

First let me extend my deepest thanks to the first peoples and ancestors of these lands which we stand upon today. And give my humble gratitude for the wise words of those who have spoken before me.

It is with great honour that I contribute to the discussion today on our oceans, seas and marine resources.

As indigenous peoples of the Pacific we believe that beyond every horizon lies undiscovered opportunities and solutions.

This fed our thirst for exploring and what made us become known as the way finders, the greatest explorers of the ocean.

My own Polynesian ancestors settled our oceanic country of 10 million square miles known as the Polynesian triangle, from Hawaii in the north, to Rapanui (Easter Island) in the east and Aotearoa (NZ) in the south. We were able to do so through our innate connection to the celestial bodies, the birds and migratory marine mammals, the clouds, winds and ocean currents.

Evidence of our intrinsic appetite for new prospects and innovations, provides many examples of how traditional knowledge must contribute to the management of our oceans as demonstrated by Marjo, and that indigenous peoples must be acknowledged as primary actors.

How can we support and ensure the empowerment of indigenous peoples including traditional knowledge experts and holders, by institutionalising their engagement throughout ocean management at global, regional and state levels?

The ocean shapes our destiny. We are all in this together. Our relationship with the ocean is our anchor in time. And it will be our legacy for our future generations.

As we move into the next phase of implementation, and as our ancestors settled the Pacific in purposeful migration, how may we be purposeful in our actions ahead?

We have heard today, a statistical analysis, and so, how will we monitor traditional livelihoods? How will we monitor the wellbeing of SIDS communities who are on the front lines of climate change to ensure their dignity?

How will we aggregate community driven monitoring outcomes, which includes data, into state level, regional and global assessment?

How do we ensure the appropriate sharing of traditional knowledge and avoid exploitation of indigenous communities?

With the recent conclusion of the mission of the Malama Honua Worldwide Voyage of Hokule'a to weave a lei of hope around the world through sharing indigenous wisdom, ground breaking conservation and preservation initiatives while learning from the past and from each other, creating global relationships, and discovering the wonders of the Island Earth.

How will we ensure the wisdom of diversity in decision making, while strengthening global governance and enhancing inter-agency coherence?

Let us follow in the wake of our ancestors and as we have believed for so long, may the ocean connect us rather than divide us.

May the great easterly and westerly trade winds connect us to you our brothers and sisters, our leaders around the world to address the ocean crisis.

And may we amplify the support for the work of those who continue their efforts to stand with the ocean, our ocean heroes of today.

Kia ora and thank you.