



REPUBLIC OF NAURU
Government Information Office

MEDIA STATEMENT

For Immediate Release
Friday, 5 February, 2021

Pacific is united despite Micronesia's disappointment: Aingimea

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea told leaders at the virtual meeting of the Pacific Island Forum leaders, 4 February, that Micronesia is very disappointed that the plea of Micronesia was heard by eight Pacific countries only.

"To say we're [Micronesian countries] disappointed is an understatement," President Aingimea told leaders.

The disappointment is with the total disregard of Micronesia's request to honour the Gentleman's Agreement that the position of secretary general be rotated among the three sub-regions of Micronesia, Polynesia and Melanesia.

Micronesia has only ever held the SG post once, whereas Melanesia and Polynesia have each held the position three times. Reform of the process is needed for a fairer process so that each sub-region has that opportunity to lead the organisation which the President says may lead to less in-fighting and anger amongst leaders.

One of the reforms is to make the Gentleman's Agreement official and legitimise its use in future elections of the SG.

Nauru was united with Micronesia in agreeing to one candidate for its region which President Aingimea says the same unity could be had for the rest of the region.

Micronesian leaders stand by their current communiqué of leaving the PIF if the Gentleman's Agreement is not honoured; they will meet on Monday 8 February to discuss the issue at length.

President Aingimea's position is that if this is the way Micronesia is treated then it is better off withdrawing from the Forum.

In respect of rotating the SG position, the President says each country has talented people fit to hold such positions, noting that all the five candidates for the SG position were all "fantastic candidates - all eligible, all peers in their own rights within their own respective environment and in their own atmosphere."

Despite the power struggle of recent events, President Aingimea says the unity of the Pacific is not broken but rather is united in their actions in their region. Leaders may have heated debates

on issues but when they are outside internationally, “we stand together”.

When other Pacific countries come to Nauru for support to stand with them on international issues, the President says, “yes we will stand next to them,” noting that not too long ago Fiji approached Nauru seeking support for the election of their candidate to the UN human rights council for presidency, and “Nauru stood by them.”

The virtual meeting of leaders was decidedly harder than face to face meetings. It takes away the Pacific way of straight talk and negotiations but that is the way the world is right now with the new norms in virtual meetings brought about by COVID-19 and travel restrictions.

ENDS///

Issued by:
Nauru Government Information Office, Republic of NAURU
Ph: +(674) 557 3009 E: gio.nauru@gmail.com / www.naurugov.nr