Governor's Statement No. 12

October 19, 2025

Statement by the Hon. **KALEB UDUI JR.,**
Governor of the IBRD and the Fund for the **REPUBLIC OF PALAU**
On Behalf of the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

Statement by the Hon. Kaleb Udui Jr.
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Honorable Governors, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Pacific Islands, I extend warm greetings from the Blue Pacific Continent — a region rich in culture, heritage, and ocean resources, yet deeply vulnerable to the currents of global change.

I express utmost gratitude to the World Bank Group and the IMF for organizing this session.

At this critical juncture, I speak as a voice for our remote island nations, reaffirming the urgent need for sustained engagement, investment, and partnership from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Our communities continue to navigate the reverberating effects of recent global shocks and climate extremes while pursuing a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable development path.

The Pacific's call is consistent and clear: scale what works, simplify how it's delivered, and tailored to remote, small island contexts.

Climate Resilience and Disaster Preparedness

The Pacific is not on the periphery of global challenges — we are on the frontlines. Climate change continues to threaten our homes, economies, and ways of life. Rising sea levels, intensified weather patterns, and environmental degradation are not future possibilities; they are today's realities. At the same time, our economies — small, remote, and dependent on external trade — are grappling with the lasting effects of disrupted supply chains, inflation, and economic fragility. Despite these challenges, our resilience is strong based on a clear vision, grounded in regional solidarity, sustainable development, and inclusive economic growth.

Sustained engagement is vital in addressing the escalating risks associated with climate change, through increased investments in climate-resilient infrastructure, early warning systems, disaster preparedness and affordable renewable energy solutions. These will also need significant investments in robust risk and exposure data and analytics.

Economic and Fiscal Sustainability

The Pacific Islands are stewards of the world's largest ocean. We safeguard vast marine ecosystems that play a pivotal role in regulating the global climate. Our region serves as a geostrategic bridge between continents. Our fisheries contribute billions to the global economy. In short, investing in the Pacific is investing in global stability, sustainability, and prosperity.
We call on the World Bank and IMF to continue enhanced engagement in the Pacific whether through concessional finance, facilitating access to climate adaptation financing, technical capacity building, targeted investments in promising sectors for economic growth, and building fiscal sustainability.

We recognize the critical importance of robust public finance management and prudent fiscal management systems in building resilience against external shocks and appreciate the continued focus on these important areas including strengthening safety nets for future shocks.

Human Development and Job Creation

We value our people as the Pacific's greatest assets and call for increased investment in critical public goods like health and education which are key to growth and poverty reduction. Human capital development needs access to quality education and vocational training, access to quality health services and technology to facilitate them.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

Connectivity is existential in archipelagic geographies. We ask that maritime and inter-island logistics be recognized as core climate-resilient infrastructure. The costs of maritime and air transport continue to be a priority for enhancing trade, tourism, delivery of basic services and economic connectivity within and beyond our region.

Small States Strategy

We appreciate the WBG's commitment to small states reaffirmed in the development of a Small States Strategy; and valued the engagement at the Small States Forum.

We appreciate selectivity of solutions and initiatives tailored to small developing states different characteristics and addressing their most common challenges and taking a regional approach to address regional challenges to issues such as correspondent banking, health, and trade facilitation. We also recognize that strengthening capacities for program impact is key.

We reiterate our call on the World Bank to align its policies with the Asian Development Bank's approach, which allows vulnerable remote small island nations like Palau and Nauru access to concessional resources despite their high income classifications.

Conclusion

At the heart of our development agenda is the principle of regionalism. As reaffirmed under the banner Act Now for an Integrated Blue Pacific Continent, we are deepening cooperation including in joint labor mobility frameworks and harmonized legislation, coordinated action on ocean governance, and transnational crime, strengthening collective action to create shared prosperity.

We offer the world a united region committed to peace and sustainability.

We remain committed to advancing resilience, inclusive growth, and global public goods for the benefit of our people and the world.

But we cannot do it alone. We recognize that our greatest strength lies in working together — as nations, as partners, and as custodians of a common oceanic identity.

We call on the World Bank and IMF to strengthen long-term financial and technical engagement in the Pacific; support innovative financing solutions tailored to our unique vulnerabilities; deepen partnerships that empower Pacific-led institutions and initiatives; and facilitate access to global climate and development finance.

Let this be a time when global financial institutions affirm their commitment to building a more resilient, connected, and equitable Blue Pacific.

We are stronger together. Tal Bekall, Tal Merael.

Thank you.