

The following message is from Forum Secretariat:

Title: Forum Leaders endorse the Niue Declaration on Climate Change Content:

*PRESS STATEMENT
26th August 2008*

PACIFIC ISLAND FORUM LEADERS ENDORSE THE NIUE DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The 39th Pacific Island Forum held in Niue 19 – 20 August has endorsed the first ever climate change declaration for the region

The Niue Declaration on Climate Change states:

“We, the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, meeting in Niue:

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the serious current impacts of and growing threat posed by climate change to the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being and security of Pacific Island countries; and that current and anticipated change in the Pacific climate, coupled with the region’s vulnerability, are expected to exacerbate existing challenges and lead to significant impacts on Pacific countries’ environments, their sustainable development and future survival;

RECALLING that despite being amongst the lowest contributors to factors causing climate change, the Pacific Islands region is one of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change including its exacerbation of climate variability, sea level rise and extreme weather events;

RECOGNISING that societies pursuing a path of sustainable development are likely to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change through enhanced adaptive capacity;

NOTING that despite Pacific Island countries’ low greenhouse gas emissions, they are taking significant steps towards reducing their reliance on fossil fuel, with its detrimental economic and environmental consequences;

RECOGNISING the importance of retaining the Pacific’s social and cultural identity, and the desire of Pacific peoples to continue to live in their own countries, where possible;

RECALLING Forum Leaders’ recognition that climate change is a long-term international challenge requiring a resolute and concerted international effort, and stressing the need for urgent action by the world’s major greenhouse gas emitting countries to set targets and make commitments to significantly reduce their emissions, and to support the most vulnerable countries to adapt to and address the impacts of climate change;

WELCOMING in this context the progress made by the international community in the “Bali Road Map” towards a comprehensive global climate change agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, along with the accompanying Bali Action Plan covering mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology, and a dramatic enhancement of effort under the Kyoto Protocol;

RECALLING the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which calls for Small Island Developing States, with the necessary support of the international community, to establish or strengthen and facilitate regional climate change coordination mechanisms, and calls on the international community to facilitate and promote the development, transfer and dissemination to Small Island Developing States of appropriate technologies and practices to address climate change;

RECALLING ALSO the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change (2006-2015), adopted by Forum Leaders in 2005, which establishes an integrated, programmatic approach to addressing the interlinked causes and effects of climate change-related impacts in the region;

STRESSING the importance of cooperating towards the establishment of an effective post-2012 framework in which all major economies will participate in a responsible manner, underlining the need to achieve both emissions reductions and economic growth in working toward climate stability;

WELCOMING the resources and technical assistance from PFD Partners' including new initiatives such as the Japanese Cool Earth Promotion Programme and the European Union's Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) that support practical measures to address the impacts of climate change in Pacific Island Countries, while noting that the priority of Pacific SIDS is securing sustainable financing for immediate and effective implementation of concrete adaptation programmes on the ground;

HEREBY:

- COMMIT Forum members to continue to develop Pacific-tailored approaches to combating climate change, consistent with their ability to actively defend and protect their own regional environment, with the appropriate support of the international community;
- FURTHER COMMIT the members of the Pacific Islands Forum to continue to advocate and support the recognition, in all international fora, of the urgent social, economic and security threats caused by the adverse impacts of climate change and sea level rise to our territorial integrity and continued existence as viable dynamic communities; and of the potential for climate change to impact on intranational and international security;
- REQUEST the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) – working in cooperation with other regional and international agencies and bilateral climate change programmes – to continue to meet the individual needs of its member countries through its mandated role of:
 - (a) strengthening meteorological services,
 - (b) consolidating and distributing information on climate change,
 - (c) strengthening adaptation and mitigation measures, and
 - (d) increasing Pacific Island countries' capacity to manage their engagement in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and to secure new and additional financial and technical resources to do this work;
- ENCOURAGE the Pacific's Development Partners to increase their technical and financial support for climate change action on adaptation, mitigation and, if necessary, relocation, while welcoming the pledged increases in resources to address the climate change challenge; and to ensure their assistance aligns with regional and national priorities and supports existing regional and national delivery mechanisms (in accordance with the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles 2007, and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness 2005);

- FURTHER ENCOURAGE development partners to increase investment in and support for Pacific Island Countries' efforts to move towards alternative and renewable energy sources, which reduce the emissions of our region and improve energy efficiency, as well as help to address the growing unaffordability of fuel;
- CALL ON international partners to assist our development by undertaking immediate and effective measures to reduce emissions, use cleaner fuels, and increase use of renewable energy sources;
- AGREE that the high sensitivity and vulnerability of Pacific Island Countries to climate change, including its exacerbation of climate variability, sea level rise and extreme weather events, means that adaptation is a critical response for Pacific governments, and requires urgent support from regional agencies and development partners alike;
- ENCOURAGE all Pacific Island countries to act on the ability and information they have now, with the assistance of development partners, to continue to address the impacts of climate change through 'no regrets' or 'low regrets' actions in affected sectors that are already facing development challenges, including food and water security, health, and the capacity to deal with extreme events such as tropical cyclones, flooding and droughts, thereby simultaneously delivering on sustainable development aims;
- AGREE that the exacerbating effects of climate change in the region will require Pacific Island countries to incorporate adaptive strategies into their national sectoral planning, and that this integration will require a high degree of whole-of-government coordination and leadership; and
- DIRECT the Forum Secretariat to work with relevant CROP agencies and Forum members to support the implementation of the commitments made in this Declaration, consistent with the Pacific Plan, the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change, and other existing regional and international initiatives, including examining the potential for regional climate change insurance arrangements, and building regional expertise in the development and deployment of adaptation technologies; and to report on progress to the 2009 Forum Leaders' meeting."