

**CONVERSATION ON THE QUESTION OF TOKELAU'S PATH TOWARDS SELF-DETERMINATION. – *Malo Fakaauau***

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of the paper is to propose a revisit the views of our people on the question of self-determination for now and into the future.

**Introduction**

2. We are well aware of our efforts in the government development agenda through our forefathers and foremothers who have passed and those who are still alive, the able men – aumaga/taulelea, elderly women and Fatupaepae, through to our children.

3. Tokelau expressed many views to a number of international forum especially the UN starting back in 1993, to detail Tokelau people's dreams and their aspirations for the future. Right up to this moment Tokelau continues to present a voice annually to the C24 (UN Committee of 24 on Decolonization) who is responsible to decolonize countries.

4. The two referenda in 2006 and 2007, we know didn't achieve the threshold required for the referendum. But the nature of the views and our dreams remains. It's now 14 years since we took that referendum, and there has been silence since with no further conversation where to from here.

5. That is the spirit of the proposal; Tokelau should be looking at defining its position. What future dreams does Tokelau wants? The answer is only within Tokelau.

6. It's is not an easy task, but it is controllable. We keep our faith that our Lord will help strengthen us because of the nation. We, Tokelau, should start meeting and have a conversation in our respective national forums. Also, in villages the conversations should be had. There may also be a decision required to include our diaspora overseas to be involve in the conversation. The purpose is to ensure the people of Tokelau understands what is ahead.

7. Some thoughts that may generate the conversations:

- Who will lead such thinking?
- Don't leave it for others to start the thinking, but initiate an internal conversation first
- Tokelau should be well prepared to respond to the question: of a preferred type of governance appropriate for Tokelau
- It is a belief such a conversation will be supported by NZ
- If we are not willing and start exploring now, we may be questioned by our future generation

8. Once Tokelau has decided, then a discussion with our administering power, NZ to support in improving our capacity and capability towards our preparations.

9. It is proposed that, by 2025 – 2026 Tokelau will have a clear response. The reason being Tokelau was administered by Samoa and NZ since 1925. If we are fortunate enough

to be alive in 2025, that is the 100 year anniversary the people of Tokelau have been administered by NZ. And there will be other thoughts to improve this matter.

10. But the thinking is, if approved by the three Taupulegas and villages than we look and investigate we have a clear understanding of the relationship between Tokelau and NZ over the past century. It will remind Tokelau also of the efforts to date since the delegation of the Administrator's powers to the 3 Taupulegas and the GF. It is hoped there will be important workshops, which will be crucial for Tokelau to consider on the way ahead.

11. There should be no proposed model from us, but we leave that to be decided by our people. Or do we select a model from the governance models provided by UN, or develop our own fit for purpose model that suits Tokelau and using some component of outside models to achieve the most appropriate governance model for Tokelau.

12. What is important, as our ancestors would say 'Taia ko Lata Matau'. Let's be strong to first allow Tokelau to develop then seek help later. Let's look forward for better days, knowing, there will be many challenges, but Tokelau can initiate the work to know the right tack depending on the wind direction whether it's from the stern, the bow, starboard or port side. Important the vaka is buoyance, steady keel, straight forward sailing, kae, e lahi foki na pokotau, kae e mafai lava ia Tokelau ke taumaka, ke gauku, fuafua lava ki te matagi pe tuliheke, pe fetalaaki pe uamua. Ko te Vaka ke hako na tau, ke takele lelei, ke teletonu, ke gutua, ke tauala, ke malu, ke tologa. And very dependent on the Voyage Guidance ('Taki Folau').

13. The three models from UN:

- Independent
- Free Association
- Integration

14. Tokelau should first understand these models, as well as another model that may be different, should Tokelau decides. The final decision is Tokelau.

15. There are a number of development that works alongside with the preparation for our internal self-determination agenda.

16. We hope that once agreed by the Taupulegas, then, it is the time to formally inform NZ

17. By the year 2025-2026 progress made:

- Workshops has happened
- Activate workshop meetings, reviewing and discussions in villages and the nation;
- Decide on a model that may be selected in future
- Improve structures of governance with politics in all levels of decision making.
- Improve governance of services in villages and national, and properly put right the Office in TALO
- The national airport would be complete by then
- A proper inter- atoll vessel in place
- The fibre optic cable is cut over for high speed internet

- Complete priorities for Education and Health
- Complete preparation for Climate Change
- Tokelau continues to be protected from COVID19
- Complete part of the independent Judiciary sector (consultation?) and the laws themselves
- The Tokelau Language Commission is established
- The TREEP project is complete.
- Secured the EZZ and fishing boundaries
- Develop a strategy for Olohega

18. There may be other development agenda that the General Fono and the Taupulega may wish to add.

**Recommendations:**

19. It is recommended that the General Fono:

i) **note** that the purpose of the paper is to encourage and seek endorsement that Tokelau now start the conversation on self-determination heading into commemorating 100 years under NZ administration;

ii) **agree** that Tokelau revive the conversation on self-determination heading into commemorating 100 years under NZ administration