

**TWENTIETH SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM  
TARAWA, KIRIBATI  
10 - 11 JULY 1989**

**FORUM COMMUNIQUE**

The Twentieth South Pacific Forum was held in Tarawa, Kiribati, from 10-11 July, 1989. The Forum was attended by Heads of Governments of Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, New Zealand, Nauru, Niue, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands were represented by their Deputy Prime Ministers, Tonga by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence, and Western Samoa by its Minister for Justice and Associate Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Beretitenti of Kiribati, His Excellency Ieremia Tabai, GCMG, chaired the meeting.

**DIALOGUE**

**Forum/Dialogue Partners Meeting**

2. In accordance with the decision taken at the 1988 South Pacific Forum, a number of selected non-regional governments with a demonstrated and constructive interest in the South Pacific were invited to participate in a post-Forum Dialogue with a representative panel of Forum leaders. The Forum welcomed the attendance at the inaugural Dialogue of:

**Canada**

Hon Pat Carney  
Personal Representative of the Secretary of State for External Affairs

**France**

H E Ambassador Philippe Baud  
Permanent Secretary for the Pacific

**Japan**

H E Ambassador Toshio Isogai  
Japanese Ambassador to Fiji

**United Kingdom**

Lord Glenarthur  
Minister of State  
Foreign & Commonwealth Office

## **United States**

Mr C Edward Dillery  
Assistant Secretary, Director of Management Policy  
Department of State

Although accepting an invitation to participate in the Dialogue, the People's Republic of China was unable to attend.

3. Forum leaders highlighted a number of issues which they wished to discuss with the Dialogue Partners, both individually and collectively. These included driftnetting, and other fisheries concerns, environmental and nuclear issues, New Caledonia, trade and investment, regional transportation, development assistance and the need to improve the productive and marketing capabilities of Forum Island Countries.

### **Dialogue with Non-member Donors**

4. The Forum welcomed increased donor involvement in the region and their continued interest in the development of South Pacific countries. In light of the newly introduced Dialogue arrangements, the Forum agreed that major consultations with those donor governments and organisations that were invited to participate in the Post-Forum Dialogue would be in the Dialogue. The Forum noted with particular appreciation the valuable co-operative arrangements developing with Canada, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Community.

### **Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

5. The Forum considered that new efforts should be made to develop a more comprehensive relationship with ASEAN.

## **ECONOMIC ISSUES**

6. Regional fisheries issues and the inaugural Post-Forum Dialogue were the main focus of the 20th Forum, although a range of economic issues was discussed.

### **Reports of the Committee on Regional Economic Issues and the Regional Committee on Trade**

7. The Forum considered Reports from the Committee on Regional Economic Issues, and from the Regional Committee on Trade. These addressed a broad range of economic and development matters of concern to member countries. The Forum agreed there was a need for member Governments to explore new trade and investment policy initiatives to promote national development. It recognised the importance of the GATT/Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. The Prime Minister of Australia advised the Forum of developments in proposals for closer economic cooperation amongst Asia/Pacific countries, and indicated that he would discuss with representatives of those governments involved the possibility of the Forum being

invited to observe the meeting proposed to be held in Canberra. The Forum agreed that if such an invitation were issued it should be represented by the Secretary General.

8. The Forum agreed that meetings of Forum trade and economic Ministers be held to address specific economic issues and concerns. It expressed satisfaction with the strengthening of the Secretariat's capacity to provide economic analysis and advice since the Nuku'alofa Forum in 1988. It directed that the Committee on Regional Economic Issues and the Regional Committee on Trade continue to meet in tandem to address economic and trade issues.

### **Telecommunications**

9. The Forum noted with gratitude the reconfirmation by the Prime Minister of Australia of the offer of A\$2.6m as assistance for the Pacific Area Co-operative Telecommunications Network (PACT), which was made at the 19th South Pacific Forum at Nuku'alofa. As requested by governments interested in participating in the network, these funds will be used to modify national earth stations in participating Forum Island Countries.

### **Fisheries Issues - Driftnets**

10. The Forum expressed its profound concern at the damage now being done by pelagic driftnet fishing to the economy and environment of the South Pacific region. Given the catastrophic effects of this fishing technique on the lives of the peoples of the South Pacific, the Forum adopted the Tarawa Declaration. Through the Declaration the Forum:

- *resolved for the sake of this and succeeding generations of Pacific peoples to seek the establishment of a regime for the management of albacore tuna in the South Pacific that would ban drift net fishing from the region; such a ban might then be a first step to a comprehensive ban on such fishing;*
- *determined, to this end, to convene an urgent meeting of regional diplomatic, legal and fisheries experts, to develop a Convention to give effect to its common resolve to create a zone free of drift net fishing;*
- *called on the international community to support, and co-operate in, the urgent conclusion of a Convention establishing the zone;*
- *resolved that individual member states of the South Pacific Forum will take all possible measures in the interim to prevent drift net fishing within their waters, and to otherwise actively discourage operations of drift net fishers;*
- *further resolved that member states acting individually and collectively will take what action they can within relevant international organisations to contribute to the cessation of this harmful form of fishing;*

- *commended the Republic of Korea for its decision to cease drift net fishing in the region; and*
- *called on Japan and Taiwan to follow this example, and abandon immediately their damaging drift net operations.*

11. The Forum accepted the generous offer of the New Zealand Government to host the meeting of experts to develop the proposed drift net Convention.

12. The Forum recognised the urgent need for closer co-operation among all Forum members in order to protect and preserve their fishery and other marine resources as effectively and cost-efficiently as possible. The Forum therefore directed the Forum Fisheries Agency to investigate, promote, and implement the design and development of an Integrated Programme of Regional Fisheries Surveillance.

13. The Forum was pleased that Japan had agreed to begin discussions with Forum Fisheries Agency member countries on a multilateral fisheries arrangement, but disappointed that no progress had otherwise been made on the issue. It renewed its mandate to the Director of FFA to continue negotiations with a view to early agreement on a multilateral fisheries arrangement.

#### **Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference (PECC)**

14. The Forum supported the development of cooperation with the PECC, through a PECC Task Force, which will consider measures for developing business opportunities in Forum Island countries and explore mechanisms for strengthening PECC activities in the region. It noted the importance for Forum/PECC links of the PECC meeting to be held in New Zealand in November, 1989.

### **POLITICAL, SECURITY ISSUES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

#### **Decolonisation - New Caledonia**

15. The Forum reviewed recent developments affecting New Caledonia since the last Forum. It expressed its deep sadness at the assassination of FLNKS leaders Jean-Marie Tjibaou and Yeiwene Yeiwene, and urged all parties to promote reconciliation and to refrain from acts of violence.

16. The Forum welcomed the positive measures being pursued by the French Government, in cooperation with the people of New Caledonia, to promote political, economic and social development in the Territory. The Forum expressed its continuing support for the agreements concluded in Paris in June and August 1988 as a framework for New Caledonia's peaceful progress to self-determination. It noted the progress made by the Government of Prime Minister Rocard to implement the agreements, including the recent elections leading to devolution of powers to provincial assemblies and a territorial congress in the Territory. It urged all parties to continue to work for the successful implementation of the agreements in a spirit of constructive dialogue and reconciliation.

17. The Forum expressed the hope that consideration of New Caledonia by the United Nations Committee on Decolonisation (C24) and the United Nations General Assembly would continue to be characterised by the consensus approach adopted in 1988.

18. Forum Governments reiterated their willingness, collectively and individually, to contribute to the process of reconciliation and to the training process for New Caledonians in the lead up to the act of self-determination in 1998.

19. The Forum restated its strong support for an act of self-determination consistent with the established decolonisation practices and principals of the United Nations, in which all options, including independence, would be open, and which would lead to a settlement that safeguarded the rights of the indigenous Kanaks, and of all New Caledonians, in a multiracial society.

## **(2) Climatic Changes and Sea Levels**

20. The Forum expressed concern about the possible effects on Island countries of rising sea levels, resulting from global warming, and emphasised the importance of a regional approach to environmental matters. It agreed that Forum members should take decisive action to draw world attention to the way the environmental problem affected the South Pacific, and to represent regional views at appropriate international gatherings, possibly including by way of a resolution in the United Nations General Assembly. The Forum supported the candidature of New Zealand to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environmental Programme as one means of achieving this.

21. The Forum welcomed confirmation by the Prime Minister of Australia that his Government would fund a core project over the next five years to establish a network of monitoring stations in the region, to research such areas as changes in sea levels, atmospheric pressures and rainfall patterns. The total cost, including the design phase, will be A\$6.25m, with implementation to begin early in 1990. The Prime Minister emphasised that the results of this research would be available to all Forum members, and he suggested that this be done in the context of a programme of information exchange. He also emphasised Australia's commitment to a long-term programme in this area.

## **(3) South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty**

22. The Forum noted with appreciation the ratification of the Treaty by Solomon Islands, making that country the tenth Party to the Treaty, and the ratification of Protocols 2 and 3 by the Peoples Republic of China. It called upon those nuclear weapon states which had not acceded to the Protocols to do so as soon as possible. It also authorised the Secretariat to engage in cooperation and information exchange with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Nuclear Arms in Latin America (OPANAL).

23. The Forum recorded its deep concern at continuing nuclear testing in the region by France. A reduction in the number of tests was not what was sought. The Forum again called upon France to cease immediately all nuclear testing in the region.

#### **(4) South Pacific Regional Environment Programme**

24. The Forum reaffirmed its strong support for the SPREP Convention and welcomed the active steps taken by several Forum countries to ratify this Convention. It urged the rest of the Forum countries to make their best endeavours to ratify the SPREP Convention and to bring it into force at the earliest opportunity.

### **INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES**

#### **South Pacific Organisations Co-ordinating Committee (SPOCC)**

25. The Forum welcomed and recognised the importance of SPOCC in ensuring cooperation and coordination of activities among the various regional institutions. The first meeting of SPOCC was held successfully in March, 1989.

### **FORUM COUNTRY INITIATIVES**

26. The Forum endorsed initiatives by the Prime Minister of Australia on action to eliminate all forms of chemical weapons, the convening of a meeting of regional officials to discuss greater law enforcement co-operation, and a joint United Nations/Australia sponsored Seminar on the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It also endorsed the forthcoming Seminar in Canberra on Security Issues in Oceania organised by the Australian National University.

27. The Forum agreed that, while there was a need for fair and accurate reporting in regional media, there was clear support for the principle of freedom of the press, and that nothing should be done which could be interpreted as limiting that freedom. The Forum authorised the Secretariat to investigate the possibility of funding and convening a workshop for interested government and media representatives to consider measures to encourage well-informed and balanced reporting by regional media.

### **FORUM SECRETARIAT**

28. The Forum commended the Secretary General and his staff on their achievements since the last Forum. It emphasised the successful arrangements that had been put in place for the first Dialogue meetings, the increased activity by the Secretariat in projecting the region internationally, and the increased cooperation which was evident with other organisations in the region.

### **FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY**

29. The Forum congratulated the Director of the Forum Fisheries Agency on the many valuable activities undertaken by his organisation for the benefit of the region. It

welcomed the concept of the forthcoming Conference to mark the tenth anniversary of the Agency, at which its past programmes would be reviewed and plans would be discussed for its activities over the next decade. The Forum noted with appreciation that Tonga had ratified the US Multilateral Fisheries Treaty, which meant that all Pacific Island Countries were now parties to the Treaty and its benefits.

## **CCOP/SOPAC**

30. The Forum noted with appreciation the various programme activities that were being administered by the Co-ordinating Committee for Mineral Prospecting in South Pacific Offshore Areas, CCOP/SOPAC to assist the Island member countries in identifying, assessing and managing the mineral, energy and other non-living marine resource potential of their respective exclusive economic zones. It also acknowledged the generous contribution and assistance of donor countries and agencies, both within and outside the South Pacific region, in supporting the work of CCOP/SOPAC. The Forum noted the need for appropriate legislation to protect the region's marine and mining resources in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

## **UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC**

31. The Forum expressed its satisfaction with the increasing contribution the University of the South Pacific had been able to make to development and education in the Island countries, and its hope that ways could be found to increase its resources accordingly. It noted also the telecommunications and postal difficulties faced by the University in spreading educational services throughout the region.

## **PACIFIC ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

32. The Forum thanked the Director of the Pacific Islands Development Program, PIDP, who had been invited to address the Forum following the establishment of SPOCC, for his organisation's work in the region.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Proposal by Nauru to be Accorded Small Island Country Status**

33. The Forum accepted a proposal by Nauru to be accorded Small Island Country status within the Forum.

## **21ST SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM**

34. The Forum accepted with pleasure the invitation by the Prime Minister of Vanuatu to host the 21st South Pacific Forum. It noted the generous offer of Federated States of Micronesia to host the 22nd South Pacific Forum in 1991.



**20th South Pacific Forum  
Conference Centre - Otintaai Hotel  
Tarawa Kiribati  
10 - 11 July, 1989.**

**TARAWA DECLARATION**

The South Pacific Forum meeting at Tarawa on 10-11 July 1989

**recognising** the crucial dependence of the Pacific Island peoples on marine resources;

**profoundly** concerned at the damage now being done by pelagic drift net fishing to the economy and environment of the South Pacific region;

**convinced** that this indiscriminate, irresponsible and destructive fishing technique threatens the survival of the albacore tuna resource, and so the economic well-being of Forum Island Countries,

**deeply** regretting that Japan and Taiwan have failed to respond to the concerns of regional countries about this most serious issue;

**noting** that it is in the mutual interest of the major fishing nations active in the region, and the Forum, to conserve fisheries stocks;

**noting** that all countries inside and outside the region are affected by the mismanagement of the resources of the World's oceans, by the environmental dangers of drift net fishing and by the threat to safe navigation;

**recalling** the relevant provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and in particular Articles 63, 64, 87, 116, 117, 118 and 119;

**recognising** that the use of drift nets as presently employed in the Southern Pacific Albacore Tuna Fishery is not consistent with international legal requirements in relation to rights and obligations of high seas fisheries conservation and management and environmental principles;

**resolves** for the sake of this and succeeding generations of Pacific peoples to seek the establishment of a regime for the management of albacore tuna in the South Pacific that would ban drift net fishing from the region; such a ban might then be a first step to a comprehensive ban on such fishing;

**determines**, to this end, to convene an urgent meeting of regional diplomatic, legal and fisheries experts to develop a Convention to give effect to its common resolve to create a zone free of drift net fishing;

**calls on** the international community to support, and co-operate in, the urgent conclusion of a Convention establishing the zone;

**resolves** that individual member states of the South Pacific Forum will take all possible measures in the interim to prevent drift net fishing within their waters, and otherwise actively to discourage the operations of drift net fishes;

**further resolves** that member states acting individually and collectively will take what action they can within relevant international organisations to contribute to the cessation of this harmful form of fishing;

**commends** the Republic of Korea for its decision to cease drift net fishing in the region;

**calls on** Japan and Taiwan to follow this example, and abandon immediately their damaging drift net operations.