

FORTY-NINTH PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

YAREN, NAURU

3 – 6 September, 2018

FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

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The Forty-Ninth Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) was held in Yaren, Nauru from 3 – 6 September 2018 and was attended by Heads of State, Government, and Territories from the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Australia was represented by its Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Republic of Fiji was represented by the Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism, Palau by its Minister of State, and Papua New Guinea by its Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Forum Leaders' Retreat was held at the Nauru Learning Village, Yaren, Nauru.

2. Tokelau attended the formal session as an Associate Member. Timor-Leste, Wallis and Futuna, the Asian Development Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the United Nations (UN), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), the International Organization for Migration and the World Bank attended as Observers. The Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP): the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (PIFFA); the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO); the Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP); the Pacific Power Association (PPA); 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. Forum Leaders also welcomed the opportunity to engage with the broader Forum family, including Forum Dialogue Partners, civil society and the private sector.

3. Forum Leaders expressed their appreciation to the President of Nauru, the Government and the people of Nauru for the warm hospitality extended to all delegations. Leaders' commended the preparations and facilitation of the 2018 Leaders' and related meetings, which enabled Leaders and all participants to hold constructive discussions, and contributed to the overall success of the 49th Pacific Islands Forum.

BUILDING A STRONG PACIFIC – OUR PEOPLE, OUR ISLANDS, OUR WILL

4. Leaders **congratulated** the Government of Nauru for the 49th PIF Leaders' meeting theme, *Building a Strong Pacific: Our People, Our Islands, Our Will*, **recognising** the opportunity that the theme presents to strengthen the region's collective will to drive the region's ambition to overcome the persistent development challenges faced by the Pacific people.

5. In recognising the *Blue Pacific* narrative, endorsed by Leaders in their meeting in Samoa, Leaders also **welcomed** the theme as an opportunity to build on the momentum of the *Blue Pacific* – reminding and inspiring 'us all' to value the strategic potential of the region, and to act together from a position of strength.

6. In taking into account the 1st Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report which tracks the region's progress in realising the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway and other global commitments, Leaders **committed** to ensuring that sustainable development in the region is achieved on its terms and in a way that recognises the region's rich culture, national circumstances, and oceanic resources.

7. Leaders **endorsed** the first Quadrennial Pacific Sustainable Development Report in 2018 as the Pacific region's Sustainable Development Report on the 2030 Agenda, S.A.M.O.A Pathway and other global commitments, recognising that it will support Leaders' participation at the 2019 UN General Assembly Special Summit on the 2030 Agenda and the S.A.M.O.A Pathway Mid Term Review, including the remaining preparatory processes.

8. Leaders **reaffirmed** the prominence of regionally established mechanisms and called on all development partners, including multilateral agencies, to integrate, monitor and report on global sustainable development commitments through existing Forum mechanisms to ensure coherence in policy, implementation and accountability.

9. Leaders **directed** the Forum Secretariat to work with the Forum Troika (Samoa, Nauru and Tuvalu) to review the guidelines and format of PIF Meetings and report back to Leaders.

REGIONALISM PRIORITIES

10. As the *Blue Pacific*, Leaders **welcomed** the opportunity for building a Strong Pacific for 'our people and our islands' by prioritising collective actions on the following priorities:

Regional Security Declaration

11. Leaders **acknowledged** the dynamic geopolitical environment that has led to an increasingly crowded and contested region, and **reaffirmed** the need for strengthened collective and cohesive action to effectively manage the regional security environment in a proactive manner.

12. Leaders **recalled** their 2017 decision on a regional security declaration and **welcomed** the extensive security discussions held on an expanded concept of security inclusive of human security, humanitarian assistance, prioritising environmental security and regional cooperation in building resilience to disasters and climate change. Leaders **acknowledged** the development of a Regional Security Declaration which builds on and complements the *Biketawa Declaration*, and responds to the region's complex and evolving regional security environment.

13. Leaders **endorsed** the Regional Security Declaration to be known as the *Boe Declaration* as provided in Annex 1 and **noted** that an action plan for implementation, supporting the proposed regional security declaration, will be developed by November 2018.

14. Leaders directed the Forum Troika to review progress of implementation of the *Boe Declaration* in mid-2019.

Climate Change and Disaster Resilience

15. Recognising that climate change presents the single greatest threat to the livelihood, security and wellbeing of Pacific people, Leaders **reaffirmed** the importance of immediate urgent action to combat climate change and **committed** to sustained, high level representation and collaboration in the lead up to, and at, the 24th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework on Climate Change Convention (COP 24) – to ensure effective progress on Pacific priorities with regards to the Paris Agreement, particularly the development of the Rule Book and Guidelines for implementing the Paris Agreement, building on the *Talanoa Dialogue*.

16. Leaders **acknowledged** the leadership of Fiji’s COP 23 presidency and **called on** the CROP Plus group to provide strong, coordinated support and assistance to Members’ delegations in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations.

17. Leaders **called on** countries, particularly large emitters, to fully implement their *Nationally Determined Contribution* mitigation targets, including through the development and transfer of renewable energy, in line with committed timeframes. Leaders of Forum Island Countries **called on** the United States to return to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

18. Leaders **urged** the expeditious progress of the work of the taskforce for the *Pacific Islands Climate Change Insurance Facility*.

19. Leaders **requested** the UN Secretary-General to appoint a *Special Adviser* on climate change and security. Furthermore, Leaders **called on** the UN Security Council to appoint a special rapporteur to produce a regular review of global, regional and national security threats caused by climate change.

20. Leaders **reaffirmed** their commitment to the *Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific*, recognising the value and importance of a multi-sectoral approach to addressing climate change and its impacts. Leaders **acknowledged** the establishment of a regional risk governance arrangement through the Pacific Resilience Partnership and the Pacific Resilience Partnership Taskforce.

21. Leaders **endorsed** the development of the concept of the *Pacific Resilience Facility* (PRF) and **directed** the Forum Secretariat to progress the development of the PRF.

Fisheries

22. Leaders **reiterated** their commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainability and viability of the region’s fisheries resources, recognising its centrality to the well-being of communities and economies.

23. In noting the outcomes of the 2018 Forum Fisheries Ministers’ meeting and recalling their 2017 decision that fisheries constitute a standing agenda item for the Forum, Leaders **endorsed** the proposal for an annual Regional Fisheries Ministers’ meeting, in the margins of the Forum Fisheries Committee Ministerial Meeting, to report to Leaders on all fisheries related matters,

including scientific and economic assessments of the adverse impacts of climate change and illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.

24. Leaders **welcomed** Fisheries Ministers' commitment to address the underperformance of the regional longline fishery and requested that Ministers report back to Leaders in 2019. Leaders **called upon** Distance Water Fishing Nations (DWFN) to remove harmful fisheries subsidies for longline fishing that lead to overcapacity and overfishing, taking note of the difficulties faced by some countries.

25. Leaders **committed** to supporting the advancement of the priorities identified by Fisheries Ministers for negotiations in the WCPFC through strengthened Forum engagement and advocacy with DWFN.

Oceans

26. Leaders **acknowledged** the urgency and importance of securing the region's maritime boundaries as a key issue for the development and security of the region, and thereby for the security and well-being of the *Blue Pacific* continent. Leaders commended the SPC, the PIFFA, the Forum Secretariat and other relevant agencies for the legal and technical support and assistance on maritime boundaries delimitation.

27. Leaders **committed** to progressing the resolution of outstanding maritime boundary claims and report back on progress at the Forum Leaders' meeting in 2019.

28. Leaders agreed to **mobilise** all relevant Forum mechanisms to advance the region's positions in the negotiations for a new Implementing Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

29. Leaders **reaffirmed** their commitment to eliminate marine litter and the urgency of implementing the Pacific Marine Litter Action Plan recently endorsed by the Pacific Region Waste Roundtable.

Childhood Obesity, Early Childhood Development and Non-Communicable Diseases

30. Leaders **expressed** their grave concern with the increasing incidence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), noting that NCDs now represent the leading cause of premature deaths in the region. Leaders also **expressed** alarm at the increasing incidence of childhood obesity and stunting, particularly its impact on future generations of Pacific people – an issue that was highlighted for Leaders' attention by the Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism.

31. Leaders **committed** to leading a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach at the national level to address NCDs, childhood obesity and early childhood development.

32. Leaders **committed** to availing sufficient resources to address NCDs and childhood obesity, to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations of the 2014 NCDs Roadmap and the 2016 NCDs Summit.

West Papua (Papua)

33. Leaders **recognised** the constructive engagement by Forum countries with Indonesia with respect to elections and human rights in West Papua (Papua) and to continue dialogue in an open and constructive manner.

AERIAL SURVEILLANCE

34. Leaders **supported** the Aerial Surveillance programme to be implemented by MOUs entered into by each government, and constituent parts, with PIFFA.

35. Leaders **committed** to ensuring processes (including national level coordination) are made as efficient as possible to ensure the program is implemented efficiently.

36. Leaders **acknowledged** the support of the Government of Australia to strengthen the surveillance capabilities of participating Members.

STRENGTHENING ARRANGEMENTS FOR REGIONALISM

37. Leaders **reaffirmed** the importance of whole-of-government engagement to drive its regional priorities, recognising their individual responsibility for maintaining the momentum for implementation of the regional policy agenda.

Charter of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific

38. In this respect, Leaders **endorsed** the revised Charter of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) Charter, to ensure full alignment with the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* and strengthen CROP cooperation, coordination and collaboration, under the oversight of the CROP Chair.

39. Leaders **directed** CROP agencies to strengthen collaboration and effectively implement commitments reflected under the revised CROP Charter.

40. Leaders **conveyed** their appreciation to Mr James Movick, Director General of the PIFFA, and Professor Rajesh Chandra, Vice Chancellor of the USP, for their commitment and service to the region. Leaders **welcomed** the appointment of Dr Manumatavai Tupou-Rosen as Director General of the PIFFA.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Sustainable Funding Resolution

41. In **recognising** the importance of increasing Members' equitable ownership of the Secretariat, Leaders **endorsed** the ongoing Secretariat reforms to ensure adequate and predictable funding of the Secretariat to safeguard its role as an independent body providing high quality policy advice to advance regionalism and **approved** the *Sustainable Funding Resolution (Annex 2)*, with qualification.

Associate Membership

42. In considering the Forum's capacity to represent the Pacific Islands region, consistent with the vision and objectives of the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*, Leaders **endorsed** the admission of Wallis and Futuna as an Associate Member to the Pacific Islands Forum.

28th Smaller Island States Leaders Meeting

43. With qualification, Leaders **endorsed** the *Summary of Decisions of the 28th Smaller Island States Leaders Meeting*.

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

44. Leaders **welcomed** and **confirmed** the future hosts of the Forum as follows: Tuvalu in 2019 and Vanuatu in 2020.

COUNTRY INITIATIVES

Pacific Fusion Centre

45. Leaders **welcomed** Australia's decision to work with regional security agencies to establish a Pacific Fusion Centre that will build on current regional frameworks to strengthen information sharing and maritime domain awareness to better inform security responses to some of the main threats outlined in the *Boe Declaration*, such as illegal fishing, drugs trafficking and other transnational crimes. Leaders **urged** the importance of working together to develop a fit-for-purpose Pacific regional fusion facility and to conduct a feasibility study in the last quarter of 2018.

Nuclear legacy and Other Issues in the Pacific

46. Leaders **reaffirmed** their commitment to addressing the outstanding security threats from nuclear legacy issues, including radioactive contaminants, World War II relics and unexploded ordnance in the *Blue Pacific* and **called on** all responsible parties to rectify the ongoing impacts of contaminants in the Ocean to sustain future generations.

47. Leaders **directed** the Forum Secretariat, in coordination with CROP agencies, to further advance national and regional efforts towards a just and final resolution, including through Forum international engagement and advocacy.

2018 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Meeting

48. Leaders **welcomed** Papua New Guinea's invitation as Chair of the 2018 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) to participate in an informal dialogue between Leaders of Forum Island Countries and Territories and APEC Leaders in the margin of the APEC Summit.

UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

49. Leaders **noted** the signature and ratification by the Cook Islands of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 5th September 2018, joining Palau as the first and New Zealand as the second Forum Members to sign and ratify the Treaty, and **encouraged** individual Member countries to progress efforts, as they deem appropriate.

Culture

50. Leaders **noted** the importance of and **supported** the mainstreaming of culture across the regional development agenda to protect, preserve and promote traditional knowledge and skills. Leaders **noted** the outcomes of the 4th Culture Ministers Meeting and **welcomed** the commitment of Ministers responsible for Culture and **supported** the integration of regional strategies, including those on gender, employment, education, trade, tourism and environment.

Anti-Corruption Regional Meeting

51. Leaders **noted** the intention of the Republic of Kiribati to host a regional meeting on anti-corruption in 2019.

2020 Our Oceans Conference

52. Leaders **welcomed** Palau's intention to host the 2020 Our Oceans Conference and **agreed** to support Palau by advocating for financial and technical assistance from Development Partners.

2018 Climate Vulnerable Forum Virtual Summit

53. Leaders **supported** the *2018 Climate Vulnerable Forum Virtual Summit of Heads of Government* hosted by the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the first to use an innovative entirely online format, on 22 November 2018, as a UNFCCC Talanoa Dialogue event towards increased ambition in climate action by 2020. Leaders **called on** world leaders to participate in solidarity with the most vulnerable nations.

Waste

54. Leaders **recognised** that waste is a critical issue for the *Blue Pacific*.

Pacific Islands Sports Ministers Agreement

55. Leaders **noted** the agreement of the 2018 Pacific Islands Sports Ministers Meeting to establish a Pacific Islands Sports Ministers' Secretariat, including the proposal for a new operational and funding model for the Pacific Games. Leaders also **noted** their decision to review the Games Charter and the Host Agreement with the Pacific Games Council.

Country Classification

56. Leaders **noted** Solomon Islands' imminent graduation from Least Developed Country status and its subsequent request to defer the graduation date to allow time for comprehensive due diligence and the development of its graduation road map to ensure a smooth transition. Leaders **further noted** Solomon Islands' request for support of its proposal at the relevant fora.

Referendum on self-determination

57. Leaders **acknowledged** the progress towards the referendum on self-determination in New Caledonia on 4 November, 2018 and **welcomed** the invitation by France for a Forum Ministerial Committee Mission to the referendum under the auspices of the UN.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
Yaren, Nauru

5 September 2018

BOE DECLARATION

Forum Leaders:

Recognising and reaffirming our endorsement of the Biketawa Declaration in the year 2000 and **recalling** the principles underpinning the Biketawa Declaration such as commitment to good governance, belief in the liberty of the individual under the law, upholding democratic processes and institutions and recognising the vulnerability of Member countries to threats to their security;

Recalling our vision and values for the Pacific under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, as a region of ‘peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy and productive lives’;

Recognising our endorsement of the ‘Blue Pacific’ identity to drive collective action in support of our vision under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism;

Recalling our agreement at the 48th Forum Leaders’ Meeting in Apia, Samoa, to build on the Biketawa Declaration and other Forum related security declarations and agreements as the foundation for strategic future regional responses;

Recognising the importance we placed on an *expanded concept of security* inclusive of human security, humanitarian assistance, prioritising environmental security, and regional cooperation in building resilience to disasters and climate change, including through regional cooperation and support;

Respecting the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of Forum Members; and

Recognising the need to strengthen regional security cooperation and collective action through the assertion of *Our Will* and the voices of *Our Pacific Peoples*.

HEREBY DECLARE AS FOLLOWS:

- (i) We **reaffirm** that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific and our commitment to progress the implementation of the Paris Agreement;
- (ii) We **recognise** an increasingly complex regional security environment driven by multifaceted security challenges, and a dynamic geopolitical environment leading to an increasingly crowded and complex region;
- (iii) We **affirm** our stewardship of the Blue Pacific and *aspire* to strengthen and enhance our capacity to pursue our collective security interests given our responsibility to sustain our Pacific peoples and our resources;

- (iv) We **respect** and **assert** the sovereign right of every Member to conduct its national affairs free of external interference and coercion;
- (v) We **reaffirm** the right of Members to individually and collectively address security issues and concerns;
- (vi) We **reaffirm** the importance of the rules-based international order founded on the UN Charter, adherence to relevant international law and resolution of international disputes by peaceful means;
- (vii) We **affirm** an expanded concept of security which addresses the wide range of security issues in the region, both traditional and non-traditional, with an increasing emphasis on:
 - a. Human Security, including humanitarian assistance, to protect the rights, health and prosperity of Pacific people;
 - b. Environmental and resource security;
 - c. Transnational crime; and
 - d. Cybersecurity, to maximise protections and opportunities for Pacific infrastructure and peoples in the digital age;
- (viii) We **recognise** that national security impacts on regional security, and therefore commit to strengthening our respective national security approaches by:
 - a. developing our national security strategies; and
 - b. strengthening national security capacity including through training;
- (ix) We commit to strengthening the existing regional security architecture inclusive of regional law enforcement secretariats and regional organisations to:
 - a. account for the expanded concept of security;
 - b. identify and address emerging security challenges;
 - c. improve coordination among existing security mechanisms;
 - d. facilitate open dialogue and strengthened information sharing;
 - e. further develop early warning mechanisms;
 - f. support implementation;
 - g. promote regional security analysis, assessment and advice; and
 - h. engage and cooperate, where appropriate, with international organisations, partners and other relevant stakeholders;
- (x) We **commit** to continuing regular Leaders' level discussions on the expanded concept of security as part of securing our Blue Pacific.

Resolution on Sustainable Funding of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

The Leaders of the Member Governments of the Pacific Islands Forum:

Recalling Forum Leaders admitted French Polynesia and New Caledonia as full Members of the Forum on 10 September 2016 at the 47th Pacific Islands Forum in Pohnpei, and accorded the Federated States of Micronesia with the status of a Smaller Island State, which necessitates a readjustment of the shares set out in the Annex to the *Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat* done at Tarawa, Kiribati on 30 October 2000 (the Agreement);

Acknowledging that the shares contained in the Annex have not been reviewed since they were set in 1996, that membership contributions have remained relatively static since that time and no longer adequately fund the operating costs for the core functions of the Secretariat;

Aware that the Secretariat's funding needs to be sustainable, to ensure it can efficiently and effectively carry out its primary policy advisory function; and

Desiring to promote greater ownership by all Members, and equity amongst all Members, of the Pacific Islands Forum and its Secretariat, and ensure the work programme and regional agenda is determined by Members:

- (i) **determine** new shares for Member governments to meet the costs of the Secretariat under Article X.2 of the Agreement as set out in Annex A to this resolution, to replace those currently set out in the Annex to the Agreement effective from 1 January 2019;
- (ii) **agree** to increase the proportion of assessed Member contributions to be 51% of the Primary Budget (the costs of operating the Secretariat to discharge its core functions) through progressive pre-determined, incremental adjustments over a period of 9 years, starting in 2019;
- (iii) **institute** a triennial review of the level of assessed membership contributions and voluntary contributions, with the first review in 2021 to incorporate an assessment of options for an adjustment factor, to address the vulnerability and financial challenges of Members;
- (iv) **strongly encourage** countries that provide Voluntary Contributions to do so on a three-yearly basis that is aligned to the triennial review period;
- (v) **approve** the parameters set out in Annex B for the use by the Secretariat of extra budget funding from donors;
- (vi) **agree** that administration fees from extra budget funding from donors must not be used to fund the Secretariat's regional policy advisory functions; and
- (vii) **agree** that any shortfall from extra budget funding from donors of the cost of Service Delivery functions must be funded by user fees or special Member assessments, from 1 January 2019.

Revised Scale of contributions to the Budget

(used to determine the Assessed Contributions from Members)

Member	% contribution 2019 (transitional)	% contribution 2020 (transitional)	% contribution 2021 and subsequent years
Australia	31.95	28.17	24.50
Cook Islands	1.11	1.34	1.50
Federated States of Micronesia	1.11	1.34	1.50
Fiji	3.08	3.73	4.41
French Polynesia	3.15	3.81	4.45
Kiribati	1.11	1.34	1.50
Nauru	1.11	1.34	1.50
New Caledonia	3.94	4.77	5.60
New Zealand	31.95	28.17	24.50
Niue	1.11	1.34	1.50
Palau	1.11	1.34	1.50
Papua New Guinea	7.54	9.13	11.10
Republic of the Marshall Islands	1.11	1.34	1.50
Samoa	2.34	2.83	3.32
Solomon Islands	2.27	2.75	3.20
Tonga	2.20	2.67	3.12
Tuvalu	1.11	1.34	1.50
Vanuatu	2.33	2.83	3.30
Associate Member			
Tokelau	0.37	0.42	0.50
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Parameters for use of Extra Budget funding by the Secretariat

Use 1: Support of Regional Policy Development

- a. To supplement policy formulation where specific activity costs can be identified.
- b. To provide dedicated funds to support the implementation of a Leaders' Regional Policy initiative.

Use 2: Advisory Support (as part of capacity building)

Where funds are needed to support the capacity of individual Members to meet the objectives of a regional policy decision.

Use 3: Service Delivery

Where other *services* or *benefits* are being provided to a wide range of identifiable users, and economic funding principles indicate that the cost of providing these should otherwise be funded through direct charges on users or beneficiaries.