

## SESSION 1:

### OPENING ADDRESS OF HONORABLE NESTOR GIRO (MP) DURING THE 8<sup>th</sup> MINISTERIAL MEETING, 29<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2022 HONIARA

#### Salutation

Your Excellencies;

- **Honorable Pedro dos Reis, MP**, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Government of Timor-Leste and Vice-Chair of the Council of Ministers.
- **Honorable Simo Kilepa, MP**, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Climate Change, Government of Papua New Guinea (Represented by Yvonne Tio)
- **Mr. Victor Gustaaf Manoppo**, Director General for Marine Spatial Management, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Government of Indonesia,
- **Madam Noor Afifah Abdul Razak**, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Environment and Water. Government of Malaysia.
- **Atty. Jonas R. Leones**, Undersecretary, Policy, Planning and International Affairs, Department of Natural Resources, Government of Philippines.
- **Dr Mohammed Kushairi Bin Mohammed Rajuddin**, Executive Director of the CTI Regional Secretariat and your staff
- CT6 Senior Officials and delegates
- Representatives of the CTI Development Partners
- Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning and Greetings from Solomon Islands.

On behalf of the Government and people of Solomon Islands, I am deeply humbled to be here today with you all.

First, I would like to recognize my colleague minister Honorable, Stanley Festus Sofu of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology, who has taken ill and is unable to join us today. I have assumed this Chair role on his behalf and I am honoured to do so.

I recognize the Regional Secretariat and wish to thank the Executive Director and his staff for organizing this 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting. Thank you very much.

To our CT6 Senior Officials, I know that last week you have put time and commitment into ensuring matters are resolved and negotiated to be ready for today, thank you very much.

To our Development Partners, who have stood with us and will continue to stand with us, your commitment and support is highly appreciated.

Distinguished Colleagues and CT6 Representatives,

The previous Council of Ministers Meeting was the 7<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting. The Meeting was held in 2018 in Manila, Philippines. In that meeting, the Government of Solomon Islands was elected by this esteemed body to serve as the Chair of the Council of Ministers from 2019-2020 including elected the Government of Timor-leste as Vice-Chair.

In 2019, the global Pandemic struck, and the conduct of Ministerial Meeting did not happen in 2020. Last year, upon agreement by the 16<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting, we were advised again to postpone the Ministerial Meeting. Thus, today is indeed a long awaited one and finally the 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting is taking place.

As the supreme decision-making body, today is critical and important. Important for the Regional Secretariat, for our Development Partners and for the Six Coral Triangle Countries of which we represent. Our decisions will continue to provide direction to the regional activities and priorities.

As the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, the Coral Triangle Initiative on coral reefs, fisheries and food security, continues to be one of our important multilateral partnerships. Along with the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology, the Solomon Islands Government has continued to lead national actions in safeguarding our coral reefs and fisheries.

COM Members and Representatives,

Last week, our 17<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials met and have put before us a list of recommendations. I hope we will collectively deliberate on them and make concrete decisions of them. I look forward to leading us here today.

With these few remarks I wish all of us a successful 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting.

*Tagio tumas,*

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