



**WELCOME ADDRESS BY  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE USP STUDENTS ASSOCIATION, MR. MANI MATE  
AT THE PACIFIC YOUTH SUMMIT,  
'RESILIENT YOUTH LEADERS AS DRIVERS OF SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT'  
7TH DECEMBER 2021, 9.10AM, THROUGH VIRTUAL PLATFORM**

Kia Orana and Warm Pacific Greetings to you all from the Cook Islands.

The Acting Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Dr. Filimon Manoni, Excellencies and members of the Diplomatic Corps.

The Vice- Chancellor and President of the USP, Prof. Pal Ahluwalia, members of the University Senior Management, fellow students, staff and ladies and gentlemen.

Allow me to join the Vice-Chancellor and President, Prof. Pal Ahluwalia, to welcome each and everyone of you to this exciting Pacific Youth Summit.

A special welcome to all our young people joining us from across the Blue Pacific region and beyond. I would also like to acknowledge all our USP students who are joining us from outside of Suva through the University Campus Conference rooms across 13 of our campuses.

As the host of this Summit, USPSA is equally excited to bring together this Summit with the support from the United Nations Development Program and through the Funding of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade- Aid Program.

Let me begin by stating at the outset as to why SDG16, which is tied to this Summit, is crucial in the overall achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. "SDG16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" play a truly transformative role. While we know that Leaving no one behind is a fundamental measure of success of the 2030 Agenda.

That overriding objective cannot be achieved without the reduction of violence and insecurity that trap people in poverty; without access to justice for all that would protect people's rights; or without effective and accountable institutions that promote and sustain development against shocks and setbacks.

Throughout the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic has shaken economies and affected progress in several areas. It is important to remind ourselves that we are not alone in this. Keeping in mind the USP Student Charter and from amongst its 8 main principles, allow me to quote 2 important ones that align to this Summit. The first one being "Knowledge - We will create, adapt and share knowledge in an engaging and conducive learning environment aligned to our graduate attributes". The second one being "Aspiration - We commit to provide opportunities for aspirational leaders to respond to unique Pacific challenges that are innovative, relevant and appropriate".

It is with these in mind, against the backdrop of SDG16, that USPSA is proudly hosting this Summit. Getting a quick headcount from across our campuses and those attending virtually, we have over 5,000 attendees this morning from across our large ocean states and beyond. This day, is a reminder to us all that no matter what, we will come together in the spirit of leaving no one behind; to dialogue on important issues affecting us all.

The Summit today offers us all with an opportunity to engage in inter-generational and regional conversations. The focus being on realising the importance of promoting integrity among youth, with specific focus on business integrity in the context of COVID-19 and the overall Pacific efforts at achieving progress against the 2030 Agenda.

I look forward to hearing from the Acting Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum regarding our Forum's regional commitment to progress Pacific unity against corruption. Our regional commitment against corruption, called the [Teieniwa](#) Vision.

Building effective institutions, ensuring access to justice takes time, effort and will. But the return on investment is significant. The moral case is evident. The business case is even more compelling. According to data from the World Economic Forum, "Corruption, bribery, theft and tax evasion cost developing countries some US \$1.26 trillion every year"; this amount of money could be used to lift those who are living on less than \$1.25 a day above \$1.25 for at least six years! Imagine what resources would be created, how much would be achieved, how many lives of

people and their communities would be transformed when SDG 16, with the others are successfully implemented in a coherent and coordinated way!

Working together we can harness once again the same energy, commitment and tenacity that successfully propelled SDG 16 on to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 6 years ago. Let's reinforce commitments, encourage integrity, good governance, transparency and accountability in businesses and all institutions, let's mobilize resources and reinvigorate concerted action as we move closer to 2030.

I encourage each and everyone of you today, please make use of this platform and engage with the speakers, the panelists and through the Q &A.

Together we can do this! I wish you all the very best as you engage in this Summit with youth leaders, community leaders and professionals. And I look forward to the outcome of the Summit that will become our action plan, adding to the progress on SDG16 and others.

Meitaki Maata  
Thank you.



*Mr. Mani Mate during the Pacific Youth Summit*