

28th TAIWAN/ REPUBLIC OF CHINA -FORUM COUNTRIES STATEMENT

10 November 2023

Rarotonga

Cooks Islands

JOINT STATEMENT

The 28th Taiwan/Republic of China (Taiwan/ROC) - Forum Countries Dialogue was held at the Muri Beach Club Hotel, Rarotonga, Cooks Islands on 10 November 2023. The Dialogue was chaired by the Honorable Kausea Natano, Prime Minister of Tuvalu and attended by His Excellency David Kabua, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Hon. Gustav Aitaro, Minister of State of Palau, and Mr. Dominic Tabuna, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Nauru.

2. The Honorable Kausea Natano, Prime Minister of Tuvalu chaired the meeting supported by Deputy Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Mr Esala Nayasi.
3. The Taiwan/ROC delegation was led by His Excellency, Chung-Kwang Tien, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Opening Remarks

4. In his opening remarks, the Chair welcomed the Deputy Minister for Taiwan/ROC and distinguished members to the *28th Taiwan/ROC-Forum Countries Dialogue*. The Chair recognized the long-standing relationship with the Government of Taiwan/ROC and noted the importance of the Dialogue, which provides the opportunity to strengthen the existing partnerships, and discuss areas for further cooperation.
5. The Chair noted the recently endorsed 2050 Strategy in 2022, and its Implementation Plan endorsed yesterday as the region's development blueprint, and as an opportunity for the Taiwan/ROC to align its development cooperation and programming support. The Chair further acknowledged, with deep appreciation, the continued support provided by the Government of Taiwan/ROC through bilateral and regional cooperation assistance to Forum Island Countries (FICs).

2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and Implementation Plan

6. Deputy Secretary General, Esala Nayasi presented an overview of the 2050 Strategy and its Implementation Plan. The presentation highlighted the importance of partnerships in progressing the region's collective vision and opportunities for policy priorities.
7. Deputy Minister Tien noted the importance of progressing the achievement of the 2050 Strategy and the implementation of regional collective actions and committed to ongoing support towards the implementation of regional collective actions of common interest.

8. Deputy Minister Tien concluded his remarks by reaffirming his Government's commitment to strengthen its engagement with Pacific partners, and to build on its current level of commitment, and continue its contribution over time, in support of building a prosperous and sustainable Pacific region through the 2050 Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Current Status and Prospects of the Republic of China (Taiwan)'s Aid Programs in the Pacific

9. Members acknowledged the on-going partnership and collaboration between Taiwan/ROC and Forum members and welcomed the opportunity to strengthen cooperation and collaboration between Taiwan/ROC and the Pacific Island countries.

10. Members welcomed the continued engagement with Taiwan/ROC in progressing key regional collective areas particularly, in the areas of agriculture, education, health, horticulture initiatives to contribute to the socio-economic wellbeing of Pacific people.

11. Members encouraged and reemphasized the need to ensure that support and commitment towards Smaller Island States within the context of the Implementation Plan of the 2050 Strategy.

12. Members also welcomed on-going initiatives on resilience, oceans and climate and the need to ensure interlinkages and alignment.

13. Members raised the need to support strengthening connectivity within the region.

Update on Existing Regional Cooperation and Way Forward

14. Members acknowledged the long-standing support and contributions of Taiwan/ROC to the Taiwan/ROC-PIC Cooperation Fund. Since the last time the Dialogue took place was in 2019, it was noted that the Cooperation Fund had been utilized to support a number of key areas of work. Members noted that the Cooperation Fund has provided important support for the implementation of regional priorities by the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) agencies, while also strengthening human capabilities in the region through scholarships and training.

15. Members further noted the important role that Taiwan/ROC could play in supporting regional leadership into the future, including by broadening the scope of the scholarship programme to align to the needs of the region in this area as articulated in the 2050 Strategy, and also by supporting Pacific led initiatives, including the *regional collective actions* focused on political leadership and regionalism as set out in the 2050 Implementation Plan.

16. In looking to revitalize the scholarship scheme for 2024, and the management of the Cooperation Fund, the Members welcomed the need for strengthened coordination support, and the engagement of a programme coordinator by the Secretariat. The meeting noted strengthened partnership between Taiwan/ROC and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to support the delivery of the 2050 Strategy and its priorities as identified through its Implementation Plan including to establish a Pacific Trade and Invest Office in Taiwan/ROC to increase trade opportunities with the Pacific.

17. Members also discussed the need to ensure standard host protocols are part of all PIF Leaders meetings to ensure consistent treatment of all dialogue and development partners.

Other Matters

18. The meeting reaffirmed the principle that the PIF Secretariat shall ensure Taiwan/ ROC's participation rights in accordance with the forum communique of the TWENTY-THIRD SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM in 1992, as outlined in clause 54: "Taiwan/Republic of China-Forum Countries Dialogue will take place at the same venue as the Forum, but will be conducted separately from the existing post-Forum Dialogue."

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