



Nauru Bulletin

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47th Pacific Leaders' forum in Pohnpei

The 47th meeting of Pacific Islands Forum leaders was convened in Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia this month (9-11 Sep) with the theme - "Small and Far: Challenge for Growth", reflecting the challenges and isolation of the islands coupled with the fragility and vulnerability of Pacific Smaller Island States.

The leaders meeting was officially opened on Thursday 8 September with traditional performances and serving of sakau, the traditional drink of Pohnpei.

"Honourable Leaders, it is with great certainty that I report that our tehn waratail, our vaka, our canoe is headed in the right direction – a direction that will lead us to deliver the ambitious vision for the region that you have set out in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. That is, a region of "peace and harmony; security, inclusion, and prosperity," PIF Secretary General Dame Meg Taylor said.

Several priority areas that were identified by the Specialist Sub-Select Committee on Regionalism (SSCR) in 2015 were



Pacific Forum Leaders in Pohnpei

put to Leaders to consider including greater economic returns on fisheries and strengthening of maritime surveillance and enforcement; climate change and disaster risk management; Information Communication and Technologies (ICT); cervical cancer; and West Papua.

President Waqa said fisheries is a very importance and valuable resources for the Pacific which benefits Nauru as well as other small island states in the Pacific for revenue and budget assistance.

Leaders endeavour to strengthen fisheries as a business as well as strengthen monitoring and surveillance, something President Waqa says is still a problem with some islands in terms of capacity

for surveillance and monitoring.

High sea bunkering is another concern and issue raised by leaders. Bunkering is the practice of refuelling at sea raising concerns of illegal fishing.

President Waqa said while bunkering is not a major issue at present it will be addressed further so perhaps fishing vessels can come to shore and refuel in

the islands.

Leaders were pleased with the work of regional organisations such as the Forum Fisheries Agency, the Forum Secretariat, Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office and the Secretariat to the Pacific Community (SPC), and endorsed the review of the regional Monitoring Controls and Surveillance arrangements.

Leaders also called for action to ending Illegal Unregulated Unreported fishing and associated activities. Fisheries will remain on the Leaders agenda.

Climate change policy and disaster risk management talks included encouraging members to sign and ratify the Paris

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SIS and PACP meeting, Pohnpei

Pacific leaders gathered in Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia this month (7-11 September) for the 47th annual meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum and related meetings.

The theme for this year's Forum - "Small and Far: Challenge for Growth", reflects the challenges and isolation of the islands coupled with the fragility and vulnerability of Pacific Smaller Island States.

Prior to the Forum meeting proper, FSM President Peter Christian chaired the meeting of Pacific Smaller Island States (SIS) on Wednesday 7 September.

The focus was on implementing the plan for the recently endorsed SIS Strategy. The Strategy highlights five key areas – climate change finance, air and sea transport, marine, mobility, and health – that, due to the unique circumstances and vulnerabilities of the SIS, require specific attention.

At the SIS meeting leaders mentioned and praised Nauru Airlines and the Government of Nauru for offering air services in the region hence assisting in the travel, tourism and business needs of these islands.

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47th Pacific Leaders' meeting in Pohnpei [...from pg 1 - article 1]

Agreement which sets out the legal framework for climate issues. At the time of the Forum meeting Nauru and six other Pacific Forum countries have ratified the Agreement.

Leaders expressed deep concern about the vulnerability of the Pacific to climate change impacts and natural hazards and voiced the importance of the early entry into force of the Paris Agreement, and securing support to deliver on commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

President Waqa said climate change is an issue for Pacific governments to address and assist their own countries.

Nauru is going through a drought and experiencing coastal erosion which is being addressed by land filling the coast line to prevent further damage to residential land and road.

Leaders called on all development partners, the private sector and civil society to join with Pacific Island countries and territories to support the principles and implementation of the Pohnpei Statement through high-level participation in a new Pacific Resilience Partnership.

The plight of the West Papuan people and human rights violations in their country remain on the Leaders agenda.

Leaders agreed on the importance of an open and constructive dialogue with Indonesia on the issue.

President Waqa said West Papua is very important to Nauru. Nauru is a strong supporter for the plight of West Papuans. West Papuans have also been part of a Nauru delegation in past Forum meetings.

President Waqa said developments over the years have shifted the West Papuan issue from a desire for independence to working with Indonesia but with greater autonomy.

However, the pressing issue for West Papua remains to be human rights abuses in West Papua.

President Waqa said the next step is to take the plight of the West Papuans to the



HE Baron Waqa at Pohnpei during the Pacific Islands Forum

United Nations.

The Solomon Islands is one of the countries taking a stance for West Papua. Second Secretary to the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Rence Sore said Solomon Islanders are in support of West Papua and have also received positive feedback from Forum member countries during the 47th Forum meeting in Pohnpei to take the issue to the United Nations.

"There are countries who are coming on board to support West Papua for United Nations C24.

C24 or Committee of 24 is the United Nations' Special Committee on Decolonisation.

"Whatever the outcome from the PIFS meeting in Pohnpei whether positive [or] negative that will not stop the Coalition members and C24 from taking the issue for the Board to the U.N," Mr Sore said.

"They [Indonesian government] are actively pursuing implementing that trans-migration program. So come 2020 the indigenous population will be much lesser than the one-third population than what they have now.

"We are behind our Melanesian brothers, we are behind the people, the indigenous people of West Papua in their struggle, whatever talk, whatever lobby others may do, we are committed and we stand behind the indigenous people of West Papua," Mr Sore said.

In health, cervical cancer is an increasing health issue in the Pacific and some countries such as Kiribati have engaged vaccination programs to vaccinate girls as young as 9-12 years of age.

Kiribati High Commissioner to Fiji Ms Reteta Rimon was at the Forum meeting in Pohnpei with Kiribati obstetrician and gynaecologist Ioanna Beiatau and they say the program was successful.

"We are trying to address that the issue of cervical cancer is increasing. Eight cases are reported per year, but those are only the reported cases. We have a problem with recalling patients because they do not return for follow ups," Dr Beiatau said.

President Waqa said all women are vulnerable and the Nauru Government emphasises a healthy lifestyle and to get regular check-ups.

The government is working on acquiring the vaccine that would save the lives of Nauruan women.

Regional mobility and harmonisation of business practises was also discussed at the Forum and one that President Waqa says would benefit Nauru in terms of labour mobility into the Australian labour force including hospitality.

President Waqa acknowledges that while Nauru currently has no products to trade, there may be an opportunity in the future but under the Pacer Plus agreement there is room for Nauru to trade with Australia and New Zealand tax free should the opportunity arise.

Persons with disabilities in the Pacific is another important issue and one that some Pacific countries are taking the lead in terms of building infrastructure for people with special needs such as ramps for wheelchair access.

Nauru is lagging in that area but takes the lead in other areas such as financial support by way of a fortnightly disabilities allowance for its citizens.

French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Tokelau attended the formal session as Associate Members. A few days later Leaders accepted French Polynesia and New Caledonia as full members of the Pacific Islands Forum taking the membership of the Forum to 18•

Nauru holds successful talks with AUS and NZ

On the margins of the 47th Pacific Forum Leaders' meeting, members of the Nauru delegation divided up the bilateral meetings to accommodate the requests from the various governments and territories with President Waqa heading the meetings with Australia and New Zealand.

His Excellency President Baron Waqa led the delegation at the bilateral meeting with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and his delegation which was held at the Australian High Commission in Pohnpei.

President Waqa said the closed door meeting centred on mutual talks of cooperation and support and largely to enhance the already existing strong relationship between Nauru and Australia.

Nauru reaffirmed its support for Australia's efforts in curbing the people smuggling and illegal migration trade which President



HE President Waqa meets with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull for bi-lateral talks

adding that what has happened in the past should be forgotten. Nauru is a sovereign nation which President Waqa says is and should be respected•

Waqa says is saddening as lives are being lost at sea.

New Zealand Prime Minister John Key met with President Waqa privately for the bilateral meeting which dealt with any misunderstanding between the two governments.

New Zealand recently withdrew financial support for Nauru however following the meeting Mr Key indicated that New Zealand will look at restoring some of that assistance.

President Waqa said the relationship between Nauru and Australia, and Nauru and New Zealand are equally as important

SIS and PACP meeting, Pohnpei

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His Excellency President Baron Waqa said he was humbled by leaders' mention and support of Nauru Airlines which has routes to the north in Kiribati, the Marshall Island and the FSM including Chuuk which has very limited air transport.

The call for air travel support for Nauru Airlines is made to Pacific countries as well as to development partners.

At the SIS meeting President Waqa raised concern that some countries were missing out on projects and funding due to lack of information sharing. President Waqa requested the possibility for CROP agencies to assist with informing countries and leaders of available projects and funding to avoid countries missing out on important and well needed projects and funding.

SIS leaders also welcomed the Federated States of Micronesia as the newest member of the SIS family.

President Baron Waqa led a delegation of 10 including the Minister Assisting the President Hon David Adeang and Assistant Ministers Hon Milton Dube and Hon Tawaki Kam,



FSM President Peter Christian is led into the Forum meeting by Secretary General Meg Taylor following FSM inclusion into the SIS.

and Nauru's High Commissioner to Fiji Kim Aroi.

President Waqa also participated in the meeting for Pacific ACP leaders on Thursday 8 September where leaders discussed a range of issues affecting the PACP region relating to their partnerships with the African and Caribbean regions, and the European Union.

The meeting was chaired by President of the Federated States of Micronesia Peter M. Christian, and PNG's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration Hon Rimbink Pato.

Leaders considered the progress on the Pacific Regional Indicative Programme (PRIP) under the 11th European Development Fund, the PACP – EU comprehensive

Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations, Private Sector Development issues, the future of the ACP Group, PACP representation in Europe, and the preparatory work towards the negotiation of the successor to the Cotonou Agreement.

The PIFS Secretary General Dame Meg Taylor reaffirmed the commitment of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in supporting Member States in progressing PACP agenda•

Nauru Air Corp opens new hangar

Nauru Air Corporation (NAC) formed a new company Nauru Airlines Hangar (Brisbane) Pty Ltd, to facilitate the need for maintenance work on its growing aircraft fleet.

The company was formed on Wednesday 16th March 2016 and was registered on Tuesday 13th September 2016 as an Australian private company.

The hangar was officially opened by His Excellency President Baron Waqa on Thursday 1st September 2016 at the Brisbane International Airport in Australia.

President Waqa was accompanied by a small delegation of Nauruan officials including the Minister for NAC Hon David Adeang.

At the opening ceremony, NAC Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Bowmaker officiated while Reverend Roger Mwareow blessed the occasion.



*Nauru Air Corporation's new hangar in Brisbane, Australia
(Photo: ourairline.com.au)*

"Having our own hangar means we can service our aircraft when needed, ending the need to be placed on frustrating waiting lists for maintenance," Mr Bowmaker said in a statement.

Minister Adeang delivered a speech highlighting the corporations' development and accomplishments.

The new company consists of an aircraft hangar, office space, its own car park area, spare parts for Nauru Airlines aircrafts and a maintenance workshop for repairs and services.

Mr Bowmaker was asked who will be doing maintenance service for Nauru Airlines', he replied that, "The maintenance company

is Aircraft Structural Contractors, headquartered at Pasturage Rd, Caboolture, Queensland. Initial term of 2 years (extendable)".

The occasion is another historic event in the growth of Nauru Airlines•

Former chief sec Mani dies aged 74

Former chief secretary of Nauru Dr. Venkatesh Subramaniam Mani has passed away recently at the age of 74 in New Dehli, India.

His Excellency President Baron Waqa expressed the government's condolences for the untimely passing of Dr Mani.

"We are deeply saddened to learn of the untimely demise of Dr V.S Mani. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this time of sorrow.

"On behalf of the Government, people of Nauru and on my personal behalf, please accept our profound condolences," Nauru President Baron Waqa said.

During his tenure as chief secretary to Nauru from 1985 to 1990, Dr Mani led a distinguished career.



*The late Professor Dr
Venkatesh Subramaniam Mani*

Dr Mani was also a legal advisor to the Republic of Nauru from 1981 to 1983 and again in 1985-1990. He is also remembered for his direct involvement in forming Nauru's case against Australia before the International Court of Justice (1986-1993) and was active in building close relations with the Government of India.

Dr Mani is the author of several books on Humanitarian law and space law. He also served in several positions including the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Chair in International Space Law as Jawaharlal and Nehru Chair in International Environmental Law, and as Director of its Human Rights Teaching and Research Programme•

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