

Background Paper 1:

PACIFIC PLAN TASK FORCE TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

At an Informal Forum Retreat in Auckland on 6 April 2004, Leaders issued a Declaration adopting the following Vision:

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. *Leaders agreed to give effect to this Vision through:*
 - i. Development of The Pacific Plan to create stronger and deeper links between the sovereign countries of the region and identify the sectors where the region could gain the most from sharing resources of governance and aligning policies;
 - ii. Agreement that the key goals of the Forum are economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security and that these goals should form the principal focus of the Forum and its Secretariat;
 - iii. Recognition that a fundamental role of the Forum is to support the particular needs of the Small Island States and to advocate their interests, especially in regard to their limited capacity and protecting their fragile environment, including from climate change;
 - iv. Recognition that the Forum has to exist for the practical benefit of Pacific people, and of the importance of cultural identity, regional inclusiveness, sub-regional representation, human rights, women and gender, youth, and civil society and invited the Secretary General, in preparing the Pacific Plan to consult, assess and make proposals on how cultural identity could be best strengthened through the work of the Forum and CROP agencies, in particular the Secretariat of the Pacific Community;
 - v. Improvement to the way the Forum communicates its work to member countries and the wider world; and
 - vi. Reform of the Forum's procedures, its meetings, and the role of Leaders, the Chair, Ministers and officials.

3. *Leaders also decided that work on the Pacific Plan should be started as soon as possible with the Forum Secretariat to complete an assessment of existing mechanisms and processes for regional cooperation¹ in time for the 2004 Apia Forum, along with draft Terms of Reference and recommendations from the Secretary General for membership of the Task Force to develop the Pacific Plan.*

GOAL OF THE TASK FORCE

4. The goal of the Task Force is to develop the Pacific Plan *to create stronger and deeper links between the sovereign countries of the region that will:*

- *Assess options and provide a strategy for deeper and broader regional cooperation, taking into account the broader international environment and agreements² in which Forum members participate;*
- *Identify the sectors and issues in which the region can gain the most from sharing resources of governance and aligning policies;*
- *Give priority consideration to the key goals of the Forum of economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security;*
- *Provide clear recommendations to Leaders on the sequence and priorities for intensified regional cooperation, taking into account the other priorities of the Forum as articulated in the Leaders' declaration (presented in paragraph 2 iii –vi above); and*
- *Be used as a springboard for stimulating debate on how to shape the region's longer-term future.*

SPECIFIC TASKS

5. In producing the Pacific Plan, the Task Force should develop and include:

- *A digital strategy for the region (to be developed mainly by CROP), based on the 1999 Communications Action Plan and other regional policies and actions;*
- *An implementation plan with clear and realistic targets and achievable outputs identifying implementation and coordination responsibilities;*
- *A monitoring and evaluation plan to continually assess the success, or otherwise, of implementation;*
- *A Communication Strategy for the Pacific Plan (with support provided by the Forum Secretariat), to ensure understanding of and commitment by all stakeholders; and*

¹ Attached at Annex A.

² Two of the most important being the World Summit on Sustainable Development, with an international consensus on sustainable development that is well aligned with the Leaders' vision; and the Millennium Declaration, with associated goals and targets.

- A process or mechanism to ensure that on-going debate occurs to shape the region's longer term future, noting that the Pacific Plan will be a living document to be reviewed and updated regularly; and *that it would be appropriate from time to time for the Forum Leaders' Meeting to revisit the Vision and assess progress towards its achievement.*
6. The Task Force should also consider the following issues:
- Members' understanding and appreciation of regional cooperation, integration and partnerships; their perception of the benefits and costs; and the manner in which regional initiatives or decisions are considered and integrated at the national level, particularly through alignment of policies and institutions;
 - The opportunity costs to the region that may result if the opportunities for further deepening and broadening of regional cooperation are not taken up;
 - The role of other CROP organisations, including their architecture and the CROP Charter;
 - The role of other regional and international stakeholders in the Pacific Plan including active partnerships that involve development partners, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), non-state actors (NSAs)³, and participation by non-sovereign Pacific territories; and
 - A practical definition of a Pacific regional approach (i.e. definition of 'regionality'), noting Leaders' declaration on the importance of maintaining and strengthening Pacific cultural identity.

METHODOLOGY

7. In carrying out its work, the Task Force will:
- Consult widely with Pacific island countries and territories;
 - Consult with other key stakeholders including CROP agencies, development partners, IGOs and NSAs, recognizing that a participatory, consultative and broad-based approach to national level consideration of regional integration is imperative in promoting ownership, which in turn will lead to commitment to implementation of the Pacific Plan;
 - Make use of parallel regional meetings (e.g. Ministerial Meetings) and other forms of consultative exercises;
 - Carry out or commission additional research and analysis as necessary to support the development of the Pacific Plan; and
 - Undertake other consultations as requested by the Secretary General.

COMPOSITION

³ These include Non-Government Organizations, Community Based Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations and Private Sector Associations, etc.

8. The Secretary General will recommend composition of the Task Force to Leaders.

OVERSIGHT

9. The work of the Task Force will be overseen in the first instance by a core group of Leaders, comprising the immediate past, current and incoming chairs and a representative of the Smaller Island States. Composition of this group will be reviewed after each Forum.

10. The Secretary General will manage the Task Force and be responsible for delivering the Pacific Plan to the Pacific Islands Forum meeting in 2005. In managing the work of the Task Force, the Secretary General will make use of reflection and/or advisory groups as necessary.

TIMEFRAME

11. The Task Force will undertake the tasks within the following timeframe:

- 23-25 August 2004 - Clarification and Documentation: The Taskforce will convene in Suva at the Secretariat Headquarters on 23 August for briefing with the Secretary General to clarify the Terms of Reference; and agree on task allocations, timeframes, consultation programmes and communication strategies for the work of the Task Force. Background materials for the meeting include the Leaders' Decisions and The Auckland Declaration of 6 April 2004, the EPG Report and the Secretariat's initial assessment of regional cooperation. The Task Force will begin discussion and documentation of a framework of keys issues for further research and consultation.
- September-October 2004 - Review and Drafting: Review of documentation and further analysis and research will be undertaken during this period. In late October Task Force members will meet again to review and analyse documents and to produce a working draft of the Plan for consultation with Members and other stakeholders.
- November 04-March 05 - Country and Stakeholder Consultations: The Task Force will visit all member countries to consult with Leaders (including members of the Core Group), governments and other non-state actors and stakeholders.
- March-April 2005 - Drafting of the Pacific Plan: After the country visits, the Task Force will reassemble in Suva to collate findings of its consultations and analysis/research and to continue drafting the Plan.
- May 2005 - Meeting with Core Group to discuss the draft Pacific Plan: The Task Force will meet with the Core Group in Suva to discuss the draft of the Pacific Plan. The Task Force will incorporate comments and amendments accordingly and will distribute to the Core Group for further consideration.

- June–July 2005 - Draft circulated to Leaders: The draft Plan will be circulated to Leaders, followed by another round of country visits by members of the Task Force to present and discuss the Plan with individual Leaders. The opportunity will be taken to report back to the government and non-state stakeholders on how their inputs have been considered and reflected in the draft Plan. The Task Force will then finalise the Plan for Secretary General and Core Group clearance.
- August 2005: The Pacific Plan will be presented to Leaders for their endorsement and subsequent implementation.