

SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM
Apia, Western Samoa
17 - 18 April, 1973

COMMUNIQUÉ

The Fourth South Pacific Forum was opened by the Prime Minister of Western Samoa on 17 April 1973. He welcomed to Apia the President of Nauru, the Prime Ministers of Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Tonga, the Premier of the Cook Islands and the two observers, the Leader of Government of Niue and the Chief Minister of Papua New Guinea. In his address the Prime Minister of Western Samoa urged Members to share their common problems and solutions if they were to help one another. In their endeavour to work together it was their responsibility to break down all the walls, whether they be economic or racial.

NUCLEAR TESTING

2. The Forum recalled the expression of opposition at the meetings of the Forum in 1971 and 1972 to atmospheric nuclear weapons testing conducted by France in the South Pacific. Members took note of the fact that their opposition was increasingly shared by world opinion. They welcomed the most recent resolution of the United Nations General Assembly calling, with renewed urgency, for a halt to all atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific and elsewhere in the world. Members were once again unanimous in expressing their deep concern at the apparent continuing failure of the French Government to comprehend the extent of opposition to the conduct by France of its tests in the Pacific area and to respect the wishes of the peoples of the area. They reaffirmed their strong opposition to these tests which exposed their peoples as well as their environment to radioactive fallout against their wishes and without benefit to them, and which demonstrated deplorable indifference to their future well being. They urged the Government of France to heed the call of the United Nations General Assembly and its obligations under International Law by bringing about an immediate halt to all testing in the area. Members expressed their determination to use all proper and practicable means open to them to bring an end to nuclear testing particularly in the South Pacific.

3. The Forum decided to issue a joint declaration in the above terms. It requested the Government of Western Samoa to transmit the views of the meeting to the French Government.

4. The Forum also resolved to raise with the British Government the possibility of associating in an appropriate manner British dependent territories in the South Pacific with the Forum's efforts to bring about a cessation of atmospheric nuclear weapons testing by France in the region. Members expressed their concern for the welfare of all their neighbours. The Forum noted the forthcoming visit of the Prime Minister of Australia to London and requested him to discuss the matter with the British Government.

5. The Forum further decided to bring urgently to the attention of all other countries bordering on or responsible for territories in the South Pacific the concern felt by Members. In particular it was noted that some countries bordering on the Pacific had already been

approached, through diplomatic channels, about the possibility of their joining in any action before the International Court of Justice under the provisions of Article 62(i) of the Statute of the Court permitting intervention in the proceedings by interested States.

6. The Government of Western Samoa was requested to convey the Forum's views as above to the countries concerned.

REGIONAL SHIPPING

7. Members agreed that the work being done by SPEC, in accordance with the decision of the Third Forum, on the financial and operational structure of a regional shipping line was of the utmost importance, in view of the need to improve services and promote trade expansion. It should therefore be closely integrated with the study of regional trade upon which on regional shipping.

8. The Forum noted that since the last meeting there had been a welcome extension of regional services through the introduction of the Nauru vessel "Cenpac Rounder", as well as an agreement between the national shipping lines of Nauru and Tonga to rationalise their operations.

9. It was agreed that on completion the shipping study should be examined by a committee of the relevant officials of member governments and that SPEC's recommendations should be presented in good time for consideration at the next Forum meeting.

REGIONAL CO-OPERATION

10. The Forum considered a paper which had been circulated earlier by Australia proposing that machinery be established at Ministerial level for consultations on labour and related matters of interest and concern to countries of the South Pacific. The Forum felt that such machinery could make a useful contribution to furthering regional co-operation, and accepted an offer by Australia to host this year a meeting of Labour Ministers from the area.

11. Reference was made to the desirability of increasing trade union awareness in Australia and New Zealand of the sovereignty of the Island Governments, and the economic situation in the Islands, and of the impossibility of applying immediately identical labour standards among countries at different stages of economic development.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

12. Members agreed that the provision of an adequate telecommunications network in the region was essential. In view of the work already being undertaken under UN and other auspices it was decided that SPEC should act as the co-ordinating agency. It should also seek to ensure that the plans of Member Governments in this area were executed in manner compatible with the regional interest.

SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

13. Members of the Forum welcomed the announcement that it was the intention of the Australian and New Zealand Governments to make a voluntary contribution of NZ\$250,000 each to the budget to the South Pacific Commission, to be devoted to extending and making more effective the work Programme. The members, who also take part in the South Pacific Conference and South Pacific Commission, agreed that with more funds available it would become possible to undertake projects of high priority which up till now had had to be postponed. There was important work waiting to be done. They believed that the Conference would continue to devise a programme of research and training which would be strictly relevant to present-day needs and which could be promptly put into effect by the Commission and its Secretariat for the benefit of all the people of the South Pacific.

14. In the course of discussion on the relationship between the Forum and the South Pacific Commission Australia introduced a paper which contained proposals on possible change in the functioning of the Conference and the Commission. Members noted that Australia would introduce these proposals at the 13th Conference at Guam in September 1973, and gave them strong support.

15. At the request of Members New Zealand agreed to prepare and circulate before the next meeting of the Forum a paper exploring various ideas and suggestions for the further development of regional institutions.

ASSOCIATION WITH E.E.C

16. The Forum considered the question of association with the EEC of Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa under Protocol 22 of the Treaty of Accession. It noted that the three Island Members directly concerned intended to give further close consideration to the matter, in the light of the study on this question submitted by SPEC. A meeting of their officials at which SPEC would assist would be held at an early date for this purpose.

17. Island members recognised the importance of their economic development of the expansion of trade within the South Pacific region. In the light of this, the Forum agreed that there was a need for continuing close consultation among its members on the association question in the period ahead.

SOUTH PACIFIC BUREAU FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION

18. The Agreement Establishing the Bureau for Economic Co-operation, which had been initialised at the previous meeting, was signed by Heads of Member Governments. The Director's report on the first five months of SPEC's operations was received by the Forum and the programme of work for the coming year was reviewed. In addition to the continuing study on E.E.C associated and the project on shinning and regional trade, it was noted that the work requested by the Forum on telecommunications would also receive high priority.

19. In order to assist SPEC in its dealings with international agencies involved in regional projects in the South Pacific, the Forum resolved to designate the Director as the competent authority to negotiate with these bodies on all phases of such projects. For the most part such projects would involve technical or financial assistance, but it was clearly understood that individual member Governments would continue to deal directly with the agencies on all national projects.

20. The Forum welcomed the Australian Government's offer to organise a trade training course later in the year geared to the special needs of the Island members of the Forum. It would have as its theme the promotion and marketing of agricultural exports and tourism, with special reference to the role and inter-relation of the private sector and government.

21. The Forum also approved SPEC's budget for the period ending 31 December 1973, totalling \$F156,195. It noted that \$F89,280 was for current expenditure and that the balance of \$F66,915 was for capital expenditure connected with staff housing and work on a site for permanent headquarters.

22. The Forum noted with pleasure that an area of Crown Land had been made available to SPEC by the Government of Fiji. It also welcomed an offer from the New Zealand Government to meet the building costs for the headquarters complex, as well as offer by Australia to provide an appropriate amount for furniture and fittings for the office headquarters and the housing of the Director and Deputy Director when the structural work on the headquarters complex was completed.

EDUCATION

23. During discussions of education the Australian Special Minister of State advised the Forum that there were places available for training in the Australian School of Pacific Administration in Sydney. The School provided training in such fields as administration, social welfare, local government and industrial relations. The Prime Minister of New Zealand initiated a thoughtful discussion of the social consequences of the migration of Pacific peoples to New Zealand, pointing out that there was a need for education to be shaped in such a way as to help with the social problems to which this migration led. Ministers felt that a solution to such problems lay in moving towards greater emphasis on technical training in education. The Prime Minister of New Zealand pointed out that this was a problem of some urgency as in 20 years' time, New Zealand would have the greater number of Polynesians in its population of all but one other country in the region.

FOREIGN FISHING IN THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

25. Members welcomed a paper introduced by New Zealand outlining the extent of foreign fishing in the South West Pacific, and agreed that it drew attention to an important problem for the islands of the area. It was noted that policing territorial waters and fishing grounds was a problem for them. It was also agreed to request New Zealand to co-ordinate the collection of further data with the object of presenting a more detailed analysis at the next Forum meeting.

SOUTH PACIFIC ARTS FESTIVAL

26. Members welcomed an offer by New Zealand to host a South Pacific Arts Festival in New Zealand probably, in 1975 and will support the proposal at the next meeting of the South Pacific Conference.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

27. Members welcomed the invitation by the New Zealand Prime Minister for each representative to attend the Commonwealth Games in 1974 as the guest of the New Zealand Government.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

28. Members accepted with appreciation the invitation of the Premier of the Cook Islands to hold their next meeting in Rarotonga, possibly in April 1974.