



## HIRI DECLARATION

### “STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS TO ENHANCE PACIFIC REGIONALISM”

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**We**, the Heads of States and Governments of the Pacific Islands Forum Member Countries, having met in Port Moresby for the Forty-Sixth Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting;

1. **Acknowledge** the rich historical and cultural heritage that the People of the Pacific were engaged in, particularly extensive barter networks and the protection and utilization of our Ocean and its resources, especially fisheries. Further acknowledge that these traditional and cultural trading networks provided sustenance and brought together our People;
2. **Pay** homage to our ancestors for setting the legacy, cultural and traditional networks, and note the various trading and social interactions including the Lapita culture, the Hiri and Rai trading systems in the Pacific region and similar interactions and exchanges by the indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand;
3. **Recognize** that these interactions and exchanges created our identity, promoted cooperation and integration at people-to-people level, improved trading and barter systems, encouraged transfer of traditional knowledge, skills and values and taught us the importance of strong connections and cooperation among the People of the Forum Member Countries;
4. **Acknowledge** the importance of the establishment of the Forum as the paramount regional organization that promotes cooperation and integration of governance and alignment of policies in order to further Forum members’ shared goals of economic growth, sustainable development and security;

#### 5. Recall

- a. Past Declarations of Forum Leaders that reaffirm the importance of business, trade and investment, sustainable development and management of oceans and resources, gender equality, and the continuous need to address the adverse impacts of climate change, and the security and health needs of the region;
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- b. The SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A) Pathway, which was adopted by the 3<sup>rd</sup> United Nations International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Apia, Samoa in September 2014, as part of the regional cooperation and collaboration on sustainable development issues.

6. **Acknowledge** the efforts and success of the Forum in the following areas:
  - Advancing Pacific issues and concerns at global fora;
  - Decolonization and self government;
  - Advocacy for cessation of nuclear testing;
  - Good governance and security issues;
  - Responsible and sustainable fisheries and environment management practices;
7. **Refer** in this regard to the vision of the 2005 Madang Leaders Retreat that endorsed the Pacific Plan which initially set the direction for issues of common concern and challenges to be progressed and addressed;
8. **Reiterate** the importance of the 2013 Review of the Pacific Plan that sets the foundation and commitment to implement the Framework for Pacific Regionalism;
9. **Draw** attention to the common regional challenges including climate change, disaster risk management, food security, trans-national crime, transportation, maritime surveillance, cyber security, remoteness, susceptibility to external forces, capacity constraints and health issues; and
10. **Call** for a unified approach and increased effort to address these common regional challenges;

**DECLARE** to take effective and meaningful actions to address and implement regional connectivity in three core areas, namely, people to people, institutional and physical connectivity:

### **People To People Connectivity**

**Recognizing** that our People are our most important asset;

11. **Encourage and strengthen** our linkages and common aspirations through enhanced:
  - a. Political dialogue and interactions at all levels;
  - b. Economic, trade, business and investment arrangements including labour mobility and reduction of trade barriers;
  - c. Social, cultural, religious and sporting activities and exchange programmes; and

- d. Gender, youth and disability awareness programmes.

### **Institutional Connectivity**

**Recognizing** the crucial roles played by institutions in enhancing regional connectivity:

12. **Note** that good governance, economic development and social inclusiveness, human rights, security, environment management and conservation measures, climate change mitigation and adaptation in the Forum Member Countries are driven by various state and regional institutions, civil society and faith-based organizations and the private sector;
13. **Encourage** synergy amongst all the national, regional and development partner institutions and organizations to implement effective and cohesive programmes;

### **Physical Connectivity**

**Recognizing** our Ocean as the bridge that links our peoples:

14. **Note** that strong social and economic infrastructure achieves economic integration for the Pacific region and is central to mobility and well being of people and business which enhances connectivity;
15. **Acknowledge** that reliable and safe air and shipping services are essential mechanisms in enhancing connectivity, particularly for movement of goods and services and labour across borders to conduct businesses, promote trade, fisheries, investment and tourism opportunities and improve accessibility to services;
16. **Recognize** the need to enhance and strengthen border and security policies and infrastructure to facilitate movement of professionals and business people to conduct their business towards achieving the broader goals for economic integration;
17. **Recognize** that our shared quest for greater energy security and energy accessibility for all is vital to promote connectivity;
18. **Recognize** that Information Communication Technologies (ICT) contribute to the ease and reduction of cost of conducting business across the borders and enable faster dissemination of information and delivery of services; and

**Reaffirm** that the development of economic infrastructures are vital elements to facilitate economic growth and integration nationally, regionally and globally.

19. **Highlighting** the political, security, economic and social benefits that can be derived from people to people, institutional and physical connectivity;

## COMMITMENT

20. Hereby **commit** ourselves to the pursuit of the goal of strengthening connections to enhance Pacific regionalism for all, that increases our people to people relations, improves institutional governance; and enhances our physical connectivity wherein we can chart our own destiny for a better Pacific by:
- a. **Encouraging** inter-sessional political dialogue to discuss issues of mutual interests;
  - b. **Facilitating** greater movement of people and secure business flows between members through supportive visa, trade and investment policies;
  - c. **Strengthening** linkages between member governments, civil societies and the private sector on common development opportunities and challenges through relevant enabling policy interventions;
  - d. **Reviewing** existing institutional structures and arrangements to improve linkages of programmes and activities to ensure maximised utilization of resources;
  - e. **Improving** the Post Forum Dialogue format.
  - f. **Fostering** Public Private Partnerships through inclusive dialogue such as business to business, creation and enhancing the competitiveness of micro and small to medium enterprises, and improvement of all ICT related infrastructure and services;
  - g. **Creating** an environment that is conducive for business, trade and investment, economic growth and sustainable development to prosper;
  - h. **Calling** for collective action to implement the Regional Road Map for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries;
  - i. **Encouraging** transparent and responsible media coverage that promotes the interests of the region;
  - j. **Undertaking** feasibility studies on the economic viability of intra-regional shipping and air services arrangements;
  - k. **Encouraging** Research and Development on regional issues; and
  - l. **Encouraging** mutual recognition of qualifications and more liberal employment opportunities;

21. Hereby **pledge** to strengthen connections to enhance Pacific regionalism through:
- a. **Implementing** core policy frameworks to encourage greater regional economic integration;
  - b. **Building** good economic and social infrastructure to facilitate the ease of doing business and movement of people across borders; and
  - c. **Sharing** of knowledge, skills, preservation and promotion of our traditional and cultural values and sporting activities.
  - d. **Calling** for greater ambition and commitment at the national, regional and international level to enable our nations to respond to emerging opportunities, issues and challenges; and
  - e. **Calling** on our international partners to align their development cooperation plans with our national priorities and regional integration and cooperation frameworks.

**Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea  
10 September 2015**