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News Release



UNITED NATIONS ANNOUNCES VIRTUAL CONCERT TO UNITE PACIFIC REGION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

Fiji – The United Nations has announced Pacific Unite: Saving Lives Together, a first-of-its-kind televised and digitally streamed concert that will call on leaders and citizens across the region to work together and with the rest of the world in the fight against COVID-19.

Hosted by Auntie Tala from the Laughing Samoans, the virtual concert will feature performances from Jah Boy (Solomon Islands); Jay Hoad (Australia); Juny B (Kiribati); Justin Wellington (PNG), Kendal T (Palau), Mia Kami (Tonga), Nem & Talei (Fiji), Paulini (Australia), Poly Flavour (Samoa); Skillz (Fiji); Stan Antas (Vanuatu), Te Vaka (New Zealand); Tiki Taane (New Zealand), Tropikana Breeze (Tuvalu), Vanessa Quai (Vanuatu), Yosh (Vanuatu), UN Messenger of Peace Yo-Yo Ma (USA), and more.

The virtual concert will also include appearances from the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, the Fiji National Rugby Sevens Team, Oscar-winning actor and Sustainable Development Goals Advocate Forest Whitaker, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Fiji Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Tuvalu Prime Minister Kausea Natano, Miss Pacific Islands 2018-19 Leoshina Kariha, UNAIDS Pacific Goodwill Ambassador Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, celebrity chef Robert Oliver; The Royal Princess Her Royal Highness Princess Salote Mafileó Pilolevu Tuita of Tonga, Director of the World Health Organisation Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Palau President Tommy Remengesau, and more.

“This will be the first ever virtual concert to comprise primarily of artists from across the region and be accessible to audiences not only in the Pacific but around the world,” said Tofiga Fepulea’i, the actor and comedian who plays Auntie Tala. “I’m very proud to be part of this historic event. Now is the time for us to come together, to celebrate the strength and solutions that are possible when the Pacific unites.”

Pacific Unite: Saving Lives Together is an opportunity for the geographically remote Pacific region to connect with each other and the rest of the world, recognising that we must work together to beat COVID-19 and build a better future. During the virtual concert, UN leaders, heads of state and

celebrities will commit to supporting the fight against COVID-19, also calling on everyone at home to play a part by adapting to the new normal.

“The concert will pay tribute to essential workers across the Pacific for the work they’ve done so far to prevent transmission and save lives,” said United Nations Resident Coordinator for ten countries in the Pacific, Sanaka Samarasinha. “But we must remain vigilant as COVID-19 is still raging around the world. At the same time, we see the devastation it has already caused for our island nations, destroying the livelihoods of many, disrupting education, stretching basic health services, increasing nutritional deficiencies of children and undermining the human rights of those who were already vulnerable – especially women and girls, people with disabilities, youth, migrant workers, refugees and the elderly.”

“The Pacific Unite virtual concert is a call, through music and art, for continued solidarity across the region as we face this unprecedented challenge together. It is also a reminder that as we rise up as a family of nations, we must seize the opportunity to build a more inclusive and resilient Pacific and a more sustainable and equitable world.”

Pacific Unite: Saving Lives Together will premiere on Saturday, August 15, 2020. It will be aired by broadcasters including Fiji Broadcasting Commission, Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation, Tonga Broadcasting Commission, Pacific Cooperation Broadcasting Limited, 103.5 FM (Marshall Islands), PAOA FM (Solomon Islands), Palau National Communication Corporation, and more to come. Please check local listings for details. The concert will also be streamed on the United Nations in the Pacific Facebook page and UN Web TV.

“Music brings people together in harmony, reminding us of our common bonds and all that is possible when we work together,” said Te Vaka songwriter and vocalist Opetai Foa’i. “It is a privilege to be part of this special event, helping to unite people across the Pacific and around the world in the fight against COVID-19.”

Already among the most remote countries on earth, Pacific island states saw their vital economic links weakened in recent months with the evaporation of tourism, severe disruptions to international trade, and a reduction in remittances.

The United Nations is supporting countries in the Pacific through a system-wide, multi-sectoral approach that aims to limit the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate the devastating social and economic impacts of the virus.

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