Annex A

VAVA'U DECISIONS ON THE PACIFIC PLAN

In order to advance the Pacific Plan over the next twelve months, Leaders:

International Context of the Pacific Plan

- endorsed the following amendment to the Pacific Plan:

  "The Pacific Plan reflects the region's priorities which are in line with and support the implementation of international frameworks such as the *Barbados Programme of Action* and *The Mauritius Strategy of Implementation.* As such, the Pacific Plan provides a solid platform for regional cooperation guiding collective positions through the Commission on Sustainable Development and other international forums that advocate the 'special case' of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The collective position of Pacific Islands Forum members in the international arena is a significant tool in garnering support for Pacific Island Countries individually and as a group and is recognised and valued by other United Nations members."

Fisheries

- reaffirmed the importance of fisheries to the economies of all Forum Member countries, and committed themselves to promoting domestic fisheries, in particular the development of national tuna industries, in the context of a phased introduction of rights-based management arrangements supported by an appropriate management and regulatory framework;

- committed to: maintaining regional solidarity among Forum member countries in managing the region's tuna stocks; strengthening their support for the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and other regional fisheries bodies as they intensify their efforts in applying a long-term strategic approach to Pacific fisheries, and to tuna species in particular, to ensure that these resources are effectively managed so as to provide enduring economic, social and cultural benefits; and upholding and strengthening the existing regional and national arrangements, agreements and conservation measures that protect this essential resource;

- committed themselves and their governments to the conservation and sustainable management of highly migratory tuna resources by: fully implementing without delay the conservation and management measures developed and endorsed by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC); seeking the urgent adoption of additional measures by the WCPFC to address over-fishing of bigeye and yellowfin, including a reduction in longline catches and addressing purse seine fishing, and specific steps to reduce the catch of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin; developing and implementing, with the assistance of the FFA, a comprehensive regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance strategy; and continuing support as appropriate for the current tuna tagging initiative of

the SPC, including the aspiration that it expand to cover the rest of the Pacific;

- reaffirmed the Declaration on Deep Sea Bottom Trawling adopted at the 2006 Nadi Forum, welcomed the subsequent UNGA Resolution 61/105 which called for strong measures to regulate and manage deep sea bottom trawling, and committed to the protection of high seas biodiversity and the conservation and management of non-highly migratory fish stocks in the Pacific Ocean;

- encouraged effective participation in the negotiations to deliver a best-practice South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation in view of the longer-term strategic significance to Members and the possible interaction of the high seas pelagic stocks with tuna resources governed by the WCPFC;

- committed to the development and management of coastal/inshore fisheries and aquaculture to support food security, sustainable livelihoods and economic growth for current and future generations of Pacific people;

- agreed to raise these deep concerns as a matter of urgency with Distant Water Fishing Nations and regional coastal states participating in the Post-Forum Dialogue, and urge their close cooperation with Forum Members' efforts;

Energy

- committed their Governments to implementing the Pacific Energy Ministers' Communiqué noting in particular: that energy and economic development need to be integrated and prioritised in national and regional strategic development plans; the importance of Pacific Island countries having robust national energy policies and strategic work plans to ensure energy initiatives are progressed in line with national expectations; the importance of implementing appropriate policies and programmes to promote an optimal energy mix and energy efficiency supporting sustainable renewable energy; and that a further Ministerial meeting would be valuable. They proposed that the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) convene this in 2009 with the next Energy Officials' Meeting;

Trade and Economic Integration

- reaffirmed the importance of intensified efforts in harnessing regional economic integration in view of its potential for engendering economic growth; noted the work of the Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting (FEMM) in advancing Pacific Plan initiatives in the areas of economic governance, including those related to strengthening regional approaches in the areas of customs, economic regulation, labour mobility and macro- and micro-economic technical assistance provision; and in this context, agreed to renew their commitment to the implementation of strengthened regional approaches;

- noted and encouraged the pooling of resources to help alleviate underlying structural problems in delivering services such as customs and economic regulation, and reaffirmed the urgency of strengthening regional support, particularly through sustainable, long term solutions, in the spirit of the Pacific Plan;

- directed that current efforts be intensified to ensure regional economic integration, including implementation of the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER), which directly address the objectives of the Pacific Plan, and stressed the importance of building on the results of the recently-completed PACER impact study and gap analysis to deepen regional economic and trade cooperation, and in doing so recognised the need for thorough consultations among all relevant national and regional stakeholders on the issues involved;

- noted in this context the consultations at the 2007 Forum Trade Ministers' Meeting, and commended the Trade Ministers' decision that officials meet informally in early 2008 at a meeting hosted by New Zealand to discuss issues relating to a possible way forward under PACER. They reaffirmed the need to coordinate intensified regional trade and economic initiatives, as agreed by Trade Ministers in 2005, with other regional priorities, such as trade in services among PICTA parties;

- endorsed**,** subject to funding, conducting a programme of activities in the Forum Island Countries to strengthen national and regional capacities in intellectual property rights (IPRs), including the conduct of a study on the possible establishment of a regional institution to advocate for and protect traditional knowledge and IPRs as mandated in the Pacific Plan. They noted that further work is to be undertaken to develop an effective dispute resolution mechanism to deal with disputes that may arise out of PICTA;

Climate Change

- agreed that national action plans for climate change should be developed and implemented and climate change should be mainstreamed into national development planning drawing on the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change and the associated implementation plan. They directed CROP agencies to:

  - intensify joint programming with the aim of advancing the implementation of regional frameworks and action plans, in particular, the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action, to better assist members develop adaptation measures in response to the effects of climate change;

  - facilitate the collection and analysis of scientific, social and economic information and traditional knowledge in a manner that will allow for appropriate and informed decision making by members; and

  - identify sustainable financing options at national, sub-regional and/or regional levels to support climate change adaptation and mitigation by members;

- requested that the issue of climate change be considered where possible or necessary in other regional meetings such as ministerial and officials' meetings, including partnerships for water resources and disaster risk reduction;

Transport

- reaffirmed the importance of intensified regional action to ensure effective transportation within the region, in particular, in developing improved shipping services and aviation liberalisation, safety and security and thereby enhancing trade opportunities. They welcomed the work done to date in support of developing sub-regional air and shipping services, noting the significant cost savings and greater efficiencies that could be secured, directed that this work continue and encouraged development partners to support the provision of reliable and effective air and maritime transport services and supporting infrastructure.

New Legal Infrastructure Initiative

- endorsed the inclusion of a new initiative 12.9 "Legal Infrastructure Strengthening" in the Pacific Plan which, subject to funding, will commence with two scoping studies to explore modalities for strengthening the region's legal infrastructure, with the results to be reported to the Pacific Plan Action Committee (PPAC);

Bulk Procurement of Petroleum

- noted the considerable work done to date on the regional bulk fuel procurement initiative and endorsed the Framework Agreement approach proposed to implement this initiative, with a finalised package to be presented to Leaders in 2008 ready for implementation;

Tourism

- agreed to: reconsider their current levels of support to their tourism industries and consider increasing these levels where appropriate; prioritise development of infrastructure and transport links (e.g. roads, ports, airports, aviation and shipping) in their countries to foster sustainable tourism and encourage foreign investment in their tourism industries; and encourage development of regional and sub-regional marketing strategies and brands for major international markets;

Information and Communication Technology

- recalled their call through the Pacific Plan Digital Strategy in 2005 to find technological solutions to bridge the communication and digital divide in the Pacific islands region and:

    - In relation to Submarine Cable Technology:

        - noted the relative absence of submarine cable technology in the Pacific islands region, and acknowledged that existing (Fiji, Papua New Guinea) and planned (American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, New Caledonia) cables in this area had been through the individual effort of each country/territory;

- agreed that sub-marine cable technology offers an ideal opportunity for enhanced regional cooperation through a regional project that links many countries and territories in the region and is supported by a mix of private and public financing;

- welcomed the South Pacific Information Network (SPIN) initiative, a new trans-Pacific submarine cable network that aims to link and connect twelve Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) to the international tele-communication backbone with a possible operational date of December 2008. The potential participating PICTs in SPIN from the east include French Polynesia, Cook islands, Niue, American Samoa, Samoa, Wallis & Futuna, Tonga, Fiji, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea;

- encouraged the 12 participating PICTs to seriously consider taking up this opportunity for a major regional project that can enhance and unlock development potential in the 12 PICTs;

- noted the interest raised in extending the SPIN project to other PICTs;

- requested development partners and private sector investors to support this major regional initiative to link 12 PICTs to the international communication back-bone that will open huge economic opportunities; and

- requested the Forum Secretariat and the SPC to continue to facilitate the consultation process on SPIN to achieve its implementation during 2008;

- noted the launch of the Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity Project (RICS) pilot scheme with a view to assessing the usefulness of Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) technology in bridging the communication divide in rural and remote areas, and that 100 sites are required within the next two years for it to be self sustaining;

- noted the potential utility of the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) initiative and the need for education authorities, where appropriate, to assess the priority to be accorded to it in their countries as a tool for education and disseminating information to rural and remote communities;

Private Sector Development

- recognised the value of the ongoing work in product development and capacity building to strengthen small and medium enterprises in the region;

National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS)

- committed to a 'whole of government' and stakeholder based approach to strengthening and developing NSDS noting the importance of operationalising NSDS priorities within national budgetary processes;

- called on regional agencies and development partners to jointly plan and coordinate regional assistance in support of Forum Island Countries to ensure that sectoral and cross cutting issues are addressed and implemented through NSDS (and related) processes, with climate change and energy security as priorities for 2008;

Innovative Financing for Conservation

- reaffirmed their Governments' commitments to environmental conservation and called on CROP agencies, development partners, and non-governmental organisations to assist member countries to:

  - mainstream conservation issues into NSDS-based national planning and budgetary processes;
  - adopt stakeholder-based planning, establishment and management of conservation areas, supported by a strong understanding of economic, social and environmental benefits deriving from effective conservation;
  - identify and obtain financial resources and undertake financial planning required for the development and management of conservation areas from different sources, including national budgets, private sources and development partners; and
  - identify alternative international, regional and/or national level financing options for conservation, utilising lessons learnt from different financing options, including conservation trust funds and the Global Environment Facility (GEF);

Agriculture and Forestry

- requested the SPC to develop a new agriculture and forestry initiative, including atoll agriculture, under the Pacific Plan's sustainable development pillar, to be considered and approved, noting resource requirements and implications, by the PPAC in 2008;

- requested SPC and the Forum Secretariat to jointly develop NSDS-based agriculture and forestry policies, plans of action and budgeting processes, in collaboration with national governments, seeking technical and financial support from regional agencies and development partners as required;

Waste Management

- committed their Governments to: integrating waste management into national development planning and budgetary processes as necessary; adopting a whole of government approach (including local governments) and working with the private sector to manage waste in an integrated manner; and identifying and accessing alternative financial resources for waste management, including the use of economic instruments (e.g. user charges);

- called on development partners to provide appropriate financial and technical resources to support member countries' efforts to develop integrated waste management strategies and systems;

Health

- called for immediate action to halt and reverse the trend of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the region through multi-sectoral engagement and resource mobilisation for implementation of evidence-based interventions, including reprioritisation of national budgets, consideration of targeted taxes and encouragement of local food production;

- endorsed the extension of the current *Pacific Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS (2004–2008)* for a further five years to cover 2009–2013 and agreed that it be amended to emphasise current and emerging trends of the epidemic, including other Sexually Transmitted Infections;

- agreed that subsequent to the extension of the *Pacific Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS*, a Phase 2 of the implementation plan (for 2009–2013) be developed and resources be mobilised accordingly for implementation;

- agreed to commit their governments to implementing the five decisions by the Pacific Ministers of Health embodied in the Vanuatu Commitment;

- noted the decisions by the Pacific Ministers of Health relating to the development of a framework for health priorities for the Pacific and funding of health initiatives in the Pacific;

Education

- agreed that the establishment and maintenance of a National Qualifications Register be included in National Development Plans/National Education Strategic Plans of Pacific Island countries;

- noted that some countries have established professional units to oversee the development and maintenance of their national qualifications registers;

- agreed to consider modalities for equitably sharing the long-term costs of running a Regional Qualifications Register;

Good Governance

- supported the strengthening of accountability and integrity institutions and in particular, Auditors General and Ombudsman offices, utilising regional and sub-regional approaches where possible;

- agreed to explore ways to enhance participation, particularly by women, in decision making processes and institutions, and in particular parliamentary processes;

- affirmed the importance of strong leadership values, supported ongoing work in this area and called on development partners, regional organisations and civil society to support the implementation of the *Forum Principles of Accountability and Good Leadership*, and in particular through the adoption of strong leadership codes;

- encouraged the pooling of resources and capacities to help alleviate underlying structural problems hampering the delivery of effective statistical services in the region;

Security

- endorsed work on the applicability of the human security concept to the region with a view to developing a regional human security framework in the medium term that will provide insight into the broader security issues underlying crises and conflicts, and provide a set of tools for preventing and addressing these, including under the Biketawa Declaration;

- directed relevant national and regional organisations and specialist Regional Law Enforcement Secretariats to strengthen the collection and exchange of law enforcement information to combat national and transnational organised crime and terrorism;

- noted the widespread support for examining the potential for new multilateral Pacific regional arrangements patterned on the Niue Treaty Subsidiary Agreement model for exchange of fisheries law enforcement data, cross-vesting of enforcement powers, and use of fisheries data for other law enforcement activities, and endorsed the Forum Secretariat and FFA working on modalities to take this issue forward;

- endorsed the Pacific Urban Agenda 2 and its implementation through a regional action plan, coordinated by the Forum Secretariat and SPC, to assist member countries address the growing challenges posed by urbanisation.