



## Vanuatu ICJ Initiative

### Press Release

#### **Vanuatu's International Court of Justice Climate Initiative endorsed by the 51<sup>st</sup> Pacific Island Forum Leaders**

**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022, Fidel Zebeta**

The 51<sup>st</sup> Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting was held in Fiji from 11 to 14 July 2022, and unanimously endorsed Vanuatu's initiative to secure an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legal obligations of states in protecting the human rights of current and future generation from the adverse impact of climate change.

The current climate change impacts

are driven by the human activities, emitting of greenhouse gases

(GHG). Pacific Island Countries (PICs) including Vanuatu, are being devastated by climate-related disasters, including cyclones and other extreme events. Slow onset events like ocean acidification and sea level rise have already displaced thousands of households and dozens of communities. In fact, climate change has been affirmed as the single greatest threat to the livelihood, security and wellbeing of the people in the Pacific.

While Vanuatu and the Pacific suffers these climate-induced human-rights violations, fossil fuel companies are making billions of dollars in profit by expanding their global operations. Just this week, the UN Secretary General slammed the "grotesque greed" of oil and gas companies and their state financial backers.

Not accepting the slow and unambitious pace of climate negotiations alone, the Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and a group of senior officials of the Vanuatu Government has successfully



*The 51<sup>st</sup> Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting in Suva, Fiji on 11<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> July 2022*

convinced Pacific nations to lead a world campaign to ask the International Court of Justice (the World's Highest Court) to give a legal opinion on whether States have responsibilities to prevent climate harm by reducing emissions.

The 51<sup>st</sup> Pacific Islands Forum Leaders voiced their unequivocal support for this pathway, and are now already working together on the development of the specific question to be put to the Court to ensure maximum impact in terms of limiting emissions to 1.5 degrees. This initiative is confirming Vanuatu's status as a world climate leader. Just this week the Pacific Elders Voice, a group of highly renowned present and former leaders, also gave their strong endorsement for this Pacific ICJ initiative, suggesting that our very survival is at stake from climate change inaction.

Next week, Vanuatu will launch its revised and enhanced Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement, highlighting more than 148 commitments our sectors have made to enhance climate action, and confirming its intentions to bring climate change to the International Court of Justice. Vanuatu will also be hosting a major ICJ climate event at the opening of the upcoming UN General Assembly to introduce the champion nations from around the globe who will be working alongside the Pacific to lobby for a successful vote on the issue. It is expected that by early 2023, every country in the world will go on record on its stance for protecting human rights from the climate crisis.

For more information, visit [www.VanuatuICJ.com](http://www.VanuatuICJ.com)