

12th Conference of the Pacific Community – Minister of State (Indo-Pacific) remarks

Chair, Director General, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am delighted to be able to join you a year into the UK's resumed membership of The Pacific Community.

Three months ago my predecessor formally opened the British High Commission in Port Vila.

It is one of 3 new High Commissions we have opened in Pacific Island countries over the last 3 years.

It is concrete evidence of our commitment to enhancing our engagement with the region, and a demonstration of the importance we attach to the whole of the Indo-Pacific.

Our Foreign Secretary recently used his first major overseas speech to reaffirm our 'Tilt' towards the Indo Pacific.

We are expanding our trade and investment relationships, our growing defence partnerships, and our work together to transition to net zero, and continuing our commitment to uphold the international rules-based order.

International solidarity and development are a central pillar of the post-World War II world order.

Which is why the UK supported the WHO COVID-19 Pacific response.

It is why we stand ready to support the Pacific Island Forum's '2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent'.

And why we are working with you as part of the new 'Partners in the Blue Pacific' alliance, to ensure greater coordination behind your priorities.

There is no greater priority for many Pacific Islands than climate change.

You were key allies in delivering the Glasgow Climate Pact at COP26.

And we want to continue working with you to ensure that the world's big economies deliver on their climate pledges.

The UK is taking a lead with our emission reductions and our International Climate Finance commitment.

We are driving global action to tackle barriers that vulnerable small island developing states face in accessing essential finance. The international

community must work better together to support your resilience building. For example, we are launching the new jointly developed Principles for Improved Aid Impact in SIDS next month at the Effective Development Cooperation Summit in Geneva.

It is important that the UK and the Pacific also continue to support shared values of human rights, democracy, rule of law and territorial integrity.

Vladimir Putin's attack on Ukraine has pushed up energy and food costs around the globe, and is a direct challenge to the international rules based order that protects us all.

We welcome the condemnation of Putin by countries across the Pacific.

It is right that we all do all that we can to stand against Putin's illegal war and stand with the people of Ukraine.

The Pacific Community does important work for human rights, development, maritime governance, and the environment.

The UK will continue to support that work where we can, and help deliver the Vision for a Blue Pacific Continent.

Together we can help the people and nations of the Pacific respond to the challenges they face.

And secure a resilient, sustainable and prosperous future for all. Thank you.