



## Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

# Indigenouswealth of the Commonwealth

## Pacific Theological College and the International Union for Conservation of Nature

This event emphasises commitments central to the survival and resilience of Commonwealth nations, particularly small island states and vulnerable economies. Stemming from the 1979 Lusaka meeting's call to support Indigenous minorities, the event focuses on Indigenous knowledge and its role in addressing climate change and development challenges. The Commonwealth Living Lands Charter highlights the importance of Indigenous contributions to sustainable land use and biodiversity. The event proposes the "Indigenouswealth of the Commonwealth" project, focusing on three pillars: Indigenous knowledge systems, equitable resource sharing, and the ethical custodianship of knowledge and resources.

- **Indigenouswealth of knowledge**, focusing on the 'whole of life' philosophies to support development as perceived by Pasifika people.
- **Indigenouswealth of custodianship**, focusing on the spiritualities and 'whole of life' ethics and philosophies to protect community knowledge and resources.
- **Indigenouswealth of resources**, promoting equitable sharing of land and ocean resources through policies and processes that are grounded on 'whole of life' ethics.

## Draft Programme

9.00am – Prayer

9.05am – Keynote address - Introductory remarks and indigenous knowledge:  
Rev Professor Upolu Vaai

9.20am – Panel Discussion: Panellists: (10 mins)

- Ms Leituala Kuiniselani TOELUPE TAGO – Indigenous wealth of Custodianship
- Mr Aisake Casimira – Indigenous wealth of Resources
- Rev. Dr. Tafue Lusama - Climate Indigenous knowledge

10.00am – Q & A

10.30am – Wrap Up and Closing

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## Profiles



Rev Professor Upolu Vaai is from Samoa. He is regarded as the leading voice in the Pasifika region in reclaiming and promoting Pasifika philosophies and theologies for a new development story grounded in the ‘whole of life’ philosophies of Pasifika communities. He grew up close to the land and ocean, where he was taught by his elders the philosophies of relationality, relational philosophy, relational hermeneutics, relational theology, and relational ways of knowing and being, which are living ideas scattered throughout his many publications and research projects. He is the Principal and Professor of Theology and Ethics at the Pacific Theological College.



Ms Leituala Kuiniselani TOELUPE TAGO is from Samoa. She brings a wealth of experience of over 26 years and a proven track record in national, regional and international work. With a background in Social Development, Leituala is well-positioned to drive IUCN to new heights in the Oceania region. Since 2015, she has worked for the Pacific Community (SPC) in different positions, most recently as the Regional Director for Polynesia and with her new role, she is committed to IUCN’s mission and values.



Mr Aisake Casimira, from Rotuma, is the Director of the Institute for Mission for Mission and Research, based at the Pacific Theological College. Over the years the Institute conceptualised, planned and implemented innovative projects in development and education. These include the ‘Reweaving the Ecological Mat’ or REM, ‘Vakatabu’ project, and the ‘Young Academics’ programme. The projects deal with Pasifika indigenous philosophy traditions and how these could be resources for Pasifika people’s search for better solutions for their development and climate change problems.



Dr. Tafue Lusama is a Tuvaluan theologian with a strong sense for climate justice, have travelled the world advocating for the Island countries challenged by the negative impacts of climate change. Dr. Lusama currently heads the Institute for Climate Indigenous Knowledge located within the PTC campus. The ICIK aims to create transformative climate programmes that are communities-based and communities-informed, grounded on the ecological knowledge, faith, and spiritualities of grassroots communities.