

Statement of Priorities for the New Government of Tuvalu after the National General Elections on 26 January 2024

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Against the backdrop of severe weather conditions and transportational challenges, it took more than a month to form the new government of Tuvalu after the national general elections on 26 January 2024.

The new government of Tuvalu under the stewardship of Prime Minister Hon Feleti Penitala Teo, hereby issues this initial compilation of priorities, the new government will pursue and allocate adequate resources to address and resolve them.

Each ministry has been tasked to develop immediately, detail action plans to progress and implement the priorities that fall within each ministry's mandate.

The new government intends to update these priorities and identify other priorities as it settles into the business of governing.

The priorities include:

1. Climate change and the impacts of sea level rise remain the single greatest and existential threat to the livelihood, security, and wellbeing of the people of Tuvalu. They continue to be paramount and top priorities of the new government. Addressing climate change and mitigating the effects of rising sea levels are of utmost importance for the new government. The new government is committed to providing every available form of support and aid to bolster Tuvalu's ability to withstand and adapt to the severe consequences of these phenomena.
2. The need for immediate and interim measures to minimize the destructive impacts of king tides and tidal surges on coastal areas and adjacent land and public and private properties as recently experienced by the whole country.
3. The need for immediate and interim measures to resolve the chronic shipping services experienced by the country in the months leading up to and after the national general elections. In particular, the unsatisfactory and life-threatening operational conditions passengers were exposed to when transporting them from ship to shore and vice versa, especially during unfavorable weather conditions.
4. The need to reform the national parliamentary electoral processes including a wholesome review of the electoral legislation and related processes. This is

against the frustrating experience of the national general elections on 26 January 2024 and related processes.

5. The need to address the high cost of living in Tuvalu. The new government is determined to quickly ascertain and address the root causes for the high cost of living in Tuvalu. This would include reviews of the taxation regime, price control regulations, freight costs, costs of basic commodities, fuel costs, and costs of services generally in Tuvalu,
6. The need for a more sustainable and affordable shipping services within Tuvalu and from abroad to ensure reliable shipping services to meet the needs of communities on the outer islands of Tuvalu and the highly densely populated community on Funafuti.
7. Similarly, the need for a more sustainable, reliable, and affordable air services to and from Tuvalu. The experience of the current air services supplied by a sole service provider demand a thorough reassessment of the needs of Tuvalu and the air services that can sustainably supports those needs on a reliable and affordable manner.
8. The pressing need for a more sustainable, reliable, and affordable internet connectivity in Tuvalu, including connection through a submarine internet cable. Whilst awaiting the landing of the submarine internet cable, the communication department to secure reliable and affordable alternative connections that would sustain the existing needs of the country.
9. The need to ascertain promptly the fiscal situation of Tuvalu, in particular, its debt situation (external and internal), and explore and pursue new and innovative revenue generating initiatives capitalizing on the country's abundant marine and maritime resources, sovereign assets, and other resources, including online revenue generating opportunities.
10. The need to review and substantially reform the Tuvalu Public Services, in particular, the Tuvalu Civil Service and the resource requirements to support the Public Service Commission. The reforms are to enhance the efficiency, accountability, and effective service delivery of the public service. An independent team would be required to undertake this task.

11. The need to review urgently the quality and standard of medical services in the country with the objective of providing a more equitable, sustainable and reliable medical services throughout the country.
12. The need to review the Tuvalu Overseas Medical Referral Scheme (TOMRS) with the objective of streamlining its operational guidelines, enhancing its governance arrangements, and assessing its financial implications on the national budget and the nation's limited financial resources.
13. The need to assess and upgrade the conditions of all classrooms in the country.
14. The need to promote inclusivity in government policies, legislation, infrastructural development to cater for youth, women, and people with special needs.
15. The need to assess and review the status and operational efficiencies of statutory corporations.
16. The need to ascertain urgently the status of the progress of the internal air service project.
17. The need to address the chronic situation of waste disposal in the country, in particular, on Funafuti with its densely populated community.
18. The new government commits to the continuation and further enhancement of sustainable programmes and support for the maintenance of Tuvalu values, cultures, tradition, traditional knowledge, customs, norms, and language.
19. The new government will undertake immediate assessment of the progress of existing infrastructures in the country with the objective of expediting the completion of identified unfinished infrastructures and developing a National Infrastructure Plan that respond to the infrastructural priorities of the country.
20. The new government wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the long-term and lasting special relationship between Tuvalu and the Republic of China, Taiwan.

It intends to reassess options that would strengthen and lift it to a more durable, lasting, and mutually beneficial relationship.

21. The new government supports the broad principles and objectives of the Tuvalu – Australia Falepili Union. It, however, acknowledges the absence of transparency and consultations in socializing and informing the public in Tuvalu of such an important and groundbreaking initiative. The new government intends to address those process issues and to work with the government of Australia towards a workable arrangement in advancing the objectives of the special union between Tuvalu and Australia, in particular safeguarding the integrity of the sovereignty of Tuvalu.

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