



Opening Statement by Solomon Kahooalahala of Maui Nui Makai Network
29th Session of the ISA Assembly
Kingston, Jamaica
31 July, 2024

Aloha Mr. President,

Thank you for giving my Delegation the floor to address this Assembly and we are very grateful for the approval and admission of our observer status. Let me join other delegates in wishing the Republic of Vanuatu Happy 44th Independence anniversary, and extend our appreciation to the people and government of Jamaica as hosts.

Heads of States, distinguished delegates, your excellencies Members of the Assembly, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen - All protocols observed.

This statement on behalf of Maui Nui Makai Network - an Indigenous Hawaiian conservation organization consisting of three islands, Maui, Moloka'i and Lāna'i in the Hawaiian Archipelago.

Members of this August Assembly, you will also see that there is the Tetiaroa Society and Te Ipukarea Society - we are Pacific Indigenous Groups here at this meeting - this is also our collective voice.

Mr President, in June of this year Hawai'i, the Maui Nui Makai Network, civil society groups and academics from around the wider Pacific, namely: Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, French Polynesia, Guahan, Yap - FSM, Niue, Palau, Pohnpei - FSM, Micronesia - Saipan, Micronesia - Northern Mariana, Hawai'i, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Aotearoa, Rapa Nui, American Samoa, and the USA met and delivered a strong declaration and commitment to protecting the sacredness of the Ocean for Pacific Peoples. This declaration will be submitted to the Secretariat for circulation to members of this Assembly.

For my opening remarks, in keeping with our native Hawaiian cultural traditions, I would like to honor you - esteemed members of this Assembly with a chant that speaks of our

relationship to the land and sea and especially our responsibility for its care and protection - this aligns strongly with the statements on our interconnectedness in the Pacific made by His Excellency The President of Palau and the Honorable Minister from Vanuatu yesterday.

CHANT

Kauno'a 'O Lāna'i Imua Haku Mele: Kolomona Pili Kaho'ohalahala Unuhi 'Ōlelo:
Makaleka Kauwena'ole 1984

EŌ MAI I KE KAUNO'A 'O LĀNA'I IMUA

Alas, Kauno'a, the flower of Lāna'i, comes forth

HE LEI NANI I KE AO 'O HALEAKALĀ

Kauno'a, subtle as the morning sky over Haleakalā

ULU A 'ENA KA PŌHUEHUE MA KAILOHIA

Profuse is the Pōhuehue lying along the shoreline at Kaiolohia

O KA HALE KA MALU I KA MAKANI I KALOHI

Providing shelter from the winds from the channel of Kalohi

HO'OULU MAI IMUA ME KA NANI PUA LEI

Pōhuehue sends forth her beautiful flowers to adorn the shorelines

HE KONO ME KE KAUNO'A E PŪLIKI IA

Enticing the Kauno'a to reach upward and embrace her

HEIHEI ME KA 'EU'EU HA'AWIPIO ANA 'OIA

Enchanted and entangled in the excitement, Pōhuehue succumbs

'ĀLOHILOHI IKAIKA MOE IHOLA KA PŌHUEHUE

To the radiance and strength of Kauno'a, the Pōhuehue sleeps

MOE ANA MALALO O KA LĀ PO'Ū I KA NOE

Laying there beneath the sun, drenched in ocean mist

MAHANA KE KAUNO'A KA ULUWEHI ANA MA KE KAHAKAI

Kauno'a now rest adorning Lāna'i shores

MAI KAILOHIA, KA LAE HĪ, I LŌPĀ ILAILA

From Kaiolohia, Ka Lae Hī and there at Lōpā

MAKANA LAHA'OLE O KA NANI I KA MAHELE

A rare gift of beauty to be shared by all

HE HANO HANO NA INOA O KA PO'E O HAWAI'I

This mele is in honor of the people of Hawai'i

ME IKAIKA HO'OKAHI E KEALOHA PAU'OLE O KE KAUNO'A

Whose strength, oneness and love, like the Kauno'a is forever

HE INOA NŌ KE KAUNO'A 'O HAWAI'I – IMUA

Aloha and Mahalo Mr. President

Attachment: Commitment and Declaration

Commitment to Protecting the Sacredness of the Ocean for Pacific Peoples

As we embark on this voyage, we recognize the ocean not as a barrier that divides us, but as the vast, sacred expanse that connects us all. Our journey begins with a deep sense of responsibility to care for our ocean, much like voyagers tending to our beloved canoe. We are binding together our "afa," our ropes, to initiate a voyage of healing and renewal. This binding signifies our collective strength and unity in protecting the ocean that nurtures and sustains us.

We are the Indigenous People of the Pacific and are raising global awareness to our ancestral ties to the ocean. Honoring our ancestors, we strive to be good ancestors ourselves, committed to working alongside current and future generations. This sacred canoe, our "vaka," is built through our shared efforts and mutual support, ensuring that all voices and spirits are present. Our rich history, filled with stories of creation, is not a collection of myths and legends but our true heritage, grounding us in our purpose and guiding our voyage.

The ocean cares for us in countless ways. It is our solemn duty to reciprocate this care. We are the people endowed with the knowledge and traditions to complete this voyage. Our voyage builds and fosters dialogue, consensus, trust, and knowledge. It is through this collaborative spirit that we will navigate our course, guided by the wisdom of our ancestors and the needs of our descendants.

We hold space as indigenous leaders, paving the way for others to follow. Conservation is more than just protection; it is about the sacred livelihoods and cultural heritage of our people. This voyage is sacred, and together we will sail forward, united in our commitment to the ocean and each other. We pledge to honor the sacredness of the ocean and to safeguard its future, ensuring our communities and cultures continue to thrive in harmony with the sea.

Declaration

We affirm that the ocean is our home. The vast and sacred expanse lies before us. Our responsibility as keepers, as voyagers embarking on a journey of reclaiming and healing our moana. Our mana is found in the unity and strength of our ancestors. Our commitment to the ocean transcends time and place. The waa of our forefathers continues today on shared efforts and mutual support ensuring no one is left behind.

We affirm our commitment to restore our rich culture and heritage to combat the erosion of our identity as ocean people. We as custodians of the Blue Continent continue to hoi, weave and sing songs while we navigate the convergences of principles.

We are the Ocean, in its preservation, we are preserved!