



GEO WEEK 2019
PACIFIC ISLAND PROGRAM

EARTH OBSERVATION COOPERATION IN THE PACIFIC: TALANOA OUTCOME STATEMENT

Tuesday 5th November 2019, Canberra Australia

We, the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICT) representatives and Pacific CROP agencies, together with other stakeholders, met on 5 November 2019 at the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Week 2019, Canberra, Australia. We echo the Vision of our Pacific Leaders as stated in the Pacific Framework for Regionalism where we have “A region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives”. We also note our Pacific Leaders commitment to regionalism in the Pacific and its principles where “we stand together as a Pacific region because there are significant benefits to sharing and combining our resources to leverage our voice, influence and competitiveness, and to overcome geographical and demographic disadvantages.”

We stress the sovereignty of Pacific Island governments as paramount to guide all conversations and interventions for Earth Observation (EO) in the Pacific. We reiterate the priorities set by Pacific Leaders through their national plans and also the regional architecture of CROP organisations and key regional frameworks, policies and declarations with specific attention to the Blue Pacific, the SAMOA Pathway, Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific and the Boe Declaration.

We encourage all ongoing and future EO interventions in the Pacific to ensure that the above vision and principles of regionalism are embedded as their key guiding consideration. We maintain that pacific ownership be the most critical component of any EO initiative and that coordination and genuine partnerships with Pacific Island governments and Pacific regional CROP agencies as key partners to ensure and enhance sustainability.

We recognize the journey of conversations and consultations that was initiated at the EO Consultations on a Platform for the Pacific held in Brisbane in 2018, and the subsequent Pacific Regional EO Coordination meeting held in Suva in 2019 and leading to the 2019 GEO week in Canberra with a specific Pacific Island Programme of conversations which included this 'Talanoa'.

Our Pacific Island Programme Talanoa session “*Earth Observation in the Pacific, the Pacific Island Countries and Territories, and Pacific Regionalism*” acknowledges the following:

1. We note the opportunity for Pacific Island nations to actively participate in GEO’s governance and initiatives. We congratulate Tonga in becoming the first Pacific GEO member. We encourage our Pacific Islands to explore and consider joining GEO.
2. We recognise the importance of EO and encourage partner initiatives that will raise the profile of EO and its benefits to the Pacific and demonstrate to Pacific leaders the transformative opportunities that EO could have in supporting decision making and in achieving sustainable outcomes.
3. We emphasise the urgency of addressing climate change, disaster risk, impacts to land and ocean resources, human security and other sustainable development challenges of our Pacific Island Countries and Territories, and welcome the opportunity of GEO and EO partners to support marine and terrestrial stewardship efforts.
4. We recognise the central role of oceans in our Pacific way of life, we highlight and emphasize the importance of expanding Pacific Ocean observing and modelling, including in-situ observations necessary to calibrate and validate remote observations. We welcome support from GEO and others to help achieve Pacific priorities for the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

5. We acknowledge our legacy EO knowledge and data that exists both nationally and with our regional agencies but are mindful of our limited capacities. We welcome and encourage support to work alongside and build off existing efforts.
6. We note that a national and regional led consultation process will begin in 2020 to engage Pacific Island Countries and Territories and facilitate EO Action plan based on their needs for the future of Earth Observation in the Pacific. We welcome GEO and other interested international partners to accompany us on this journey.
7. We emphasize the recognition of Traditional Knowledge in the Pacific and encourage that this is embedded as part of EO interventions and its application to Oceans and Lands sensing initiatives.
8. We welcome capacity support for the Pacific Countries and Territories and encourage specifically the development of a cadre of Pacific Islanders with core EO skills that can support the countries and with supplemented support in more specialised areas from regional agencies and international partners in a complementary manner.
9. We welcome genuine partnerships that support our Pacific Data Ecosystem and the ability to encourage data management and access in the Pacific whilst supporting good data governance and respecting country data sovereignty to ensure a sustainable Pacific data infrastructure.