

SEVENTH SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM

Nauru
26 - 28 July 1976

FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ

The Seventh South Pacific Forum was opened by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Nauru, President Hammer DeRoburt, O.B.E., M.P., in the Nauru Civic Centre on 26 July 1976. His Excellency warmly welcomed the Prime Ministers of Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Western Samoa; the Premiers of the Cook Islands and of Niue; the Chief Ministers of the Solomon Islands and of Tuvalu; the Acting Chief Minister of the Gilbert Islands; and the Minister for Industry and Commerce of Australia: His Excellency also welcomed the Director of SPEC and delegation officials.

2. In his opening address the President said that it was a great and signal honour to the Government and to the people of Nauru to host the Forum Meeting. His Excellency conveyed to the Meeting the apologies of the Australian Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of the Gilbert Islands who had been unable to attend the meeting. His Excellency expressed a special welcome and congratulations to the new Prime Minister of Western Samoa and the new Chief Minister of the Solomon Islands, In responding to the President, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea also welcomed the two new Leaders to their first Forum Meeting. A copy of the President's address is attached to this communiqué.

3. The Minister of Industry and Commerce of Australia told the meeting that the Australian Prime Minister regretted very much that the unavoidable timing of his visit to the United States had prevented him from attending the meeting.

4. The President of Nauru was elected Chairman. The Prime Minister of Fiji was elected Vice-Chairman and the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea was appointed press spokesman for the Forum.

Environmental Conservation in the South Pacific

5. The Forum considered a paper entitled "Environmental Conservation in the South Pacific" presented by the Government of Papua New Guinea. The paper outlined the concern felt by the Government of Papua New Guinea that common and co-ordinated approaches to development and environmental protection should be adopted in the region as soon as possible.

6. The Forum decided that SPEC should consult with the SPC with a view to preparing proposals for a co-ordinated regional approach to the problem of environmental management for consideration at the next meeting of the Forum. In the preparation of these proposals UNEP, UNDP and other interested countries and agencies should be consulted.

Law of the Sea

7. The Forum considered a paper circulated by the Government of Fiji on recent developments in the Law of the Sea negotiations.

8. The Forum adopted a declaration which is attached to this communiqué, embracing specific proposals for regional co-operation in this highly important field. A regional meeting will be held at SPEC Headquarters later this year. The objective of the meeting will be to consider the timing and terms of creation of 200 mile zones; the problems and opportunities associated with them; the conservation of marine resources; the possible creation of a South Pacific fisheries agency; and the prospects for joint action and regional co-operation in matters such as surveillance and policing.

Regional Telecommunications

9. The Forum considered the Report of the Regional Telecommunications Meeting which was held in Apia from 5 to 9 July 1976, and endorsed the proposed arrangements for the future administration of the Regional Telecommunications Training Centre. Under these arrangements the Fiji Government will administer the Centre on behalf of, and in consultation with other participating countries. The Management Board for the Centre will include a representative of SPEC.

10. The Forum also agreed that national basic training centres, to be located in the Cook islands, Tonga and Western Samoa as part of the Regional Telecommunications Training Project, will be given high priority.

Report of the Aid Review Task Force

11. The Forum ban before it the Report of the seven member Task Force appointed to review aid to the South Pacific. The Forum noted that the report was a comprehensive one and raised wide-ranging issues involving all aspects of the aid relationship.

12. The Forum agreed that member Governments should analyse the report in detail and transmit their comments to SPEC. A regional meeting at the official level will be convened to discuss the submissions from member Governments with a view to deciding future action.

Regional Shipping Project

13. The Forum agreed to establish the Pacific Forum Line as recommended by the South Pacific Regional Shipping Council.

Regional Civil Aviation

14. The Forum considered the report of the first meeting of the South Pacific Regional Civil Aviation Council which had been held in Suva on 8 and 9 July 1976, and endorsed the following priority areas for investigation by the Council:

- a) Regional requirements for air services.
- b) Rationalisation of routes and schedules within the region as a means to meeting these requirements.

- c) Identification of impediments to proposed services to achieve a better regional co-ordination of routes and schedules.
- d) Eligibility of the region as a group for membership of ICAO and to report back on the possibilities and advantages of such membership.

Annual Report of SPEC

15. The Forum approved the Annual Report of the Director on the operations of the Secretariat since the last meeting of the Forum.

Other Business

16. The Prime Minister of Fiji raised the question of the relations of the Banaban people with the Government of the United Kingdom in the light of recent developments. The Acting Chief Minister of the Gilbert Islands outlined his Government's position.

17. There was general expression of views on the presence and growing interest of the Soviet Union and China in the South Pacific.

Date and Venue of Next Forum Meeting

18. The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea announced that the Papua New Guinea Government would be happy to host the next formal meeting of the Forum in Port Moresby in August 1977. The Forum accepted the Prime Minister's kind offer.

Nauru

28 July 1976

SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM MEETING ON LAW OF THE SEA

SPEC HEAD QUARTERS SUVA

13-14 OCTOBER, 1976

PRESS COMMUNIQUE

In accordance with the declaration issued by the Seventh South Pacific Forum held in Nauru from 26-28 July 1975, a Forum meeting on the Law of the Sea was convened by SPEC in Suva on 13 and 14 October, 1975, to consider the timing and terms of the creation of 200 mile zones; the problems and opportunities associated with them; the conservation of marine resources; the possible creation of a South Pacific fisheries agency; and the prospects for joint action and regional co-operation in matters such as surveillance and policing. The meeting was preceded by informal discussions at head of delegation level on 12 October 1976.

The meeting was formally opened on 13 October 1976 by the Acting Prime Minister of Fiji, Hon Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau who welcomed Forum leaders and delegates. The Acting Prime Minister referred to the importance of the resources of the sea to the Pacific island countries and said that it was vital that those countries secure rights to control those resources around their islands and have the capability to safeguard and harvest them for the benefit of Pacific island peoples. In this endeavour there was a need to take regional co-operative action.

The meeting was attended by the President of the Republic of Nauru, the Prime Ministers of New Zealand, Tonga, and Western Samoa, the Acting Prime Minister of Fiji, the Premiers of the Cook Islands and Niue, the Chief Ministers of the Gilbert Islands, the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia and the Minister for Justice of Papua New Guinea. The Minister for Labour of Fiji represented the Government of Fiji when the Acting Prime Minister was unable to be present. The Acting Prime Minister of Fiji the Hon Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau was elected as chairman of the meeting and Sir Albert Henry, Premier of the Cook Islands deputy chairman. The Prime Minister of Western Samoa Tupuola Efi was appointed press spokesman for the meeting.

The meeting reviewed developments at the recent , Fifth Session of the Law of the Sea Conference, concentrating on aspects of special relevance to the South Pacific.

The meeting made a joint Declaration underlining the common concern to achieve a new and comprehensive international Convention on the Law of the Sea which would take account of the interests of the region. The Declaration is attached.

GUVA
10 October 1976