/pacific-islanders-present-historic-declaration-to-leaders-at-cop27.htm>

<https://www.uusc.org/partner-spotlight-kico/>