

**HON. DR. 'AISAKE VALU EKE  
PRIME MINISTER OF TONGA**

On the occasion of the General Debate  
at the Eightieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

**United Nations Headquarters, New York.**

**Tapu mo e 'Otua Mafimafi 'oku 'afio 'i hotau lotolotonga.**

Distinguished Heads of State and Heads of Government,

His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations

Her Excellency Ms. Annalena Baerbock, President of the 80<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly,

Distinguished Delegates,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

**Madam President,**

Allow me at the outset to bring Warm **malo-e-lelei** Greetings from His Majesty's Government and the people of the Kingdom of Tonga.

It is with profound honour to address this esteemed Assembly at its 80<sup>th</sup> session.

First, I wish to congratulate Your Excellency on assuming the esteemed Presidency of the 80<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly. We commend you Madam President on your election to preside over this session, and we pledge our full support to your leadership.

I take this opportunity to also thank your predecessor, His Excellency Philemon Yang, for his able leadership throughout the duration of his mandate.

We also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, for his steadfast efforts in advancing the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the roles he has played.

**Madam President,        [THEME OF THE 80<sup>TH</sup> SESSION]**

We convene at this 80th session under the theme “*Better Together: 80 Years and Beyond for Peace, Development and Human Rights*,” a vision to which Tonga pledges its full support. For us as a Small Island Developing State, this theme resonates deeply: the pursuit of peace, development, and human rights cannot be realized without urgent action on climate change, the protection of oceans, and the resilience of vulnerable communities. At a time when climate change has become a profound security threat, we must rally around the collective vision of the United Nations, for only through solidarity and shared responsibility can we safeguard our

planet, uphold the dignity of all peoples, and secure a sustainable future for generations to come.

As I stand before you in commemorating the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, I am pleased to share that Tonga will soon celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Constitution on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025. Constitution Day is a profound reminder of our sovereignty, unity, and enduring independence. Proclaimed in 1875 by His Majesty King George Tupou I, our Constitution laid the foundation for justice, the protection of land, and the rights of our people. As we mark its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we celebrate not only a historic milestone, but also a living legacy that continues to guide our nation and inspire future generations.

**Madam President,** **[UN CHARTER]**

Tonga reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, first signed in San Francisco eighty years ago. That historic document, continues to guide our collective pursuit of peace, security, human rights, and development. Its vision endures as a beacon for **multilateralism**, reminding us that the challenges we face today can only be addressed through unity, cooperation, and respect for international law.

**Madam President,** **[UN 80 INITIATIVE]**

Tonga welcomes the UN80 reform process as an opportunity to ensure the United Nations remains fit for purpose in addressing today's challenges, just as the Pacific undertakes its own Review of the Regional Architecture under the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. For us, reform is not abstract—it is about survival, dignity, fairness, and efficiency. If the UN is to deliver for our people, it must deliver with us, through us, and in alignment with the principles our Leaders have endorsed. This means anchoring Regional Integrated Platforms within the Pacific Islands Forum, ensuring financing flows respond to regionally determined priorities, safeguarding access for the smallest administrations, easing reporting burdens, and above all, increasing Pacific representation across the UN system and decision-making bodies. Only then can we renew trust in multilateralism, ensure that our voices shape global outcomes, and guarantee that the Blue Pacific Continent benefits from effective, inclusive, and responsive multilateral delivery.

**Madam President,** **[PACT OF THE FUTURE]**

Tonga welcomes the adoption of the Pact for the Future, with its annexes—the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations—as both an opportunity to strengthen multilateralism in a time of global crises, and a responsibility to ensure no nation, however small or remote, is left behind. Its focus on climate action, sustainable development, financing, and intergenerational responsibility speaks directly to Tonga’s priorities as a Small Island Developing State on the frontlines of climate change, offering a vital framework to accelerate adaptation, close critical financing gaps, and safeguard a sustainable world for generations to come, while reaffirming the need for inclusive governance where Pacific voices help shape the decisions that define our shared future.

**Madam President, [CHAIR OF THE FORUM]**

Last month, Tonga concluded its chairmanship of the *53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting*. The Kingdom was privileged to host Secretary-General António Guterres on our shores. His attendance as a Special Guest reaffirmed the deep partnership between the Pacific and the United Nations, and further strengthened our belief in the indispensable role of this Organization.

Tonga’s tenure as Chair was highly significant, both symbolically and practically. Our representation here at the United Nations as Chair, afforded Tonga the opportunity to assume a leadership role within the Pacific Family, guiding collective priorities and setting the tone for regional cooperation. It enabled us to play a pivotal role in reinforcing Pacific solidarity, ensuring that both small and large island states stood together in negotiations with global partners. It also amplified Tonga’s voice in international diplomacy by carrying the mandate and collective positions of the Pacific region.

Above all, it left us with a **legacy of resilience** and provided a vital platform for advocacy on **issues** central to our peoples’ survival and well-being.

**Madam President, (AUSTRALIA’S BID TO HOST COP-31)**

For Small Island Developing States, one of the most pressing issues remains the existential threat of **climate change**. For Tonga, this is not a remote threat but an unfolding reality that threatens to erase decades of development gains and imperils

the very existence of our islands. We therefore continue to call for urgent, ambitious, and concrete climate action from the international community—action grounded in the principles of equity, justice, and common but differentiated responsibilities.

It is in this connection that Tonga support **Australia's bid to host COP31 in partnership with the Pacific** as a **PACIFIC-COP**. We see this as a unique opportunity to bring the voices of Small Island Developing States to the forefront of the global climate agenda, ensuring that the realities of our peoples are not only heard but drive the urgency of action. Hosting COP31 in our region would symbolize a global commitment to climate justice and amplify the call for solutions that safeguard the most vulnerable.

**Madam President, [ICJ Advisory Opinion)**

Tonga welcomes the landmark Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on 23 July, a historic decision affirming that climate change is not only an environmental crisis but also a profound challenge to international law, human rights, and the very survival of small island nations.

For Tonga, this Opinion is more than a legal milestone—it is a moral victory that amplifies the voices of the world's most vulnerable, strengthens our call for urgent action to cut emissions, accelerate adaptation, and deliver on loss and damage finance, and reinforces our shared duty to secure climate justice, resilience, and protection for present and future generations.

It also affirms Small Island Development State a special case for sustainable development, the use of the multi-dimensional vulnerability index (MVI), more managed approaches to international financial standards, and recognize the need to scale up ocean finance.

**Madam President, [FFD4]**

Tonga welcomes the *Compromiso de Sevilla*, adopted at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development earlier this year. For Tonga, this commitment is especially significant. It calls for a more inclusive, fair, and transparent global financial system—one that better responds to the realities of countries most at risk, including Small Island Developing States.

The *Compromiso de Sevilla* speaks directly to Tonga's priorities: mobilizing equitable financing for climate resilience, disaster preparedness, and sustainable development; addressing debt sustainability; and ensuring that no country is left behind because of its size, geography, or vulnerability. We see this as a framework that can help transform inequality into opportunity, and reaffirm our call for development finance that delivers for our people and for future generations.

**Madam President, [Ocean Conference]**

Tonga joined the international community at the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice, France, under the theme “Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean,” where we underscored the centrality of sustainable ocean-based economies to Pacific Island Countries that rely on the ocean for food security, trade, and culture. We called for integrated ocean governance, stronger financing for marine conservation, resilient maritime infrastructure, and sustainable transport across our islands, while reaffirming our commitment to the Nice Ocean Action Plan and the political declaration. At home, Tonga has taken concrete steps with the Ocean Management Bill 2025, a landmark framework to conserve biodiversity, manage resources sustainably, and protect our marine environment for the benefit of our people and future generations.

**Madam President, [Ocean of Peace Declaration]**

Tonga is proud to have joined the Pacific family in the adoption of the *Ocean of Peace Declaration*, declaring the Blue Pacific Continent as an Ocean of Peace. This is more than symbolism—it is a shared regional vision that peace, security and sustainability are deeply interconnected with how we treat our ocean, how we protect our environment, and how we safeguard our communities. Tonga supports this declaration fully, and calls for its principles to be embedded in our international ocean governance, climate action, and sustainable development efforts. The ocean must not only be protected—it must be honoured as a foundation of our security, of our economies, our way of life – our legacy of resilience.

**Madam President, [PACIFIC RESILIENT FACILITY]**

It is in this spirit of resilience that Tonga is proud to host the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF), the first Pacific-led, member-owned, and regionally managed financing mechanism dedicated to strengthening climate and disaster resilience across our Blue Pacific Continent.

Tonga acknowledges with gratitude the commitments and contributions already extended by our development partners and friends of the Pacific. We continue to urge global partners to support our Pacific-led solution, the PRF, designed to bridge the financing gap for smaller, high-impact adaptation projects. In doing so, we not only strengthen resilience in the Pacific but also demonstrate how regionally owned solutions can advance global climate and sustainable development goals.

**Madam President, [DOMESTIC CONTEXT]**

Tonga continues to strengthen laws to protect our children especially those who are susceptible to harm from technology in this digital age and empower our youth, recognizing them as the foundation of our nation's future. We remain firmly committed to safeguarding public health and addressing the dual threats posed by the scourge of drugs and the rise of non-communicable diseases. At the same time, we acknowledge the complex challenges of migration and deportees, while valuing the enduring contributions of our diaspora to national development. We also view economic development as a vital pathway to opportunity and resilience, harnessing trade and sports as drivers of growth, unity, and national pride. Together, these priorities embody Tonga's vision of a just, healthy, and prosperous society where no one is left behind.

**Madam President [CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH]**

And lastly, may I humbly remind this Assembly to seek wisdom and strength beyond ourselves. Let us first ask God for guidance in our shared pursuit of peace, in advancing sustainable development, and in safeguarding the dignity and human rights of all peoples. In humility, we recognize that our common challenges are greater than any one nation.

In closing, may I share the national motto of Tonga, “**Ko e ‘Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi’a**”. Which translates that God and Tonga are my inheritance. It is from this foundation that I draw my strength to serve with humility and dedication.

A reminder that with faith, solidarity, and collective action, we can rise to above and beyond - turning trials into pathways for hope - guided by compassion and a spirit of service to humanity.