Mr. President, Excellencies,

As Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Pacific Islands Forum with presence at the United Nations, namely; Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and my own country, Tuvalu.

Mr. President,

75 years ago, the United Nations rose from the ashes of the horrific pain and trauma of World War II. Through the establishment of this august organization, humankind affirmed a commitment to peace and security, development and human rights through tolerance and cooperation that still resonates today.

In commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, we reaffirm our commitment to the spirit of multilateral cooperation as symbolized by the shared history
of the United Nations. It is important to do so especially in recognition of the many new and longstanding challenges the world faces. Indeed, we believe that each member state of the United Nations must have equal sovereignty and voice, as the basis of multilateralism.

Our challenges include long-term goals of nuclear non-proliferation, poverty eradication, conflict prevention and social and economic development but also an array of modern threats, cyber threats, ‘infodemics’, a new wave of populism, the Covid-19 pandemic and the global threat of climate change.

Since the mid-20th Century, Pacific states have been calling for peace and security on the Blue Continent by condemning the testing of nuclear weapons in the region. Although the testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific has been eliminated thanks to the multilateral efforts, the impacts of the tests have left devastating scars that are still visible today in the lives and livelihoods of the people of the Pacific.

The other global challenges we are facing today, from the Covid-19 pandemic to climate change, can only be resolved through such multilateralism. The purpose and principles underpinning the establishment of the United Nations still speak to today’s challenges.

In the Pacific, both the climate and ocean are getting warmer. Our sea levels are rising faster than the global average and our coral is dying. Disasters, in particular cyclones, flooding and droughts have increased in intensity and costs. Our vulnerabilities have been further exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, which threatens Pacific economies, food security and remittances while demonstrating the multi-layered nature of the challenges our region faces. Pacific peoples are on the frontline battling these daily challenges. We will not be able to build back better without strengthening collaboration and cooperation.

As the ocean navigator follows a fixed constellation through uncharted and stormy seas, we must remain steadfast in order to reach our destination. The commitment to a common good encapsulated in the words “We the peoples of the United Nations” must never be diminished in any way, shape or form but rather be further empowered and strengthened for the benefit of all.
Mr. President,

The commemoration today reinforces our commitment to working together to attain the future we want. To face our complex challenges, we require a robust, rules-based international order with the spirit of multilateralism embedded in the heart of the United Nations.

In this regard, we welcome the Declaration for the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations for reiterating our commitment and confidence to the UN and the principles enshrined in its Charter. Let us draw inspiration from this spirit of cooperation as we face the future more determined than ever to advance towards peace and security, human rights, and development.

I thank you.