



## **PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT**

### **SMALLER ISLAND STATES SEVENTEEN SIS LEADERS' SUMMIT**

**Alofi, Niue**  
*19 August 2008*

#### **SUMMARY OF DECISIONS**

The Pacific Islands Forum's Smaller Island States (SIS) Leaders' Summit was held on the 19 August 2008 in Alofi, Niue. The Summit was attended by Leaders from the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu. Palau's Minister of State also participated at the meeting. The meeting was chaired by the Premier of Niue. Leaders welcomed the Ulu of Tokelau, the President of French Polynesia, the Representative of the Prefect of Wallis and Futuna and Executive Heads and representatives of CROP organizations. A minute of silence was observed at the opening of the meeting to pay respect to the late Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat, Mr Greg Urwin and the late Deputy Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Mr Falani Aukuso.

#### **(i) Update on the Pacific Plan and the SIS Unit**

2. SIS Leaders noted the good progress made on the implementation of the Pacific Plan, the importance of the work of the Secretariat's SIS Unit and the valuable work of the SIS desk officers in their respective countries in supporting the implementation of the Pacific Plan and providing the necessary support and input to the Pacific Plan reporting process.
3. They called on donor partners and other CROP agencies to support the work programme of the SIS unit within the Secretariat and the work of the SIS desk officers.

#### **(ii) Labour Mobility**

4. SIS Leaders noted and welcomed activities implemented by the Secretariat thus far in advancing and supporting the initiative on labour mobility. These included on-going trade

negotiations; assisting Members prepare themselves with their negotiations under the PICTA Arrangement; engaging in discussions with the World Bank to assist kick start states strengthen their capacities to tap foreign labour markets and exploring other avenues to expand the market for labour for Forum Member countries.

5. SIS Leaders noted the progress and outcome of the bilateral meetings with selected EU MS in February 2008, including the recent PACPTMM decision to put on hold bilateral discussions. They welcomed an update on the discussions of Mode IV and the recent PACPTMM decisions to re-engage the EU on mode IV negotiations if EU would be interested, otherwise service negotiations would be suspended.

2. SIS Leaders further noted the progress on PICTA Trade in services covering the schedule of commitments in TMNP; latest developments on the RSES as well as the issues and challenges that need to be addressed; the on-going involvement of the Secretariat in monitoring and evaluating the RSES through continued dialogue with New Zealand Department of Labour, and the administration of the IDF grant in collaboration with the World Bank.

3. With respect to exploring avenues for expanding labour markets for Forum Members, the SIS Leaders noted the progress of the pilot scheme on aged caregivers in Solomon Islands and the conclusion of a Letter of Understanding between PIFS, SPC, and the Guam Department of Labour committing the parties to maintain a policy dialogue to ensure that the Pacific Island countries continue to remain a priority in relation to employment opportunities that would be created by the military build –up in Guam.

4. They also noted the Outcomes of the Roundtable Meeting on Temporary Labour Mobility between the FICs Labour Officials and the representatives of the private sector from Australia, New Zealand, Guam and EU and the Workshop on capacity building for FICs services liberalization.

5. SIS Leaders noted the successes of the scheme so far and certain failures due to misunderstandings and difficulties faced by SIS. In this respect, they noted the airfare subsidies they had to provide to enable their people participate in the scheme. They further noted that citizens already working under NZ existing work permits prior the RSE have

since been relegated to the terms and conditions of the RSE. In this respect, Leaders encouraged NZ to ensure that the RSE is additional to, and not replacing existing work visas arrangement.

6. Leaders welcomed the Australian labour mobility scheme and those involved expressed their sincere appreciation. However, there were concerns raised for some of the SIS who were not included in the first phase of Australian Labour Scheme. In this respect, Leaders urged Australia to expand their scheme to include these Members.

**(iii) Bulk Procurement Initiatives**

7. SIS Leaders welcomed the progress made in advancing the bulk procurement initiative on petroleum. They noted that a package of measures was being finalised for implementation and directed the Secretariat to ensure finalization of this package of measures as quickly as possible for signing by the Leaders. They further expressed support to the recommendations of the PPAC to direct national experts to meet and present to Forum Economic Ministers this finalised package of measures at their October 2008 meeting with a view to expediting its implementation and ensuring that the Pacific Energy Ministers endorsed this package of measures their 2009 meeting.

8. They further tasked the Secretariat to explore other feasible options that would complement the bulk procurement initiative focusing in particular on cheaper fuels, regular supplies and renewable energy options.

9. They further noted that the Heads of Pharmaceuticals Services would consider desirable options and benefits of replicating the bulk procurement arrangement for pharmaceuticals at their 2008 Annual Meeting.

**(iv) Shipping Services**

10. The SIS Leaders welcomed initiatives planned to be executed by SPC Regional Maritime Programme to address the shipping problem faced by the SIS. They further noted the reason for the delay in the commencement of the sub-regional shipping Kiribati's vessels and tasked the Secretariat to continue work on the Regional Shipping Service Agreement in close collaboration with SPC Regional Maritime Programme. They further

directed that an in-country consultation be undertaken by SPC with KSSL, the appropriate line Ministry in Kiribati and other relevant stakeholders to advance the implementation of the existing tonnage option.

11. The SIS Leaders further tasked the Secretariat, in collaboration with SPC, to consider the option of acquiring a purpose built vessel to address the challenges faced by SIS. They further requested the Secretariat and SPC to expedite the convening of a meeting of those countries involved to discuss the best way to proceed with this feeder shipping service option.

**(v) Air Services**

12. SIS Leaders noted the findings and conclusion of a questionnaire study aimed to ascertain and reconfirm commitment of the relevant participating Member countries toward the establishment of a sub-regional air service and concluded that there was no need of further pursuing this initiative.

13. Leaders noted the critical importance of air services to their countries and their frustrations with extremely expensive airfares and licensing difficulties. In this respect, in addition to Secretariat support, SIS members should look towards also engaging other assistance including possibly PFD partners, development partners and other organisations.

**(vi) Sub-Regional Financing Mechanism**

14. SIS Leaders noted that the draft study report on the sub-regional financing mechanism had been completed and that initial indication was not promising. They tasked the Secretariat to consult further with member countries on the content and findings of the report and make recommendations on the future course of action for the sub-regional financing facility initiative.

**(vii) Renewable Energy – Update on implementation of the PEMM**

15. The SIS Leaders noted the progress on the implementation of the PEMM Action Plan and the good work of the respective regional organisations in supporting Members in implementing initiatives under the Plan.

16. They further noted the relevant recommendations made in the PPAC on energy and food security; and called on international stakeholders working in the area of renewable energy to coordinate their efforts in a holistic manner at the national level when assisting members with their respective needs.

17. Leaders noted the importance of exploring practical and affordable renewable energy options and given the typically high set up costs, the need to gain support from development partners.

#### **(viii) Sustainable Financing for Climate Change**

18. SIS Leaders noted the various international financing mechanisms available to the Pacific Island Countries to support their efforts in addressing the threats posed by climate change. They acknowledged and noted the importance to the region of the recent appointment of Enele Sopoaga of Tuvalu, as a member of the Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund Board;

19. They also noted the inadequacy of resources available under the international financing mechanisms to assist Pacific Island Countries implement concrete adaptation projects on the ground and directed the Secretariat to work with SPREP to assist SIS to build their capacity to access these financial resources in addressing effectively the challenges posed by climate change.

20. They acknowledged the importance of the Japan Cool Earth initiative and other initiatives by partners that would focus resource toward climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. In this respect, they encouraged all Forum Members to establish partnerships with Japan, the EU and others for further assistance in the areas of mitigation, adaptation and access to clean energy.

21. They noted the importance of committing to meaningful adaptation and mitigation measures for all major economies to ensure an effective and ambitious global post 2012 climate change regime, and to achieve both emissions reductions and economic growth in working towards climate stability.

**(ix) Emerging Health Issues in the SIS**

22. SIS Leaders noted again the importance of health issues in SIS and their potential to have a devastating impact on societies and individual lives if not effectively addressed. They noted also that health issues involve systems, environments and societies, and that adoption of a collective, broad-based and multi-sectoral response would be most appropriate to address the fundamental determinants of health.

23. They further noted the importance of the work of regional agencies to assist Member countries implement their health priorities activities and the excellent work that SPC was involved in supporting SIS members address their health issues.

**(x) Regional Meteorological Services**

24. SIS Leaders acknowledged with appreciation the role played by the Fiji Government FMS to provide regional meteorological services in support of and at no cost to NMS in the Pacific. They also recognized with gratitude the ongoing support provided by development partners, in particular Australia, New Zealand, USA and Japan and global network of meteorological services and called on their continued support;

25. They noted the high risk to sustainable meteorological services, particularly due to ongoing loss of experienced professional staff and resource constraints faced by FMS and other NMSs in upgrading and maintaining specialized equipments.

26. They agreed in principle to the strengthening of the regional meteorological service, with the FMS as a hub and to invite the Fiji Government to support this initiative. They further invited SPREP, with support from SOPAC and RMSDs and in partnership with the Fiji Government to develop an institutional framework to support the management of the provision of sustainable regional meteorological services for consideration by Forum Leaders in 2009.

27. They called on Forum Leaders to support and join in the proposed sustainable regional meteorological services arrangement.

28. They called on partners, agencies and the international community to support the strengthening of national meteorological services to assess micro climate conditions and weather services.

**(xi) Eighteenth SIS Leaders' Summit**

29. SIS Leaders agreed that the 18<sup>th</sup> Summit be held immediately prior the 40<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, with a full day being set aside for the purpose. They also welcomed Australia's bid to host the Pacific Islands Forum in 2009.

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