



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

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FORUM ECONOMIC OFFICIALS MEETING

FORUM ECONOMIC MINISTERS MEETING

10 – 12 August 2022

Port Vila, Vanuatu

AGENDA ITEM 3A:

2050 STRATEGY FOR THE BLUE PACIFIC CONTINENT

Purpose and Recommendations

Purpose

This paper presents the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* as endorsed by Forum Leaders at the 51st Pacific Islands Forum which took place from 11-14 July 2022. In presenting the 2050 Strategy, the paper also highlights the broad economic implications for Ministers to consider and discuss – particularly in regards to linkages to the *Blue Pacific Economic Strategy (BPES)*.

Summary

At the oversight of the FOC Sub-Committee on the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, co-Chaired by Fiji and Vanuatu, and following the completion of the two-stage methodology to develop the 2050 Strategy and an extensive, member-led drafting process, a final draft of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent was conveyed to Forum Leaders, which they endorsed at their retreat on 14 July 2022. The 2050 Strategy is **attached** at Annex A for Ministers' consideration.

The 2050 Strategy sets out the region's long-term vision and aspirations, including in terms of economic development. Given Leaders' endorsement of the Strategy, the next steps include the development of an implementation plan which will identify key collective actions under each thematic area, delivery timeframes, implementation arrangements and partners, and resourcing requirements.

Given this, it is important to ensure alignment between the development of this implementation plan and the advancement of the BPES. Furthermore, and in the context of the proposed *Review of Regional Architecture*, it is important that any consideration of the regional economic architecture be considered in the context of this wider review.

Next Steps

Following Leaders' consideration / endorsement of the 2050 Strategy, the proposed next steps in relation to the 2050 Strategy will focus on implementation. This will include finalisation of the policy brief and TORs for the RRA, and development of an implementation and monitoring plan for the 2050 Strategy. In the first instance, these steps require the consideration of governance arrangements and an agreed processes for these steps to be taken forward.

A. Context & Progress Update

At the 2019 Forum Leaders meeting in Tuvalu, Leaders recognized that escalating climate change impacts and the intensification of geostrategic competition were exacerbating the region's vulnerabilities. Leaders noted that in order to secure the future of the Blue Pacific there was a need for a long-term vision and a carefully considered strategy for regionalism. Based on these considerations, they endorsed the development of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (the 2050 Strategy).

2. Leaders tasked the Forum Secretariat to work closely with Members to develop the 2050 Strategy and accordingly the FOC Sub-Committee on the 2050 Strategy was established¹, and Fiji and Vanuatu were nominated as Co-Chairs by the Sub-Committee. As part of the development of the Strategy, the Sub-Committee was supported by an Informal Working Group of Members, a CROP Taskforce on the 2050 Strategy, Non-State Actors, Regional Experts, and Technical Consultants. The Forum Secretariat provided coordination and administrative support.

3. In July 2020, the Sub-Committee endorsed a methodology for the development of the 2050 Strategy, consisting of strategic foresight and the identification of key thematic areas for the Strategy. The methodology also recognised and built upon existing Leaders' decisions and regional policy frameworks, and Leaders' values and aspirations for regionalism, such as those espoused in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR).

4. In developing the Strategy, the FOC Sub-Committee on the 2050 Strategy met for a total of twenty times. Its first meeting was held on 14 October 2019, while its twentieth and most recent meeting was held on 30 June 2022. The Sub-Committee has been ably supported by a number of working groups and taskforces, as well as by regional and international experts who have provided input as part of the development of the Strategy.

5. Following completion of the two-stage methodology, an extensive, national consultation and member-led drafting process was conducted from December 2021 to May 2022, to develop and refine the draft strategy. As an outcome of this process, a final draft of the strategy was conveyed to, and agreed by, the Forum Officials Committee and Forum Foreign Ministers who then conveyed the document to Forum Leaders for endorsement. Following their consideration, Forum Leaders endorsed the 2050 Strategy at the retreat segment of the 51st Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, held on 14 July, 2022.

B. 2050 Strategy – Overview & Strategic Linkages

6. The *2050 Strategy* sets out our long-term approach to work together as a region. It includes the Leaders' vision for 2050, and frames our regional cooperation around seven key thematic areas:

- i. Political Leadership and Regionalism
- ii. People-Centered Development
- iii. Peace and Security
- iv. Resource and Economic Development

¹ The FOC Sub-Committee on the 2050 Strategy is a sub-committee of the Forum Officials Committee. This sub-committee is Co-Chaired by Fiji and Vanuatu and includes all Forum Members countries. CROP agencies participate as observers to the Sub-Committee.

- v. Climate Change and Disasters
- vi. Ocean and Environment
- vii. Technology and Connectivity

7. Further to this, each thematic area has its own ‘2050 ambition’ which serves as an agreed long-term objective for each thematic area, in support of the vision. At the same time, it encompasses *10 Leaders Commitments* and numerous *strategic pathways* to guide the region’s broad trajectory over the short, medium and long term.

8. The thematic area of resource and economic development is of particular relevance to Forum Economic Ministers. Its focus includes accelerating the region’s economic growth aspirations through strengthened ownership and development of the region’s natural and human resources is key; diversifying investment portfolios and increasing the role of the private sector in key areas such as fisheries, agriculture, forestry, mining and tourism, and cultural industries, and through strengthened trade facilitation; as well as leveraging our collective solidarity and voice to continue to access climate and development finance, as well as to engage with financiers on debt issues.

9. To support this, the thematic area sets out a number of high level strategic pathways focused on strengthening regional mechanisms to ensure the sustainable management and development of shared resources; expanding opportunities for all peoples to engage in economic activity including through development of MSMEs, as well as expanding into underexplored areas such as cultural industries, professional sport, and through an expansion of labour mobility programs; developing innovative policy options based on the management and value-added development of our shared resources; and ensuring strategic and genuine regional and international partnerships to accelerate economic growth and trade, based on agreed priority areas.

10. In progressing these high-level economic aspirations as set out in the 2050 Strategy – including through the development of an implementation plan for the 2050 Strategy, Ministers are invited to consider how best to ensure current and proposed future policies and initiatives, including the *Blue Pacific Economic Strategy* might best align to these aspirations.

C. Next Steps

Development of an Implementation Plan for the 2050 Strategy

2050 Strategy

11. As per the decision of Leaders in the 51st Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Communique, the next steps in relation to the 2050 Strategy consist of the development of an implementation plan, which will identify key collective actions under each thematic area, delivery timeframes, implementation arrangements and partners, and resourcing requirements. It is envisaged that the first implementation plan will take a 5-year time frame. This implementation plan development process will continue to be member driven, and will involve the input of CROP agencies, non-state actors, and wider stakeholders. It is important that Ministries of Finance/Economy be centrally involved in this process.

12. Added to this, Ministers are encouraged to consider and view the Blue Pacific Economic Strategy (BPES) as the implementation plan for the Resources and Economic Development

thematic area under the 2050 Strategy.

Review of Regional Architecture

13. Ministers will recall that in 2019 Forum Leaders tasked the review of the regional CROP architecture to re-examine and ensure the requisite governance and resourcing arrangements that promote, govern and deepen collective responsibility and accountability to deliver the 2050 Strategy. Further to this, Leader expanded the scope of the review to focus on broader issues including the *political setting; institutional processes; governance mechanisms*; and to review mechanisms in place to effect cooperation and coordination between the various regional entities, and their engagement with the Pacific Islands Forum; and *eengagements and partnerships*.

14. Ministers are also advised that this work will also commence in earnest in light of Leaders' latest decisions, and that Forum Economic Officials and Ministers will be thoroughly consulted in this work. Further to this, it is important for Ministers to consider that any considerations of the Forum Economic Architecture, including in relation to post-CERT mechanisms, be considered as part of this review of regional architecture – to ensure broad regional cohesion and coherence.

D. Regional Governance Implications

16. Ongoing progress regards the 2050 Strategy and the review regional architecture require ongoing coordination and consultation with key regional stakeholders including Members, CROP agencies, NSAs as well as other valued stakeholders.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
27 July 2022