

DECISIONS & Resolution: Réunion des leaders de la région pacifique du groupe ACP, 5 septembre 2017, Apia, Samoa.

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[Disponible en anglais]

SUMMARY DECISIONS

Pacific ACP (PACP) Leaders and their representatives from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu met on 5 September 2017 in Apia, Samoa. The Meeting was chaired by Honourable Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Sa'ilele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa.

2. In her opening statement, the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Dame Meg Taylor urged Members to be proactive in ensuring that the development support is channeled effectively to the Pacific region and aligns with the regional priorities. She encouraged the PACP States to capitalise on the renewed impetus and new narrative relating to The Blue Pacific, the theme of the 48th Pacific Islands Forum, which focuses on strengthening the region's collective identity and political action to advance regional priorities.

3. The Chair acknowledged the President of the Federated States of Micronesia, H.E Peter M. Christian for his stewardship during his term as the PACP Chair. He thanked the PACP Officials, Forum Secretariat, ACP Secretariat and other regional technical agencies in supporting the PACPS priorities and impressed on the need for collaboration on all fronts. He called on the PACPS for their active participation in discussions with the European Union (EU) on future partnerships and voice the challenges in areas such as climate change, renewable energy and sustainable development, including the management and conservation of our Ocean and its resources, and to ensure that the vision, objectives and priorities as articulated through the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, fundamentally guides the EU's relations with the Pacific region in the post-2020 era.

PACIFIC REGIONAL INDICATIVE PROGRAMME (PRIP)

4. Noting the significant delays in the programming of the 11th cycle of the European Development Fund (EDF11) PRIP, Leaders called on all stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the regional initiatives, including on the monitoring and evaluation of ongoing EU-funded programmes in the region. Leaders **expressed** concern that a Mid-Term Review has been initiated by the EU without any disbursements being made.

5. Leaders **urged** the EU not to make any cuts or further rebalancing of the EDF11 PRIP.

6. Leaders **highlighted** the importance of the PRIP Priority Area 1 relating to Regional Economic Integration (REI), particularly through intra-regional trade and private sector development, including the development of the tourism sector; and

urged the EU that the allocation of €37 million should not be reduced any further and guarantees from the EU be sought to this effect.

7. Leaders **requested** the EU to speed up the commitment and finalisation of EDF11 PRIP initiatives, so that all programmes are underway by the first quarter of 2018.

8. Leaders **urged** that the EU use international auditors domiciled in the region for all future examination and audits of financial records of EDF programmes due to their familiarity with the region.

9. Leaders **agreed** to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Regional Authorising Officer (RAO) to ensure effective coordination support, monitoring and evaluation for the implementation of the EDF11 PRIP.

10. Leaders **noted** that the EDF resources are linked to the Cotonou Agreement, with continuity of EU support beyond 2020 dependent upon any new arrangements to be negotiated and agreed to in the Post-Cotonou Agreement.

KEY INTRA-ACP ISSUES

11. While noting that the intra-ACP funding offer additional opportunities to secure financial resources to complement regional and national initiatives under EDF11 programming, Leaders **expressed** concerns that historically, the PACPS have had little success in securing significant resources from the broader Intra-ACP envelope.

12. Leaders **urged** the ACP Secretariat and regional organisations to ensure increased awareness of intra-ACP programmes and modalities to enable PACPS to benefit from the intra-ACP funds, including through the multi-country initiatives.

13. Leaders **urged** the ACP Secretariat and relevant regional organisations, in close consultation with the PACP Ambassadors in Brussels, to assist with the implementation of the 2014-2020 ACP Private Sector Development Strategy in the Pacific with a particular focus on the regional priorities, noting PIFS role as the Regional Focal Point.

14. Leaders **agreed** that PACPS submit related project proposals for financial support under the private sector financing envelope for the EDF11 intra-ACP facility, in alignment with the eligibility criteria, including for intra-ACP support and Investment Facility for the Pacific.

PREPARATIONS FOR A SUCCESSOR TO THE COTONOU AGREEMENT

15. Leaders **noted** that the negotiations for a successor to the Cotonou Agreement is to commence no later than August 2018, and that the Pacific region needs to be strategically represented in the agreed ACP Group negotiating structure with the EU for a post-Cotonou arrangement. Leaders **reconfirmed** Forum Secretariat's role as the regional coordinating entity on post-Cotonou negotiations, and the continuing role of PACP Ambassadors in support of the region.

16. Leaders **supported** the ACP policy framework as outlined in the document "Towards the ACP We Want";

17. Leaders **endorsed** the attached *PACP Leaders Resolution on the future of the ACP Group post-2020*, for circulation to European Council and Parliament, and the ACP Group structure.

18. Leaders **agreed** that Papua New Guinea and Samoa be the PACP Ministerial representatives at the political-level in the Central Negotiating Group in their respective roles as the current ACP and PACP group chairs respectively. Leaders **agreed** that Fiji and Solomon Islands be the alternate representatives.

19. Leaders **agreed** that the PACP Ambassadorial-level representatives on the Technical Negotiating Teams (TNT) be determined by the PACP Ambassadors in Brussels, and expressed preference for the PACP region to chair in the first instance the TNT on Trade, Investment, Industrialisation and Services; and in the second instance the TNT on Development Cooperation, Technology, Science and Innovation/Research.

20. Leaders **urged** the ACP Secretariat and the PACP Ambassadors Coordinator to keep PACPS informed of the negotiating briefs on post-Cotonou related issues through the Forum Secretariat, and liaise with the ACP Secretariat on the ACP outreach mission to the Pacific on this matter.

21. Leaders **requested** that the ACP Secretariat and the EU allocate adequate resources for the PACPS and the Forum Secretariat to ensure effective engagement in these negotiations by the PACP region.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

22. Leaders **noted** the need for the PACPS to consult, engage and coordinate on key regional issues through various platforms and institutional arrangements in Brussels as a priority given the imminent start of Post-Cotonou negotiations.

23. Leaders **urged** the EU to allocate resources for effective PACP engagement with EU, including a presence in Brussels **noting** that the PIFS Geneva Office is currently undertaking the necessary outreach work on ACP/EU matters within the resource constraints it has.

24. Leaders **tasked** the Forum Secretariat and PACP Ambassadors in Brussels to progress further a High Level EU-Pacific Summit in 2018.

TRADE RELATED ISSUES-WTO, PICTA AND EPA

25. Leaders **noted** the importance of increased engagement by Members in trade arrangements such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the PACP-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) to contribute positively to regionalism and economic development.

26. Leaders **encouraged** Forum Island Country (FIC) WTO Members to remain actively engaged and to build strategic coalitions with 'like-minded' partners to help shape the agenda and outcomes of the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC11) on fisheries subsidies, agriculture, development issues, and potentially e-commerce.

27. Leaders **strongly encouraged** FIC WTO Members to ensure Ministerial-level participation at MC11, given the importance of fisheries and agriculture to their respective economies.

28. Leaders **directed** the Secretariat to facilitate the review of the PICTA Rules of Origin (ROO) and the establishment of a PICTA ROO Committee.

29. Leaders **agreed** that the PICTA framework should provide for deeper integration among the FICs.

30. Leaders **welcomed** Kiribati's completion of its domestic processes and announcement of its readiness to trade under PICTA.

31. Leaders **tasked** the Secretariat to undertake a comprehensive review of Members' commitments under the various trade-

related agreements they are parties to.

32. Leaders **urged** the EU to allocate adequate resources in the 11th EDF PRIP to allow for PACPS' engagement in their EPA with the EU.

33. The Chair thanked the Leaders for their contributions and decisions, and the Forum Secretariat for its ongoing support.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

Apia, Samoa

5 September 2017

**RESOLUTION OF THE PACIFIC ACP LEADERS ON THE FUTURE OF THE ACP GROUP POST-2020
AT THEIR MEETING HELD IN APIA, SAMOA ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2017:**

The Pacific ACP Leaders,

Recalling the objectives of the Georgetown Agreement and in particular the desirability of strengthening and enhancing the unity and solidarity of the ACP Group;

Having regard to the decisions of the 7th and 8th Summits of ACP Heads of State and Government held in Sipopo and Port Moresby respectively, **reaffirming** the need for the ACP Group to negotiate a post-2020 Agreement with the EU as a unified entity with a single ACP position and speaking with one voice;

Noting the decisions taken by the ACP Council of Ministers at their 104th and 105th Sessions held in Brussels in November 2016 and May 2017 respectively, and in particular the policy framework document entitled "Towards the ACP We Want" setting out the three strategic pillars to guide the work and focus of the Group's activities post-2020, and mandating the Committee of Ambassadors to commence work on the structure, governing organs and institutional arrangements to allow the Group to successfully accomplish its vision, mission and objectives;

Recalling also the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* as setting the scene for the Pacific in its vision for "a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy and productive lives" and the Mulifanua Conclusions and Recommendations of 2013 from the Pacific Conference on Future Perspective for the ACP Group Beyond 2020;

Recognising the benefits from the Cotonou Agreement towards the development of Pacific people;

Having regard also to the upcoming negotiations between the ACP Group and the EU and the necessity to secure a legally binding successor agreement to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement as well as the decision by Council to establish a Central Negotiating Group as well as three Technical Negotiating Teams to advance and secure the interests of the ACP Group during negotiations.

Hereby Resolve to:

Reaffirm our strong commitment to and support of the decisions taken by the ACP Summits and the ACP Council of Ministers for the ACP Group to negotiate a successor post-2020 agreement with the EU as a single unified trans-regional entity with guidance to be provided by a Central Negotiating Group composed of Ministerial representations from the six ACP regions;

Reaffirm also our commitment to work in mutual understanding and cooperation with other ACP regions and endeavour to

further enhance the relationship and engagement with the ACP Group in the spirit of partnership, unity and solidarity;

Commend the leadership of the ACP Group in repositioning itself so as to advocate for opportunities that present themselves in preparations for post-2020 relations with the EU including securing better ACP trade and economic deals with others outside the EU frame including the United Kingdom when it leaves the EU;

Call on the EU to accelerate the full disbursement of financial commitments made under the 10th and 11th EDF, and engage in negotiations with the ACP Group in the spirit of true partnership to agree a legally binding treaty to the current ACP-EU Partnership Agreement and to take into account the challenges and opportunities available to both parties and in tune with the Sustainable Development Goals and the outcomes emanating from Paris Agreement on Climate Change; and

Request the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary-General to forward this resolution to the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament and all duly mandated regional integration organisations in ACP regions.

[end]

For more information, visit the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat website: www.forumsec.org [1]

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Liens:

[1] <http://www.forumsec.org/index2.cfm>

[2] <http://acp.int/fr/category/story-type/declarations-0>