



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
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Introductory remarks at the Fifth P-SIDS Regional Training and
Capacity Development workshop organized in the context of the
Abyssal Initiative for Blue Growth

Nuku'alofa, 20 June 2023

Kia Orana, Malo e lelei, and greetings Excellency's, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to deliver opening remarks at this Regional Training and Capacity Building Workshop on "Equitable sharing of benefits from activities in the Area."

Through the Abyssal Initiative project, we have benefitted from four capacity building workshops – the most recent hosted by the Cook Islands on Deep Seabed Environmental Management and Monitoring.

This fifth workshop is yet another step towards our collective engagement to ensure the sound and sustainable management of deep seabed minerals within and beyond our national jurisdictions.

To that end, I take this opportunity to thank the International Seabed Authority, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Government of Norway for their support of the Abyssal Initiative project.

I also acknowledge the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime who have partnered on a segment of this workshop.

I would also like to recognise the supporting remarks from the Pacific Community and the Pacific Islands Forum.

Let me also thank the presenters from around the world who are sharing their expertise in this workshop.

I am pleased to see a broad range of participation in this workshop which includes government, industry, and civil society.

Let me also express my appreciation to the organisers and collaborators who have devoted their time and effort to make this workshop a reality.

Finally, I extend my gratitude to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Tonga for graciously hosting this important gathering.



Equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits is a crucial aspect of our shared responsibility as custodians of the international seabed beyond national jurisdiction.

The resources of the Area belong to all of humanity. Thus, it is paramount that we establish and implement a robust regime to ensure the equitable and non-discriminatory sharing of benefits derived from seabed activities – for the benefit of current and future generations.

UNCLOS requires particular consideration to be given to the interests and needs of developing States and of peoples who have not attained full independence or other self-governing status – so that no nation or community is left behind.

Given this, it is critical that Pacific SIDS ensure our voices are heard.

I am pleased to note that the Finance Committee has already started to develop proposals on equitable sharing. The Cook Islands, and I am sure the Pacific region, looks forward to supporting and participating this process.

I encourage everyone gathered for this workshop to actively participate in the discussions and to share your experiences and expertise.

Let us take this opportunity to deepen our understanding of the issues and to explore options and measures to ensure the equitable sharing of benefits derived from seabed activities.

Let us work together to identify pathways to empower developing countries, especially Pacific Small Island Developing States, to harness the economic potential of our oceans while also preserving the health and integrity of our marine environment. The two are not mutually exclusive.

I wish you all a successful and productive workshop of constructive dialogue and learning.

May God bless you all, Kia Manuia.