



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM



Pacific  
Disability  
Forum

## **Seventh Pacific Regional Conference on Disability**

**“Nothing Without us: Deepening partnerships for an inclusive and equitable Blue Pacific Continent for persons with disabilities.”**

### **OUTCOME DOCUMENT**

#### **Indigenous Persons with Disabilities**

As we participate in the 7th Pacific Regional Conference on Disability, we have defined the following key asks to be undertaken by the Pacific Disability Forum, relevant government stakeholders and regional partners who have indigenous issues as one of their priority areas. For the next two years we request that these recommendations be brought to light help to support the promotion, protection and advancing of our rights in upholding the principles of the indigenous normative frameworks.

We, the indigenous persons with disabilities from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Tonga would like to put forth the following recommendations:

#### **1. Recognizing the Importance of Indigenous Normative Frameworks**

We are a Pacific people and we are known for our active engagements and partnerships at all levels of our society. Therefore, We would like to extend an advocacy arm to regional partners who also advocate on indigenous issues in and around the Pacific region. Do include the issues of indigenous persons with disabilities as part of your advocacy efforts! As most of the Pacific island states are yet to sign the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we would like to encourage our governments to recognize the importance of this Declaration. We hope that out of these ongoing advocacy efforts, Pacific governments would be moved towards signing and ratifying the UNDRIP thus, leading to inclusive indigenous policies be realized in advancing our collective rights as indigenous persons with disabilities.

#### **2. Accessible Health Services**

Persons with disabilities including indigenous persons with disabilities experience disability specific discrimination related to the accessibility of health services across the Pacific region. These challenges are further compounded and acute in the rural and remote communities in the Pacific. We call for more disability specific training and advocacy efforts to be geared towards health service providers such as medical practitioners including community health workers. Increase awareness on the availability of various health services provided in the communities. Health services must reach communities whose

location is far from the nearest towns to enable persons with disabilities including indigenous persons with disabilities to readily access these services when necessary.

### **3. Support Services**

At most times, our participation is limited due to the barriers that we face such as communication, exchange of vital information and the necessary means to do this. We strongly request for the provision of appropriate training for support services such as sign language interpreters, guides and personal assistants that will improve communication and information sharing as we continue to advocate on our rights for inclusion at various levels.

### **4. Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Efforts**

We, the indigenous persons with disabilities in and around the Pacific region are amongst the most affected during natural disasters thus increasing our already vulnerabilities. Due to the vast geographical landscapes that we live in, we often are located in areas of difficult access, which under the present circumstances results in limited to no access to humanitarian preparedness and response efforts. As indigenous persons with disabilities, our needs do differ according to the severity of our impairments. We strongly urge for the commitments from humanitarian partners for the provision of safe and inclusive access to evacuation centers. We do exist as members of our communities. Include Us as recipients of relief assistance and services that are offered or distributed during response efforts.

### **5. Preservation of Indigenous Stories and Experiences**

As we are living in the ever changing world, our unique Pacific cultures and traditions are greatly affected. Our traditional indigenous knowledge is eroding. We call upon the Pacific Disability Forum to support us in preserving our culture and traditions alive through audio and visual record keeping on our indigenous experiences as persons with disabilities.

### **6. Funding Opportunities Towards Indigenous Issues**

We request for donor partners and agencies to realize the importance of achieving our rights as indigenous persons with disabilities across the Pacific region and to set aside proportions of funding towards programs and services that would help to recognize and further realize these rights as unique peoples of the region.