



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT
Excelling Together for the People of the Pacific

**2019 PRIVATE SECTOR DIALOGUE WITH
PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM LEADERS**
Funafuti, Tuvalu
14 August 2019

SUMMARY RECORD

**2019 PRIVATE SECTOR DIALOGUE WITH
PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM LEADERS**

Funafuti, Tuvalu

14 August 2019

Securing our Economic Future in the Pacific

Summary Record

The 2019 Private Sector Dialogue with Pacific Islands Forum Leaders was held in Funafuti on 14 August 2019. Forum Member Countries represented were Australia, Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

2. Private sector were represented by the Australia PNG Business Council, the Cook Islands Chamber of Commerce, the Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation, the Nauru Chamber of Commerce, the New Caledonia Confederation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, the New Zealand Pacific Cooperation Foundation, the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation, the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Pacific Island Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO).

3. The full list of participants is at [Annex A](#), and the programme and working procedures are at [Annex B](#).

4. The Dialogue was chaired by Honourable Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu and Chair of the 50th Pacific Islands Forum, and supported by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General, Dame Meg Taylor.

WELCOME REMARKS BY THE FORUM CHAIR

5. In his opening remarks, the Chair welcomed Leaders and noted that the Private Sector held their Caucus Meeting in Suva, Fiji on 12 August where three important areas of discussion were highlighted for Leaders' consideration: (1) Resilient Infrastructure for Climate Change and Economic Development; (2) Labour Mobility; and (3) Dialogue with Leaders.

6. The Dialogue theme resonated the need for Forum Governments to support and empower the private sector in the region in striving to "Securing our future in the Pacific" collaboratively.

OPENING STATEMENT BY THE TUVALU NATIONAL PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATION

7. Ms Eseta Soloseni, President of the Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation, delivered an opening statement on behalf of private sector of Tuvalu.

8. As in almost all Pacific Island Countries, the public sector in Tuvalu continue to dominate economic activities. Tuvalu's private sector experienced major challenges in areas of transportation, distances to markets, skilled labour force, and access to finance. These challenges were further exacerbated by Tuvalu's vulnerability and susceptibility to climate change related risks and the increasing frequency, intensity and impact of natural disasters.

9. The Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation called on Forum Governments to focus on the needs of local Small and Medium Enterprises. She stated that local businesses were disproportionately affected by high transportation costs and the lack of access to markets, and that Governments had a key role to support private sector growth in the region. Having said this, the role of Governments was appreciated and acknowledged for their efforts to support private sector growth.

10. The Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation stated their support for the *Blue Pacific* narrative and all it stood for, and further, stated their support for the notion of a Blue Continent by working together to drive the changes desired as a region.

11. Ms Soloseni said that the private sector statement (presented in the subsequent session) was a reflection of collective thoughts and desires as local business leaders on three specific issues. She thanked the Government of Australia for providing the financial resources to support the Private Sector Dialogues, and also thanked the Forum Secretariat for their technical assistance and stewardship on this journey.

PRIVATE SECTOR STATEMENT

12. The Private Sector Statement was jointly delivered by Mr Stephen Lyon, the Chair of PIPSO, Ms Eseta Nadaikuitavuki, Vice President of the Fiji Employers and Commerce Federation, and Mr Jay Bartlett, President of the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The full statement is at Annex B.

13. The Private Sector announced support for the *2050 Strategy and Vision for the Blue Pacific Continent* and committed support for inclusive dialogue with Leaders on the development of the Vision and Strategy.

14. The Private Sector noted the opportunities for Public Private Partnerships in the development and management of infrastructure assets and urged governments to, through their National Designated Authorities (NDAs), work in partnership with National Private Sector Organisations, to access the Private Sector component of the Green Climate Fund, for adaptation initiatives. The Private Sector sought Governments' support to task the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to develop a regional policy to formalise the pathways for local and regional Public-Private Partnership opportunities, taking into consideration scale constraints at the national level.

15. The Private Sector called on Leaders to agree to a harmonised system that would ease transit visa requirements for the establishment of a single Pacific Business Travel Card. The Private Sector also requested Leaders to consider the establishment of a mechanism to identify the key barriers to labour mobility and a streamlined process for addressing these impediments. The

Private Sector committed to undertake an assessment of constraints to better identify labour mobility barriers, and to provide a report to the 2020 Pacific Islands Forum Meeting, in Vanuatu.

16. Recognising the important role of the Private Sector in informing policies related to economic development and climate change mitigation and adaptation, the Private Sector called for the continuation of the annual Private Sector Dialogue as part of the Forum Leaders' Agenda.

17. The Chair thanked the presenters and the statement, and summarised the key points and messages raised, as follows:

- *Resilient Infrastructure for Climate Change and Economic Development:*
 - The challenge of survival from the effects of climate change;
 - The importance of strengthening key public infrastructure;
 - Involvement of private sector in planning and implementation of infrastructure projects;
 - Ensuring transfer of skills, retaining as much revenue within the local economy;
 - Public Private Sector partnerships in development and management of infrastructure;
 - Development of regional policy to formalise pathways for Public Private Partnerships;

- *Labour mobility:*
 - Harmonising and introducing a single Pacific Business Travel Card in easing visa requirements;
 - Support on labour mobility, whilst encouraging and developing skills-set to compliment local industry and partner training;
 - Broader program to facilitate skilled and unskilled mobility within Forum Countries;
 - A call for support and establishment of a mechanism to identify key barriers to Labour Mobility to which the private sector will undertake assessments on these; and

- On the matter of *Dialogue with Leaders*, that the mechanism for the annual dialogue with political Leaders should continue as a standing agenda of Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meetings, noting the critical role of private sector in economic development.

OPEN DIALOGUE

18. Honourable Rear Admiral Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, acknowledged the private sector representatives and the informative presentations, emphasising the invaluable role the private sector played as the engine room driving our economies. This is why it was so important to continue to provide a space for these dialogues, allowing Leaders to find innovative ways to answer some of the challenges confronting our Pacific people today. Prime Minister Bainimarama commended private sector partners, the Secretariat and the Chair for the dialogue, and fully supported the calls made by private sector.

19. Prime Minister Bainimarama recommended that Leaders consider a small number of transformational regional projects or programmes, through an innovative partnership between governments, private sector and communities that would provide real solutions in Climate Change preparedness, contribute to the livelihoods of Pacific people and create world-class products linked to the region's unique natural resource base.

20. Prime Minister Bainimarama highlighted the need for innovative private-sector-led regional initiatives at a scale that would: build and adapt critical public and private infrastructure; train and improve the skills of Pacific workforces in sectors; and, provide employment anywhere in the region. It would also enable Pacific countries to strengthen and promote key sectors that could sustainably utilise shared resources such as in tourism, fisheries, manufacturing, agriculture and other areas where the region may have a natural advantage.

21. Prime Minister Bainimarama noted the significant commitment of potential financing from Australia, the Asian Development Bank and the Green Climate Fund, as well as added interests from many of our development partners. He urged Leaders and private sector not to think small, rather to address the impacts of climate change with vision, leadership and innovation. He encouraged embarking on a region-wide public private initiative that could transform a sector, contribute to the livelihoods of Pacific people, and create world-class products linked to the world-class, unique natural resource base that the Pacific was blessed with.

22. Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa, recognised that many of the private sectors were small and the contributions to the economies were similarly limited. Support was therefore needed from governments. The proposal for regular engagement with government was very good because government needed to understand and appreciate the help needed, noting Government's own responsibilities and preoccupations. Private Sector were encouraged to play a more active part in engaging with Government. The issue of labour mobility and capacity development were also important for both Government and private sector. To advance development, Prime Minister Malielegaoi encouraged competition through encouraging Pacific companies to establish branches throughout the region and developing related advanced know-how.

23. Honourable Samuela 'Akilisi Pohiva, Prime Minister of Tonga, stated that given vulnerability to climate change risks and isolation, Pacific private sectors needed easy access to markets to Australia, New Zealand and other established markets. He recognised the informal sector, those not able to elevate to a more formal position and become part of the private sector.

24. Prime Minister Pohiva was thankful for the reminder that inadequate responses to climate change would comprise all other goals of the region.

25. Honourable Alex Hawke, MP, Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Assistant Defence Minister, Australia, referred to Australia's position on the Green Climate Fund and its announcement of a new AUD\$140 million funding for the private sector to develop a portfolio of about \$700 million to reinvest in climate projects that would make a meaningful contribution to climate resilience, including small scale bankable projects in waste management, renewable energy, power purchasing arrangements, agro-business investment, climate resilience, water management and reduction in industry emissions. Minister Hawke supported regional labour

mobility, informing that access to Australian labour market was increasing and that many businesses wanted to invest more in the Pacific.

26. Honourable Faustina K Rehuher-Marugg, Minister of State of Palau, sought views on establishing at national level a national authority or board within Government to work with private sector so that there was regular communication to further plans for economic development of the country.

27. Honourable Aupito William Sio, Minister for Pacific Peoples, New Zealand, re-emphasised the importance of the private sector in contributing to the region's economic development and supported appropriate initiatives. New Zealand reiterated its commitment of NZD\$300 million in climate related support over the next 3 years, with two thirds focused on the Pacific region. New Zealand supported the investment endeavours put forward, but noted the need for a two-way dialogue. New Zealand supported inclusive development in the Pacific, particularly for women and young people, and noted the important contribution private sector made to inclusive growth. In terms of the business travel card, New Zealand cautioned against duplication of regional business harmonisation provisions already granted in the PACER Plus agreement.

28. The Chair expressed the view that labour mobility should build and look beyond the provisions set out in the PACER Plus Agreement, noting solutions needed to address training opportunities, such as for seamanship, as job opportunities were limited due to trade policies, fuel importing costs, and other issues.

29. The Chair sought views from private sector on how it could assist these issues, for example, reducing costs through bulk purchasing. In Tuvalu, importing fuel was completely unsustainable. Similar issues were faced with pharmaceuticals and other commodities.

30. Her Excellency Hilda C. Heine, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, advised that her country needed a lot of labour and was looking for labour from both within and outside of the Marshall Islands.

31. Leaders also encouraged the Private Sector to have regular interactions with Government departments at the national level and expressed a genuine desire to work collaboratively with their respective National Private Sector Organisations.

32. Leaders emphasised the importance of supporting micro enterprises, noting the levels of development across Pacific Island economies.

33. In response to comments by Leaders, the Private Sector supported the need for, and the ongoing, two-way dialogue.

34. Private sector thanked Prime Minister Malielegaoi for his leadership at the regional dialogue as well as at national level through proactive engagement between the Samoan Government and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce, which strengthened business operation in Samoa. In terms of labour mobility, private sector noted the myriad of opportunities, including utilising national and regional work forces not only for labour but also for business opportunities.

35. The private sector noted Tonga's support with private sector development and the comments made relating to the informal sector, noting that private sector support was for everyone including the informal sector.

36. The private sector thanked Australia and New Zealand for the funding support and looked forward to information on private sector allocation within these funds and to progressing activities.

37. The private sector noted suggestions on bulk purchasing, further noting however the small size of Pacific economies. The move to renewable energy was interesting as it gave the opportunity to use the revenue within the region as opposed to overseas investment where the revenue was directed overseas. The private sector was grateful for the regional tender portal, established pursuant to a direction from the 2018 Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting. The private sector noted the difficulty in having visibility across infrastructure projects across the whole Pacific, so the portal would help Pacific private sector to be competitive.

38. The Private Sector supported the views expressed by Palau on the establishment of an advisory board within Government comprising government officials and private sector representatives in order to enhance cooperation and engagement.

CLOSING

39. The Chair thanked Leaders for their active participation and the Private Sector for the informative discussions. A closing prayer was given by the Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation.

40. The Chair declared the Dialogue closed.

Funafuti, Tuvalu
14 August 2019

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM MEMBERS

AUSTRALIA

Honourable Alex Hawke, MP
Minister for International Development and the Pacific
and Assistant Defence Minister

Dr Martin Parkinson
Secretary
Department of the Prime Minister
and Cabinet

Ms Michelle Chan
National Security Adviser and
Senior Adviser (International)
Office of the Prime Minister

Mr Justin Hayhurst
First Assistant Secretary,
International Division
Department of the Prime Minister
and Cabinet

Mr Nico Louw
Executive Officer
Office of the Prime Minister

COOK ISLANDS

Honourable Henry Puna
Prime Minister

Ms Tapaeru Herrmann
Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration

Mr Jim Armistead
Director
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration

Mr Ben Ponia
Chief of Staff
Office of the Prime Minister

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

His Excellency David W Panuelo
President

Honourable Lorin S Robert
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Honourable Andrew Yatilman
Secretary
Department of Climate Change
Environment and Emergency Management

Mr Wilson Waguk
Deputy Chief of Mission
FSM Embassy, Suva

Mr Leo Falcam Jr
Chief of Staff
Office of the President

Mr Sohses Calvin Ehmes
Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs

Mr Richard Clark
Special Assistant of the President

FIJI

Honourable Rear Admiral Josia Voreqe
Bainimarama
Prime Minister

Honourable Inia B Seruratu
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr Yogesh Karan
Permanent Secretary
Office of the Prime Minister

Mr Esala Nayasi
Deputy Secretary Policy
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr Peter Emberson
Director, Multilateral Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms Alanieta Blakelock
Acting Director Oceania
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr Jone Biaukula
Principal Economic Planning Officer
Office of the Prime Minister

Ms Laite Ratuwuki
Senior Foreign Service Officer
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr Taholo Kami
Special Adviser

Ms Shea Agneus
Special Adviser

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Honourable Tearii Alpha
Minister of Green Economy
Biodiversity and Land Affairs

Mr Manuel Terai
Head for International, European
and Pacific Affairs

Mr Maurice Lau Poui Cheung
Head for Pacific Affairs

KIRIBATI

His Excellency Taneti Maama
Beretitenti

Mrs Peniita Kabubuke Garisau
Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration

His Excellency Mr David Teaabo
High Commissioner
Kiribati High Commission, Suva

Mr Beretitara Neeti
Private Secretary to Te Beretitenti
Office of Te Beretitenti

Mr Teeta Erikate
Senior Assistant Secretary for Fisheries and
Marine Resources Development
Ministry of Fisheries & Marine Resources
Development

Mr Michael Joseph Gahan
CEO, Airport Authority
Ministry of Information, Communication,
Transport,
Tourism Development

Ms Betty Mapuola
Development Coordination Officer
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration

Mr Choi Yeeting
Senior Policy Adviser (Climate Change)
National Climate Change Coordinator
Office of Te Beretitenti

Ms Roreti Eritai
SIS Officer
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration

Mr Tearinibeia Enoo Teabo
Senior Communication Officer
Office of Te Beretitenti

NAURU

His Excellency Baron Divavesi Waqa
President

Honourable David Adeang
Minister for Finance and Sustainable
Development

Mr Michael Aroi
Secretary
Foreign Affairs & Trade

Mr Peter Jacob
Chief of Staff

Her Excellency Ms Kim Aroi
High Commissioner
Nauru High Commission, Suva

Ms Rosene Ika

First Secretary
Nauru High Commission, Suva

Ms Janelyn Scotty
Assistant Director
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Ms Angelina Waqa
SIS Desk Officer

Ms Joanna Olsson
Director, Government Information Office

Ms Trudy Aroi
Official

NEW CALEDONIA

His Excellency Thierry Santa
President

Mr Pascal Sawa
Member of Parliament

Mr Jimmy Naouna
Senior Advisor

Ms Rose Wete
New Caledonia's Official Rep to Fiji

Mr Cedric Chan Yone
Deputy Chief of Staff

Mrs Margaret Russet-Whaap
Translator

NEW ZEALAND

Honourable Aupito William Sio
Minister for Pacific Peoples

Mr Kurt McLauchlan
Prime Minister's Office

Ms Kelly Spring
Prime Minister's Office

Ms Paula Wilson
DPMC

Mr Jonathan Kings

Deputy Secretary
Pacific and Development Group

Ms Charlotte Darlow
Divisional Manager
Pacific Regional Division

His Excellency Mr Matt Howell
High Commissioner to Tuvalu
New Zealand High Commission, Wellington

Mr Kay Harrison
NZ Climate Change Ambassador

Mr Nathan Ross
Climate Change

Mr Ben Eckman
Policy and Programme support

Mr Edon Hoppener
Policy and Programme support

Mr John Anakotta
Policy and Programme support

Mr Va'i Ioane
Policy and Programme support

NIUE

Honourable Billy Graham Talagi
Minister of Social Services

Mr Justin Vili Malefono Kamupala
Senior Crown Counsel

Ms Melanie Sonalofa Iosefa
Adviser

PALAU

Honourable Faustina K Rehuher-Marugg
Minister of State

Mr Jeffrey Antol
Chief of Staff of the Minister of State &
Acting Director of Foreign Affairs & Trade

Ms Shelley deBlair Remengesau
Special Assistant to the Minister

Ministry of State

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Honourable James Marape, MP
Prime Minister

Honourable Soroi Marope Eoe, MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs & International
Trade

Ms Barbara Agrigolo
Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs & International
Trade

Her Excellency Ms Lucy Blanche-Lee Bogari
High Commissioner and Permanent Delegate
to the Pacific Islands Forum and CROP

Ms Miriam Louma
Senior Official

Ms Berlina Natalie Gawi
Foreign Service Officer

**REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL
ISLANDS**

Her Excellency Hilda C. Heine
President

Honourable John M. Silk
Minister of Foreign Affairs & Trade

His Excellency Mr Tregar Albon Ishoda
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall
Islands, Suva

Mr Chris DeBrum
Chief of Staff
Office of the President

Mr Bernard Adiniwin
Acting Attorney General

Ms Andrea Muller
Assistant Secretary of Bureau of Multilateral
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Mr Terry Keju
SIS Desk Officer
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade

Mr Michael Traut
Director, Micronesia Centre for
Sustainable Transport

SAMOA

Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi
Prime Minister

Ms Peseta Noumea Simi
Chief Executive Officer
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade

Mr Agafili Shem Leo
Chief Executive Officer
Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

His Excellency Leiatua Dr Kilifoti Eteuati
Ambassador at Large
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Ms Desna Solofa
Assistant Chief Executive Officer
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Honourable Manasseh Sogavare, MP
Prime Minister

Honourable Jeremiah Manele, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade

Dr Jimmy Rogers
Secretary to Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister & Cabinet

His Excellency Ambassador Colin Beck
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade

Mr Cornelius Walegereia
Assistant Secretary
Pacific & Regional Organisation Branch
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade

Mr Trevor Ramoni

Chief of State Protocol
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & External Trade

TONGA

Honourable Samuela 'Akilisi Pohiva
Prime Minister

Honourable Dr Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa
Minister for Finance

Mr Edgar Cocker
Chief Secretary and Secretary to Cabinet

Mr Mahe 'Uliuli Tupouniua
Secretary for Foreign Affairs

Ms Ofa Finau
Deputy Secretary
Prime Minister's Office

Mr Lopeti Senituli
Political/Media Adviser
Prime Minister's Office

Mr Siosiu Pohiva
Personal Assistant &
Senior Assistant Secretary
Prime Minister's Office

TUVALU

Rt Honourable Enele Sosene Sopoaga
Prime Minister

Honourable Maatia Toafa
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
and Economic Development

Honourable Namoliki Neemia
Minister of Home Affairs & Rural Development

Honourable Satini Manuella
Minister of Health

Honourable Fauoa Maani
Minister of Education, Youth & Sports

Honourable Puakena Boreham
Minister of Natural Resources

Honourable Taukelina Finikaso
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade, Tourism,
Environment & Labour

Mr Tine Leuelu
Secretary to Government

Mr Fakavae Taomia
Chief Executive Officer -

Mr Avafoa Irata
Chief Executive Officer

Mr Talavai Iona
Chief Executive Officer

Dr Tapugao Falefou
Chief Executive Officer

Dr Nese Ituaso
Chief Executive Officer

Mr Nikolasi Vakalasi Apinelu
Chief Executive Officer

Mr Karlos Lee Moresi
Chief Executive Officer

Mr Iete Avantele
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Ambassador Aunese Simati

Ambassador Samuelu Laloni

Ambassador Limasene Teatu

High Commissioner- Paulson Panapa

His Excellency Temate Melitiana
High Commissioner
Tuvalu High Commission, Suva

Ambassador Ian Fry

Mrs Simalua Enele Taukiei

Mrs Asogali Panapa

Mrs Pepetua Latasi

Mrs Moira M L Simmons-Avafoa

Mr Simona Kilei

VANUATU

Honourable Charlot Salwai
Prime Minister

Honourable Ralph Regenvanu
Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International
Cooperation and
External Trade

Dr Gregoire Nimbtki
Director General
Prime Minister's Office

Dr Siobhan McDonnell
Advisor

Ms Lora Lini
Special Envoy on Decolonization of
West Papua to Pacific Islands States

Mr Benny Wenda
Delegate

PRIVATE SECTOR

AUSTRALIA

Mr Peter Taylor
Immediate Past President
Australia PNG Business Council

COOK ISLANDS

Mr Fletcher Melvin
Chair
Chamber of Commerce

FIJI

Ms Eseta Nadakuitavuki
Vice President
Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation

NAURU

Mr Paul Finch
Vice President
Nauru Chamber of Commerce

NEW CALEDONIA

Ms Cherifa Linossier
President
Confederation of Small and Medium-Sized
Enterprises in New Caledonia

NEW ZEALAND

Ms Nicole Metzger
Chair
Pacific Cooperation Foundation

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Mr Jeremy Bartlett
President
Chamber of Commerce & Industry

TUVALU

Mr Itaia Lausaveve
Chief Executive Officer
Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation

Mrs Eseta Soloseni
President
Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation

Mr Melton Paka Tauetia
Vice President
Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation

Mr Peter Hudson
Business Development Advisor
Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation

VANUATU

Mr Shaun Gilchrist
President
Chamber of Commerce & Industry

PACIFIC ISLAND PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATION

Mr Stephen Lyon

Chair

**PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM
SECRETARIAT**

Ms Meg Taylor, DBE
Secretary General

Ms Cristelle Pratt
Deputy Secretary General

Mr Sione Tekiteki
Director, Political Governance and Security

Mr Zarak Khan
Director, Programmes & Initiatives

Mr Alifeleti Soakai
Political Issues Adviser

Dr Filimon Manoni
International Legal Adviser

Ms Tasha Siaosi
Smaller Islands States Adviser

Ms Tupe Solomon-Tanoa'i
Development Cooperation Adviser

Ms Catrina Rowe
Team Leader Communications & Public Affairs

Mr Penisoni Naupoto
CSO Engagement Adviser

Ms Glynis Miller
Trade Development Officer

Ms Nikola Komailevuka
Executive Coordination Officer

Ms Pritika Bijay
Engagement Officer

Ms Mele Utoikamanu
Conference and Protocol Officer

Ms Titilia Uluiviti
Executive Assistant to the Secretary General

Mr Manasa Vakuruivalu
IT Systems

Ms. Nandni Vandhana
Media Support

Tuvalu, Funafuti
14 August 2019

PROGRAMME AND WORKING PROCEDURES

2019 PRIVATE SECTOR DIALOGUE WITH PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM LEADERS

TIME	SESSION	FACILITATOR
14:00	Introduction of the Forum Leaders Dialogue with the region's private sector representatives	Forum Chair
14:10	Forum Chair invites the President, Tuvalu National Private Sector Organisation to deliver an Opening Statement	Forum Chair
14:15	Opening address to the Forum Leaders	Ms Eseta Soloseni
14:18	Forum Chair acknowledges the Opening Statement and invites the private sector representatives to deliver their Statements	Forum Chair Private sector reps: Steve Lyon, PIPSO Chair Eseta Nadaikuitakivi, Vice President, Fiji Employers & Commerce Federation Jay Bartlett, Chair, Solomon Islands Chamber of Industry & Commerce
14:35	Forum Chair acknowledges the presentation by the private sector. Forum Chair summarises the key topics / messages	Forum Chair
14:45	Open Dialogue begins Forum Chair invites Forum Leaders to respond to the private sector topics/messages	Forum Chair
15:10 – 15:20	Forum Chair thanks the Forum Leaders for their contributions and invites the private sector to respond to the interventions by the Forum Leaders	Forum Chair
15:20 – 15:30	Forum Leaders are given the opportunity to react to the response/s by the private sector	Forum Chair
15:30	Dialogue Ends Wrap up by Forum Chair Closing Prayer by TNPSO	Forum Chair
15:30	Group Photograph, Forum Leaders, SG and private sector delegates	

STATEMENT BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Introduction

1. Honourable Leaders, we extend our gratitude for giving us the opportunity to interact with yourselves and to present this statement. We have confined ourselves to three matters, which collectively we consider to be the top priorities – cognisant of your priority agenda.

2. Whilst the Pacific Islands vary greatly in their geographic size, population and resources there is commonality with respect to economic development challenges. Among these are geographic isolation, small domestic markets, limited opportunities for manufacturing, and the difficulty of obtaining and high cost of capital. Adding to these economic development challenges is climate change.

2050 Strategy and Vision for the Blue Pacific Continent

3. We recognise the theme of the Forum Leaders Meeting this year, *Securing our Future in the Pacific* as particularly timely, noting urgent challenges facing our region related to climate change, geopolitical competition, and economic security. These are issues that not only impact on our Governments and our people, but also us, as businesses. The Private Sector registers its full commitment to work with Forum Members and Leaders in seeking to deliver on the theme of this year's Forum through dialogue with Leaders, critical ways in which the Private Sector is best suited to supporting Forum Members in these endeavours.

4. The Private Sector notes that Forum Leaders will discuss the establishment of a *2050 vision and strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*. We encourage Leaders efforts in this regard and **call for the central inclusion** of the Private Sector in the delivery of this vision and strategy, including through consultation on the development of the vision and strategy.

(a) Resilient Infrastructure for Climate Change and Economic Development

5. For most Pacific countries, climate change is the challenge of survival. Already prone to natural disasters, a proactive approach to adaptation is essential.

6. Pacific Islands economies will benefit from infrastructure upgrades and development. Key public sector areas are communications, water, energy and transport infrastructure including shipping. Strengthening infrastructure has social and economic benefits for communities and is essential for building resilience of our societies.

7. Local and regional Private Sector involvement in the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects as active partners and participants is imperative. In instances where offshore companies are engaged, local participation must be included. This will ensure transfer of skills and to retain as much revenue as possible within the local economy.

8. The Private Sector reiterates the opportunities for Public Private Partnerships in the development and management of infrastructure. We highlight current commitments from development partners to provide concessional lending and underwriting of Private Sector investment in PPPs, such as facilities offered by Australia.

9. The Private Sector **urges** all governments to work through National Designated Authorities (NDAs), in partnership with National Private Sector Organisations, to access the Private Sector component of the Green Climate Fund for adaptation in order to build resilience of Private Sector infrastructure against climatic impacts.

10. The Private Sector **calls** on the Governments of the Pacific to task the PIFS to develop a regional policy to formalize the pathways for local and regional Public-Private Partnership opportunities, taking into consideration scale constraints at the national level.

11. The Private Sector **requests** that the Governments of the Pacific to continue to work on integrating local Private Sector infrastructure resilience with national priorities and projects.

(b) Labour Mobility

12. Recalling the Private Sector Dialogue with Leaders in 2016 on this issue, we **welcome and thank** Australia for the introduction of the Pacific-Australia Travel Card, which has been recently introduced.

13. This card goes some way to advance the previous call of the Private Sector to establish a Forum-wide Business Travel Card. We now **encourage** New Zealand and Australia to continue to work as Forum Members to realise this vision, including the harmonization and introduction of a single Pacific Business Travel Card, and easing transit Visa requirements.

14. It is encouraging that Australia has now moved beyond unskilled labour to semi-skilled labour including in hospitality, fisheries and health sectors thus increasing the opportunity for skills transfer and urge New Zealand to do the same.

15. Labour mobility should not be restricted to providing labour to Australia and New Zealand, but also consider labour mobility between Pacific Island Countries. A broader program, like the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Skills Movement Scheme of 2012, is needed to facilitate skilled and unskilled mobility between all Forum Countries.

16. We **call** for the establishment and support of a mechanism to identify the key barriers to labour mobility and make recommendations to address these issues. In conjunction with this, the Private Sector will undertake an assessment of constraints to better identify labour mobility barriers, and report to the next Forum.

(c) Dialogue with Leaders

17. It is crucial to maintain strong relations between the Private Sector and governments on national and regional levels. The Private Sector plays a strategic role in working with governments to formulate a regional response to development challenges and in progressing opportunities. The

Private Sector is a key partner in regional development, therefore we need to be actively engaged in the decision-making process at all levels.

18. Recognizing the fundamental role the Private Sector plays in economic development, it is essential that the annual dialogue with Political Leaders continue as a standing agenda of the Forum Leaders' meeting.

19. We **reaffirm** the benefits of the Forum Economic Ministers-Private Sector Dialogue and look forward to direct engagement with Forum Trade Ministers. We thank you – Forum Leaders, for this Dialogue and look forward to the 2020 Dialogue in Vanuatu and beyond.