



## TWENTY SIXTH SMALLER ISLAND STATES LEADERS MEETING

### Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

*7 September 2016*

### SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

1. The Pacific Islands Forum Smaller Island States (SIS) Leaders Meeting was held on 7 September 2016, and was attended by the following SIS Leaders: Honourable Henry Puna, Cook Islands; His Excellency Baron Waqa, President of Nauru; Her Excellency, Hilda C. Heine, Ed.D, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands; and the Honourable Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu. Palau was represented by Honourable Billy G. Kuartei, Minister of State and Special Envoy; and Kiribati was represented by Her Excellency, Reteta Rimon as Special Envoy. Honourable Afega Gaulofa Ulu-o-Tokelau attended as an Observer.

2. In handing over the Chair of the SIS Leaders' Meeting, the Honourable Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga, commended the work of the SIS in adopting the SIS Regional Strategy and encouraged the SIS to continue to strengthen the position of SIS within the wider Forum and to demonstrate unity on those issues pertinent to the SIS.

3. In assuming the Chair, the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Honourable Henry Puna, acknowledged the strong leadership of the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, the Honourable Enele Sopoaga during his term as Chair of the SIS Leaders. The Chair also extended a warm welcome to Her Excellency, Hilda Heine to her first Forum Leaders meeting and as the first female Pacific Head of State and congratulated His Excellency, President Baron Waqa on his reelection and His Excellency, President Taneti Maamau on his election.

4. The Chair **reaffirmed** his commitment to ensuring that SIS concerns would be appropriately addressed through regular consultation with SIS Leaders. SIS Leaders thanked the Government and the people of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) for their warm hospitality and for the excellent hosting and meeting arrangements.

5. Leaders **acknowledged** the importance of the Closed Session as an opportunity for frank and open discussion on issues of significance for the SIS.

#### **Membership application to the SIS**

6. Leaders unanimously **agreed** by acclamation to confirm FSM as a member of the SIS and welcomed the President of FSM, His Excellency Peter M. Christian, to take the seat of FSM as a new member of SIS.

## **Progress report on the implementation of SIS Leaders' Decisions and CROP assistance**

7. Leaders **recognised** that progress had been made in the implementation of their key decisions of 2015, in particular the development of and subsequent adoption of the SIS Regional Strategy 2016 - 2020.
8. Leaders **noted** the support provided by CROP agencies on specific issues identified by SIS.
9. Consequent on the adoption of the SIS Strategy, Leaders:
  - a) **Noted** the progress in implementing the SIS Leaders decisions;
  - b) **Requested** CROP agencies to integrate key actions of the SIS Strategy into their programme frameworks;
  - c) **Acknowledged** the substantial technical and financial contribution of CROP Agencies, in support of implementing regional priorities that complement national development priorities;
  - d) **Tasked** CROP agencies to provide more specific report on targeted SIS work undertaken at the regional and national level, including challenges and constraints on implementing the SIS Strategy; and
  - e) **Noted** that the Secretariat will fully implement the adopted recommendations from the 2015 SIS Programme Unit Review.

## **Report from the Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism**

10. Leaders **noted** the Report from the Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism (SSCR) and **recognised** that the SSCR identified important priorities for discussion by Forum Leaders this year that included climate change, fisheries and West Papua. Leaders also **noted** other regional priorities, in view of the multiple issues that continue to be top priorities for SIS, for example, health, energy and oceans. Leaders **tasked** the Secretariat to facilitate the timely engagement of relevant SIS stakeholders in providing input into the assessment of proposals received under the regional public policy process.
11. Leaders **reiterated** the importance of the Pacific Islands Forum and in particular the SIS Leaders maintaining a strong voice on the indiscriminate impacts of Climate Change, considering the SIS unique vulnerabilities to impacts of Climate Change and Disaster Risk.
12. Leaders **reinforced** that achieving the Paris Agreement goal of limiting average global temperature raise to 1.5 C is an existential matter for SIS. In that context Leaders **encouraged** all countries to ratify the Paris Agreement and take ambitious climate change action in and across all sectors. More specifically, they urged all countries to actively work towards phasing down hydrofluorocarbons under the Montreal Protocol; curbing emissions through adoption of an effective global market based measure in the International Civil Aviation Organisation; and agreeing to a process to develop a long-term strategy for addressing greenhouse gas emissions in the international shipping

sector, including active consideration of all options to complement existing efforts being made through the International Maritime Organisation.

13. In fully implementing the mechanism to raise ambition under the Paris Agreement at COP22, Leaders also **encouraged** active participation of all countries in relevant international meetings for the remainder of 2016 to ensure outcomes take into account the special circumstances of SIS. Leaders **welcomed** the possibility that all Pacific SIDS will have ratified the Paris Agreement by the 71<sup>st</sup> UN General Assembly to contribute to its early entry into force, and urged other countries to ratify.

### **Review of regional meetings**

14. Leaders **expressed** concern that the SIS Leaders and Officials were not considered as core meetings of the Forum. Leaders **reaffirmed** the SIS Officials and SIS Leaders meetings as standing and annual meetings of the Pacific Islands Forum and **considered** the Forum Regional Security Committee meeting as an important officials' level meeting, and **endorsed** the recommendations of the final Review of Regional Meetings report reflecting this.

### **Fragility**

15. Leaders **welcomed** the Forum Chair's letter to the President of the World Bank Group to expand the definition of fragility, to encompass vulnerability to climate change; and economic, equity, access, geographical and environmental challenges. Leaders **agreed** to raise this matter at the Forum Leaders Retreat and ensure that it is included in the Forum Communique, and advocated at the World Bank's upcoming annual meeting.

16. Leaders **requested** the Forum Chair to prepare and submit an official letter to the World Bank, seeking formal recognition of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and to create a special development assistance window for SIDS.

### **SIS Attachment Programme**

17. Leaders **recognised** the importance of the SIS Attachment Programme in strengthening capacity of the SIS through applied learning on regional and partnerships frameworks; and to provide support to the Secretariat, to ensure a whole of organisation approach to facilitate implementation of the SIS Strategy, through CROP agencies and development partners.

18. Leaders **reaffirmed** their commitment to fund the Programme through SIS financial contributions of at least USD10,000 while recognising the importance of joint efforts by the Secretariat and SIS to mobilise additional resources to support the Programme.

19. Leaders **agreed** on the Terms of Reference for the SIS Attachment Programme.

## **SIS Regional Strategy Implementation Plan**

20. Leaders **noted** progress on developing the SIS Regional Strategy Implementation Plan and **tasked** the Secretariat to complete the Plan, for finalisation by Leaders out of session, in the first quarter of 2017.

### *Climate Change*

21. Leaders **noted** the merits of developing a joint proposal by SIS to the Green Climate Fund on mitigation and adaptation to Climate Change, and reiterated that its focus must demonstrate tangible benefits at national and local levels.

### *Air services agreements and upper air space management*

22. Leaders **noted** the need to discuss equitable and fair air service agreements through a collective political position pursued at the highest level of the SIS.

23. Leaders **recognised** the opportunity of the Forum Leaders Retreat in the Federated States of Micronesia to engage the wider Forum Leaders on this matter.

24. Leaders **acknowledged** the importance of addressing the issue of greater management of the sovereign upper air space, through collective management arrangements as a platform to ensure that access and equity of economic and other benefits accrue to respective SIS countries.

## **Other Matters**

25. Leaders **urged** the United States to meaningfully address the lingering effects resulting from the United States Nuclear Testing Program in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. While the Leaders recognise the Special Rapporteur's 2012 report to the United Nations Human Rights Council as a significant first step towards the nuclear contaminants issue, more needs to be done given that the United States Nuclear Testing Program occurred during the Trusteeship of the United Nations. Leaders therefore **called** on the United States and the United Nations, either individually or collectively, to achieve a fair and just resolution for the Marshallese people.

26. Leaders **tasked** the Secretariat to work with CROP agencies and the United Nations system, to assist the Republic of the Marshall Islands in addressing the adverse impacts of the nuclear testing, including human rights, environmental contamination and health.

27. Leaders **noted** an invitation from the Republic of the Marshall Islands to join the High Ambition Coalition.

28. Leaders **noted** the invitation from Tuvalu for SIS and CROP agencies to attend the Coalition of Atoll Nations Against Climate Change, meeting being held in Funafuti, October 2016.