



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**Inaugural European Union – Pacific Islands  
Forum Ministerial Troika  
Final Communiqué  
Brussels, 16 September 2008**

In the framework of the European Union (EU) – Pacific dialogue, the inaugural meeting of the Ministerial Troika of the EU and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) was held in Brussels on 16 September 2008.

The PIF Troika was chaired by The Honourable Mr Toke Tufukia Talagi, Premier of Niue, accompanied by The Honourable Sonatane Tu‘akinamolahi Taumoepeau Tupou, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga, and The Honourable Mr Bob McMullan MP, Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Australia.

The EU Troika was chaired by Mr Alain Joyandet, Minister of State, attached to the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, responsible for Cooperation and Francophony (Presidency of the Council of the EU), accompanied by Mrs Helga Schmid, Director of the Policy Unit at the Council Secretariat, and Mr Stefano Manservigi, Director-General responsible for Development and Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific States, for the Commission. The Czech Republic (incoming Presidency) also attended.

**P R E S S**

## **PREAMBLE**

The EU and the PIF held a Special Consultative Session in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, on 19 October 2007. The Session agreed to launch an enhanced Political Dialogue between the EU and the PIF to reflect their growing relationship.

Representatives meeting at Ministerial level for the first time in Troika format in Brussels, welcomed the opportunity to exchange views on a wide range of topics of mutual interest, notably regional security, rule of law, democratic principles and fundamental human rights, climate change, economic stability, growth and international trade, development cooperation and fisheries.

## **COMMUNIQUE**

### **1. Regional Security and Regional Governance**

Representatives stressed the importance of the enhanced EU – PIF Political Dialogue to enable a structured interaction between the EU and the Pacific region. They recalled the benefits that regional integration brings to peoples and nations of their respective regions, as well as the usefulness of a result-oriented, regular and comprehensive inter-regional dialogue.

#### **Fiji**

The EU recalled that a High-level EU Troika mission visited Fiji on 18-21 June 2008 in the framework of the Article 96 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement procedure with Fiji. The main purpose of the mission was to reassert the EU approach, based on the principles of understanding, engagement and mutual commitments (concept of “reliable partners”), to the crisis following the coup of December 2006. The general objective was to seek to maintain a constructive dialogue based on shared values. The High-level Troika emphasised the importance of progressing towards holding elections in February / March 2009 as well as an inclusive political dialogue.

The PIF recalled that the Ministerial Contact Group established by the Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers to further monitor the progress of Fiji's preparations for the election in March 2009 and the return to democracy visited Fiji in July 2008. The report of the Ministerial Contact Group was considered by PIF Leaders at their meeting in Niue in August 2008.

Representatives noted the PIF Leaders' statement on Fiji and:

- a) reaffirmed the importance of the Interim Government honouring the undertakings it made to Forum Leaders and to the EU in 2007 to return Fiji to democracy by holding an election by February / March 2009 in accordance with Fiji's existing Constitution and electoral laws, and to accept the outcomes of that election;
- b) reaffirmed the readiness of the PIF and the EU to continue to assist Fiji prepare for that election;
- c) urged the Interim Government to maintain respect for human rights and the rule of law;
- d) acknowledged that there are long-term issues that need to be addressed in Fiji, including through independent and inclusive political dialogue. The Representatives recognised that a political dialogue process could assist in developing understanding among key stakeholders;
- e) called on the Interim Government to re-engage in the activities of the Joint Forum – Fiji Working Group and support the work of the Ministerial Contact Group.

#### Solomon Islands

Representatives welcomed the positive developments in Solomon Islands, notably the closer and constructive cooperation between the Solomon Islands Government and the PIF and the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). They noted the positive progress made in developing the Solomon Islands Government – RAMSI Partnership Framework, which provides a mechanism for shared responsibility in setting priorities. Representatives commended the strong commitment of the Solomon Islands Government to reforms aimed at consolidating peace and security, promoting national reconciliation, as well as, delivering social and economic development to the people of Solomon Islands. Representatives noted, however, that Solomon Islands faces difficult economic challenges and encouraged stronger economic discipline and governance. They stressed the need for continued support by the international community to the sustainable and balanced development of Solomon Islands.

#### Nauru

Representatives welcomed the decision of the PIF Leaders to extend the Pacific Regional Assistance to Nauru (PRAN) and the new memorandum of understanding between Nauru and the PIF clarifying their respective roles in the implementation of PRAN. They also welcomed the new strategic sustainable development plan for Nauru.

## 2. Economic stability, growth and international trade

Representatives noted progress in the negotiation of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the Pacific ACP States (PACPS) and the EU. In doing so, they recognised the unique challenges faced by the PACPS in seeking to promote regional integration and to participate meaningfully in the international trading system. PACPS and the EU remain committed to building a long term partnership and concluding by the end of 2008 a comprehensive EPA fully supportive of the developmental aspirations of the PACPS and one that fosters regional integration.

PIF representatives also noted the valuable assistance provided by the EC for the development of trade capacity-building activities in the PACPS and for the operations of the Forum Representative's Office to the WTO in Geneva. That Office has enabled the PACPS to participate actively in WTO affairs in support of regional trade priorities. PIF representatives called on the EC to give favourable consideration to providing continued support for the WTO Office. Representatives undertook to continue their close collaboration in WTO matters wherever possible and agreed on the importance of reaching an ambitious, comprehensive and balanced outcome of the WTO Doha Round as soon as possible.

Representatives welcomed the commitment of the EU to strive to collectively increase its trade-related assistance to € 2 billion per annum by 2010 – 1 billion from the EC and 1 billion from the EU Member States. Representatives stressed the importance of the PACP States receiving a fair portion of the aid-for-trade assistance for ACP States to ensure that PACPS do not become aid-for-trade orphans and will be able to play a full role in the Pacific – EU partnership.

Representatives recognised Governments' shared interest in addressing the regional challenge of delivering sustainable economic growth for a secure, prosperous and stable region underpinned by improved trade and economic integration. Representatives noted the outcomes of the Forum Leaders' meeting in Niue which reaffirmed the pursuit of greater economic integration and trade as a regional priority and the need for officials to formulate a detailed roadmap on PACER Plus with the view to Leaders agreeing at the 2009 Forum to the commencement of negotiations.

## 3. Environment – climate change

Representatives had a constructive discussion on climate change and its impacts. The EU welcomed the Niue Declaration on Climate Change adopted by PIF Leaders on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2008.

Representatives affirmed their commitment to work together to enhance cooperation in international fora and to strengthen efforts to address adaptation to and mitigation of the effects of climate change, including through regular consultations, joint initiatives and leadership in their respective regions. In this context they agreed to finalise a joint EU – PIF Declaration on climate change as a commitment between the two regions to address the challenges posed by climate change and to highlight the importance of the international community agreeing on an ambitious and comprehensive post-2012 climate change agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Such a declaration would be endorsed by the EU and the PIF well ahead of the UNFCCC 14th Conference of Parties in Poznań in December 2008.

Representatives welcomed the Global Climate Change Alliance as a mechanism for improving political dialogue and promoting the exchange of experiences between the European Union and developing countries that are most vulnerable to climate change, such as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), and as a mechanism designed to increase their capacity to adapt to climate change and pursue sustainable development strategies. They also welcomed the continuing assistance provided by Australia, such as the International Climate Change Adaptation Initiative, and New Zealand.

Representatives welcomed the fact that the development assistance made available by the EU in the framework of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF is aligned with Pacific regional and national priorities, with the Energy chapter of the Pacific Plan, as well as with the EU Strategy for the Pacific<sup>1</sup>, where the ‘blue-green’ approach was elaborated with emphasis put on renewable energy and energy efficiency. Representatives noted with satisfaction that most of the National Indicative Programmes agreed by the PACP countries and signed in Nuku‘alofa in October 2007 address the issue of sustainable management of natural resources in the Water and Energy sectors, and – wherever possible – Renewable Energy. These interventions help to address the climate change challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Communication of the Commission “EU Relations with the Pacific Islands – A Strategy for a Strengthened Partnership” of May 2006.

#### 4. Development Cooperation

##### 10<sup>th</sup> EDF Regional Strategy Paper – Regional Indicative Programme (RSP – RIP)

Representatives took note of good progress made on the preparation of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF Regional Strategy Paper and the Regional Indicative Programme for the Pacific. They underlined its political dialogue dimension and the importance they attach to regional integration and cooperation. They welcomed the intention of the EU to ensure that the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF RSP reflects the Pacific Plan and the EU Strategy for the Pacific and that the RIP has tripled from € 29 million to 95 million.

They agreed that the aim should be to finalise the RSP – NIP and sign them either at the European Development Days in Strasbourg on 15-17 November or, at the latest, in the Pacific region by the end of 2008.

##### Aid Effectiveness

Representatives recalled that aid effectiveness is an important issue for the PIF and is a part of the Pacific Plan. In recognising the unique challenges the Pacific faces and the importance of the Paris Declaration, the Pacific as a region has proactively adapted the Paris Principles to the Pacific context. These Pacific Principles adopt the central tenet of the Declaration on Aid Effectiveness while acknowledging the development challenges that countries in the region face.

Representatives welcomed the adoption of the Accra Agenda for Action and committed themselves to its implementation. They urged integration of the Accra Agenda for Action in the development plans of PACPS as soon as possible. Representatives paid special attention to the commitment for donors to agree to use country systems as the first option for aid programmes in support of activities managed by the public sector. Representatives recognised the importance for donors and developing countries jointly assessing the quality of country systems in a country-led process, including: using mutually agreed diagnostic tools to improve developing country ownership of aid; the alignment of aid to partner countries' priorities, systems and processes; harmonisation between donors; managing for results; and mutual accountability between donors and partners and their populations.

## Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Representatives recalled that the international community is approaching the mid-point in its commitment to achieve the MDGs by 2015. Representatives noted that the Pacific region has to date shown mixed results towards the achievement of the MDGs and that poverty is growing in the region. They committed themselves to intensify their efforts to make faster progress towards their achievement.

### 5. Fisheries

Representatives recognised the importance of fisheries, in particular tuna fisheries, for the economic development of Pacific island countries and the need to ensure that the tuna resource is sustainably managed. In this context, they referred to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing as a major threat to sustainability and stressed the importance of a regional approach to effectively combat IUU fishing. The EU referred to its continuous commitment to support the development of the fisheries sector in the Pacific. Representatives emphasised the need for sustainable management of fishery resources, in particular the strengthening of monitoring, control and surveillance mechanisms.

### 6. Follow up

Representatives decided that the next round of the EU – Pacific dialogue will take place at the level of Senior Officials in Suva in the first semester of 2009.