



RAPA NUI PACIFIC LEADERS SUMMIT 2024:

Protection of the Oceans and the Challenge of Plastic and Microplastic Pollution in the Region.

Date: **April 3rd, 4th, and 5th, 2024** | Duration: **3 days** | Location: **Rapa Nui, Chile.**

Aroha Nui

The world's oceans, particularly the vast and unexplored Pacific Ocean, are facing an urgent and shared crisis: pollution from plastics, microplastics, and the degradation of their marine ecosystems. The presence of plastics and microplastics in the waters and the threat they pose to marine life and human health are challenges that require a coordinated and global response

The "**RAPA NUI PACIFIC LEADERS SUMMIT 2024:** Protection of the Oceans and the Challenge of Plastic and Microplastic Pollution in the Region", an international high-level event organized by the Municipality of Rapa Nui, supported by the United Nations System in Chile, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, aims to bring together leaders from various islands and coastal territories of the Pacific to promote actions to address plastic and microplastic pollution in the Pacific Ocean. Additionally, it aims to foster ocean conservation and protection. The Summit will also highlight the importance of integrating scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge to address climate change, pollution, and ocean protection.

Given its significance in the global food chain, the Pacific Ocean stands as a vital source of natural resources and sustenance for humanity, providing essential resources that support the nutritional needs of millions worldwide. However, this immeasurable value also imposes a shared responsibility to ensure its sustainability and preservation for future generations.

In this context, the Municipality of Rapa Nui, through its Mayor, has recently presented a Voluntary Local Report of the 2030 Agenda at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, demonstrating its serious commitment to this important challenge and thus assuming the responsibility to promote and host a leaders' reflection on a globally significant issue.





Background:

It is acknowledged that plastic products bring multiple benefits to society; however, their excessive use also has unintended consequences. Pollution from plastics in the environment, particularly in the marine environment, is a matter of global concern due to its persistence and widespread distribution. The breakdown of this material results in the formation of microplastics, posing an additional problem by threatening biodiversity and altering the livelihoods of millions of people, as well as representing a significant risk to human health and the global economy.

Currently, it is estimated that between 9 and 14 million tons of plastic waste end up in the oceans each year, and plastic waste has been found in all areas of the planet, from the deepest seas to the most remote mountains.

Plastic production also contributes to generating huge amounts of greenhouse gases. The United Nations Environment Programme has estimated that, if current trends continue, by 2040 plastic production could account for 19% of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions.

Plastic and microplastic pollution are not only linked to their production but also to other factors such as inadequate waste management by communities, insufficient collection and final disposal mechanisms, lack of relevant regulations, and unsustainable consumption patterns linked to a linear economy. Thus, plastic and microplastic pollution do not recognize borders; it is therefore a global issue that requires a comprehensive response.

Consequently, a series of resolutions have been adopted to prevent and counter plastic pollution in terrestrial and marine environments . Additionally, in 2022 , the Member States agreed to negotiate a new global treaty to end plastic pollution, marking a historic step toward protecting wildlife, the environment, and humans from the adverse effects of plastic pollution. This treaty will be an internationally legally binding agreement that will define what measures to take and how they should be implemented, emphasizing the importance of considering the entire life cycle of plastic through a circular economy, including its production, design, recovery, and disposal, in a concerted global effort to address plastic pollution.

*United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, 2016, 2018, 2019a, 2019b.
End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument (UNEP/EA.5/L.23/ Rev.1) UNEA 5.2.*

Objective



The Rapa Nui Pacific Leaders Summit Rapa Nui 2024, aims to bring together leaders from different islands and coastal territories of the Pacific within an enriching dialogue space where the present leaders, supported by their local experiences, can share ideas and knowledge on the matter. The event seeks to promote dialogue and collaboration among these territories in the region to jointly address the challenges related to plastic and microplastic pollution and ocean protection through the exchange of experiences. It emphasizes the importance of science and the integration of traditional knowledge in finding effective solutions. This initiative seeks to unite forces in a common front to safeguard the wealth and vitality of our ocean, thereby benefiting communities and future generations.

Topics to be Addressed

- *Analysis of the current state of plastic and microplastic pollution in the Pacific Ocean: Participants will analyze the available scientific data on the magnitude of the problem, its impacts on marine life, human health, and the environment.*
- *Strategies for reducing and preventing the entry of plastics into the oceans: Participants will identify and discuss strategies to reduce and prevent the entry of plastics into the oceans, including reducing the production and consumption of plastics, improving plastic waste management, and promoting a circular economy.*
- *Integration of scientific and traditional knowledge to address plastic and microplastic pollution: Participants will share experiences and best practices, and discuss how to integrate scientific and traditional knowledge to address plastic and microplastic pollution.*
- *Contribution to global negotiation and agreement processes: Participants will identify opportunities to support the global negotiation and agreement processes on issues of pollution and ocean management.*
- *2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development: The importance of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14, which aims to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources, will be emphasized.*
- *Opening a space for dialogue to address the challenge of plastic and microplastic pollution in the region, from a local perspective, involving communities and indigenous peoples who are affected, contributing to a joint action methodology that involves relevant actors: State (national and local governments), private sector, and individuals, with a participatory and inclusive approach.*





The " RAPA NUI PACIFIC LEADERS SUMMIT RAPA NUI 2024"

Will not only be an opportunity to reflect but also an achievement and milestone in global action against plastic pollution. By sharing experiences, knowledge, and commitments, we will lay the groundwork for a sustainable and clean future for our beloved Pacific Ocean.

Together, we will be the voice of change.



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