

# Sautu Voyage - The Uto ni Yalo's Call for Ocean Protection and Pacific Solidarity

*The Uto ni Yalo (UNY) is embarking on an international voyage on Sunday from Fiji to Tonga — voyaging as an Ambassador of Pacific goodwill to the PIFLM53.*

SUVA, FIJI, August 16, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After nearly a decade, the Uto ni Yalo (UNY) is once again embarking on a momentous international voyage on Sunday with its sights set on Tonga — voyaging as an Ambassador of Pacific goodwill to the 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting (PIFLM53).

The UNY and its sister vessels from across the region have long stood as symbols of the Pacific's resilience, promoting traditional voyaging and sustainable sea transport and advocating for the health of our oceans. The voyage, aptly named "Sautu Voyage – Moana 'o e Melino," is a celebration of the shared heritage and ancestral ties between Fiji and Tonga, offering a powerful reminder of the unity and collaboration that defines the Blue Pacific Continent in the face of contemporary challenges, aligning with the Forum's theme, "Transformative Resilient Pasifiki: Build Better Now."

At this critical juncture for the Pacific, the Sautu Voyage embodies the ancient wisdom of an "Ocean of Peace," moving away from its usual security framing to a more cultural understanding, where all depend on the ocean, treat it with respect, and see it as a unifying element that connects our islands rather than divides them—a true source of prosperity for our region.

While in Tonga, the UNY stands ready during the PIFLM53 as a safe space for Talanoa on critical issues that are important to Pacific people and places, advocating for the protection of 30% of the Pacific Ocean by 2030 and representing an affirmation of Pacific leaders' vision of a fossil fuel free Pacific. Our hope is that the image of the UNY, a traditional double-hulled canoe, will inspire our regions' leaders to embrace the different ways we work together in the Pacific, with State and non-state actors working together for a stable Pacific.

Rev. James Bhagwan, Trustee of the Uto ni Yalo Trust, emphasised the significance of this voyage: "The Sautu Voyage is more than just a journey; it's a call to action for the Pacific. As we sail to Tonga, we are reminded of our shared responsibility to protect our oceans and uphold the values that bind us together as one Blue Pacific Continent. This voyage also provides a unique opportunity for young seafarers, some of whom are experiencing blue ocean voyaging for the first time. Building and strengthening our voyaging community—both within the Uto ni Yalo and

alongside our sister voyaging societies—will feature prominently on this sail, alongside our calls for strengthened collaboration between civil society organisations and governments to achieve the vision of the 2050 Strategy.”

The voyage is also a celebration of Tonga’s recent acquisition of its own traditional voyaging canoe, the Hinemoana II. As in our Pacific culture communities and families come together to celebrate the birth of a child, we come together to celebrate this significant milestone for Tonga’s traditional voyaging community.

Dr. Kathryn Mengerink, Executive Director of the Waitt Institute, a key partner in this voyage, highlighted the importance of this collaboration: “Supporting the Sautu Voyage is part of our commitment to the Pacific’s future. It is an honour to work with the Uto Ni Yalo team, Pacific Leaders, and local partners to progress the vision of protecting 30% of the Pacific Ocean by 2030, to ensure its health for the prosperity of the communities that depend on it and for the generations to come.”

This historic voyage has been made possible through the generous support of the Waitt Institute, Blue Prosperity Coalition, Oceans 5, Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, Greenpeace Australia Pacific, the Office of the Pacific Oceans Commissioner, with in-kind contributions from National Geographic Pristine Seas, Tradewinds Marine, Value City and Niranjans.

As the UNY sets sail on Sunday, those inspired by this journey also have a unique opportunity to participate. A few paid spots are still available for the return sail, departing Tonga for Fiji on 5 September 2024, offering a once-in-a-lifetime chance to experience the rich tradition of Pacific voyaging firsthand. Get in touch at [team@utnoniyalo.org](mailto:team@utnoniyalo.org).

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