

# Erakor Village Mpau Natkon

South East Efate



Dear Secretary General of Shefa Provincial Government

Port Vila, 6 May 2022

Following previous invitations to the Shefa Province for the "The Voices of Erakor Lagoons" and the consultations on the "Erakor Lagoons Restoration Plan", we would like to thank the presence of one of your officers and we would like to book an appointment to discuss possible inputs of the Shefa Province on the Erakor Lagoons Restoration Plan's implementation. In this meeting, it would be great to have all area councils that live around the margins of Erakor Lagoons.

Following the visit to the Erakor Lagoons on the 21 and 22 April by the Chiefs, Departments of Water Resources, Environment and Urban Planning, we jointly identified pollution hotspots that leak solid and wastewater pollution into the Lagoon. We will start our implementation plan as we identify a considerable amount of pollution hotspots.

We are concerned about getting all of us prepared to the opening of the borders. The Erakor Lagoons host many hotels and resorts. As you know the Restoration Plan has 3 main objectives: 1 STOP Pollution, 2 CLEAN and 3 RESTORE the Lagoons, based on Awareness, Education and Livelihoods.

We will continue to work in partnerships with authorities, businesses and communities and to achieve the objective 1, we need to make a general clean-up of all the hills around the Lagoons, before starting cleaning the Lagoons. Attached is our phase 1 plan to clean all margins of the Lagoon, for your information. You can find details on the Restoration Plan here: <http://storian.invanuatu.net/>

We would like to discuss Shefa Province's inputs in the following points:

1. Organise a general clean up in all margins around both Lagoons (approximately 20 KM)
2. Subsequently improve the waste management systems.

We are trying to organise this work based on cooperation between communities, businesses and authorities. Meanwhile the Chief blong Solwora was contacted by the Department of Environment that is designing a project to be funded by SPREP, Sustainable Waste Actions in the Pacific (SWAP). We simply hope to be able to influence with some ideas to ensure that Erakor Lagoons are kept clean in the future. We are not interested in managing any funding but simply action and cooperation in kind to support the Restoration Plan's implementation. We hope that Shefa Province can access to some funding to dedicate to the Plan. The Chiefs are engaging with all communities around both Lagoons so we believe sharing this link may benefit authorities to implement other wellbeing activities.

We also witnessed together some areas on the Lagoons being threatened by ongoing activities that we believe are illegal:

1. Dumping area of electronic, car batteries, AC, construction materials, at the opposite side of the South Pacific Supply, after Korman;
2. Various private houses with pipes leaking water into the lagoons;
3. Abandoned construction sites, with references to construction permits with rotten machinery and oil leaking into the Emten Lagoons;
4. The Hospital wastewater plant;

We believe that the Shefa Provincial Government may have by laws that may prevent these situations, if enforced. We believe that, if we all - communities, businesses and authorities - work together the Erakor Lagoons Restoration Plan can be achieved. We welcome suggestions to improve the plan by the Shefa Provincial Government.

Best Regards, Marik Waoute, Chief blong Solwota 7640236

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