Before joining the project Akuila worked as SPC-GSD’s Senior Advisor in Agribusiness for more than seven years. During his professional career Akuila has worked with a broad range of stakeholders in the minerals sector including government, regional and international organizations, civil society, mining companies, extractive industries, communities and resource owners.

Q: Where are you from and what was it like growing up there?
A: I come from the island of Matuku in Fiji’s Lau Group and I was brought up there.

Q: What inspired you to become a Geologist?
A: I come from the island of Matuku in Fiji’s Lau Group and I was brought up there. I read about the beauty of minerals in some books that I read in high school. I was interested in studying minerals and became interested in mining.

Q: What do you like to do when you’re not at work?
A: Simply the beauty of minerals, their colours, appearance and shapes, in some books that I read in high school. I am interested in studying minerals and became interested in mining.

Q: Who would play you in a movie about your life?
A: Gladiator!

Q: What’s your favourite movie?
A: To build a family house in my village so we can visit my family. I am a family man and I have four children, three sons and a daughter. I love spending time with my kids, gardening and reading.

Q: What do you think is the most important lesson you’ve learned in life?
A: I think the most important lesson I’ve learned in life is the importance of hard work. I believe that hard work is the key to success.

Q: What would you like to be when you grow up?
A: I am currently working as a Geoscience Division (GSD) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Fiji, and I am looking forward to continuing my work in the field of geology. I am also passionate about mining and I hope to continue my work in this field.

Q: What advice would you give to young people who are interested in pursuing a career in geology?
A: My advice to young people interested in pursuing a career in geology is to work hard and stay dedicated. Geology can be a challenging field, but with the right mindset and work ethic, I believe anyone can succeed.

Q: What do you think is the most important lesson you’ve learned in life?
A: A very important lesson I’ve learned in life is to never give up. No matter how difficult a situation may seem, I believe that if you keep working hard and don’t give up, you can overcome anything.

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international experts including Mary-Louise Vitelli, an international expert on international negotiations between companies and governments of developing countries.

Mr. Joses R. Gallen, Assistant Attorney General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Nauru

“The trip to Tonga was highly beneficial and the experience is invaluable to all stakeholders—government, civil society organisations, and the media.”

Mr. T. Suka Mangisi, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Nauru

“We need to change the current mindset from “Let’s let governments do this” to “let’s get CSOs to do this.” It really needs to be a multi-stakeholder approach with a wider range of participants and not just governments. CSOs can support Government divisions with different initiatives and help us make sure that the resulting legislation is robust. We need to be involved to make sure that legislation is robust and environmentally friendly, that they’re harvested such that we want to see happen is that in extracting deep sea mineral resources. The most successful way forward is to work with them, and I would encourage them to work with us.”

Messrs. Suka Mangisi, Toepenina Hekau (Ms), Senior Crown Counsel, Niue Government.

The key message is, “How do we sustain economic growth?” Finally, governments need to be very clear on what it is that they want to get out of this. They have to have fairly definite milestones that are not negotiable, and use that as a negotiating basis. There are many companies out there and governments should not be afraid of saying no to those that are not viable. “We should actually be looking at the perspective of what is the best deal for my country, not just what is happening at the moment. We think that will really enhance the experience in a way that is environmentally and economically sustainable.”

How do you respond to organisations that are concerned about the potential impacts of deep sea mining?

The ocean is the biggest resource that the Pacific has. The thing that we want to see is that we want to see sustainable deep sea mining, activities that we actually put up a fairly strategic defence that there are going to be any issues. In the next 20 to 30 years, “We need to change the current mindset from “Let’s let Governments do this” to “let’s get CSOs to do this.” It really needs to be a multi-stakeholder approach with a wider range of participants and not just governments. CSOs can support Government divisions with different initiatives and help us make sure that the resulting legislation is robust. We need to be involved to make sure that legislation is robust and environmentally friendly, that they’re harvested such that we want to see happen is that in extracting deep sea mineral resources. The most successful way forward is to work with them, and I would encourage them to work with us.”

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