



Annexures

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IMPACT STATEMENT OF ALFRED DIDI

BACKGROUND

1. My name is Alfred Didi and I live in the village of Ambu on the western coast of Malita province in Solomon Islands.
2. I grew up on Savo Island and am married to a woman who is also from there. My wife and I moved to Ambu in 2007 and have 3 children – two boys and one girl.
3. I do not have a job and my children support our family by catching and selling fish.
4. My family and I live together in a house 3 metres from the stone wall that we built to protect our house from the impacts of high tides.
5. Since moving to Ambu 16 years ago, I have observed many changes to the environment which is impacting our community in different ways. These are described below.

INCREASE IN HIGH TIDES

6. When I first arrived in Ambu, high tides happened usually two or three times a year. The tides would reach just below the stone walls that we had built to protect our village from these events.
7. Now with the weather changes, we are unable to predict the high tides. When the high tides come, they are now so large that the water flows over the stone walls and damages our village. I have never seen tides like this before.
8. When there is a high tide, it usually takes three days to come through and into our village. On the first day, I can see the tide come close to our shores. On the second day, the tide will move closer to outside the front of our house. On the third day, the water will cover the whole village, increasing in volume towards the evening. After the third day, the water recedes back to the ocean.
9. During these high tides when the water flows over the stone walls, I have observed that the water brings lots of dirt and plastic waste into the village. This rubbish and debris are difficult to clear away after the tide recedes.
10. These high tides are very unsafe for our villagers as many of our houses are just a meter away from the sea including my own house. I fear that the high tides will completely destroy our house and I usually do not sleep well because I worry about the high tides flowing into our village during the night.

11. The high tides have been increasing since I moved to Ambu in 2007. Over the past 5 years, the high tides have been the worst I have ever seen, reaching more than 3 metres above the stone walls that we built, inundating our village with water and rubbish.

CHANGE IN WEATHER PATTERNS

12. I have observed that the weather patterns in Ambu have significantly changed.
13. When I first moved to Ambu, we had the *Koburu* season which is the cyclone season between January and June and the *Ara* season which is the humid and hot weather season between July to September.
14. Now we no longer experience the seasons in that way. The cyclone season starts in January but continues until later in the year, around September. I have also noticed that there is significantly more rainfall than in previous years. Throughout the year we now feel both *Koburu* and *Ara* seasons and experience huge rainfalls and high heat.
15. This change in weather pattern has been confusing and I can no longer distinguish between *Konburu* and *Ara* season as I used to do.
16. Due to these drastic changes in weather, I have noticed that our soil is no longer fertile to grow root crops for our families. This has meant that our community depends more on manufactured foods which has affected our diets and we spend more on rice and tuna.
17. The high rainfall and humidity have also affected our gardens and harvests meaning we eat less local fresh produce. This means our women now need to work extra hard to plant and grow food to sustain our families for our daily survival.

REDUCTION IN FISHING

18. I have observed that our fishing catch is much less than what it used to be. When my sons started fishing in Ambu, they would usually catch about 15 good sized fish after diving for 4 hours. Now when they go diving they may only catch 3-5 good sized fish over the same time period.
19. My children and I are the only family in Ambu that dives so my sons are very experienced divers and will be out fishing almost every day. Recently I noticed that the increased hot weather has affected the breeding grounds for the schools of fish that live in the mangrove close to the village. Those fish have now left the mangrove so there is

no longer any breeding happening there - this has significantly impacted the fish that we would normally catch here.

20. As I explained above at paragraphs 13-15, the changing weather patterns has affected my ability to differentiate between the *Konburu* (west winds) and *Ara* (east winds) seasons. These seasons helped our local fisherman work out the currents and therefore the best fishing grounds on nearby reefs. Without these distinct seasons and wind patterns, it has become difficult for those same fishermen to predict where those fishing grounds are.
21. The unpredictable rainfall and heat have also meant our villagers cannot plan how and where we should fish like we used to. The weather patterns have changed the currents and tides that the fish usually follow to breed. I have also noticed that villagers are fearful when they go out to fish as the weather can change so quickly and place them in danger.
22. I am sad seeing how these changes have affected our livelihood on Ambu especially for us saltwater (coastal) people who rely heavily on marine resources for survival. We can no longer rely on our cultural knowledge for fishing and have much less certainty around catch size.

IMPACTS ON INFRASTRUCTURE

23. The roads on Ambu are in poor condition which has only been made worse by the changing weather conditions. This has impacted our community's ability to use and travel on these roads in a range of ways.
24. Due to the fact that our villagers are unable to grow the same produce from their gardens, many women are now baking buns and local bread to sell in the main market in Auki as a means of supporting their families. To sell those goods, the women must walk 2-3 kms carrying their large containers of baked bread. When it is raining, the potholes fill with muddy water, making the roads particularly slippery and increasing the risk of people slipping or having accidents with vehicles. I have noticed that in some areas, the roads are in such poor condition and so uneven that those roads cannot be used. Our women must then wait for boats to transport them from Ambu to Auki.
25. The increased rainfall in Ambu has also contributed to landslides which have further narrowed our roads and made it dangerous for people walking along them with vehicles

passing. The fear of these accidents is particularly acute for parents whose children walk along these narrow roads to and from school each day.

26. The increased potholes in our roads are not only a risk for people walking along them but they also damage our vehicles when driving.
27. It is a sad reality that our women and children are most impacted by the poor conditions of the roads in Ambu, placing them at much higher risk of injury or even death.
28. Finally, I have observed that the changing rainfalls and frequent sun and high humidity have impacted the housing of our community. Some of our community in Ambu have built homes using bush materials and therefore their homes do not have permanent iron roofing. It is difficult for these people to maintain their homes to withstand the weather changes. This is a particular concern when our community experiences cyclones because their homes are destroyed by the strong winds, leaving those families homeless and unsafe.

IMPACT STATEMENT OF DANIEL DURU

BACKGROUND

1. My name is Daniel Duru and I am 64 years old. I was born on 20 November 1959 in Kombe Village, North East Ngella Islands which is known as ward 7. This is in Central Province, one of the provinces in Solomon Islands.
2. There are 7 people in my family and I am the fourth child. I am a retired nurse and currently I am self-employed in my community. I have coconut, cocoa and betelnut plantations which I run as a source of income. I am a fulltime village person and have spent almost all my life in Kombe.

SEA LEVEL RISE

3. Growing up in Kombe, I remember our grandparents' house was built on the mainland which was far from the shoreline. I remember that the line between our long white sandy beaches and the seawater was around 10m. Over the years I have observed that the seawater was rising, slowly increasing up to the higher ground. Our grandparents' house which was next to the coastline was eventually destroyed due to this rising sea water, and I fear that it will also reach our house if it continues at this fast rate. What was once our long white sandy beach that stretched for miles has been shortened and covered by seawater with the shoreline moving inward towards mainland.
4. In 2015, I observed that people in my community started to move and relocate their homes further inland to avoid being damaged by the rising sea level, strong winds, and king tides that were edging up the shoreline.
5. Fortunately there is a drain that runs through our village so that during high tides, especially in November, the drain fills up with sea water and prevents flooding in surrounding areas, including our houses and kitchen which used to greatly impact our daily food preparation. This drainage system helps us as it serves as a channel to control and protect our homes from the rising sea water and floods during heavy rain.
6. Root crops such as cassava, potato, banana and pawpaw are our cultural food source. I have observed that 10 years ago we used to grow cassava, potato, banana, and pawpaw near our homes but now with the frequent high tides happening twice every month, our root crops and plants are dying. I believe this is because these plants do not grow well in areas which have been affected by salt water – they can no longer get the good nutrients in the soil. This had negatively impacted our daily food supply, food preparation, enjoyment of our food and its management. Unlike other islands, in Kombe we depend on our home-grown foods like cassava, potato, banana, and pawpaw to survive.

7. Due to increasing sea level, we now plant our crops further up in the bushes far from our homes where we live. We also have to walk further inland to plant our root crops because the area where we used to garden is no longer good for growing. In my experience, the problem is that the soil becomes saturated with salt water so our food crop cannot survive and, as a result, we do not produce enough food for our families. I have noticed this has added stress to our community because our villagers now need to walk further distances for our gardening activities. For the young, strong and active family members, this is not such an issue. However for us elderly, children, and women, walking such long distances is tiring and requires great energy and time to garden on a daily basis.
8. I have also observed that the low tide today we experience on Kombe is not how it was before. Today when the tide goes out, it recedes to such a low point that all the corals and reefs are totally exposed to sunlight. The tide then remains at that low level for the whole day and I have noticed that the corals and reefs are damaged from this sun exposure. Unfortunately, the corals eventually die and are washed away with the damaged reefs. As a result, fish and shellfish do not have place to live and I see them in much deeper waters than where they used to be found.
9. During my childhood in Kombe, we used to fish along the coastline. With the damaged corals and reefs, I now need to go much further out to the deep water to catch fish.

SEA WALLS / WATER SOURCE

10. One of the solutions proposed by my community is the building of seawalls to protect our community during high swells, king tides, and floods. In 2019 we tried to build a temporary sea wall with stones, corals, and other local materials but it wasn't strong enough to be effective. It was simply destroyed by big waves, king tides, and bad weather such as cyclones.
11. In Kombe, there are two sources of water: there is a stream located approximately 200m behind our village and at the west end of the village is a creek. Only 3 months ago, there was such heavy rain that it caused big pools of water in our village. I believe this was mostly due to insufficient drainage which cannot withstand the increased amount of heavy rain and redirect the flow of water. Rainfall is more frequent than it used to be, and because of the frequency it often results in flooding in our community. The flooded water runs into our homes, causing damage to our properties. After the flood, our homes are left filled with debris and mud which can lead diseases such as diarrhea and malaria.
12. I have also noticed a change in the water pressure in our village. Our water source is at a nearby village which used to have high water pressure that flowed to our village's water taps. Now the water pressure is low and our community will be left without water supply for some days. When this happens, we have to dig water wells and boreholes for our water but this water is not safe

for drinking - it can only be used for washing or swimming. For drinking water, we have to walk several miles to the other village to fill our water bottles. This is stressful and particularly impacts the children, women, girls and older people in my community who have to walk a mile every day to get clean drinking water.

IMPACT ON OUR FOOD SOURCE

13. I have observed that there is change in weather patterns on Kombe. Now there are frequent, unpredictable and long rainfalls, strong winds, swollen waves and king tides. I believe that these changes are the main cause of the low yield we are experiencing in our harvest. When I was younger, our crops such as taro and cassava used to grow up to 3ft high. But today during harvest, the size of yam might be a ½ foot and they are not of good quality. We no longer can yield enough to feed everyone in our families.
14. When I was young and growing up in Kombe, our parents used to bring big yams and taros for us during school lunch. Today we can only bring bananas for our children because there are not enough yams and taros to feed them. I believe that this is due to the changing weather patterns which is causing bad soil quality. We are no longer able to carry out our traditional planting practices as we used to.
15. In 1972 when I was in school, Cyclone Ida carried big boulders of coral stones from the reefs into our village, damaging our homes and the coastline. The damage from the storm made it more difficult to fish along the shorelines. Even since then, we have had to go out to the deep seas to find types of fish that we eat like 'Sweetlips'.
16. I am an older man. I am not strong enough to paddle further out into the deep sea to fish, so it is harder for me to eat good fish like 'Sweetlips' these days.

DAMAGE TO INFRASTRUCTURE

17. When I was a child, I used to walk to school during high tides because shoreline was far from the road. Today, the high tides cause the road to flood with sea water as the shoreline has now moved further inland. Children from our village now have to use canoes to paddle to and from the school every day.
18. Flooding water from heavy rainfall runs downhill and damages our village. I observed that such flooding damaged one of our school classrooms by coming into the building and spoiling the resources in the classrooms that our children use to learn. This impacted our children's education. The same has happened to our health center buildings which have been flooded by the downhill flow of water. I am worried because these are all new events that I have never seen before, and I can see that they are only increasing in frequency and will continue if we do nothing.

INCREASE IN MALARIA

19. As I explained at paragraph 11 above, the frequent rainfall has led to an increase in the number of people contracting malaria in Kombe. Now malaria has become the main illness in our community. The water from the rainfall and flooding gets trapped in empty tins of food, together with debris and mud, which serves as a good breeding ground for mosquitos carrying malaria. I believe this is the cause of the recent high malaria cases in our community which has affected everybody in the community, especially the children, the elderly, and those with special needs.
20. Fortunately, we have a clinic at a nearby community where we can access medical services when needed. However when we have malaria outbreak and there are high numbers of patients admitted, it is common for the clinic to experience a shortage in medicine which, in some cases, leads to loss of life.
21. Perhaps if we did not have as many food tins, there would be fewer outbreaks of malaria after floods. When I was young, we certainly did not have as many tins and I do not recall there being frequent outbreaks of malaria. However in recent years, our community in Kombe has had to change its eating habits and now we rely more on processed, tinned food. We have to eat more store-bought food because we are unable to grow the same amount of fresh food in our gardens due to the unpredictable weather.

RELOCATION

22. There has been gradual increase in the sea level in Kombe over many years and, by 2000, I noticed that people started moving to the high lands. Only few of us remain by the seashore. The idea of relocation is not simple for us. We face a land dispute problem because the higher land further inland is owned by different tribes and families, so we are not allowed to settle on their lands unless we come to an agreement. Reaching agreement is not easy, so we have no place to relate to and therefore we have no choice but to stay.
23. So for now we can only move a small distance inland so we are on safe ground, however it is not the relocation that we really need - that would be to move to a much higher ground.

IMPACT STATEMENT OF GLADYS HABU

1. My name is Gladys Salirade Bartlett, née Habu. I am 28 years of age.
2. I was born in Papua New Guinea on 18 July 1995 but I was raised for most of my life in the Solomon Islands, where I have paternal ties with Kia Village, in Isabel Province. We belong to the Makara clan.
3. I make this statement in regard to my grandfather's tribal land in Isabel Province, Kale Island. Sadly, as of today, Kale Island is completely underwater.
4. Kale Island has a cultural significance to my family as it is where my grandparents, and some of my father's extended family members lived for some time. It is an island that provided and sustained my family's livelihood through fishing and growing crops. I have been told that there was a coconut plantation on the island, and there were mangroves surrounding the coastline which were home to mud clams, crabs, turtles, and other marine species. Megapode birds, among others, nested on Kale island, and I recall seeing a few of their nesting grounds when I visited as a child.
5. My father's family did not live on Kale permanently and they later relocated to the mainland, to Kia Village. Nonetheless, our familial ties with Kale remained and we maintained a close connection through regular visits to the island.
6. As a child during our annual visits to Kale Island, I recall needing my parents' guidance to navigate the thick forest as it was dense enough for me to get lost. I remember the island being populated with wildlife and I used to play with my siblings and cousins on its beautiful white sandy beach.
7. My observations of the disappearance of Kale Island began in December 2009 at the age of 14 when I returned there on holiday to Isabel Province. When we visited Kale that year, I noted a drastic difference in the size of the island, and I took a photo of it. Where there used to be heavy vegetation and abundant wildlife, there was now only a few small trees and almost no wildlife. The sea had risen so far inland that the island was half the size from what I remembered as a child.
8. In December 2014 my family and I once again attempted to visit Kale Island however it was completely submerged underwater. There was only a few old trunks and branches sticking out of the sea. It was shocking to us that the island had disappeared in less than a decade.
9. The loss of Kale Island has had a profound impact on me, my tribe, and community. For me, it is the loss of our cultural heritage and a place very close to home. I now have a daughter who will never experience this part of our culture that I was fortunate to experience growing up. Like many in Solomon Islands, our genealogies are tied to our customary lands, and the loss of Kale Island is indeed a loss of part of our tribal identity and cultural practices. For my

community, it is a harsh realisation of the impacts of sea level rise, and its implications for our future.

10. The villagers in Kia village are resilient in their efforts to prevent sea level rise through the building of sea walls, and houses on higher stilts with semi-permanent materials, but these efforts have their limitations. Many villagers who have had their houses damaged from increasing sea level are displaced. The moving of houses further inland and the need to reoccupy new land is also difficult – it heightens the risk for social conflict among the community because of disputes, where traditional lineage is affected.
11. It saddens me that my country which has contributed so little to the acceleration of global warming through greenhouse gas emission, is most vulnerable to the adverse effects of it. I have witnessed the real, and visible impact of climate change and sea level rise through the loss of our Kale Island, and the negative impacts this loss has had on my community. It is almost a decade since Kale's complete disappearance, and already there are so many of those younger than me, who only hear of Kale as a story passed down through the generations. What was once a significant part of our upbringing, now is just a distant memory.

IMPACT STATEMENT OF ETHEL LOKU

BACKGROUND

1. My name is Ethel Loku and I am from Haleta village in Ngella Central Province, Solomon Islands. My husband works in Tulaghi which is why I reside here, but I travel between Tulaghi and my village Haleta frequently.
2. I am 54 years old and I have one child. I have lived in my community of Haleta for more than 40 years – it was my home throughout my childhood and youth.
3. I only reached grade 4 at school but through my engagement in my community and church related programs (advocacy, awareness, and literacy), I have learnt to read and write common and simple words. We use our native dialect as our main language of communication as well as some Tok-pigin (broken English).
4. Haleta is one of the many communities in Central Islands where we have a great view of a white sandy beach, situated at the edge of our islands. When you come to Tulaghi, you see the beautiful white sandy beach and local made houses with lovely people. I am proud of my village and I will do whatever it takes to protect my village because it is not only my home, but the home of my children and my grandchildren.
5. I have noticed many changes in my village of Haleta which I have described below.

SEA LEVEL RISE

6. When I was a little girl growing up in the 1970s, the sea was far from where the coconuts and plants were located. The sea provides our everyday basic needs and our animals and pets (local chickens, pigs, and dogs) also use the sea for their survival. Our homes are built just adjacent to the coastline. Our people planted local fruit trees next to their houses as the land was fertile. We had a healthy environment and good space in our community.
7. Now I observe that the sea has moved inland. The sea now reaches beyond the coconut trees, pandanus trees, and other plants trees and fruits. This has caused destruction and death of those trees and plants, and damaged the houses of our people that were built next to the coastline.
8. The rising sea level has forced our people to move and rebuild their houses 10 to 20 meters further inland to avoid their home being washed away and damaged by seawater.
9. Since the early 2000's I have noticed the impacts of the rising sea level on Haleta. The evidence of this is all there to see today - the remains of trees and coconut trunks, and damaged homes on the shoreline.

INCREASED RAINFALL

10. Today in our village today when there is heavy rain, the rainwater will rise and flood the whole village, so we need to use canoes to travel from house to house. This flooding happens during rainy season but also outside this season on a normal day where there is heavy rain. I started noticing the increased rainfall levels from around the early 2000's.
11. When the flooding happens, the floors of our low-built houses are damaged as well as key buildings like our local school, Marvin Primary School, where the classrooms fill with water. Marvin Primary School was built by our villagers and accommodates almost all the primary school aged children in our community, about 90 students. The flooding of the primary school impacts our children and their learning environment. Fortunately, we as teachers have learnt to adapt to this challenge so that we can still accommodate the children in the wet classrooms and teach them as best we can, even during these floods.
12. The flooding however also impacts the homes of our local teachers. In some cases, the flooding means that the teachers themselves are unable to attend school and their families unable to cook meals. Without teachers, our students cannot learn.
13. When the heavy rain falls, we now experience landslides in Haleta. We are lucky that so far no lives have been lost even though the landslides have caused major property damage. These landslides scare our community and place our local villagers, especially the children, the elderly, and those with special needs, in danger.
14. When we experience prolonged rainfall for 2 to 3 days in Haleta, I notice that people in our community are on high alert, looking for ground falling from nearby cliffs which may lead to a major landslide. Although the possibility of a landslide is low, people are still afraid as they have seen first-hand the damage it causes. I am sad that our community has to live with this fear for their safety and the safety of their loved ones.
15. Heavy and frequent rainfalls also damage our food crops. This is because there is too much water in the soil. The sun is also so hot that it heats and burns our food crops. Our traditional knowledge has taught me that plants need sun to grow but when the sun shines after a rain, it will be too hot and will kill our garden. As a result of this, we now get a much lower harvest from our gardens, leaving us without enough healthy local food to eat.
16. In the past, our traditional knowledge taught us when to plant our gardens, when the ground was soft and when the weather was right for gardening. Today it is different. Our knowledge, skills and techniques are not workable anymore and I believe this is due to the changing weather patterns.
17. I have noticed that the heavy rainfalls also cause soil erosion to flow to the sea which I believe has damaged the coral reefs where our fish used to live and breed. This is because during and after a heavy rainfall event, I can visibly see soil and inland materials covering the coastline

and the coral reefs. I have observed that after a while, the corals and reefs become small and eventually disappear.

18. This continuous, unpredictable, and changing rainfall is also affecting the health of our people and I have observed that malaria and diarrhea are now common diseases in our community.
19. After heavy rainfall and flood, the areas surrounding the village become wet and cold which I understand is a good breeding ground for mosquitoes that carry malaria. Further, due to the fact our people are now consuming more canned food from the local shop, there are more tins and cans lying around. These tins and cans are also good sites for malaria-carrying mosquitoes to breed in and then infect our community.
20. I believe that the changes in diet and food preferences of our community are not only a result of outside influence (namely processed food), but also because there is not enough fresh garden produce and fish due to the changes in weather patterns.
21. I have also noticed that our community's water sources and surrounding environment have become dirty which results in our people experiencing more cases of diarrhea. Compared to when I was a child growing up in Haleta, we never had such frequent cases of diarrhea and malaria like we do today.

FISHING

22. In the past we used to fish near our islands, just off the coastlines. These catches would bring us enough seafood for the family. We would also collect seashells and always had enough to leave some for the next day (a local sustainability practice).
23. This is not the case anymore. I have observed that our villagers must now paddle further out into the deep water to fish. I believe this is because our shoreline corals and reefs have been damaged by sea level rise and flooding of rivers and soil into the sea. Only the strong and fit members of our community can go and fish in the deeper sea - for me and other elderly people, we cannot go out that far. This is so different to my youth when everybody including the elderly would enjoy going out to the shoreline to fish for our daily meal. Unfortunately, this is a new reality for our Haleta community.

SEAWALLS

24. With the current and continuous rise in sea level, I believed seawalls are one way to protect our community during storms, winds, and king tides. However building a strong seawall requires expertise, time and money. Our people have built seawalls before – in our village of Haleta, we had built a local seawall to protect our homes near the shoreline. We used traditional materials

such as stones, corals, and bush-sticks but the seawall was not strong enough to withstand the strong waves and flooding that we are now experiencing.

25. I strongly believe that if we had a more effective and skilled team of people, we could - and indeed would - build better and stronger seawalls that would protect our affected community.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF PLANTING SEASONS

26. I have observed that changes in the weather patterns in Haleta have caused our gardening season to shift from the normal planting and harvesting time.
27. Growing up with traditional knowledge, my grandparents and parents taught me the different gardening seasons in a year (dry season and wet season), when to begin the gardening process, when to plant, and when to harvest. For this reason, we always begun the gardening process in June as that meant the plants would produce the highest harvest.
28. Today however, that practice has changed and is no longer possible. During the month of June, we experience heavy rain which makes it impossible for me and my family to go to the garden. This means we now begin the gardening process in around September each year. Based on our local calendar, this is usually the end of the harvest season so when we start the harvest, I already know that I will not collect as much produce as when we harvested when I was a child.
29. These new weather patterns have affected our traditional way of gardening and the resulting produce which has been a daily livelihood for our community.

RELOCATION DUE TO SEA LEVEL RISE

30. I am afraid for when the sea level rise will be so high that water will completely cover our community and leaders will need to step in to assist our community to relocate.
31. However, relocation is easy to say but harder to do. Our community's lives and livelihoods are in Haleta and we have strong cultural connections because it is the place where many generations of our families have lived before us.

CONCLUSION

32. When I see the impacts of climate change on my community, I ask myself "What has happened? What is going on? What will the future of my children and grandchildren hold? What hardships will they face in future?" I feel sad when I think about these things – our young people are beginning their life journeys facing enormous challenges. This is something I never had to think about when I was their age.
33. We must teach our children to respect, use and pass on our important and culturally rich traditional knowledge and skills. I fear that these practices will be lost in the same way that we

are losing our traditional ways of fishing and gardening due to changes in weather patterns and sea level rise.

34. I want to share a message with the world. My community in Haleta is in dire need of help. With the devastating sea level rise and changing weather patterns, our people are at grave risk and we cannot wait any longer for real action on combatting climate change.

IMPACT STATEMENT OF MELINDA TAHOLA

BACKGROUND

1. My name is Melinda Tahola and I live on Sikaiana Island, which is one of the outer islands in Malaita province. I work here as a teacher.
2. Climate change has been impacting Sikaiana Island for many years and affected many generations of our ancestors.
3. Since I have lived on Sikaiana Island, I have observed that the sea level has been rising steadily. Rising sea level brings with it coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, and destruction by powerful waves. I have witnessed the impacts of these events on our community and it has caused people to leave the islands and relocate to other areas.
4. On Sikaiana Island, sea level rise has caused saltwater intrusion in our community's gardens, causing crops to wilt and die. For example there is a place called 'Kaleia' which is a swamp patch that has been infected with salt water. For at least the last a few decades, no crops can be grown in the area. There are other places like 'Moaleva'¹²⁸ and 'Lotohenua'¹²⁹ which were once home to a plant we call 'swamp taro'. Both these areas have been affected by saltwater intrusion and no more swamp taro will grow there. Moaleva, in particular, has been unable to grow produce since the 1990s.
5. Saltwater also contaminates our drinking wells. Such contamination used to occur only at high tide but I have noticed that now, even when the tide is low, our wells are contaminated by sea water.
6. Coastal erosion is another challenge on Sikaiana Island and our shorelines have been washed away by increasingly high tides. Over the past decade, I have observed that the beach sand of the shoreline has washed inland. For example, I recall that at 'Teala Ote Haitamana'¹³⁰, coconut palm trees would grow together with other greeneries. People would gather dry coconuts and group them together in a sort of nursery and leave them to germinate. We call this 'hakatupuna' and it is a normal staple food of the atoll community. High tides and waves have destroyed these coconut plants. In particular in 2014, I recall that the area was so badly affected by erosion that it caused the old road to wash away and new roads needed to be built.
7. Recently on 22nd January 2024, high tides and waves reached areas as far as 10 metres inland. This is much further inland than the high tides on Sikaiana Island reached a decade ago. These

¹²⁸ Another Kakake swampy patch

¹²⁹ A footpath in the inner land of the island community.

¹³⁰ A farmland at the most eastern coastal part of the island uses for gardening and feeding pigs by the tribesmen.

tides and waves damaged 13 houses and the surrounding gardens and our wells were filled with seawater and dirt.

8. Time and time again, cyclones and extreme weather events cause high tides and waves that wash away the shoreline and cause suffering for the Sikaiana Island community.
9. As a community, we are trying to adapt so we can remain on our ancestral lands. For example since 2014, we have tried new techniques to grow our crops. That year an Agricultural team visited Sikaiana Island to introduce new agricultural techniques such as growing crops in bags, raising the beds and planting other root crops such as yam and panna. In 2018, seventeen tanks were delivered to Sikaiana Island through a climate change project. These tanks improve the water sanitation systems even if the well is contaminated by saltwater, however more tanks are still needed to support our community and address the impacts of sea level rise.