

**TWENTY-FIRST SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM
PORT VILA, VANUATU
31 JULY - 1 AUGUST 1990**

FORUM COMMUNIQUE

The Twenty-First South Pacific Forum was held in Port Vila, Vanuatu, from 31 July to 1 August 1990, and was attended by Heads of Government of Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa. The Cook Islands and Solomon Islands were represented by their Deputy Prime Ministers, Tonga by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence and Vanuatu by its Minister of Foreign Affairs and Judicial Services. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu, Hon Fr Walter H Lini, CBE, MP, chaired the meeting which was officially opened by the President of the Republic of Vanuatu, His Excellency Frederick Timakata.

2. Forum Heads of Government discussed the following key issues:
- strengthening the region's capacity to address environmental concerns;
 - ensuring more effective management of regional fisheries resources;
 - responding to recent political developments in New Caledonia;
 - addressing the future of regional tourism and energy programmes; and
 - considering major economic and political concerns to be discussed with the Forum Dialogue Partners.

ENVIRONMENT

3. The Forum recognised the fundamental importance to Pacific countries and peoples of environmental issues, particularly climate change, sea level rise and waste disposal at sea. It also recognised that sustainable development was the key to the protection of the region's resources and environment for future generations. The Forum further agreed that strengthened institutional arrangements should be developed to address environmental concerns. Towards this objective, the Forum agreed to establish a special committee, to be funded by New Zealand, to examine future institutional and operational arrangements for strengthening the capacity and efficiency of SPREP. The Forum invited SPREF, to report to it on an annual basis commencing in 1991. In addition the Secretariat should have enhanced capacity to keep abreast of environmental issues.

4. The Forum noted with satisfaction recent ratifications of the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources by France and Western Samoa, a result of which the Convention will enter into force on 22 August 1990.

5. The Forum noted the continued threat to the cultural and physical survival of Pacific nations from climate change and sea level rise. The Forum recalled that the gases which cause the greenhouse effect, notably carbon dioxide, are emitted mainly by the industrialised countries.

6. The Forum therefore strongly urged industrialised countries to enact immediately significant cuts in the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, including the establishment of obligatory emission reduction standards. The Forum agreed to communicate these concerns to all relevant international bodies, including the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and the World Climate Change Conference (WCC).

7. The Forum affirmed the importance of a greater regional capability to contribute to international action on environmental issues. It agreed that every effort should be made to ensure Forum Island Country representation at major international conferences, including the forthcoming UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the World Climate Change Conference and meetings leading up to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. The Forum expressed appreciation to New Zealand for its commitment of an additional NZ\$500,000 in 1990/91 and NZ\$1 million in 1991/92 in support of SPREP related regional action such as identifying World Heritage Sites and an inventory on species and ecosystems at risk. The Forum also noted progress on the implementation of the Australian climate and sea level monitoring project in the region, and Kiribati's participation in the Malé Declaration Action Group.

8. The Forum welcomed the progress being made at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva towards the conclusion of an international convention to ban chemical weapons. It reaffirmed its desire for the early conclusion of a verifiable, comprehensive and global convention which would ban chemical weapons from all environments for all time. The Forum reaffirmed its strong support for the Chemical Weapons Regional Initiative.

9. The Forum also noted with satisfaction that Papua New Guinea had become the eleventh Forum member to ratify the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

FISHERIES

10. The Forum was gratified by the impetus given by the 1989 Tarawa Declaration on the elimination of drift net fishing. The Declaration had been followed in quick succession by the adoption of the Convention for the Prohibition of Long Driftnets in the South Pacific and a United Nations resolution against driftnetting. The Forum continued to give high priority to the more effective management and better utilisation of marine fishery resources in the region and adopted a number of decisions on issues of immediate concern and importance.

(a) Control of Long Driftnets in the South Pacific;

The Forum:

- endorsed the Convention for the Prohibition of Long Driftnets in the South Pacific

- called on all interested parties to accede to the Convention or its Protocols as appropriate
- welcomed Japan's decision to cease driftnetting one year in advance of the date stipulated in UNGA Resolution 225
- directed that every effort be made to find means to involve Taiwan in negotiations for a management regime for South Pacific Albacore Tuna

(b) Multilateral Fishing Arrangements with Japan;

The Forum:

- recorded its disappointment at Japan's continuing reluctance to enter into substantive negotiations towards the conclusion of a multilateral fisheries access arrangement which would protect fisheries resources and the interests of all parties
- renewed its call to Japan to resume negotiations
- directed the FFA to strengthen and develop regional strategies for improved fisheries management

(c) Minimum Terms and Conditions for Access by Foreign Fishing Vessels;

- Forum members agreed to give high priority to the implementation of the revised Minimum Terms and Conditions as the basic standard of access to the FFA members' EEZs

(d) Western Pacific Purse Seine Fishery;

The Forum:

- noted with concern the potential threat to the western Pacific fisheries by the increased purse seine effort
- endorsed the need to control the number of purse seine vessels licenced to fish within the EEZs of FFA members in the western Pacific fishery

(e) Ratification of the Law of the Sea Convention.

- The Forum urged all member countries, as a matter of priority, to take measures to ensure the entry into force of the Law of the Sea Convention.

NEW CALEDONIA

11. The Forum reviewed developments affecting New Caledonia since the last Forum. In this connection, it reaffirmed the importance of the universal realisation of the right of peoples to self-determination in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and

noted that the year 1990 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and the commencement of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. It also noted the positive measures which continue to be pursued in New Caledonia by the French authorities, in co-operation with all sectors of the population, to promote political, economic and social development in the territory, in order to provide a framework for its peaceful evolution to self-determination.

12. The Forum acknowledged the close links which exist between the people of New Caledonia, particularly the indigenous Kanaks, and other peoples of the South Pacific, and the positive actions being taken by the French authorities and others to facilitate the further development of those links.

13. The Forum urged all the parties involved, in the interests of all the people of New Caledonia, to maintain, in a spirit of harmony, their dialogue, and continue promoting a framework for the peaceful evolution of the territory toward an Act of Self-Determination, consistent with United Nations principles and practices, in which all options, including independence, are open, and which would safeguard the rights of the indigenous Kanaks and those of all other New Caledonians.

14. Forum Governments expressed the hope that the French authorities, and others, would further expand their assistance for education and training opportunities for the Kanak population, in order to enable all New Caledonians to exercise their right of self-determination under the best possible conditions. They also expressed the hope that the French authorities would facilitate regular visits to New Caledonia by visiting missions of the United Nations.

15. The Forum took note of the Asia/Pacific Regional Seminar of the United Nations Special Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, held in Port Vila, Vanuatu, from 9-11 May 1990, and the various proposals and recommendations made by participants in the Seminar, as set forth in the Summary of Discussions thereon. The Forum, noted that many of the remaining non self-governing territories are in the South Pacific, and urged that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, or a specially designated representative of the Secretary-General, visit, at the outset of the Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, each of the territories which remain on the United Nations list of non self-governing territories. The Forum further urged that an extensive study be undertaken by the United Nations of the remaining non self-governing territories, and the results widely distributed. The Forum also proposed that countries be requested to consider adopting legislation to promote and safeguard the human rights of peoples living under colonialism.

16. In order to ensure that satisfactory progress is maintained in the implementation of the Matignon Accords, the Forum established a Ministerial Committee comprising Fiji, Nauru and Solomon Islands to monitor events within New Caledonia as it moves toward an Act of Self-Determination. Informal consultations with political groups within New Caledonia during annual meetings of the Forum would be continued.

17. The Forum further directed that the Officials Committee established to make recommendations to the 1991 Forum on Dialogue arrangements should also consider and

report on possible changes to existing criteria and formulae for participation in the Forum by non self-governing territories of the region.

ENERGY

18. The Forum reviewed regional energy programmes and activities. It agreed that all energy activities should be managed by the Forum Secretariat rather than by the establishment of a separate regional energy agency. The Forum stressed the importance of regional energy programmes and urged UNIDP to continue its support for those programmes.

TOURISM

19. The Forum recognised that the development of the tourist industry was of major economic significance to the region and considered mechanisms to link the Tourism Council of the South Pacific (TCSP) with the Forum. It directed the Secretariat to recommend measures for achieving this aim, in consultation with TCSP, and to report to the 1991 Forum.

SOUTH PACIFIC ORGANISATIONS COORDINATING COMMITTEE (SPOCC)

20. The Forum expressed satisfaction with the improved co-operation between regional organisations through SPOCC and agreed that existing arrangements be retained, with the Secretariat providing the overall coordinating role.

POST-FORUM DIALOGUE

21. The Forum took cognizance of the rapid changes in the international political and economic situation, in particular, the recent developments in Eastern Europe and the impending implementation of the Single European Act in 1992, all of which could have a significant impact on the region. The Forum agreed that the Secretariat should monitor such developments and assist the Forum in registering its continuing concerns and interests in the international community.

22. To this end, the Forum agreed to continue the Post-Forum Dialogue with Canada, China, France, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It also agreed to invite the European Community to participate in the Post-Forum Dialogue at Ministerial level in 1991. In the context of a suggestion to include the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the Republic of China (ROC) among Dialogue Partners, the Forum decided that a Committee of Officials should examine the criteria for future Post-Forum Dialogue Partners and report to the Twenty-Second South Pacific Forum.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND COORDINATION

23. In recognising the region's vulnerability to cyclones and other natural disasters, the Forum affirmed that appropriate steps be taken in the area of disaster preparedness. The Forum also recognised the need for closer cooperation between organisations and national governments involved in the provision of assistance in disaster preparedness and rehabilitation and directed the Secretariat to undertake a greater coordination role.

COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

24. While it was recognised that many aspects of law enforcement were the prerogative of national governments, some aspect such as drug related crimes extradition and customs could be addressed more effectively at the regional level. The Forum agreed that the Committee on Regional Security Information Exchange be revived to consider the needs and priorities of member countries in the area of law enforcement co-operation.

MEDIA ISSUES

25. The Forum agreed that while many of the issues arising out of the South Pacific Regional Media Workshop held in February 1990 could be considered only at the national level, it would be appropriate for the Secretariat to undertake a further review to identify action that might be taken at a regional level.

FORUM COUNTRY INITIATIVES

26. The Forum discussed at length the Johnston Atoll Chemical Agent Disposal System (JACADS). While agreeing with the destruction of existing chemical weapons, the plans by the United States to destroy at that facility chemical weapons now stored on Johnston Atoll, along with others that may be found within the region and those to be shipped from FRG, posed a serious dilemma for Forum Leaders.

27. This was another example of the Pacific being used by the major weapons producing states as an experimental area. While the Forum accepted that in this instance it was the destruction rather than the development of lethal weapons which was being undertaken, this did not alter the fundamental issue of principle. The Forum Heads of Government declared that the Pacific Ocean and the islands in it should not continue to be used as a convenient area for the development, storage, dumping or disposal of hazardous materials, including chemical weapons, particularly from outside the region.

28. While noting the stringent precautions being taken by the United States, the Forum remained concerned by the substantial potential risks to the environment and peoples of the Pacific of the whole operation, including, in particular, shipments of chemical weapons stockpiles from FRG. On the basis of these significant uncertainties and risks, the Forum expressed grave concern for the fragile environment and ecosystems of the region, not least in relation to marine resources and the island communities they sustain.

29. The Forum therefore called for early discussions with the United States on all aspects of the JACADS operations including the shipment of stockpiles from FRG, prior to commencement of the operation.

30. The Forum felt very strongly that the facility at Johnston Atoll should not become the permanent toxic waste disposal centre of the world. They expressed their firm conviction that the facility should be closed down once the current operations had been completed and called on the United States to ensure that no further chemical weapons or other toxic materials would be stockpiled on or destroyed at Johnston Atoll.

PRESIDENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

31. The Forum unanimously endorsed the candidacy of the Foreign Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Rt Hon Sir Michael Somare, for the position of President of the 46th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

32. The Forum expressed satisfaction with Namibia's successful transition to political independence, earlier this year. Heads of Government congratulated the Government and People of the Republic of Namibia on the attainment of their political independence. They also commended the Frontline States, the Organisation of African Unity, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the United Nations for the positive and constructive roles they played in Namibia's political evolution.

33. The Forum also expressed great satisfaction with the release from prison of Mr Nelson Mandela and called upon the authorities currently governing South Africa to release all political prisoners, and to take the further steps which would signal a commitment to the profound and irreversible changes necessary to accelerate the process of dismantling the apparatus of apartheid, and eliminate the vestiges and effects of apartheid. Until such time, the Forum calls upon the international community to continue the sanctions already imposed upon South Africa, and to explore other avenues of bringing a rapid end to the system of apartheid.

34. The Forum requested its Chairman to forward copies of this declaration to the Chairman of the Frontline States, the Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

SMALL ISLAND STATES COMMITTEE

35. In view of the particular difficulties faced by the small island country members of the Forum, it was agreed that the Committee on small island states be revived to consider measures for providing assistance to these Forum members and that a report be prepared for the 1991 Forum.

REPORTS OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

36. The Forum received and adopted annual reports of:

- (1) Director of the Forum Fisheries Agency
- (2) Interim Director of the Pacific Islands Development Program
- (3) Director of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
- (4) Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific

(5) Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat

(6) Coordinator of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

37. The Forum accepted with appreciation the offer by the President of the Federated States of Micronesia to host the Twenty-Second South Pacific Forum in 1991.

Forum Secretariat, Port Vila
2 August 1990