

## **TENTH SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM**

Honiara, Solomon Islands

9 – 10 July 1979

### **FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ**

The Tenth South Pacific Forum was held in Honiara, Solomon Islands on 9-10 July 1979. It was preceded by celebrations commemorating Solomon Islands' First Anniversary of Independence on 7 July. The meeting was attended by Heads of Government and Ministers from the following countries: Australia, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Western Samoa. The Chairman of the Forum meeting was the Rt Hon Peter Kenilorea, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands.

The main items on the Forum agenda and the decisions of the Forum are set out below:

#### **Forum Membership**

##### **(a) New Hebrides**

The Forum welcomed the interest expressed by the Government of the New Hebrides in participation as an observer at the Forum. The Forum noted that the New Hebrides was scheduled to attain independence in 1980 and agreed to admit the New Hebrides to the Forum in an observer capacity. The New Hebrides delegation comprised Fr Gerard Leymang, Chief Minister and Mr George Kalkoa.

##### **(b) Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)**

The Forum also welcomed the expression of interest by the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia in membership of SPEC and the Forum. The Forum noted that a new constitutional arrangement between the FSM and the US had come into effect on 10 May 1979. It noted, however, that the FSM still formed part of the United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands administered by the United States and that it was not expected that the trusteeship agreement would be terminated until 1981. The Forum concluded that it was premature to admit the FSM as a Forum observer, but that the FSM should be invited to join the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation (SPEC).

#### **Forum Fisheries Agency**

The Forum considered, adopted and opened for signature the Convention formally establishing a South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency. The Forum recognised that the terms "coastal states" and "living marine resources" in the Convention included and wholly covered archipelagic states and marine mammals respectively. The Agency, which had been established early in 1979 in Honiara under the framework of the SPEC Agreement, is designed to promote the rational exploitation of all living marine resources in the region for the benefit of the Forum member countries. The Forum also recognised that there was a need to consider a more broadly-based fisheries organisation, such as that proposed in Article 64 of the draft Law of the Sea Convention.

## **Trade Relations and Industrial Development**

The Forum noted that a Ministerial meeting held in Tonga in June had recommended that early negotiations be commenced between Forum members to establish a comprehensive non-reciprocal trade agreement in favour of the Forum Island countries with the objective of achieving, progressively, duty free and unrestricted access to the markets of Australia and New Zealand over as wide a range of products as possible. The Forum endorsed those recommendations. The Forum also endorsed recommendations by the Ministerial meeting relating to the promotion of industrial development in the South Pacific region.

## **Regional Transport**

### **(a) Regional Shipping**

The Forum noted the serious financial situation of the Pacific Forum Line and recommended that a study conducted by consultants on the future of the Line which had been circulated to Forum Governments should be considered by the forthcoming meeting of the Regional Shipping Council in Mt Hagen, Papua New Guinea, in early August. Further, the Forum reaffirmed the strong support which Ministers had expressed for the PFL at the Special Session of the Shipping Council held in Auckland in February 1979.

### **(b) Regional Civil Aviation**

Forum Governments also welcomed the establishment of the Association of South Pacific Airlines, which would make recommendations on such matters as the rationalisation of airline routes, schedules and equipment. The Forum noted with concern the sharp increase in aviation gasoline prices and recommended that ASPA study possible solutions at an early date.

## **The Question of the French Territories in the South Pacific**

The Forum passed the following Resolution:

“The Governments comprising the South Pacific Forum welcomed the progress being made in the New Hebrides towards independence, and expressed the hope that all major political groups in that island territory would work closely together in preparing for their independence.

Noting the desire of Pacific Island peoples, including those in French Territories, to determine their own future, the Forum reaffirmed its belief in the principle of self-determination and independence applying to all Pacific Island peoples in accordance with their freely expressed wishes. Accordingly, the Forum called on the metropolitan powers concerned to work with the peoples of their Pacific Territories to this end.”

## **Banaba**

The Forum adopted the following Resolution:

“The Forum Leaders welcomed the impending independence of Kiribati and noted with appreciation the willingness of the Government of Kiribati to hold continuing discussions with the Banabans with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable solution to the future of Ocean Island, in accordance with the communiqué of the recent Suva meeting of the Kiribati Government and the Rabi Council of Leaders, chaired by the Prime Minister of Fiji.”

## **Environment**

The Forum adopted the following Resolution:

The South Pacific Forum countries:

noting the proposal currently under examination by the United States of America to store its spent nuclear fuel in either Midway, Wake or Palmyra in the Pacific;

believing that in a continental area such as the United States, leaching of nuclear waste would be less likely to be an environmental hazard than in the case of an island such as Palmyra with a mass of moving water containing living marine resources in its immediate surrounds;

bearing in mind their determination to protect the livelihood of their peoples and the Pacific environment;

express their grave concern at the possible environmental hazards in the event of the Pacific becoming an international dumping ground for nuclear wastes, notwithstanding that the expressed intention of this proposed measure is to further limit the possibilities for the proliferation of nuclear weapons;

strongly  
condemn any move to use the Pacific as a dumping ground for nuclear wastes;

urge the United States to store its nuclear wastes in the USA continent; and

request the Chairman of the Tenth South Pacific Forum to convey this Resolution to the Government of the United States of America.

The Chairman was requested to convey the Forum Resolution to the Government of the United States of America.

## **Relations with Other International Organisations**

The Forum noted the close and co-operative relations which existed between SPEC and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the European Communities, UNDP, ESCAP and ASEAN. The Forum welcomed the appointment of Mr R Koelmeyer, as the first Commonwealth Regional Liaison Officer whose task it was to pursue the initiatives emerging from the CHOGRM meeting on trade, narcotic drugs, energy and terrorism. Mr Koelmeyer is based at SPEC Headquarters in Suva. The Forum also welcomed the decision of the ASEAN Standing Committee to establish official contact with SPEC.

The Forum noted that the East-West Center in Hawaii planned to convene a Conference of Pacific Island Leaders in January 1980 to discuss and exchange ideas on development appropriate to Pacific Island countries.

### **SPEC Director**

The Forum agreed to appoint Dr Gabriel Gris from Papua New Guinea to succeed the Hon Mahe Tupouniua who had been Director of SPEC since its creation in 1973. The Forum paid tribute to the Hon Mahe Tupouniua for his dedicated service and commitment to regional cooperation. Dr Gris is expected to take up his position early in the New Year.