

**Pacific Statement on Mine Action – APMBC 22MSP
short version (3 minutes max) for delivery**

I deliver this statement on behalf of the following Pacific Island Forum members that are States Party to the Convention:

Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country Palau,

As well as the Federated States of Micronesia in its capacity as observer.

Anti-personnel mines continue to cause long-term human suffering.

They kill and maim civilians, often children, long after the end of hostilities.

The Convention was born of a collective determination to address this humanitarian impact and unacceptable harm.

The Convention has delivered remarkable achievements, including over 55 million stockpiled landmines destroyed, large-scale clearance, survivor assistance, and a significant decline in States producing landmines.

But this progress is under threat.

Recent Convention withdrawals, coupled with continued anti-personnel mine use, have underscored more work is needed.

We reaffirm our commitment to the Convention's full application, particularly in conflict, and we urge all States to do the same.

Adherence to and implementation of this Convention demonstrates States' commitment to international humanitarian law.

The Pacific has long supported the Convention.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tonga both joined the Convention this year.

Federated States of Micronesia are also moving towards accession.

We will continue to work towards universalisation in our region.

The Pacific understands the critical value of mine action. Many of our nations remain contaminated by explosive remnants from WWII.

They cause harm to life and limb, and also to ecosystems, including loss of biodiversity, soil degradation and water contamination,

with a negative impact on the realization of a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

We call on the international community to work with us on removal and clearance,

and on victim rehabilitation, ensuring survivors' social and economic inclusion and direct involvement in decision-making.

Aligning with our region's 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent,

in September Pacific Islands Forum Leaders declared the Pacific as an Ocean of Peace and reaffirmed our commitment to address hazards posed by UXOs and remnants of war,

recognising their multidimensional threat to sovereignty, human security, environment and development.

Protection of civilians must remain at the heart of our collective action.

Upholding international humanitarian law is a legal obligation and a moral imperative.

We hope the positive direction our region is moving can serve as an impetus and inspiration for other regions, and for the world.

Thank you.