Kole keu hufanga he fakatapu kae ‘ata keu kau he talanoa ‘o e ‘aho ni. 

Acknowledging the presence of the UN Secretary General, Mr. Antonio Guterres; the Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffith, Government Representatives, and Civil Society and other stakeholders who are here with us. My name is Emeline Siale ILOLAHIA, Executive Director of the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisation (PIANGO), the host organization for the Start Network Humanitarian Localisation Pacific Hub, based in Suva, Fiji.

It is an honour to provide a Pacific Civil Society perspectives relating to the theme of today’s talanoa.

If one thing that the Covid 19 has taught us in the Pacific is the fact that our resilience as Pacific people is based on our relationship to each other as people, family and community and our relationship with nature and our environment. These core value of our existence is disrupted by Climate Change and the people that have the least to contribute to the Climate Crisis are the very people that has to live with the devastating impact of the climate crisis and we are not talking about the future, we are living with the crisis now. On a daily basis we see families and communities moving inland to higher ground because the sea has taken over their homes, women and children are displaced because the category 5 cyclone has taken over their shelter and people with disabilities are cut off from basic public health services because 3 layers of crisis – volcanic eruption that triggered a tsunami to an already vulnerable coastal communities with about 2 weeks of communication black out because their communication fibre optic cable was cut off by the tsunami current as in the case of Tonga that top off with Covid 19 entering the Country as their Covid 19 safety precautionary plan had not prepared them to deal with a multiple humanitarian crisis at once.

With this situation in mind, we put forward a call to action –

1. Government system cannot cope alone with the magnitude of the climate crisis and the humanitarian response that is
demanded of them. The coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance should be strengthened to support civil society and local humanitarian actors.

2. The climate crisis is a humanitarian crisis. All humanitarians, particularly local actors, must play a proactive role in addressing escalating climate risks.

3. Anticipatory action is one of the practical ways that civil society can address escalating climate risks. We must scale up anticipatory action to meet the challenges of the climate crisis.

4. The global approach to dealing with crises is not fit for purpose. The climate crisis is exacerbating humanitarian needs and humanitarian funding cannot keep up with increasing demand.

5. We need a more proactive, localised system where communities are supported to analyse risks, create plans and have access to pre-arranged financing to put plans into action.

6. Alternative traditional and cultural locally led systems should be empowered to ensure that local actors and frontlines impacted communities are part of the decision making in finding the solution in humanitarian response.

In conclusion, we need to shift the power to transition from relief and welfare approach to human rights and development recognizing that none of us are immune from the effects of climate crisis but we are not all equally at risk so our response should be tailored by local actors themselves to fit their context, hence support for humanitarian localization that put people in the centre of humanitarian response that fit for purpose.

MALO ‘AUPITO for the opportunity.