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FORTY-FIFTH PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM

KOROR, REPUBLIC OF PALAU

29 – 31 July 2014

FORUM COMMUNIQUÉ



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

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The Forty-Fifth Pacific Islands Forum was held in Koror, Republic of Palau, from 29 – 31 July 2014 and was attended by Heads of State and Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. Australia was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister, New Zealand and the Republic of Vanuatu were represented by their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and Cook Islands by its Minister of Finance. French Polynesia and New Caledonia attended the formal session as Associate Members. Tokelau, Timor-Leste, Wallis and Futuna, the Asian Development Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the United Nations (UN), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the World Bank attended as Observers. The Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP): the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (PIFFA); the Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP); the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC); the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO); the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP); and the University of the South Pacific (USP) were represented by their respective Heads of Organisations and senior officials. The Forum Leaders' Retreat was held at Peleliu State on 31 July 2014.

2. Leaders expressed their deep gratitude to the President, the Government and people of the Republic of Palau for the excellent arrangements made in hosting the 2014 Leaders' meeting, and for the kind hospitality extended to them during their stay in Koror.

FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM

3. Following their decision taken at the Special Leaders Retreat on the Pacific Plan Review on 5 May 2014 in Rarotonga, Cook Islands to re-cast the Pacific Plan as a new Framework for Pacific Regionalism, Leaders endorsed the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, attached at Annex A, which embraces the principle of inclusivity. Leaders encouraged its early implementation while recognising the importance of regional processes in complementing national efforts. Leaders also endorsed the Specialist FOC Sub-Committee for Regionalism, to be composed of allocated positions for suitably-skilled representatives from each sub-region, Australia or New Zealand, a Smaller Island State, civil society and the private sector, with the Secretary General (the permanent Chair of CROP), as Sub-Committee Chair and supported by co-opted specialists as required, and be selected by a panel of Forum members serving on a rotational basis.

4. Leaders noted their directions at their Special Retreat to rationalise ministerial meetings and endorsed the proposed changes to improve cost allocation, focus and time efficiency, and transparency and accountability of meetings. They also affirmed the important roles and continued coordination of CROP agencies in relation to the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and its associated processes and requested all CROP organisations to consult with their

governing bodies and non-member partners on participating in a comprehensive review of regional meetings.

5. Leaders tasked the Forum Secretariat to continue the analysis of Forum regional meetings, including the option of a Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers' meeting, through to completion, and consult with members on its findings, as well as propose recommendations to the next relevant meetings of Ministers or officials. Leaders further tasked the Forum Secretariat to submit a report on rationalisation measures proposed or implemented to the 46th Pacific Islands Forum in 2015.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FORUM COMPACT

6. Leaders endorsed the 2014 Pacific Regional Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Tracking Report and the 2014 Tracking the Effectiveness of Development Efforts in the Pacific Report and acknowledged Forum Island Countries' (FICs) efforts so far on progress towards the MDGs. They continue to uphold their commitment towards achieving the MDGs even if they remain unmet by 2015.

7. Leaders committed themselves and FICs to continue to take an active role in the Forum Compact implementation and to work with development partners to support coherent implementation of Peer Review recommendations and Pacific South-South attachments. Leaders also encouraged development partners to volunteer to be peer reviewed and/or participate in the peer review processes.

THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA/SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, AND THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

8. Leaders reiterated the importance of member countries playing an active role in shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They warmly commended and support the active efforts of Pacific Ambassadors/Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York to shape the Post-2015 Development Agenda, particularly the Troika of Papua New Guinea, Palau and Nauru representing the Pacific region on the SDGs Open Working Group.

9. Leaders expressed their serious concern for the extremely large number of SDGs and targets being discussed at the global level and called on the global community to strive for a more manageable, achievable and limited number of SDGs with clear and relevant targets. They emphasised the importance of incorporating the unfinished business of the MDGs in the SDGs, reflecting the special case of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as a cross-cutting issue, and taking into account the circumstances that have constrained the ability to achieve MDGs in some countries. Leaders made a strong call for the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on Oceans.

10. Accordingly, Leaders tasked the Forum Secretariat, in collaboration with CROP and UN agencies, to fully support and assist member countries throughout the intergovernmental process to determine the SDGs by the Post-2015 Summit in September 2015. Leaders reiterated strong support for a successful Third International Conference on SIDS and affirmed the important roles and continued coordination of CROP agencies in relation to the Third International Conference on SIDS.

11. Leaders called on development partners for their strong commitment and support, particularly including financial assistance, in the implementation and monitoring of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (or the S.A.M.O.A) Pathway Outcomes document. Leaders also acknowledged the importance of the involvement of all stakeholders at the national and local level. They encouraged regional organisations, such as the CROP agencies, to support the delivery of the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway Outcomes document.

12. Leaders highlighted the Forum Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination in the Pacific as a successful existing partnership that should be showcased at the SIDS Conference and committed to support the National Sustainable Development Strategy Partnership Group, the Pacific Ocean Alliance and the Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) Partnership to be launched at the Conference.

13. With respect to the Pacific Regional Data Repository for Sustainable Energy for All (PRDR for SE4ALL), Leaders noted that this has been developed and its portal will be launched at a side-event at the SIDS Conference.

OCEANS

14. Leaders welcomed the Republic of Palau's theme for the 45th Pacific Islands Forum, "The Ocean: Life & Future" which highlighted the Pacific region's many commitments and efforts to sustainably develop, manage and conserve the Pacific Ocean and its resources for present and future generations. Leaders welcomed and endorsed the Palau Declaration "*The Ocean: Life & Future*" *Charting a Course to Sustainability* which is attached at Annex B.

15. Leaders acknowledged their central stewardship role in Pacific Ocean governance, sustainable development, management and conservation. They reaffirmed their commitment to implementation of the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy and the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape. They agreed that the Palau Declaration will provide impetus to, and should be actively promoted at, the SIDS Conference, UNSG 2014 Climate Summit, UNGA69 and in the Post-2015 Development Agenda/SDGs to highlight the importance of the Pacific Ocean to economies, societies, culture and environmental integrity.

16. Leaders noted with concern the rapid decline in tuna stocks, especially bigeye and bluefin tuna stocks, and tasked fisheries ministers to urgently strengthen sustainable fisheries conservation and management plans and measures that constrain and reduce catches based on current and accurate data and information.

17. Leaders called for effective environmental impact assessments, where appropriate, to be incorporated into approval processes and, where necessary, the precautionary principle to be applied to any extractive activities in the Pacific Ocean. Leaders further called for fishery and extractive industry stakeholders, as well as States operating in the region to take on the responsibility to contribute to the rehabilitation of the Oceans and its resources.

18. Leaders welcomed Australia's pledge of AUD 2 billion to extend the Pacific Patrol Boat Program to strengthen monitoring, control and surveillance in the Exclusive Economic Zones of FICs, with the first replacement vessels to come on line from 2018. They acknowledged new Australian funding for aerial maritime surveillance and the secondment of regional officials to

the PIFFA. They also noted that Australian funding for the PIFFA and the SPC would increase to \$40 million over the next four years.

INVASIVE SPECIES

19. Leaders recalled their decisions from the 2013 Forum in Majuro, acknowledging the importance of effectively dealing with invasive species through integrated action and effective partnerships to reduce the threats to Pacific economies, communities and environments, and to enhance climate change adaptation and sustainable development efforts.

20. Leaders acknowledged the progress made by SPREP and SPC in formalising the establishment of the Invasive Species Advisory Group, under the auspices of the Heads of CROP agencies. Leaders further acknowledged and welcomed the contribution of the Pacific Invasive Partnership through preparation of a report on the state of invasive species management in the Forum region.

21. Leaders welcomed the Pacific Commitment to combat invasive species noting announcements by some of the Forum members toward this commitment and called upon development partners and donor community to support the Pacific Commitment to strengthen efforts to prevent, control and eradicate invasive species in Forum Countries.

FIJI

22. Leaders requested the Ministerial Contact Group (MCG) to make a recommendation to Leaders following the election in Fiji regarding Fiji's re-admission to the Forum based on an assessment of the report of the Multinational Observer Group and any other factors the MCG wishes to take into account. Leaders expressed their expectation that a positive report by the MCG about Fiji's election would form the basis for the MCG to recommend that Leaders fully lift Fiji's suspension from the Forum so that it can participate in all Forum activities, including the meetings of the Forum Leaders. Leaders agreed that in these circumstances, the Forum Secretariat would facilitate all Pacific ACP meetings and related activities.

REGIONAL ASSISTANCE MISSION TO SOLOMON ISLANDS (RAMSI)

23. Leaders noted the postponement of the meeting of the Enhanced Consultative Mechanism (ECM) on RAMSI and the proposed plan to convene a meeting of the ECM in August 2014 and looked forward to the meeting outcomes for consideration out-of-session.

TRANSNATIONAL AND BROADER SECURITY ISSUES

24. Leaders endorsed the Forum Security Sector Governance Guiding Principles. They also encouraged the United States to ratify the Protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty as soon as possible. Leaders also noted and supported the Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme's Nadi Accord on Culture, Religion and Tradition which declared that culture, religion and tradition can never be an "excuse for abuse".

RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINANTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

25. Leaders recalled that the Marshall Islands were placed under the trusteeship of the United States of America by the international community, which therefore has an ongoing obligation to encourage a final and just resolution for the Marshallese people. Leaders noted the findings in the Special Rapporteur's report to the UN Human Rights Council and supported bilateral and multilateral action to assist the Marshall Islands in its efforts to engage the United States towards a justified resolution to the U.S. Nuclear Testing Programme. Leaders considered submitting another letter to the United States Government urging the United States to take action to address meaningfully the lingering needs resulting from the U.S. Nuclear Testing Programme and to stand in solidarity with the people of the Marshall Islands as they face the challenges of overcoming the ongoing legacy of the nuclear weapons testing programme.

PRIVATE SECTOR DIALOGUE

26. Leaders noted the strengthened Private Sector Dialogue arrangement involving the Economic Ministers and expressed their support for the theme of the 2015 Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting 'The development of, and increased engagement with the private sector in the region'.

APPLICATIONS FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP AND FORUM OBSERVER

27. Leaders agreed to admit Tokelau as an Associate Member and invite the International Organization for Migration to become an Observer in the Forum.

PARTNERSHIP MECHANISMS INCLUDING APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION AS POST-FORUM DIALOGUE PARTNERS

28. Leaders acknowledged the commitment of the region's development partners to meaningful dialogue towards strengthening political and strategic partnerships with the Pacific and agreed to admit Spain and Turkey to Post-Forum Dialogue Partner membership to take immediate effect.

CANDIDACIES

29. Leaders reaffirmed support for New Zealand's candidature for the 2015 – 2016 term of the United Nations Security Council to maintain a Pacific voice in the world's primary body to address international peace and security.

30. Leaders noted the importance of their decisions being adhered to in relation to votes for international elections.

EUROPEAN UNION – PACIFIC ACP SUMMIT

31. Leaders welcomed the prospects of regular high level EU-Pacific ACP meetings to further strengthen the relationship. Leaders tasked the Forum Secretariat to facilitate arrangements for these meetings.

OUTCOMES OF THE SIS LEADERS MEETING

32. Leaders endorsed the outcomes of the SIS Leaders Meeting held in Koror, Republic of Palau on 29 July 2014.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

33. Leaders expressed appreciation to Nauru, as their tenure as Chair of AOSIS comes to a close, for their leadership in advocating SIDS issues at international level.

APPOINTMENT OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARY GENERAL

34. Leaders agreed to appoint Dame Meg Taylor as the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat for a three-year term.

APPRECIATION TO THE OUTGOING FORUM CHAIR

35. Leaders commended the outgoing Forum Chair, His Excellency Christopher Jorebon Loeak, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and his Government for their leadership of the Forum over the past year.

APPRECIATION TO OUTGOING SECRETARY GENERAL

36. Forum Leaders expressed their deep appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing Secretary General, Mr Tuiloma Neroni Slade for his significant and valued contribution to the strengthening of the region during his six years in office. Leaders particularly acknowledged the Secretary General's contribution during challenging times.

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

37. Leaders welcomed and confirmed the future hosts of the Forum as follows: Papua New Guinea in 2015; the Federated States of Micronesia in 2016; Samoa in 2017; Nauru in 2018 and Tuvalu in 2019.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
Peleliu State, Republic of Palau
31 July 2014

Framework for Pacific Regionalism

FORUM LEADERS' STATEMENT

Pacific peoples are the custodians of the world's largest, most peaceful and abundant ocean, its many islands and its rich diversity of cultures.

We celebrate and draw strength from the culture and traditions, language, social values, and religious freedoms and beliefs that bind citizens and communities together, providing sustenance, social stability, and resilience.

We acknowledge our shared responsibility for our significant terrestrial and oceanic resources, which provide livelihoods and opportunities for sustainable development.

We also face significant challenges, including complex vulnerabilities, dependencies, and uncertainties that arise for countries and communities as our region changes with modernity, the processes of globalisation, and the damaging effects of climate change.

We stand together as a Pacific region because there are significant benefits to sharing and combining our resources to leverage our voice, influence and competitiveness, and to overcome geographical and demographic disadvantages.

From its foundation, the Pacific Islands Forum has recognised the advantages of shared purpose and of close cooperation and coordination. Our nations commit to working together to address our common challenges, harness shared strengths, and ensure that our individual and collective advancement brings practical benefits to all Pacific people. Deeper regionalism will help increase market opportunities, improve service delivery, and ensure good governance for Pacific people.

Forum Leaders embrace Pacific regionalism as:

The expression of a common sense of identity and purpose, leading progressively to the sharing of institutions, resources, and markets, with the purpose of complementing national efforts, overcoming common constraints, and enhancing sustainable and inclusive development within Pacific countries and territories and for the Pacific region as a whole.

For successful implementation of this *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*, which replaces the Pacific Plan, we seek the support, commitment, and ownership of all Pacific people, including governments and administrations, civil society organisations, private sector representatives, regional organisations, development partners, media, and other key stakeholders.

Framework for Pacific Regionalism

Vision

Our Pacific Vision is for a *region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives.*

Values

We value and depend upon the integrity of our vast ocean and our island resources.

We treasure the diversity and heritage of the Pacific and seek an inclusive future in which cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are valued, honoured and developed.

We embrace good governance, the full observance of democratic values, the rule of law, the defence and promotion of all human rights, gender equality, and commitment to just societies.

We seek peaceful, safe, and stable communities and countries, ensuring full security and wellbeing for the peoples of the Pacific.

We support full inclusivity, equity and equality for *all* people of the Pacific.

We strive for effective, open and honest relationships and inclusive and enduring partnerships—based on mutual accountability and respect—with each other, within our sub-regions, within our region, and beyond.

These Pacific regional values will guide all our policy-making and implementation.

Objectives

Our principal objectives are:

- Sustainable development that combines economic social, and cultural development in ways that improve livelihoods and well-being and use the environment sustainably;
- Economic growth that is inclusive and equitable;
- Strengthened governance, legal, financial, and administrative systems; and
- Security that ensures stable and safe human, environmental and political conditions for all.

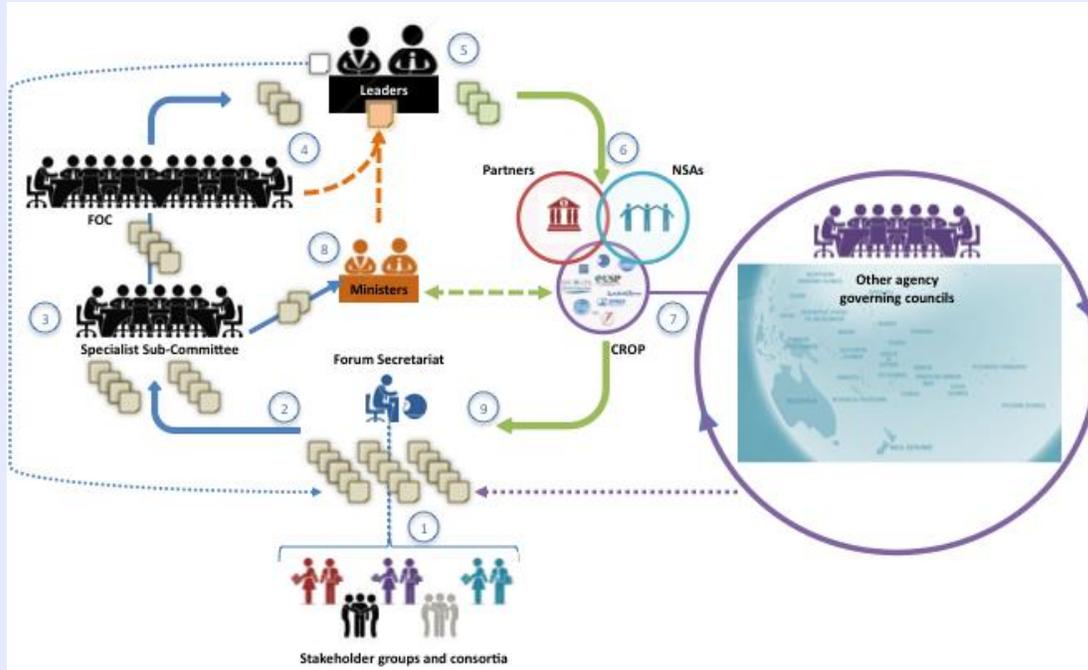
Forms of Regionalism

For each of the principal objectives, Pacific countries will adopt forms of regionalism, drawing from the collective actions below, that work in support of deeper regionalism.

Regional collective action	To achieve:	By:	Requiring:
<i>Coordination</i>	Open consultation and access to information; and coordinated application of shared, best-practice norms and standards.	Establishing and managing agreed processes that facilitate regional dialogue and access to (and use of) information.	Voluntary consultations and agreements; possible resource sharing.
<i>Cooperation</i>	An effective and strengthened voice in protecting and sustainably harnessing the region's physical, social and cultural assets for the benefit of all.	Developing and committing to coordinated regional or sub-regional policies and strategies.	Voluntary agreement to modes of regional cooperation; services are mainly funded and delivered nationally.
<i>Collaboration</i>	Achievement of economies of scale and equitable benefits that cannot be achieved nationally.	Delivering regional public goods and pooled services.	Voluntary agreement to modes of regional collaboration; national governments are freed from daily management of these priorities.
<i>Harmonisation</i>	Achievement of shared institutional and/or legal objectives.	Entering into specific regional or sub-regional commitments to common policies, regulations, standards and/or processes.	Legally binding arrangements, including commitment to national resource allocation; each country free to amend their internal laws / requirements to meet the shared regional objectives.
<i>Economic integration</i>	Greater economic prosperity founded on regional economic integration and sustainability and the equitable distribution of benefits and costs.	Lowering physical and technical market barriers to enable freer movement of people and goods within and among countries.	Legally binding arrangements, including commitment to national resource allocation; each country commits to amending their internal laws / requirements to meet the shared regional objectives.
<i>Administrative / legal / institutional integration</i>	A secure and well governed Pacific region pledged to upholding regional values.	Agreeing to common rules, standards and institutions to foster and sustain integration.	Legally binding arrangements, including commitment to national resource allocation and to operating within regionally mandated requirements.

Process for priority setting

To further regionalism in line with the vision, values, objectives, and forms of regionalism set out above, **Pacific countries will prioritise major regional initiatives for Leaders' oversight** through the following process:



① All interested stakeholders will be eligible to submit proposals for new regional initiatives to be overseen and driven by Forum Leaders. Proposals will be submitted to the Forum Secretariat, using a standard template that demonstrates how the proposed initiative is in line with the values and objectives established in this Framework, and how it meets the approved tests for regional action (see Annex 1). The Forum Secretariat will assist stakeholders requiring assistance with this process.

② The Forum Secretariat will check proposals for completeness, and will compile all eligible and viable proposals for further consideration by a specialist sub-committee of the Forum Officials Committee (FOC). The list of proposals will be made publically available.

③ The FOC specialist sub-committee will review new proposals alongside progress reports for any existing initiatives. It will evaluate whether any existing priorities should be halted due to lack of progress or unfavourable re-evaluation against the tests; and whether any new proposals should be put forward for the consideration of Leaders. The specialist sub-committee's decisions will be made public and will follow clear and transparent principles aligned with the values and objectives set out in this Framework.

④ The FOC will receive the specialist sub-committee's report to Leaders, and have an opportunity to provide comments or further advice to Leaders. The FOC will compose a proposed agenda for Leaders, including consideration of the recommendations of the specialist sub-committee, consideration of pressing issues forwarded to Leaders from Ministerial meetings, and political issues identified by FOC as requiring Leaders' guidance. The FOC will have responsibility for ensuring that politically sensitive and major regional issues and initiatives are the focus of Leaders' meeting agendas.

⑤ At their annual Forum, Leaders:

- Will be invited to consider the specialist sub-committee's recommendations, identify a small number

of regional initiatives for the region to focus on (with no more than five, ongoing or new, to be selected at any one time), and provide directions on further policy development, implementation, and reporting;

- Will have opportunity to discuss other highest-priority concerns raised by Ministers and the FOC for Leaders' guidance; and
- May propose new ideas for regional initiatives, which would be subjected to the evaluation and priority-setting process set out in the previous steps.

6 If an initiative is selected by Leaders for their oversight, the relevant agencies, organisations, and partners involved in proposing the initiative would work together on its implementation.

7 Work on regional initiatives selected by Leaders through this Framework should be consistent with the work plans already agreed on by the governing bodies of the relevant agencies, organisations, and partners. In addition to their broader programme of ongoing work in the region, these agencies may develop future proposals for new regional initiatives, which would be subjected to the evaluation and priority-setting process set out above.

8 Regional initiatives that are not recommended by the specialist sub-committee for Leaders-level oversight may be overseen by Ministers—who retain decision-making responsibilities in their areas of sectoral expertise—by officials or by the Governing Council of the relevant CROP agency.

9 The Forum Secretariat will compile progress reports for existing priority areas, at least annually. Progress reports will detail actions taken and costs incurred, and provide an updated evaluation against the tests for regional action. These progress reports will be shared with the original proponents and implementers for comment before being forwarded (along with stakeholders' comments) to the specialist sub-committee, FOC and Leaders and be made publically accessible.

Measuring progress

Progress will be monitored by:

- Relevant implementing agencies identifying measurable indicators of outcomes and impacts for each initiative, linked to the Framework's principal objectives;
- Relevant implementing agencies ensuring every initiative has a detailed implementation and monitoring plan;
- The Forum Secretariat analysing and reporting on areas of major progress in initiatives on an annual basis, with reference to the measurable indicators;
- The Forum Secretariat regularly sending high-level delegations to visit Member countries and to hold open dialogues with key stakeholders across the Pacific on progress towards regionalism, including the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Framework and its supporting processes, and the contribution of regionalism towards national plans and objectives;
- The Forum Secretariat working together with CROP agencies to develop a high-level regional monitoring framework, linking regional work across key areas to the pursuit of higher-order objectives for regionalism and the fulfilment of SDGs / post-2015 development goals;
- The specialist- sub-committee reviewing progress reports from the Forum Secretariat, and preparing a brief report to Leaders highlighting important issues for consideration, including points of notable progress or concern;
- Ministers reviewing progress and making decisions in their areas of mandate, related to the pursuit of regional cooperation and integration; and
- Leaders reviewing progress and determining the continuing value of major initiatives in advancing the regionalism agenda.

Proposed Tests for Regional Action

More specific and detailed criteria and evaluation guidelines, including a relative weighting for each test, will be developed and made public and will be used consistently by the Forum Secretariat and the specialist sub-committee in assessing regional initiatives.

Test	Criteria for regional implementation
• Market test	The initiative should not involve a service that markets can provide well.
• Sovereignty test	The initiative should maintain the degree of effective sovereignty held by national governments (countries, not regional bodies, should decide priorities).
• Regionalism test	<p>The initiative should meet one of the following criteria at a sub-regional or regional level, in support of national priorities and objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. establish a shared norm or standard</i> <i>ii. establish a common position on an issue</i> <i>iii. deliver a public or quasi-public good which is regional (or sub-regional) in its scope</i> <i>iv. realise economies of scale</i> <i>v. overcome national capacity constraints</i> <i>vi. complement national governments where they lack capacity to provide national public goods like security or the rule of law</i> <i>vii. facilitate economic or political integration</i> <p>Where benefits accrue sub-regionally, the contribution to broader regionalism should be clear.</p>
• Benefit test	<p>The initiative should bring substantial net benefits, as demonstrated by a cost-benefit analysis. The distribution of benefits across countries and across stakeholders within the region should also be considered—particularly with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relative costs and benefits for smaller island states (an “SIS test”). • How inclusive the proposal is of all stakeholders who might benefit from regionalism.
• Political oversight test	The initiative should require the Leaders’ attention and input (as opposed to being within the mandate of Ministers or other governing bodies).
• Risk and sustainability test	The initiative should demonstrate a robust risk and sustainability evaluation, be based on a sound implementation plan, be supported by some identified funding, and demonstrate available capacity and experience for successful implementation.
• Duplication test	The initiative should not be currently under progress by another organisation or process, and there should be no duplication of effort.

Palau Declaration on ‘The Ocean: Life and Future’

Charting a course to sustainability

Importance of the Ocean to us

1. As Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, we have and will continue to play a central role in the stewardship of one of the greatest natural endowments in the world – the Pacific Ocean. It is the lifeblood of our economies and societies and is crucial to global climatic and environmental stability. It is the fabric of unity upon which we have woven individual and collective relationships and agreements on sustainable development, now and into the future. The Ocean is our Life and our Future. The people of the Pacific Ocean are a living testament to that truth. Our way of life, our culture, our direction and our actions should reflect that truth, as it is our very identity: People of the Ocean.

2. The well-being of our Pacific people remains the central point of reference and convergence for our efforts to sustainably develop, manage and conserve our Pacific Ocean and its resources. This is made all the more important as many of our countries are faced with: increased dependency on imported foods; a growing Non-Communicable Disease crisis in Pacific communities; slow to moderate economic growth rates; high transport costs; fossil fuel dependency; growing urbanization; growing population rates and adverse impacts from climate change. The health and productivity of the Pacific Ocean is significant for all of these development challenges, now and into the future.

Threats to the Ocean and populations

3. In our life time, a dangerous combination of human impacts has come to threaten the foundation of our Pacific livelihoods, which centers largely on the Pacific Ocean, and indeed those of the rest of the world. Over harvesting and overfishing, dangerous fishing practices and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing (IUU), damaging extractive industries, pollution, invasive species, coastal runoff, and other stressors (both local and exogenous) have weakened the resilience of many marine ecosystems and constitute a massive threat to the health and productivity of the ocean and its resources. Compounding these pressures, global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions are contributing to ocean warming, more frequent and extreme weather events, sea level rise and acidification and potential loss of territories present the greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific and one of the greatest challenges for the entire world. The implications of these challenges to the populations of the Pacific are very significant and must be addressed.

4. IUU fishing robs the Pacific of its development opportunities, reduces revenue from fisheries, undermines investment and employment opportunities and threatens the sustainability of fish stocks. A growing number of marine protected areas and conservation initiatives implemented in the region have significant opportunity costs largely borne by Forum Island countries themselves. Effectively implementing marine protected areas will provide global and regional benefits.

Lifting accountability across Ocean development

5. The outcome of Rio+20 Conference, *The Future We Want*, placed Oceans as central to sustainable development, stressing the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and seas, and of their resources, to sustainable development through their contributions to poverty eradication, sustained economic growth, food security and creation of sustainable livelihoods and decent work, while at the same time protecting biodiversity and the marine environment and addressing the impacts of climate change. It further called for the establishment of global sustainable development goals (SDG).

6. The Forum membership took a strong position on the importance of having a comprehensive stand-alone Sustainable Development Goal on Oceans complemented by comprehensive national, regional and international commitments and action as a key part of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and as central elements of our priorities as we prepare for the 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Apia, Samoa, 1 - 4 September 2014.

7. Leaders and communities have developed and are implementing many significant local, national, sub-regional, regional and international initiatives across all aspects of sustainable Ocean management. To this end, as a comprehensive regional umbrella framework, Forum Leaders approved the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP) in 2002 and towards its reinvigorated commitment and implementation, endorsed the ‘Our Sea of Islands – Our Livelihoods – Our Oceania: a Framework for Pacific Oceanscape’ in 2010. These holistic Pacific Ocean policy frameworks for sustainable development are underpinned by some of the world’s most advanced regional multilateral organizations and processes.

Integrated and Mixed Management Approach

8. These umbrella frameworks stress the fact that the sustainable development, management and conservation of the Ocean can only be achieved through integrated and **mixed management approaches** to maximize benefits for our people and conserving our Ocean assets for future generations. This approach recognizes jurisdictional rights, fosters good ocean governance, encourages sustained action and facilitates adaptation to a rapidly changing environment. It also recognizes that what works best for one community or country may not work best and may not be possible in another – and in spite of our different approaches, we are fundamentally working towards the same objective – responsible and sustainable development of our Ocean and its resources.

A call to Action

9. We call on regional and global partners, including civil society and the private sector to work with members and the Forum Fisheries Agency to evaluate and implement appropriate solutions to address IUU and associated significant loss of fisheries earnings to Pacific Island countries. Accordingly, we welcome the entry into force of the Niue Treaty on Cooperation in Fisheries Surveillance and Law Enforcement in the South Pacific Region which provides for enhanced regional coordination and cooperation in fisheries surveillance and law enforcement,

for example through the sharing of fisheries data and intelligence and cross-vesting of fisheries enforcement personnel amongst parties.

10. We call for strengthened regional efforts to fix baselines and maritime boundaries to ensure that the impact of climate change and sea level rise does not result in reduced jurisdiction.

11. We call for members to ensure that, where appropriate, effective environmental impact assessments are undertaken and incorporated into approval processes for any extractive activities in the Pacific Ocean, and where necessary, the precautionary principle is applied. We further call for fisheries and extractive industries, stakeholders and States operating in the region to take on the responsibility to contribute to the rehabilitation of the Ocean and its resources.

12. We call on the global community to support the efforts of Forum Island countries to sustainably conserve their Ocean resources and explore ways to share costs and avoid a disproportionate burden on Forum Island countries.

13. We support a decision in favour of launching negotiations by September 2015 for an International Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

14. Taking ‘leadership through action’ promoted by the 44th PIF Majuro Declaration as our inspiration, we have prepared a list of current and proposed initiatives and commitments on the ocean taken by Forum member States. Those initiatives are listed with this declaration and serve as a basis and an inspiration for future integrated management approaches, actions and commitments by PIF nations as well as other nations and regional and international partners and institutions. These actions should assist to foster further implementation and accountability towards the achievement of the Post-2015 Development agenda and associated SDG on Oceans and Seas.

15. We call on the office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, with the support of the Pacific Ocean Alliance, to build on the actions listed with this Declaration and maintain a more comprehensive ongoing register of initiatives and relevant data and information across the spectrum of the Pacific Ocean as a basis for promoting and monitoring the sustainable development of our Ocean and fostering integrated management approaches, where appropriate. This register should assist in reducing individual country reporting in the long term and help to facilitate the necessary collective reporting from this region towards global monitoring efforts under the SDG on Oceans and Seas and the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

16. This Declaration will be presented by the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum to the Secretary-General of the United Nations as a contribution to the global effort to support a comprehensive, effective and implementable stand-alone Oceans Sustainable Development Goal and to the preservation of our Pacific Ocean.