

**Event: PIDF and OHCHR Talanoa**

**Venue:** Suva Business Center, Victoria Parade, Suva.

**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2018 **Time of speech:** 3.10pm to 3.20pm (10 min duration)

**Theme:** "Integration of Human Rights in the achievement of the SDGs"

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**Objectives: Welcome Address: Mr. François Martel**

**Secretary General**

**Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF)**

Dr. Chitrlekha Massey, Pacific representative for the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps and representatives for International and Regional Organizations.

Advocates for Human Rights

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon, Bula vinaka,

I extend to you all my warmest welcome for this Talanoa on ***“Integration of Human Rights in the achievement of the SDGs”***. At the outset; allow me to thank all participants at this joint event. For the most, you are the actors on the ground and your presence at this Talanoa conveys your commitment towards keeping the momentum for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and more importantly the integration of Human Rights into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Pacific Islands

A few months ago, on this Year, the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Fiji received the visit of **Dr. H.E. Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein**, the Outgoing United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. I had the great honour to meet directly with him to dialogue on issues of human

rights in the Pacific, and from our perspective what we considered as priorities. For those who attended his Public Lecture at USP, titled *“Navigating new challenges with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”*, you will remember how he acknowledged the profound impacts climate change has already on human rights, including rights to life, self-determination, development, food, health, water and sanitation, and housing. These are cornerstones of the Agenda 2030.

He also called for Governments to draw upon the wisdom and knowledge of civil society organizations as the development challenges we face today needs to be addressed through all sectors of society.

Human Rights are not only important for achieving SDG’s, it is also one of the conditions for accelerating progress towards the achievement of the entire SDG agenda, in critical areas for the Pacific, in terms of advocacy, securing the rights of people with specific disabilities such as p, rights of people affected by environmental disasters, and human rights outreach and education.

This is why we have worked in close collaboration with the Pacific office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights in developing a partnership to address these five key areas of cooperation.

At the regional level, PIDF will continue working with the Pacific office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote and include human rights in PIDFs work for sustainable Blue/Green Economies in the Pacific and assist in supporting PIDF members in integrating human rights in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this context, PIDF worked very closely with PIANGO and CIVICUS on the adoption of the Global Civil Society Declaration on climate-induced human displacement and migration that will be proposed for adoption by the Pacific leaders for submission to the UN Global Compact on Migration at the end of this year.

And in just a few hours, in another Talanoa on the Blue Economy at USP Oceania Centre hosted by OXFAM – Pacific, I was asked to share the key recommendations of the 1<sup>st</sup> High- level Pacific Blue Economy Conference held in August last year, here in Suva and the first recommendation is – I quote:

“Creating a sustainable Pacific Blue Economy will require collective and coordinated actions of many stakeholders. Partnerships across Governments, private sector and civil society organisations are needed to shape this future – a future which is people-centred, and places human rights and human dignity at its core.”

Today’s event, in the form of this Talanoa, is intended to introduce this new partnership between the Pacific Islands Development Forum and the UN Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights for the Pacific, and use the occasion of the signing of our comprehensive MOU to also serve as a first platform to share knowledge, raise Human Rights challenges and issues affecting the Pacific and engage in discussion on the importance of integration of Human Rights in the achievement of the SDGs.

This will act as the initial way forward for our new partnership on supporting our members and stakeholders in human rights advocacy and outreach in the Pacific.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate and thank the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights team for co-organizing the very first yet vital Talanoa with our PIDF Team. We will then conclude with the signing of the MOU heralding a new partnership for joint advocacy on Human Rights in the Pacific and to fulfill our commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind.

I trust you will find this talanoa of much interest and thank in advance our speakers and for your active participation in this event.

I thank you - Vinaka vakalevu.