



International Science Council

Regional Focal Point for
Asia and the Pacific



press release

Pacific talks progress ambitious plan for science

APIA, SAMOA, 25 October 2023

An ambitious plan to co-design and establish a Pacific academy of sciences and humanities has gained strong support from more than 70 scholars from across the [Pacific meeting in Samoa](#).

There is currently no mechanism for the knowledge of Pacific scholars to be gathered and used to inform decision-making regionally and internationally, even though the Pacific region stands to be most impacted by the rapidly changing environment.

Local scientists and indigenous communities possess unique knowledge about their respective regions and inhabitants. The establishment of a Pacific Academy responds to the pressing need to foster co-creation of knowledge to empower Pacific scholars to be part of solutions in their region.

In a speech of the Prime Minister of Samoa, Fiame Naomi Mata'afa (delivered by Aeau Christopher Hazelman, CEO, Ministry of Education & Culture), she said "The establishment of a Pacific Academy of Sciences and Humanities will be a global testament and a commitment by the Pacific region to promote sustainable development through scholarly activities providing interdisciplinary approaches to complex problems, offering scientific advice to governments as well as informing public policy for the benefit of our communities".

After two days of discussions, hearing from experiences in other regions including the African Academy of Sciences, Australian Academy of Science, the Royal Society Te Aparangi (NZ) and U.S. National Academies, the Pacific scholars overwhelmingly agreed in a landmark decision to join forces to create a voice for science in the Pacific by establishing a Pacific academy.

Sir Collin Tukuitonga, a Pacific Island scholar leading the initiative on behalf of the International Science Council, said he was confident that convening the expertise of scholars from across the Pacific would gain sustained institutional support.

"There is a time and a place for everything, and I think the time for an Academy in the region is now," Sir Collin Tukuitonga said.

"It will unite Pacific scholars, foster collaboration within the community and outside, and promote research on and from the region," he said.

Professor Teatulohi Matainaho, Vice Chancellor of the Pacific Adventist University in Papua New Guinea said, “The Pacific Island states and territories face unique issues, from environmental to health and wellbeing challenges, and local knowledge plays a key role in supporting the solutions,”

“A Pacific Academy would be game changing for the region and for our young people,” Professor Matainaho said.

Early-career researchers welcomed the opportunity for more multidisciplinary local and global collaborations to build regional capability and to create opportunities for them to continue to advance research.

“Importantly, establishing a mechanism to connect all our science, signals to the international science community that Pacific scholars are leading investigators,” said research student Salote Nasalo from the University of the South Pacific.

Professor Tuifuisa’a Patila Malua Aмоса, Vice-Chancellor, National University of Samoa, welcomed the leadership of the International Science Council, which is the global voice of science that has catalysed this initiative in view of integrating the voice of Pacific scholars in global scientific decisions.

Meeting participants agreed to set up an Establishment Group to lead the next steps in designing a Pacific academy that represents Pacific scholars and their knowledge.

The landmark meeting of Pacific scholars to discuss the codesign for a united Pacific academy of science and humanities has been facilitated by the [International Science Council](#) and its regional office, the [ISC Regional Focal Point for Asia and the Pacific](#). The meeting has been hosted by [National University of Samoa](#), with funding support from the [Sasakawa Peace Foundation](#), and the [Richard Lounsberry Foundation](#).

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