



PIANGO

Pacific Islands Association of
Non-governmental Organisations

*Association Des Ongs
Desiles Du Pacifique*

PRESS RELEASE

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Suva, Fiji- PIANGO Facility Aiding Locally-led Engagement (FALE) Coordinator, Akmal Ali, delivered a series of strong interventions at the 9th Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (PFSD) last week, calling for a fundamental course correction in how development is financed, planned, and implemented across the Pacific.

Representing 24 National Liaison Units across the region, PIANGO's message was unified, development must be locally-led, culturally grounded, and treat communities as equal partners, not as passive recipients.



Photo: PIANGO FALC Coordinator, Akmal Ali, delivered a series of strong interventions at the 9th Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (PFSD) last week.

Ali asserted that current development models often create "dependency by design" and bypass the community systems-the "roots" of the Pacific-in favour of external, imported

solutions.

In sessions covering SDG 6 (Water and Sanitation) and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), PIANGO argued that these are not merely technical or infrastructure agendas, but matters of **dignity, survival, and identity**.

PIANGO called for concrete financial commitments, urging governments and partners to adopt a **dual financing approach**. This would mandate that a minimum, measurable share of investments in water and energy flows directly to local and national civil society actors, traditional leaders, and community-level committees.

“Communities are rights holders, knowledge holders, and problem solvers,” Ali stated. “They are already designing water and energy solutions at the village level. They ask for one thing: Let us lead the actions that affect our lives,” he added.



Addressing innovation (SDG 9) and urban development (SDG 11), PIANGO rejected imported models that fail to build local capacity. The interventions stressed that true Pacific innovation, like the region’s traditional wayfinding, must be rooted in local identity and knowledge.

Key Demands for Innovation and Infrastructure:

- **Locally Led Innovation:** Stop navigating with "someone else's compass." Innovation must be designed with communities from the start and invest in Pacific-led research and domestic industries.
- **Culturally Resilient Cities:** Urban planning must treat cultural resilience as a core foundation, not as decoration. Plans must safeguard language, heritage, and traditional governance spaces, ensuring a Pacific city "feels like home, not like somewhere we got lost in."

Ali concluded with forceful demands for systemic change in global partnerships and financing structures. and criticised "consultation theatre," stating that partnerships often remain extractive or transactional, and called for civil society and community representation to be formally embedded as co-shapers in national and regional decision-making, not merely observers.

The most critical call centered on development financing (Session 8): "If financing continues to bypass local actors, we will keep funding symptoms, not solutions." he demanded:

1. A regional financing target for direct, tracked funding to local and national actors.
2. A shift from short-term, project-based grants to long-term, core, and flexible financing.
3. Establishing financing mechanisms that are governed and accountable to Pacific people, not controlled externally.

"You cannot ask the tree to bear fruit if you starve its roots. Nourish the Pacific at the roots," Ali concluded. "We are asserting our right to shape and lead them."

ENDS

PIANGO acknowledges the tremendous support of our following partners with whose help our work is possible in the Pacific. Vinaka sara valevu, Shukriya, Ko rabwa, Meitaki Maata, Malo 'Aupito, Fa'afetai lava, Fakaaue, Fakafetai lasi, Tangkyu tumas, Si Yu'os ma'āse', Kom̃mooltata, Kalahngan, Ke kmal mesaul and Thank you to [Brot für die Welt](#), [Forus international](#), [CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness](#), [European Union in the Pacific](#), [AFD - Agence Française de Développement](#), [#Action4SD](#), [Commonwealth Foundation](#), [UNDP in the Pacific](#), [UNICEF Pacific](#).

PIANGO was formally established in 1991 to assist NGOs in the Pacific to initiate action, give voice to their concerns and work collaboratively with other development actors for just and sustainable human development. A regional secretariat to a network of umbrella organisations in 24 countries and territories that serve the Pacific through strengthening and building the capacity of NGOs and the civil society sector through giving the sector a voice in policy formulation and strengthening its member umbrella organisations. Our network continues to work towards supporting enabling environments and their membership at the national level. PIANGO recognises the need to strengthen itself, its Kainga (family) broaden its partnership

base across the sector, to help the Vanua (region) achieve resilient and sustainable development, rooted in its theory of change of **Governance and Leadership** that strengthens institutions, amplify **Voice** focus on **Approaches** and genuine **Partnership** that effectively promote and advance the interests and well-being of Pacific People.

To learn more about PIANGO and its members, visit www.piango.org.

Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact:

Akmal Ali, FALE Pacific Coordinator, PIANGO.

Phone: +679 3300060

Email: info@piango.org



[www.piango.org]

