



MINISTRY OF FISHERIES & MARINE RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

Wong Calls on Forum Leaders to Unite and Stand firm

15th March 2023

Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources of Papua New Guinea the Hon. Jelta Wong has asked all Pacific Forum Leaders of the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) to unite to form a stronger position against Japan's plan to proceed with the dumping of nuclear wastewater into the Pacific Ocean.

"I make this appeal to the PIF Secretary General Henry Puna to immediately convene an extraordinary meeting of all Pacific Island Forum leaders with the intention of signing a joint petition to stop the dumping of nuclear wastewater into our ocean.

Small islands in the Pacific and indeed the world over are facing horror and devastation triggered by climate change caused by industrial super powers the world over, and in the face of this all – the Japanese Government sees it fit to risk the lives and our precious resources of the Pacific with this careless action". Wong said

The PIF, whose membership includes most of the independent South Pacific Islands, has established a panel of scientific experts to conduct an independent assessment. The panel have called for full disclosure of the scientific data and information to enable an assessment of safety, and of environmental and health impacts

The United Nations through the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) set up a Task Force to provide Japan and the international community with an objective and science-based safety review on the planned discharge. In January of 2023 the Task Force conducted a second review mission focussed on regulatory aspects of plans to discharge. The reports have not been finalized and have not been presented to the PIF member states.

Countries sharing maritime boundaries with Japan namely China and Korea have also called for the stop to the planned dumping scheduled to take place in coming months and have asked for greater consultation with all stakeholders. The Japan domestic fishing industry have also raised concerns over the planned discharge fearing the reputational risk they will endure as a result of the planned dumping.

But Japan has reiterated its stance to proceed with the dumping regardless of the outcry from the region.

“I call on my colleague Fisheries Ministers of the 16 Pacific member countries of the Pacific to stand together to protect our valuable resources for future generations. There are 16 of us – we are a force.

The 1982 UN Convention of the Law of the Sea stipulates the overarching legal obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment – I will employ every option to ensure our region is protected.

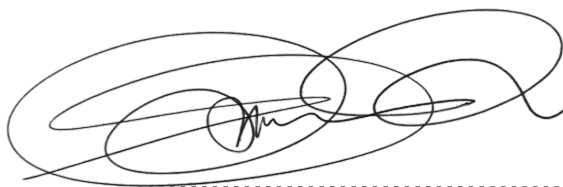
“Who owns the boats fishing in our region? Who owns the onshore processing facilities? We must put Japan on notice – if you want to use our resources, you are obligated to help us protect them. The Pacific Ocean does not belong to Japan, it belongs to the Pacific”.

Until we are satisfied with the advice of PIF’s independent panel – no plans must be made to dump wastewater into our Ocean”. Wong said.

Meanwhile Minister Wong spoke of Papua New Guineas plans to spearhead an intergenerational fisheries endowment fund for the region to future proof Pacific economies by ensuring sufficient and stable revenue generation from fisheries.

“I call on the PNA group of countries to consider consolidating our revenues and deliberate on the establishment and capitalization of a regional development fund that can remove the dependency of our countries on donors and so-called partners. This will unlock the ongoing challenge of our smaller countries to fund their development aspirations. Wong said.

ENDS


.....
Hon. Jelta Wong
Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources

