

THIRTY-SIXTH PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

Papua New Guinea
25-27 October 2005

FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ

The Thirty-Sixth Pacific Islands Forum was held in Papua New Guinea, from 25-27 October 2005 and was attended by Heads of State and Government of Australia, the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, and representatives of Palau and Tonga. New Caledonia, French Polynesia Timor-Leste and Tokelau also attended the formal session as observers. The Forum Retreat was held at the Madang Resort, Madang.

2. Leaders expressed their deep appreciation to the Government and People of Papua New Guinea for hosting the 2005 meeting and for the warm and generous manner in which they have been welcomed and for the arrangements made for the meetings. They congratulated Papua New Guinea on its 30th anniversary of Independence.

Pacific Plan

3. Leaders welcomed and endorsed the Pacific Plan for strengthening regional cooperation and integration. They commended the Task Force that developed the Plan and Core Group of Leaders who oversaw its development. They noted that the Pacific Plan has been developed through a consultative process, conducted with a range of representatives from governments, non-state groups and development partners; and included formal submissions and the commissioning of analytical work.

4. In endorsing the Plan, Leaders agreed to note in particular the need to:

- Expand access to markets for trade in goods under the SPARTECA, PICTA, PACER, and with non-Forum trading partners;
- expand regional technical and vocational education training (TVET); ensure the portability of technical qualifications; and to support Australia's offer to investigate the potential of setting up in the Pacific region an Australian Pacific Islands Technical College;
- continue to consider the issue of labour mobility in the context of member countries' immigration policies;
- facilitate international financing for sustainable development, biodiversity and environmental protection and climate change in the Pacific including through the Global Environment Fund;
- note with appreciation additional resources contributed by Australia (AUD 5 million for the Pacific Judicial System; AUD 3 million for maritime security; AUD 0.4 million for regional aviation) and New Zealand (NZD 5

million for the Pacific Judicial System; NZD 1.4 million for a permanent home for the Oceania Customs Organisation; USD 150,000 for the Kula Fund); and

- provide special assistance to the Smaller Island States for the implementation of the Plan, noting New Zealand's offer of additional assistance to the Secretariat for this purpose.

5. Leaders also agreed to issue the Kalibobo Roadmap Statement on the Pacific Plan (Annex A) highlighting the significance of the Plan, its key priorities and implementation requirements.

New Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum

6. Leaders agreed to adopt the new Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum and to open it for signature at their Plenary Session in Port Moresby. The new Agreement establishes the Pacific Islands Forum as an intergovernmental organisation at international law. The Agreement also updates the Forum's purpose and functions to reflect the vision and directions taken under the Pacific Plan. As a way of facilitating regional cooperation and integration, the Leaders have agreed to broaden the Forum's membership by establishing new associate and observer membership categories. Leaders also agreed to adopt a new policy regarding admission, criteria and entitlements for associate membership and observer status in the Forum, to take effect from the 2005 Forum.

Avian Flu Preparedness

7. Leaders noted with grave concern the risk of a possible worldwide epidemic or pandemic caused by the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A/H5N1. They called for urgent concerted action to mobilise resources for the immediate development and implementation of national and regional influenza Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plans. They noted the need to further strengthen partnerships amongst Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), regional and international organisations and development partners to ensure all PICTs are as well prepared as possible.

8. Leaders expressed their appreciation of Australia's offer of AUD 8 million to assist Pacific Island Countries prepare for, and respond to, epidemics or pandemics. They also noted with appreciation New Zealand's assistance through the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to assist Pacific Island Countries develop and implement their preparedness and response plans.

HIV/AIDS Regional Strategy

9. Leaders reinforced their endorsement of the Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Strategy (2004-2008) and its implementation. They stressed the critical importance of: continuing action to combat HIV/AIDS; the development of national plans of action through a consultative process; an effective partnership among countries and territories, regional agencies and development partners in mobilising resources and implementing the Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Strategy (2004-2008). They noted the implementation plan as a living document and one that must cover all PICTs.

10. Leaders noted with appreciation New Zealand's offer of an additional NZD 12 million towards the implementation of the Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Strategy.

Pacific Health Fund

11. Given severe capacity limitations in the Pacific, the double disease burden faced by all PICTs and the difficulty faced by individual countries in accessing support from the Global Fund, Leaders welcomed the idea of establishing a special 'Pacific Health Fund' from which PICTs could receive financial support to address health challenges including HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, emerging 'outbreak' diseases such as SARS and avian influenza; and emergency response capability to diseases. They noted the possibility of such a fund becoming a financing mechanism for an overarching strategy in health in the Pacific. They further noted that SPC was coordinating the development of the full proposal and expressed the wish to see this being brought forward as soon as possible.

Solomon Islands

12. Leaders considered the Forum Eminent Persons Group report on Solomon Islands and expressed considerable satisfaction at the results of the recovery efforts. At the same time, they also noted that Solomon Islands' long-term task of rebuilding and reforming will take many years to complete. Leaders therefore strongly affirmed the role of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and acknowledged the need for continued strong support from the Pacific Islands Forum and its Members to Solomon Islands and RAMSI as they tackle the challenges ahead.

Nauru

13. Leaders received a report on the steps Nauru is taking in its efforts to recover from its financial and economic crisis. They also recalled that at their 2004 meeting, they strongly supported Nauru's request for Forum assistance under the Biketawa Declaration recognising Nauru's economic crisis and the threats this posed to its security and national stability. Leaders were pleased to note the actions taken by the Forum and key development partners in support of Nauru and strongly encouraged further support as Nauru embarks on the long-term task of rebuilding and reforming its economy, including through the participation of development partners at the Donor Round Table in Nauru on 30 November.

Transnational Security Issues

14. Leaders acknowledged that the region remains vulnerable to the activities of transnational organised criminal groups and terrorist organisations. They therefore endorsed the Pacific Islands Regional Security Technical Cooperation Strategy for helping Forum Island Countries meet their international and regional commitments to combat transnational organised crime and counter terrorism. They also noted the progress of the Pacific Regional Policing Initiative and the activities of the Pacific Transnational Crime Coordination Centre, and emphasised the need for continuing close cooperation between all the law enforcement agencies including through the Forum Regional Security Committee.

15. Leaders encouraged effective participation in the counter-terrorism contingency planning exercise “Ready Pasifika” to take place in Suva on 8-9 November. They also noted the importance of enacting legislation to implement obligations countering terrorism, and welcomed New Zealand’s offer of assistance to Forum Island Countries in implementing their UNSCR 1267, 1373 and 1540 reporting obligations. They recognised that border management is a major regional issue that requires a coordinated whole of region approach from all Pacific border management agencies. Leaders, however, reiterated the importance of security being considered in its broader context, in line with the 1997 Aitutaki Declaration on Regional Security Cooperation.

New Caledonia

16. Leaders endorsed the report of the Forum Ministerial Committee on New Caledonia and in particular welcomed the high degree of political will from all stakeholders to implementation of the Noumea Accord. At the same time, they encouraged and urged all parties to continue to maintain their commitment to the full implementation of the Noumea Accord and to that end endorsed the Forum Ministerial Committee’s continuing role in monitoring developments in the Territory and in encouraging closer regional engagement.

French Polynesia

17. Leaders noted the report on developments in respect of French Polynesia’s progress towards self-determination. They welcomed the high degree of support in French Polynesia for a closer relationship with the Forum. Leaders endorsed the suggestions in the report for strengthening cooperation with French Polynesia.

Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency Governance

18. Leaders were pleased to note the progress on their 2004 Apia direction to seek greater sustainable returns from fisheries and to allow for ministerial oversight of regional fisheries matters. They noted for example the range of governance and other reforms underway within the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (PIFFA) including its new mission statement that will enable it to provide advice and briefings on market conditions and investment opportunities; support private sector consultative bodies; and assist with the preparation of fishery development plans, and access and trade negotiations including, for example, the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the EU.

19. Leaders noted the launching of the PIFFA strategic plan and expressed the wish to see the plan implemented effectively over the coming years.

Moratorium on Deep Sea Bottom Trawling

20. Leaders noted the proposal by the Republic of Palau for a moratorium on deep sea bottom trawling and for the creation of a legal framework to manage this method of fishing to protect biodiversity in the high seas. Leaders were seriously concerned about the problem and thanked Palau for bringing the matter to the Forum. They agreed to develop an appropriate legal framework for consideration of the

Forum in 2006. The PIFFA and SPC were tasked with the implementation of this decision.

Transport

21. Leaders noted the outcomes of the Forum Aviation Officials meeting in August 2005 and encouraged members to implement the Forum Principles on Regional Transport Services. They also encouraged members wishing to become parties to the Pacific Islands Air Services Agreement to sign the Agreement, and those who have signed to ratify. Leaders encouraged members to consider joining the Pacific Aviation Safety Office with a view, where appropriate, to using its services and, in this regard, also to become parties to the Pacific Islands Civil Aviation Safety and Security Treaty.

Mobile Phone Study

22. Leaders noted the study on improving the compatibility of mobile phone systems in the Pacific region, funded by Australia as offered at the 2004 Forum, and that funding is available from the Australian Government to assist Pacific Island Countries that wish to undertake market analysis for mobile roaming.

Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy

23. Leaders noted that the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Framework for Integrated Strategic Action was launched at the Mauritius International Meeting in January 2005. Leaders endorsed regional organisations providing assistance to member countries as requested for the development and implementation of a national ocean policy as an integral part of their national sustainable development strategy process; and a short consolidated CROP-wide report of regional activities on the implementation of the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Framework for Integrated Strategic Action at the national level being provided annually to Forum Leaders.

Pacific Regional Framework for Action for Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters 2005-2015

24. Disaster management, which has several elements ranging from mitigation, to preparedness, emergency response and recovery, has been a priority issue for the Forum for years. Leaders endorsed the Pacific Regional Framework for Action for Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, 2005-2015, which reflect the key principles articulated in the Hyogo Framework and the vision of the Forum Leaders as operationalised through the Pacific Plan. They called upon regional organisations to assist member countries develop and implement national action plans consistent with this Framework.

25. Leaders noted with appreciation Australia's announcement of an additional AUD 2 million to assist with natural disaster preparedness and response in the region.

Climate Variability and Change, Sea Level Rise and Extreme Weather Events

26. Leaders endorsed the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006–2015 as a regional mechanism to support responses to climate change and related concerns for the period 2006-2015. They noted the need to develop and implement national action plans for climate change and related issues consistent with the Framework and other regional frameworks (e.g. the Pacific Regional Framework for Action for Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters). Leaders also welcomed the agreement by the 18th Meeting of the Heads of CROP organisations to strengthen joint programming among themselves to better provide regional support for mitigating and adapting to climate change.

27. Leaders noted with appreciation Australia's announcement of an additional AUD 6 million for the continuation of the South Pacific Sea Levels Monitoring Project.

Carbon Trading

28. Leaders noted and supported Papua New Guinea's carbon trading initiative and welcomed its offer to draft a concept paper outlining the purpose, functions, regulations and benefit sharing framework of carbon trading for Forum members. In doing so, Leaders noted the many benefits that Forum members could derive from Clean Development Mechanism projects. Leaders also expressed interest in advancing the idea of recognising the ocean as a carbon sink.

Shipment of Radioactive Materials

29. Leaders reiterated their concerns about the risks of economic loss in an incident involving the shipment of radioactive materials through the Pacific, and restated their view that in the event of losses directly attributable to such an incident, there is an imperative on the shipping states not to leave the countries suffering those losses unsupported. They agreed that the Chair write again to the shipping states in early 2006, taking account of further research on the case for "rumour damage" and the outcomes of the planned International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regional workshop, and restating the Forum Leaders' view as outlined above. Leaders noted the IAEA's response to New Zealand's informal request for a region-specific Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and that the Forum Secretariat in consultation with members will consider the implications of that response for the Forum's EIA proposal.

Post Forum Dialogue

30. Leaders agreed to place a moratorium on Post Forum Dialogue membership and directed the Secretariat to review the criteria and arrangements for the Post Forum Dialogues and to recommend new criteria and arrangements to the 2006 Forum.

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

31. Leaders encouraged Members, development partners and all those other countries which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). They affirmed the importance of entry into force of the CTBT as a practical step and an effective measure towards nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation; and encouraged Members who have agreed to host monitoring stations under the global verification regime to ensure that national arrangements required for setting up and operating the stations are established and maintained.

Republic of the Marshall Islands Radioactive Contamination

32. Leaders recognised the special circumstances pertaining to the continued presence of radioactive contaminants in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and reaffirmed the existence of a special responsibility by the United States of America towards the people of the Marshall Islands, who have been, and continue to be, adversely affected as a direct result of nuclear weapons tests conducted by the United States during its administration of the islands under the UN Trusteeship mandate. They reiterated their call on the United States to live up to its full obligations on the provision of adequate and fair compensation and commitment to its responsibility for the safe resettlement of displaced populations, including the full and final restoration to economic productivity of all affected areas. They also noted the continuing dialogue between the Governments of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the United States, including the U.S. Congress and Administration, and agreed to submit a letter to the United States Government urging the United States to meet its obligations as presented in the Marshall Islands' Changed Circumstance Petition to the United States. Leaders encouraged members to lend support to the Marshall Islands on this issue at United Nations General Assembly and other international fora.

Tokelau

33. Leaders welcomed Tokelau's admission to Forum observer status as a significant political and diplomatic step in its own right.

34. Leaders also supported Tokelau's wish to accede to the ACP-EC Cotonou Agreement under Article 94 of that Agreement, if the outcome of current considerations of its future status is a move to self-government in free association with New Zealand.

35. Leaders also noted with appreciation the announcement by Australia of a \$5 million contribution to the Tokelau International Trust Fund and an additional \$3 million contribution from New Zealand, bringing the total of that fund to NZD 19 million.

Results of the Smaller Island States Leaders' Summit

36. Leaders noted the results of the Smaller Island States Leaders' Summit expressing interest in some of the initiatives proposed therein including on petroleum bulk purchasing.

Results of the Pacific ACP Leaders' Meeting

37. Leaders noted the outcome of the Pacific ACP (PACP) Leaders' meeting and expressed appreciation at the additional contribution of Euro 10 million made by the European Union to the Regional Indicative Programme of the PACP states.

The Fourth PALM in Japan

38. Leaders welcomed the Japanese Government's proposal to host the 4th Pacific Islands Leaders' Meeting (PALM) in Japan in May 2006, noting the significance of previous PALMs in enhancing the relations between the Forum members and Japan. Leaders looked forward to a fruitful exchange including on the implementation of the Okinawa Declaration and expressed their appreciation for Japan's assistance to the region.

Appreciation

39. Leaders commended the outgoing Chair, Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, MP, Prime Minister of Samoa, and his Government for their leadership of the Forum over the past year.

Venue

40. Leaders welcomed the Government of Tonga's offer to host the 2006 Forum.

26 October 2005

KALIBOBO ROADMAP ON THE PACIFIC PLAN

Pacific Islands Forum Leaders today launched a new era for Pacific partnership by adopting a Pacific Plan to strengthen and deepen regional cooperation and integration. The Plan is a living document which, step by step, aims to give practical effect to the Leaders' vision of a region that is "respected for the quality of its governance, the sustainable management of its resources, the full observance of democratic values, and for its defence and promotion of human rights".

The "**Kalibobo Roadmap**" reinforces the objectives of the Plan and is intended to guide the PIF member countries during the implementation phase in the first three (3) years. In this regard, the Leaders will be looking to the Plan to help achieve major outcomes for the people of the region.

The Pacific Plan is built on **four pillars** that are geared towards enhancing:

- Economic Growth
- Sustainable Development
- Good Governance
- Security for the Pacific through regionalism

Economic Growth: The key objective is *improved income earnings and livelihoods through better access* to goods, services, employment and other development opportunities. The Plan includes initiatives for better access to markets and goods, trade in services including labour, trade facilitation, enhanced transportation and communication, private sector development and in the key resource sectors of fisheries and tourism.

Sustainable Development: The key objective is *enhanced capacity and resilience* of Pacific people and societies. The Plan includes initiatives for improving not only educational standards but also practical (technical and vocational) skills that are relevant to job markets, in areas such as seafaring, hospitality/training, health care, and peacekeeping and policing. There are also initiatives to enhance the health of Pacific people, and support the fight against HIV/AIDS and STI, non-communicable diseases and other health threats.

Good Governance: The key objective is to support a *safe, enabling, inclusive and sustainable environment* for economic growth and personal development and human rights. It is for this reason that the Plan promotes the development and implementation of national sustainable development strategies; regional support for good governance, particularly in areas such as leadership, human rights, ombudsman functions, audit, transparent administration systems, and participatory decision-making mechanisms that includes the non-government groups, women and youth. The Plan will also support the maintenance of strong Pacific cultural identities and the protection of traditional knowledge and intellectual property rights.

Security: The key objective is to ensure safety and security of maritime and aviation and borders. The Plan will promote technical cooperation, regional police training, and other measures relating to drug and weapons control, quarantine, bio-security and safety. Another important dimension of the security and sustainable development environment relates to prevention, mitigation and adaptation with regard to natural disasters, pollution (through waste management) and climate variability and change and sea level rise.

Twenty-four (24) initiatives have been identified for immediate implementation over the next three years:

Economic Growth

- Expansion of market for trade in goods under the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (SPARTECA), the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA), the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER), and through trade arrangements with non-Forum members.
- Integration of trade in services, including temporary movement of labour, into the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Economic Partnerships Agreement (EPA).
- Timely and effective implementation of the Regional Trade Facilitation Programme (RTFP).
- Maximise sustainable returns from fisheries by development of an eco-based fishery management planning framework; encouragement of effective fisheries development, including value-adding activities; and collaboration to ensure legislation and access frameworks are harmonised.
- Implementation of the Forum Principles on Regional Transport Services (FPRTS) including development of the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO).
- Investigation of the potential impacts under the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) of a move towards a comprehensive framework for trade (including services) and economic cooperation between Australia, New Zealand and the Forum Island Countries.
- Support of private sector mechanisms including through the Regional Private Sector Organisation (RPSO).

Sustainable Development

- Development and implementation of National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), using appropriate cross-cutting and Pacific relevant indicators.
- Development and implementation of national and regional conservation and management measures for the sustainable utilisation of fisheries resources.
- Development and implementation of policies and plans for waste management.
- Implementation of the Pacific Islands Energy Policy and associated Strategic Action Plan to provide available, reliable, affordable, and environmentally sound energy for the sustainable development of all Pacific island communities.
- Harmonisation of approaches in the health sector under the *Samoa Commitment*, including: implementing the HIV/AIDS and STI Strategy; a stronger focus on non-communicable diseases; and agreement on health worker recruitment.
- Investigate the potential for expanding regional technical vocational education training (TVET) programmes to take advantage of opportunities in health care, seafaring, hospitality/tourism, peacekeeping and for enhancing and standardising regional training programmes.
- Enhancement of advocacy for and coordination of youth programmes and monitoring of the status of youth.
- Enhancement of regional sporting networks to support the developmental role of sport.

Good Governance

- Regional support to consolidate commitments to key institutions such as Audit and Ombudsman Offices, Customs, Leadership Codes, Anti-Corruption Institutions and Departments of Attorneys General; including through judicial training and education.
- Regional support to the Forum Principles of Good Leadership and Accountability.
- Enhancement of governance mechanisms, including in resource management; and in the harmonisation of traditional and modern values and structures.
- Upgrade and extension of country and regional statistical information systems and databases across all sectors.
- Where appropriate, ratification and implementation of international and regional human rights conventions, covenants and agreements and support for meeting reporting and other requirements.

Security

- Development and implementation of strategies and associated legislation for maritime and aviation security and surveillance.
- Implementation of the Pacific Islands Regional Security Technical Cooperation Strategy in border security, including for trans-national crime, bio-security, and mentoring for national financial intelligence units.
- Strengthening of law enforcement training, (e.g. regional policing initiative), coordination and attachments.
- Development and implementation of policies and plans for the mitigation and management of natural disasters.

There are also a range of other initiatives under the Pacific Plan which have been agreed to in principle or have been listed for future analysis before they are implemented.

Future Outlook and Implementation

The Forum is expected to move progressively towards a comprehensive framework agreement amongst all the Forum members that includes trade (and services) and economic cooperation. Leaders are particularly pleased that the Forum's Economic and Trade Ministers have taken the initiative to progress work on this goal of theirs.

The successful implementation of the Pacific Plan is dependent on the support and commitment of member countries, regional organisations, development partners and a range of stakeholders. As stronger regional cooperation and integration is a means to support national development objectives, the development and implementation of national policies and strategies on regionalism are an important Strategic Objective of the Pacific Plan. These strategies will need to include clear statements of national interests as they relate to regionalism and the establishment of appropriate mechanisms and processes for the use of regional approaches at the country level.

At the regional level, implementation of the Plan in the first instance will be the responsibility of the PIF Secretariat. This is consistent with the 2004 decision by Leaders that the primary functions of the Secretariat are to provide policy advice, coordination and assistance in implementing their decisions.

Political oversight and guidance to the Secretariat will be provided, during the year by a ***Pacific Plan Action Committee (PPAC)***, chaired by the Forum Chair and comprising representatives of all PIF Countries. The Forum Chair (as chair of the PPAC) will report to Leaders on the implementation of the Plan on a quarterly basis.

The Secretariat will provide written quarterly reports to the Chair for consideration and dissemination to PIF member countries.

A small implementation unit, reporting directly to the Deputy Secretary General, will be maintained in the Secretariat to support the PPAC and progress the plan. A similar unit will be established to ensure that the Smaller Island States derive the fullest possible benefit from the Plan.

Overall implementation of Pacific Plan initiatives will be reviewed annually by Leaders who will receive a report, prepared in consultation with members of the PPAC, from the Chair and Secretary General prior to the Leaders' meeting. These reports will include recommendations on future directions for the Plan.

Given the central role of regional organisations, a regional institutional framework that is appropriate to the development of the Pacific Plan will be established. A progress report on this will be provided to the 2006 Forum. Relationships with Pacific territories, NSAs, civil society and development partners will be strengthened, and an annual outcomes-oriented process with non-state-representatives from the business sector, academia, media and civil society organisations will be established, to provide a platform for wider debate and feedback to the Leaders through the Secretary General.

It is proposed that a **Pacific Fund** be established to manage the Pacific Plan implementation through the PPAC. Leaders acknowledge with appreciation the assistance or contributions of development partners and international bodies towards the development and initial implementation of the Plan and urge other development partners to also contribute to the Pacific Fund and the implementation of the Plan. The Fund would be utilised in the areas of capacity building in workshops, symposiums and seminars and for Forum Secretariat Officials to make in country assessments of progress on implementation and advise countries on the appropriate course of action when implementing the Plan.

While the Pacific Plan has a general timeframe of ten years, it provides a mechanism for discussing and shaping the region's longer-term future. It is a living document that will continue to draw inspiration from Leaders and from the people they serve, now and in the years to come.

Kalibobo Village, Madang
Papua New Guinea
26 October 2005