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FORTY-FIFTH PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

KOROR, REPUBLIC OF PALAU

29 – 31 July 2014

FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

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The Forty-Fifth Pacific Islands Forum was held in Koror, Republic of Palau, from 29 – 31 July 2014 and was attended by Heads of State and Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. Australia was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister, New Zealand and the Republic of Vanuatu were represented by their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and Cook Islands by its Minister of Finance. French Polynesia and New Caledonia attended the formal session as Associate Members. Tokelau, Timor-Leste, Wallis and Futuna, the Asian Development Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the United Nations (UN), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the World Bank attended as Observers. The Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP): the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (PIFFA); the Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP); the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC); the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO); the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP); and the University of the South Pacific (USP) were represented by their respective Heads of Organisations and senior officials. The Forum Leaders' Retreat was held at Peleliu State on 31 July 2014.

2. Leaders expressed their deep gratitude to the President, the Government and people of the Republic of Palau for the excellent arrangements made in hosting the 2014 Leaders' meeting, and for the kind hospitality extended to them during their stay in Koror.

FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM

3. Following their decision taken at the Special Leaders Retreat on the Pacific Plan Review on 5 May 2014 in Rarotonga, Cook Islands to re-cast the Pacific Plan as a new Framework for Pacific Regionalism, Leaders endorsed the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, attached at Annex A, which embraces the principle of inclusivity. Leaders encouraged its early implementation while recognising the importance of regional processes in complementing national efforts. Leaders also endorsed the Specialist FOC Sub-Committee for Regionalism, to be composed of allocated positions for suitably-skilled representatives from each sub-region, Australia or New Zealand, a Smaller Island State, civil society and the private sector, with the Secretary General (the permanent Chair of CROP), as Sub-Committee Chair and supported by co-opted specialists as required, and be selected by a panel of Forum members serving on a rotational basis.

4. Leaders noted their directions at their Special Retreat to rationalise ministerial meetings and endorsed the proposed changes to improve cost allocation, focus and time efficiency, and transparency and accountability of meetings. They also affirmed the important roles and continued coordination of CROP agencies in relation to the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and its associated processes and requested all CROP organisations to consult with their

governing bodies and non-member partners on participating in a comprehensive review of regional meetings.

5. Leaders tasked the Forum Secretariat to continue the analysis of Forum regional meetings, including the option of a Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers' meeting, through to completion, and consult with members on its findings, as well as propose recommendations to the next relevant meetings of Ministers or officials. Leaders further tasked the Forum Secretariat to submit a report on rationalisation measures proposed or implemented to the 46th Pacific Islands Forum in 2015.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FORUM COMPACT

6. Leaders endorsed the 2014 Pacific Regional Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Tracking Report and the 2014 Tracking the Effectiveness of Development Efforts in the Pacific Report and acknowledged Forum Island Countries' (FICs) efforts so far on progress towards the MDGs. They continue to uphold their commitment towards achieving the MDGs even if they remain unmet by 2015.

7. Leaders committed themselves and FICs to continue to take an active role in the Forum Compact implementation and to work with development partners to support coherent implementation of Peer Review recommendations and Pacific South-South attachments. Leaders also encouraged development partners to volunteer to be peer reviewed and/or participate in the peer review processes.

THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA/SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, AND THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

8. Leaders reiterated the importance of member countries playing an active role in shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They warmly commended and support the active efforts of Pacific Ambassadors/Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York to shape the Post-2015 Development Agenda, particularly the Troika of Papua New Guinea, Palau and Nauru representing the Pacific region on the SDGs Open Working Group.

9. Leaders expressed their serious concern for the extremely large number of SDGs and targets being discussed at the global level and called on the global community to strive for a more manageable, achievable and limited number of SDGs with clear and relevant targets. They emphasised the importance of incorporating the unfinished business of the MDGs in the SDGs, reflecting the special case of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as a cross-cutting issue, and taking into account the circumstances that have constrained the ability to achieve MDGs in some countries. Leaders made a strong call for the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on Oceans.

10. Accordingly, Leaders tasked the Forum Secretariat, in collaboration with CROP and UN agencies, to fully support and assist member countries throughout the intergovernmental process to determine the SDGs by the Post-2015 Summit in September 2015. Leaders reiterated strong support for a successful Third International Conference on SIDS and affirmed the important roles and continued coordination of CROP agencies in relation to the Third International Conference on SIDS.

11. Leaders called on development partners for their strong commitment and support, particularly including financial assistance, in the implementation and monitoring of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (or the S.A.M.O.A) Pathway Outcomes document. Leaders also acknowledged the importance of the involvement of all stakeholders at the national and local level. They encouraged regional organisations, such as the CROP agencies, to support the delivery of the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway Outcomes document.

12. Leaders highlighted the Forum Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination in the Pacific as a successful existing partnership that should be showcased at the SIDS Conference and committed to support the National Sustainable Development Strategy Partnership Group, the Pacific Ocean Alliance and the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) Partnership to be launched at the Conference.

13. With respect to the Pacific Regional Data Repository for Sustainable Energy for All (PRDR for SE4ALL), Leaders noted that this has been developed and its portal will be launched at a side-event at the SIDS Conference.

OCEANS

14. Leaders welcomed the Republic of Palau's theme for the 45th Pacific Islands Forum, "The Ocean: Life & Future" which highlighted the Pacific region's many commitments and efforts to sustainably develop, manage and conserve the Pacific Ocean and its resources for present and future generations. Leaders welcomed and endorsed the Palau Declaration "*The Ocean: Life & Future*" *Charting a Course to Sustainability* which is attached at Annex B.

15. Leaders acknowledged their central stewardship role in Pacific Ocean governance, sustainable development, management and conservation. They reaffirmed their commitment to implementation of the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy and the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape. They agreed that the Palau Declaration will provide impetus to, and should be actively promoted at, the SIDS Conference, UNSG 2014 Climate Summit, UNGA69 and in the Post-2015 Development Agenda/SDGs to highlight the importance of the Pacific Ocean to economies, societies, culture and environmental integrity.

16. Leaders noted with concern the rapid decline in tuna stocks, especially bigeye and bluefin tuna stocks, and tasked fisheries ministers to urgently strengthen sustainable fisheries conservation and management plans and measures that constrain and reduce catches based on current and accurate data and information.

17. Leaders called for effective environmental impact assessments, where appropriate, to be incorporated into approval processes and, where necessary, the precautionary principle to be applied to any extractive activities in the Pacific Ocean. Leaders further called for fishery and extractive industry stakeholders, as well as States operating in the region to take on the responsibility to contribute to the rehabilitation of the Oceans and its resources.

18. Leaders welcomed Australia's pledge of AUD 2 billion to extend the Pacific Patrol Boat Program to strengthen monitoring, control and surveillance in the Exclusive Economic Zones of FICs, with the first replacement vessels to come on line from 2018. They acknowledged new Australian funding for aerial maritime surveillance and the secondment of regional officials to

the PIFFA. They also noted that Australian funding for the PIFFA and the SPC would increase to \$40 million over the next four years.

INVASIVE SPECIES

19. Leaders recalled their decisions from the 2013 Forum in Majuro, acknowledging the importance of effectively dealing with invasive species through integrated action and effective partnerships to reduce the threats to Pacific economies, communities and environments, and to enhance climate change adaptation and sustainable development efforts.

20. Leaders acknowledged the progress made by SPREP and SPC in formalising the establishment of the Invasive Species Advisory Group, under the auspices of the Heads of CROP agencies. Leaders further acknowledged and welcomed the contribution of the Pacific Invasive Partnership through preparation of a report on the state of invasive species management in the Forum region.

21. Leaders welcomed the Pacific Commitment to combat invasive species noting announcements by some of the Forum members toward this commitment and called upon development partners and donor community to support the Pacific Commitment to strengthen efforts to prevent, control and eradicate invasive species in Forum Countries.

FIJI

22. Leaders requested the Ministerial Contact Group (MCG) to make a recommendation to Leaders following the election in Fiji regarding Fiji's re-admission to the Forum based on an assessment of the report of the Multinational Observer Group and any other factors the MCG wishes to take into account. Leaders expressed their expectation that a positive report by the MCG about Fiji's election would form the basis for the MCG to recommend that Leaders fully lift Fiji's suspension from the Forum so that it can participate in all Forum activities, including the meetings of the Forum Leaders. Leaders agreed that in these circumstances, the Forum Secretariat would facilitate all Pacific ACP meetings and related activities.

REGIONAL ASSISTANCE MISSION TO SOLOMON ISLANDS (RAMSI)

23. Leaders noted the postponement of the meeting of the Enhanced Consultative Mechanism (ECM) on RAMSI and the proposed plan to convene a meeting of the ECM in August 2014 and looked forward to the meeting outcomes for consideration out-of-session.

TRANSNATIONAL AND BROADER SECURITY ISSUES

24. Leaders endorsed the Forum Security Sector Governance Guiding Principles. They also encouraged the United States to ratify the Protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty as soon as possible. Leaders also noted and supported the Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme's Nadi Accord on Culture, Religion and Tradition which declared that culture, religion and tradition can never be an "excuse for abuse".

RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINANTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

25. Leaders recalled that the Marshall Islands were placed under the trusteeship of the United States of America by the international community, which therefore has an ongoing obligation to encourage a final and just resolution for the Marshallese people. Leaders noted the findings in the Special Rapporteur's report to the UN Human Rights Council and supported bilateral and multilateral action to assist the Marshall Islands in its efforts to engage the United States towards a justified resolution to the U.S. Nuclear Testing Programme. Leaders considered submitting another letter to the United States Government urging the United States to take action to address meaningfully the lingering needs resulting from the U.S. Nuclear Testing Programme and to stand in solidarity with the people of the Marshall Islands as they face the challenges of overcoming the ongoing legacy of the nuclear weapons testing programme.

PRIVATE SECTOR DIALOGUE

26. Leaders noted the strengthened Private Sector Dialogue arrangement involving the Economic Ministers and expressed their support for the theme of the 2015 Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting 'The development of, and increased engagement with the private sector in the region'.

APPLICATIONS FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP AND FORUM OBSERVER

27. Leaders agreed to admit Tokelau as an Associate Member and invite the International Organization for Migration to become an Observer in the Forum.

PARTNERSHIP MECHANISMS INCLUDING APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION AS POST-FORUM DIALOGUE PARTNERS

28. Leaders acknowledged the commitment of the region's development partners to meaningful dialogue towards strengthening political and strategic partnerships with the Pacific and agreed to admit Spain and Turkey to Post-Forum Dialogue Partner membership to take immediate effect.

CANDIDACIES

29. Leaders reaffirmed support for New Zealand's candidature for the 2015 – 2016 term of the United Nations Security Council to maintain a Pacific voice in the world's primary body to address international peace and security.

30. Leaders noted the importance of their decisions being adhered to in relation to votes for international elections.

EUROPEAN UNION – PACIFIC ACP SUMMIT

31. Leaders welcomed the prospects of regular high level EU-Pacific ACP meetings to further strengthen the relationship. Leaders tasked the Forum Secretariat to facilitate arrangements for these meetings.

OUTCOMES OF THE SIS LEADERS MEETING

32. Leaders endorsed the outcomes of the SIS Leaders Meeting held in Koror, Republic of Palau on 29 July 2014.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

33. Leaders expressed appreciation to Nauru, as their tenure as Chair of AOSIS comes to a close, for their leadership in advocating SIDS issues at international level.

APPOINTMENT OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARY GENERAL

34. Leaders agreed to appoint Dame Meg Taylor as the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat for a three-year term.

APPRECIATION TO THE OUTGOING FORUM CHAIR

35. Leaders commended the outgoing Forum Chair, His Excellency Christopher Jorebon Loeak, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and his Government for their leadership of the Forum over the past year.

APPRECIATION TO OUTGOING SECRETARY GENERAL

36. Forum Leaders expressed their deep appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing Secretary General, Mr Tuiloma Neroni Slade for his significant and valued contribution to the strengthening of the region during his six years in office. Leaders particularly acknowledged the Secretary General's contribution during challenging times.

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

37. Leaders welcomed and confirmed the future hosts of the Forum as follows: Papua New Guinea in 2015; the Federated States of Micronesia in 2016; Samoa in 2017; Nauru in 2018 and Tuvalu in 2019.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
Peleliu State, Republic of Palau
31 July 2014