



Pacific Conference of Churches

www.pcc.org.fj

Moderator

Rev. Dr. Tevita Havea

General Secretary

Rev. James Bhagwan

e-mail : GenSec@pcc.org.fj

Mobile (679) 5085487

G.P.O Box 208, Suva.

4 Thurston Street, Suva, Fiji

Tel: (679) 3311 277 / 3302332

Fax: (679) 3303 205

PCC Statement of Reaffirmation for a Regional Moratorium on Deep Sea / Seabed Mining

The Pacific Conference of Churches is reaffirming its calls for a regional moratorium on Deep Sea / Seabed Mining in the Pacific.

Following the release of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Oceans and Cryosphere, we have the strongest possible proof of the need to protect our oceans in order to ensure the survival of both the Pacific and the Planet. Given that the Pacific Ocean covers approximately one third of the planet's surface, is responsible for producing one quarter of the oxygen we breathe and absorbs fifteen percent of the world's carbon emissions, the health and wellbeing of our *Moana*, our *Wai Tui*, our *Solwara* is essential.

Grassroots movements across our region have been increasingly raising their cries of opposition to land and sea extractive industries, that without consultation or foresight to the impacts on the environment and society, have caused suffering of ecosystems and communities. Last month's spillage of mine waste into Papua New Guinea's Basamuk Bay by the Metallurgical Corp of China (MCC) owned Ramu nickel plant is a hash reminder of the danger of placing profit above planet and people.

Pacific Churches have been consistent for their call for a ban/moratorium of Deep Sea/ Seabed Mining over the last decade.

We continue to reject any attempts by regional and international bodies to attempt to validate exploration and mining which undermine the Precautionary Approach and the concern of Pacific communities for free, prior and informed consent. We are very concerned that the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and International Seabed Authority are proceeding with this agenda.

We applaud the decisions by the Fiji and Vanuatu governments to impose a 10-year moratorium on Deep Sea / Seabed Mining announced during the Civil Society Dialogue at this year's Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting in Tuvalu. With the imminent UN Decade for Ocean Science (2021 – 2030), we have an alternative to using an industry, that has a vested interest in developing mining on the seabed, to obtain the science that is needed to make clear and informed decisions.

PCC, as a member of the CSO Forum that addressed Pacific Leaders in Tuvalu, reiterates the statement that:

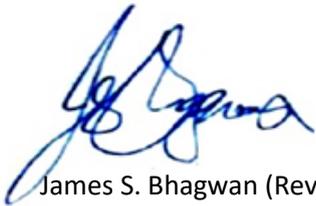
“The UN Decade of Ocean Science is a neutral initiative for Leaders to align with and a positive goal to aspire to that would have the support of communities. Recommending a Moratorium is not requiring the industry not to commence, it is advising the industry to be put on hold so the research that will be taking place as part of the Decade of Oceans can better inform Leaders in how to progress with the DSM industry if they chose to do so. “

This is truly utilizing the Precautionary and ecosystem approaches as per the 2017 Ocean Conference in New York which is in line with the implementation on the Sustainable Development Goal 14 for a thriving ocean.

“As well, the resourcing for scientific research will come from a more independent source as opposed to mining companies who have interests in progressing the industry. A moratorium would support a reduction of negative impacts from the rapid acceleration of climate change, protect coastal fisheries from the effects of negative impacts to the seabed and negate transboundary effects. It would also allowing time for the science that is required in order to make informed decisions on whether to proceed with a pioneer industry, namely (deep sea/)seabed mining.”

We urge other Pacific Island countries to make this commitment and “solidify the principles of traditional stewardship for nature and, in turn, for our people by enabling good health, secure and enjoyable livelihoods and progress that captures the Pacific spirit of nurturing both living (sentient) and non-living (non-sentient) entities. “

We call on our member churches to continue to advocate on this issue with their governments as part of their prophetic role. We continue to be grateful for the support from our partners regionally and globally and for those who join us in this call.



James S. Bhagwan (Rev.)
General Secretary

30th September, 2019