



## **PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT**

### **PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM LEADERS SPECIAL RETREAT**

#### **ON THE PACIFIC PLAN REVIEW**

Rarotonga, Cook Islands

5 May 2014

#### **FORUM OUTCOMES DOCUMENT**

The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Special Retreat to consider the Pacific Plan Review 2013 *Report to Pacific Leaders* was held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands on 5 May 2014 and was attended by Heads of State and Governments of the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Samoa, and representatives of Australia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu. Leaders noted the apologies received from Vanuatu for its inability to attend due to circumstances beyond its control.

Leaders expressed their deep gratitude to the Prime Minister, the Government and the people of Cook Islands for hosting this Special Retreat of Leaders and for the kind hospitality, excellent facilities, and arrangements.

Leaders paid tribute to the collective work of agencies in the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP), development partners, international agencies, multilateral institutions, civil society organisations, and private sector representatives, for their contributions in support of Pacific Island governments to the development of the region, since the adoption of the Pacific Plan in 2005 and its subsequent implementation.

Leaders acknowledged the important role of the Forum Secretariat in driving regionalism, and welcomed the achievements in regional cooperation that have been recorded since the Pacific Plan's inception. Leaders acknowledged the challenges and opportunities in pursuing initiatives for regional integration, and the importance of establishing, from the outset, robust criteria for such initiatives.

Leaders recalled their agreement in 2012 at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Pacific Islands Forum in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, that a review of the Pacific Plan was necessary to reflect on progress and ensure its relevance in consideration of the region's current issues, future challenges, and opportunities, and that this review should be led by the Rt. Hon. Sir Mekere Morauta of Papua New Guinea.

Leaders recalled also the briefing provided at the 44<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands by Sir Mekere Morauta on the preliminary findings and recommendations of the Pacific Plan Review, and Leaders' direction that the final Review report be submitted to Leaders in October 2013 and be reviewed by the Forum Officials

Committee (FOC) in December 2013 with a view to reporting to Leaders on proposed next steps at a Special Leaders' Retreat in 2014.

Leaders expressed their appreciation for the extensive consultation and advisory work undertaken by Sir Mekere Morauta and his Review team, and the in-depth analysis in preparing the findings and recommendations in their Report.

**Affirming** that, from its establishment, the Pacific Islands Forum has recognised the advantages of shared purpose and of close cooperation and coordination, and has committed to working together to address common challenges, harness shared strengths, and ensure that individual and collective advancement brings practical benefits to all Pacific people;

**Acknowledging** that Pacific countries have in common many of the same constraints, vulnerabilities and dependencies that define their ability to grow and to respond to challenges, and draw strength from their shared cultural identity, diversity, and heritage; and

**Believing** that deeper regional integration will help increase socio-economic and development prospects, expand market opportunities, improve service delivery, and contribute to security and good governance for Pacific people and for the region as a whole;

Leaders **considered** the 2013 Pacific Plan Review Report and:

1. **Reaffirmed** a shared commitment to the vision of regionalism expressed in the 2004 Auckland Declaration:

*“Leaders believe the Pacific region can, should and will be a region of peace, harmony, security and economic prosperity, so that all of its people can lead free and worthwhile lives. We treasure the diversity of the Pacific and seek a future in which its cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are valued, honoured and developed. We seek a Pacific 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. We seek partnerships with our neighbours and beyond to develop our knowledge, to improve our communications and to ensure a sustainable economic existence for all.”*

2. **Agreed** that this vision will only be achieved through focussed political conversations and settlements that address key strategic issues, including shared sovereignty, pooling resources and delegating decision-making.
3. Recognising that regionalism is a continuum, **committed** to progress beyond regional cooperation towards deeper forms of regional integration where there are clear, equitable benefits to be gained.
4. **Agreed** that the Pacific Plan is a framework specifically for advancing Pacific regionalism, not a regional development nor a funding plan.
5. **Endorsed** the re-casting of the Plan as the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*.
6. **Agreed** that the Forum Secretariat use the initial draft *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* as the basis for further consultation with regional stakeholders to develop its final content.
7. **Tasked** the Forum Secretariat to present the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* for Leaders' further consideration and final approval at the 45<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum to be held in Palau from 29 July to 1 August 2014.

8. **Agreed** that the Pacific Plan Action Committee be replaced and re-established as a smaller, specialist Sub-Committee of the FOC.
9. **Urged** Forum member Governments to send highest level senior official representation to FOC meetings.
10. **Tasked** the Forum Secretariat with consulting Forum member Governments on governance arrangements, including the rationalisation and sequencing of ministerial meetings and the role of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in the prioritisation of initiatives of the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* for submission to Forum Leaders, and with presenting recommendations for Leaders' further consideration and approval at the 45<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum.
11. **Reaffirmed** their earlier decision (Special Leaders' Retreat, Auckland, 6 April 2004) to "mandate Forum Ministerial meetings with decision-making power on all issues except those where Ministers determine that a decision by Leaders is required. Leaders would of course retain the right to reconsider issues" (Decision 22).
12. **Agreed** that the particular needs of Smaller Island States (SIS) will form an integral part of the assessment and prioritisation process for future regional initiatives.
13. **Sought** further advice from the Smaller Island States Leaders' meeting to be held in Palau on the proposed SIS strategy once the new *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* has been finalised.
14. **Noted** the announcement of Papua New Guinea to allocate 10million Kina to establish the Smaller Island States House in Port Moresby, with future details to be provided at the 45<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum.
15. **Reaffirmed** the Forum Secretariat's role as a central conduit for providing policy advice to Leaders on regionalism.
16. **Tasked** the FOC to oversee action by the Forum Secretariat to be responsive to the effective implementation of the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*.
17. **Tasked** the Forum Secretariat to consult with CROP agencies and other stakeholders and develop terms of reference for an analysis of governance and financing options for collective action in pursuit of Pacific regionalism.
18. **Acknowledged** the important role of CROP agencies and their governing bodies in implementing regional service delivery initiatives.

Leaders **accepted** shared responsibility to provide requisite resources to support the next phase of work leading up to the 45<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum. Leaders **welcomed** Papua New Guinea's pledge of USD50,000 for implementation of the Pacific Plan Review recommendations. Leaders **tasked** the Forum Secretariat to develop a more detailed implementation and financing plan, including reflection of realignment of existing resources, for the work to be completed thereafter, for consideration by the FOC at their 2014 Budget and Work Programme Session.