

EIGHTH SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM

Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

29 – 31 August 1977

FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ

The Eighth South Pacific Forum was convened on 29 August 1977 at the Administrative College Conference Centre, Port Moresby, and was attended by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Nauru; the Prime Ministers of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Western Samoa; the Premiers of the Cook Islands and of Niue; the Chief Minister of the Gilbert Islands; the Deputy Prime Minister of Fiji representing his Prime Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister of the Solomon Islands representing his Chief Minister. An official from Tuvalu was also present at the meeting as the Chief Minister was unable to attend because of Tuvalu's General Elections.

2. In his opening address, His Excellency the Governor-General of Papua New Guinea, Sir Tore Lokoloko, G.C.M.G., O.B.E. welcomed, on behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea, all the delegates present.

3. The Governor-General recalled the Island Governments had come together because of their recognition of common problems which they faced in the region. Much ground work had already been done in previous Forums and in the discussions following towards solving these problems. He saw the Port Moresby Forum as providing the basis of concrete proposals in areas of mutual concern. He was certain that the Forum would adopt a wider perspective in finding regional solutions to regional problems. He reminded delegates of the need for vigilance, so that they could be worthy of the trust of future generations, while satisfying the needs of their present day peoples.

4. In reply, the Premier of Niue, Hon. Robert Rex, C.M.G., O.B.E. congratulated His Excellency the Governor General, the Prime Minister, Rt Hon. Michael Somare and the people of Papua New Guinea for hosting the Eighth South Pacific Forum in Papua New Guinea. Delegates were appreciative of the hospitality with which they had been welcomed. He saw value in the informal gathering which they held during the weekend in Madang, which had paved the way to solutions for some of the difficult decisions. The Premier also congratulated the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea in his success in retaining the leadership of the country in the recent elections. The Premier stressed that regional links had been developed since the Forum started, and should continue to be strengthened.

5. The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea were unanimously elected Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The Premier of Niue was appointed as Press Spokesman for the Forum.

Admission of New Member

6. The Gilbert Islands was admitted as a full member to the Forum having achieved full self-government.

Annual Report of the Director and Report of the SPEC Committee

7. In approving the Annual Report of the Director on the operations of the Secretariat since the last meeting of the Forum, the Forum agreed with the Director's statement that it was now time to take stock and to examine critically the past achievements of SPEC. The Forum also approved the Agreed Report of the pre-Forum SPEC Committee Meeting which had met on 24-26 August 1977 to consider the detailed operations of SPEC.

Telecommunications

8. The Forum noted the Government of Fiji's under taking to make sufficient places available to trainees from other participating countries in the Telecommunications Training Centre in Fiji to meet the needs of the countries of the region. Fiji would operate the Centre as a national institution to meet the regional need.

Law of the Sea

9. Forum members agreed to establish 200 mile fishing or economic zones as quickly as possible.

10. The Forum considered a paper prepared by the Director of SPEC on the establishment of a South Pacific Regional Fisheries Agency and adopted a Declaration which is attached to this Communiqué, on the Law of the Sea and the Regional Fisheries Agency.

11. The Forum expressed its support for Fiji's offer made at the 6th Session of the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference for Fiji to be the location of the proposed International Seabed Authority.

Relationships with Other Regional Organisations

12. In noting the growing importance of ASEAN as an influential organisation in a neighbouring region, the Forum agreed that informal contact on matters of common interest between the Forum and ASEAN should be initiated.

13. The Forum expressed its desire to see the role of ESCAP in the Pacific strengthened.

14. The Forum received the Report of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific on the operations of the University over the past year.

Membership of SPEC and the Forum

15. The Forum discussed the related questions of which countries could qualify to be members of SPEC and of the Forum. It was agreed that an officials group would meet during the forthcoming year with a view to reporting on the matter to the next Forum

Third South Pacific Festival of Arts

16. The Forum welcomed Papua New Guinea's offer to host the Third South Pacific Festival of Arts in late June/early July 1980. The importance of the Arts Festival to the South Pacific region was reaffirmed by the Forum.

Environment

17. The Forum endorsed the establishment of a comprehensive environmental management programme and adopted a resolution which is attached.

Date and Venue of Next Meeting

18. The Forum accepted the offer of the Government of Niue to host the 9th South Pacific Forum in Niue at a date to be confirmed later.

**DECLARATION ON LAW OF THE SEA AND
A REGIONAL FISHERIES AGENCY**

The members of the South Pacific Forum meeting at Port Moresby

1. Recall their decisions to co-ordinate and harmonise their policies on the law of the sea so as to ensure the maximum benefits for their peoples and for the region as a whole and, specifically, to harmonise fisheries policies in the region and to adopt a co-ordinated approach in their negotiations with distant water fishing countries;
2. Note with appreciation the report on the establishment of a South Pacific Regional Fisheries Agency prepared by the Director of SPEC at their request;
3. Recognise that in the continued absence of a comprehensive international convention on the law of the sea and in view of the action taken by a large number of countries including distant water fishing countries exploiting the valuable highly migratory species in the region, the countries in the region should move quickly to establish fishing or exclusive economic zones and should take steps to co-ordinate their policies and activities if they are to secure more than a very small part of the benefits from their resources for their peoples;
4. Undertake to complete as early as practicable and, if possible, by 31 March 1978, the legislative and administrative actions necessary to establish extended fisheries jurisdiction to the fullest extent permissible under international law and to apply within their zones principles and measures for the exploration, exploitation, management and conservation of the living resources.
5. Decide to enter immediately into consultations at the official level with a view to:
 - a) agreeing on principles and measures to be applied in the establishment of their extended fisheries jurisdictions,
 - b) agreeing at least provisionally, on a common basis for negotiations with distant water fishing interests in relation to highly migratory species common to the region; and
 - c) ensuring that agreements concluded in the near future with distant water fishing interests are compatible with these principles and measures and are so framed as to take account of principles and measures that the coastal state might agree to in future regional arrangements.
6. Recognise that the coastal countries of the South Pacific have an immediate and continuing need for information and advice concerning the living resources in the region and the ways and means of securing maximum benefits from them as well as for an effective instrument to co-ordinate policies in this field, and that management of resources moving over vast areas, control of their exploitation, surveillance and policing and

collection of adequate statistical and other information require co-ordination by a regional agency.

7. Decide to establish a South Pacific Regional Fisheries Agency open to all Forum countries and all countries in the South Pacific with coastal state interests in the region who support the sovereign rights of the coastal state to conserve and manage living resources, including highly migratory species, in its 200 mile zone.

8. Request the Director of SPEC to convene and service not later than the end of November 1977 a meeting of officials of all interested coastal states in the region

- a) to prepare a draft convention establishing a South Pacific regional fisheries agency;
- b) to make arrangements for the setting up of an interim agency office and for the appointment of a core staff for a period of one year;
- c) to discuss and prepare guidelines for the activities of the agency which should include:
 - i) collection, analysis and evaluation of statistical and other biological and economic information relating to the conservation and utilisation of living resources to assist member governments in the development of policies aimed at securing maximum benefits for their peoples;
 - ii) assistance, if requested, in negotiations with distant water fishing nations and other extra-regional interests;
 - iii) facilitation, without detriment to the sovereign rights of coastal countries, of a regional approach to management and to licensing including agreement on generally applicable policies and measures, pooling of information and standardisation of procedures and forms;
 - iv) facilitation of collaboration among coastal countries and of cooperation by others in surveillance and enforcement;
 - v) provision of advice on necessary conservation measures including the need for a widely based organisation envisaged in the Informal Composite Negotiating Text;
 - vi) technical advice;
 - vii) execution of agreed administrative activities.

In preparing these guidelines the officials should take into consideration the suggestions contained in the annex to the Director's Report to the Forum.

9. Welcome the offer of the Government of the Solomon Islands that the permanent headquarters of the Agency be located in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

10. Invite the Government of Australia to agree to the Agency office being located on an interim basis in Cronulla, New South Wales, pending its establishment on a permanent basis in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

11. Request the Director of SPEC to seek funds from governments and international agencies for the operation of the Agency until such time as it is self-supporting and to recommend an equitable formula for the costs to be levied on participating governments.

12. Draw the attention of the South Pacific Conference to this Declaration and invite the members of the Conference to consider arrangements whereby governments and territories in the region with a common interest as coastal states can participate with members of the Forum in the conservation and management of the living resources of the region.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Members of the South Pacific Forum meeting at Port Moresby

1. Recognise that

- a) South Pacific countries are custodians of a significant proportion of the earth's surface which is richly endowed and so far largely unspoiled by unwise development.
- b) These countries have limited financial and human resources to ensure that the South Pacific region is wisely managed in the interest of future generations of Pacific peoples.
- c) South Pacific countries will more effectively manage this unique South Pacific environment by the adoption of common approaches and standards to development planning and environment conservation and by strong regional co-operation.
- d) South Pacific countries have the opportunity to explore and adopt new approaches to development planning and environment conservation which are most compatible with the natural, social and cultural resources of the region.

2. Recall their decision made at the Seventh South Pacific Forum that SPEC should consult with the South Pacific Commission with the view to preparing proposals for a co-ordinated regional approach to the problem of environmental management for consideration at the Eighth South Pacific Forum.

3. Note a resolution of the Sixteenth South Pacific Conference directing that a proposal for a comprehensive environmental management programme be formulated reflecting the environmental interest of all countries and territories in the region by SPEC and the SPC as a joint executing agencies.

4. Having considered the paper prepared by the South Pacific Commission in consultation with SPEC on a proposed comprehensive environmental management programme notes that:

- a) the paper lacks sufficient detail, particularly with respect to costs and institutional and administrative arrangements; and
- b) the establishment of a separate agency to administer the programme is undesirable.

5. Reaffirm however, its commitments to optimum and coordinated management of the total Pacific environment.

6. Resolve accordingly that SPEC should consult with the South Pacific Commission prior to the Seventeenth South Pacific Conference with a view towards convening a meeting of officials from members of the South Pacific Commission at the earliest possible date, to consider the paper in detail and to make recommendations to SPEC and the SPC on how the programme can be financed and modified to meet the needs of the countries of the region.

7. Support the further development of a programme by SPEC in consultation with the South Pacific Commission.

8. Invite UNEP, the UNDP and other multilateral organisations and interested donor governments and agencies to provide financial and other assistance for a comprehensive environmental management programme.

9. Agree that the Seventeenth South Pacific Conference be advised accordingly of the Forum's decision.