



SPECIAL SMALLER ISLAND STATES LEADERS MEETING

Koror, Republic of Palau
24 June 2016

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

The Special Meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum Smaller Island States (SIS) Leaders was held on 24 June 2016, and was attended by the following SIS Leaders; His Excellency Taneti Maamau, Te Beretitenti of the Republic of Kiribati; Her Excellency Hilda C. Heine Ed.D, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands; His Excellency Tommy E. Remengesau Jr. President of the Republic of Palau. Tuvalu was represented by the Honourable Taukelina Finikaso, Minister of Foreign Affairs; the Cook Islands was represented by Ms Tapaeru Herrmann, Secretary for Foreign Affairs as Special Envoy; Nauru was represented by Mr Michael Aroi, Secretary for Foreign Affairs as Special Envoy. Leaders acknowledged with gratitude the Government and people of Palau for the excellent hosting arrangements and courtesies accorded to them and their delegations.

2. As Chair of the special meeting, His Excellency Tommy E. Remengesau Jr. echoed the principle of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, calling for a more focused regional agenda. The Chair added that the SIS Regional Strategy was built on the premise that greater attention be given to the unique vulnerabilities of the SIS.

SIS Strategy

3. Leaders agreed to adopt the SIS Regional Strategy as the strategic platform to ensure greater influence and presence by the SIS in shaping the regional policy agenda and direction. Leaders welcomed the consultative process and inclusive engagement of key stakeholders in the development of the Strategy, and in particular, ensuring that the specific priorities of the SIS are reflected in, and aligned to, the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

4. Leaders emphasised the importance of translating the Strategy into time bound actions, supported by genuine and durable partnerships.

5. Partners affirmed their support to the Strategy and emphasised that additional technical and financial resources would be mobilised in support of its implementation, through greater coordination and sharing of experiences with themselves and SIS.

Key Result Areas

6. In confirming the key results of the Strategy, Leaders agreed that the following priorities would ensure mutual benefits for the SIS, achievable through a collective effort.

Climate Change

7. Leaders reiterated their shared concern that climate change remains the single most important priority for the SIS, in particular strengthening access to, and delivery on, climate financing. Leaders stressed the need for a collective, coordinated and targeted approach between SIS and relevant partners to identify options to improve and expedite access to climate financing to address “economies of scale”, including through an SIS joint proposal to relevant climate financing arrangements and support for its subsequent implementation.

8. Leaders directed the Secretariat to work with the Asian Development Bank and the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) to identify specific areas of focus for joint proposals, including a suitable modality for disbursement of Green Climate Fund (GCF) resources.

9. The balance of raised ambition and realism was central to Leaders’ call for a more considered approach to developing a transformational joint proposal. They called for greater consideration of the associated challenges, including costs, timing, coordination, scope and national readiness for implementation.

10. Leaders agreed to scope the prospect of a regional climate fund to accelerate access and expand funding options. Leaders directed the Secretariat to engage relevant stakeholders and report back to Forum Leaders at their next meeting.

11. Reflecting Leaders’ concern on the impacts of disasters on their economies, they directed the Secretariat to work with the World Bank on a disaster risk finance initiative to incorporate Member views on improving the scope of the current Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative (PCRAFI).

Labour

12. Leaders agreed that a mapping of labour flows within the region is required to establish greater understanding of where the opportunities and constraints for SIS exist within the current labour mobility schemes.

13. Leaders emphasised that the easier movement of skilled labour within the Pacific enhances and should be linked to regional disaster response and trade and investment opportunities.

Health

14. Acknowledging Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) as one of the biggest killers within the Pacific region, Leaders agreed to support and ensure a greater “whole of government” response to NCDs, recognising that the solutions lie beyond the health sector.

15. Leaders called for more targeted actions within the regional NCDs Roadmap, to assist SIS in harnessing their collective influence to enforce controls, identify and expand sustainable financing, develop legislation and policy, and enhance education and awareness to tackle the social determinants and main risk factors of NCDs within the SIS.

Marine

16. As combined custodians of the largest portion of the Pacific Ocean, Leaders echoed their support for the priority given to fisheries within the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and emphasised the importance of targeted SIS actions and implementation within the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries. Leaders also noted the importance of coastal fisheries to food security, health, poverty alleviation, and livelihoods.

17. Leaders reiterated the importance of tackling Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing through expanded surveillance and innovative initiatives.

18. Noting the Pacific's leadership in gaining a standalone Sustainable Development Goal on Oceans, Leaders reiterated their commitment to its effective implementation recognising specific SIS vulnerabilities. Leaders emphasised the need to sustain and preserve our coral reefs, and to invest in science and research.

19. Leaders recognised the potential benefits and risks of Deep Sea Mining (DSM) and called on CROP agencies to scope SIS partnerships and resourcing to support the DSM effort.

Air & Sea Transportation

20. Leaders recognised the ongoing challenges in ensuring mutually beneficial air and sea transportation services to the SIS. Noting the limited results of ongoing bilateral efforts to secure in particular, equitable and fair air service agreements, Leaders agreed to elevate their efforts through a constructive political dialogue with relevant governments within the Pacific Islands Forum to achieve a resolution.

21. Leaders affirmed their sovereignty over their upper airspace. Leaders directed the Secretariat to seek advice from relevant agencies on possible options for greater control and management of their upper airspace.

Resources and Implementation

22. Leaders directed the Forum Secretariat to work closely with SIS Officials and key partners to develop and finalise the Strategy Implementation Plan, to be presented at the next meeting of Leaders in the Federated States of Micronesia.

23. Leaders agreed to deploy the SIS Development Fund to promote resource mobilisation efforts and to leverage additional resources in the implementation of the Strategy. To demonstrate commitment, Leaders committed to annual contributions to the Fund.

24. Leaders acknowledged the central role of the SIS Officers in-country and welcomed the establishment of a dedicated SIS Adviser within the Forum Secretariat as an enabler in mobilising and coordinating a “whole of Secretariat” approach to the implementation of the Strategy.

25. Leaders agreed to an SIS officials attachment program based at the Forum Secretariat and directed that the program be funded through SIS financial contributions. Leaders tasked the Secretariat to also seek partner contributions and develop a programme Terms of Reference for their consideration at the next meeting of Leaders in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Other Business

26. Leaders considered the expressed interest of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to be a member of the SIS. Leaders directed the Secretariat to facilitate a formal expression of interest from FSM and in consultation with officials, develop a process for seeking membership within the existing SIS membership criteria.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
24 June 2016

SMALLER ISLAND STATES REGIONAL STRATEGY 2016-2020

1. The Smaller Island States (SIS) of the Pacific Islands Forum: Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu, seek to ensure sustainable development for their people through working together to address issues of specific relevance and importance to the group.
2. They do so in partnership among each other and with others, promoting mutual accountability and support as a group, while remaining fully committed to the vision, values and objectives of the Pacific Islands Forum *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*.
3. At the Leaders Special Retreat on the Pacific Plan Review, held in Cook Islands on 5 May, 2014, in which Leaders endorsed the re-casting of the Plan as the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*, they also agreed that the particular needs of SIS would form an integral part of the assessment and prioritisation process for future regional initiatives.

Membership

4. On numerous occasions, Leaders reaffirmed that given the smallness in terms of land area and population, as well as a degree of economic, social and environmental vulnerability of the SIS, it was important to give specific attention and assistance to ensure that they derive the fullest possible benefit from regionalism.

Vision

5. The SIS share the vision of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism of *a region of peace, harmony, security, social cohesion and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy and productive lives*.

Mission

6. Advocate, build resilience and through genuine and durable partnerships within SIS and with others, ensure the effective implementation of sustainable regional development initiatives for smaller island states.

Principles

7. The principles governing the strategy are:
 - a) As large ocean states realizing and advancing the geo-political, security and natural resource capital opportunities, while recognizing the need to sustainably manage and maximise economic returns in the use and management of the Pacific's ocean resources;
 - b) The importance of recognizing the contribution of Non-State Actors (NSA) to promoting sustainable development and the strength of partnerships between Governments and NSA; including civil society, non-government organisations and the private sector; and

- c) Increasing the effectiveness of the SIS group to ensure a regional approach to development also encompasses the special circumstances of SIS.

Objectives

8. The objectives of the strategy are to:
- a) Identify areas where the Pacific Islands Forum can foster coherent and cohesive partnerships for sustainable and inclusive development for the SIS;
 - b) Seek support to specifically address resilience through expanded opportunities that focus on strengthening infrastructure and human resource capacity in the SIS;
 - c) Ensure that the specific priorities of the SIS are reflected and captured in the regional public policy process and implementation of initiatives under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism; and
 - d) Establish and action an appropriate monitoring and review mechanism, utilizing relevant regional indicators, to ensure the strategy is achieved.

Setting Priorities

9. The SIS face a range of development challenges that limit their capacity to ensure resilience and long-term sustainable development. Over past years, SIS Leaders have considered options for addressing a number of development challenges. As a consequence in setting priorities under the Strategy, a specific focus has been given to issues common to the group or requiring further work. This has led to the identification of priorities that address the potential for: designing regional or cross-border initiatives; implementing pooled technical capacity and/or funding approaches; promoting south-south cooperation; development of SIS regional public goods; and for addressing regional cooperation/advocacy opportunities.

Focal Areas and Key Results

10. The following are considered to be the key priorities of the SIS where the issues identified are considered to be of importance to all members of the group. While actions and expected results have been briefly described it is envisaged that these will be developed further when implementation plans are designed and linked to individual country national implementation plans/strategies, with appropriate performance indicators specified.

Focal Area	Key Issues	Action	Expected Result
Climate Change	Financing; adaptation; mitigation; food security and sustainable livelihoods; disaster risk management, Renewable Energy	Technical assistance, capacity supplementation and easier access to funding sources; Biosecurity laws and implementation of biosecurity plans; Infrastructure resiliency and early warning systems; support	A SIS regional programme to access GCF funding for national implementation

		implementation of National Determined Commitments (INDCs)	
Labour	Trade - youth employment; seasonal workers scheme; south-south cooperation; labour mobility; Temporary Movement of Natural Persons (TMNP)	Regulatory labour framework and free movement of people amongst SIS	Updated labour laws and revised visa requirements and legislation.
Health	Health; economic development; political; legal; NCD Roadmap; Cervical cancer; expand availability of sustainable financing	Strengthened education and awareness, behaviour change, primary health care and legislation on access and availability of harmful products to reduce NCDs	Prioritised and resourced prevention and care activities.
Marine	Oceans and coral reefs; Fisheries, including coastal fisheries (with links to health, food security, poverty and livelihoods): surveillance; fisheries revenues; aquaculture & coastal fisheries Deep Seabed Mining ; protected areas; maritime boundaries; Science and research	Design and delivery of SIS focused action to ensure effective implementation of the regional fisheries Roadmap and other initiatives; consider regional ship-rider program and other initiatives (with training component); integrate research and analysis into national planning processes and improved scientific data on the impact of climate change of fisheries.	Sustainable and enhanced economic and financial returns for SIS from marine resources; enhanced fisheries science focused on reef and pelagic fish stocks and cross border fishery impacts; alternative marine based industries.
Air & Sea transportation	Transportation: service agreements – chartered flights; infrastructure; air space management	Negotiation of improved and sustainable air and shipping service links.	Fair and equitable air service and shipping agreements together with improved infrastructure.

Strategic Partnerships & Implementation

11. The institutions in place to support the implementation of the Strategy are:
 - a) **SIS and Forum Leaders Meetings** provide an opportunity for SIS leaders to endorse and advocate SIS priorities of specific importance and call to action its members and the wider Forum to support those priorities. The meetings also provide an opportunity to propose new initiatives and review progress of earlier initiatives to ensure SIS concerns have been adequately addressed during implementation.
 - b) **SIS Chair and Troika** provides continuity and advocacy for the priorities of SIS between meetings of the SIS Leaders.
 - c) **SIS Officials & Forum Officials Committee** provide the institutional arrangements through which the SIS Leaders are provided with policy advice; raise the profile of SIS within the Forum and PIFS; provide focused agendas and issues for SIS Leaders' meeting; and oversee prioritisation process for SIS regional issues and implementation of the Strategy.
 - d) **Forum Ministerial Meetings** are an opportunity to underline the importance of and direct resourcing to SIS priorities. Officials will ensure relevant regional SIS issues are brought to the attention of their Ministers.
 - e) **Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism** is a key vehicle for ensuring SIS priorities are adequately addressed in the prioritisation process. This will be assured through a more proactive engagement with and by the SIS appointed representative on the Committee and clearly defined benefits for SIS in the tests for regional action.
 - f) **Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat** has a key role in the implementation of the Strategy and support for the identification and implementation of the SIS priorities. The SIS Regionalism Officers network to be provided recognition and support in order to channel information from the Secretariat and assist national officials to ensure that priority-setting is informed.
 - g) **Development partners** remain critical to the capacity of the SIS group to meet its development objectives and the implementation of the strategy.
 - h) **CROP (Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific)**. Officials to promote SIS issues in CROP governance meetings and the relevant CROP working group agendas; and advocate specific activities and resources to address the expected results of the Strategy. The work of the CROP agencies should also include specific reference to the priorities of the SIS. SIS focal points within CROP agencies ensure greater coordination and alignment of support to SIS priorities.
 - i) **Country/National Level**. National focal points or contacts need to ensure that the SIS Leader's outcomes and priorities are communicated to its community and national networks.
12. Of underlying importance to SIS cooperation is the maintenance of effective national processes for ensuring coherence in approaches and advocacy of SIS issues in regional and international fora.

13. Effective involvement of the NSA in the identification of priorities is a key aspect of the national planning process that informs the selection of the focus areas for specific action at the regional level under the Strategy.

14. The SIS Leaders meetings and the associated Officials meetings provide the formal mechanisms for promoting coordination and cooperation between SIS members that includes sharing experiences, identifying shared priority issues and advocating for SIS priorities within the Forum meetings and with other partners.

15. PIFS and the SIS Regionalism Officers play an important role in ensuring SIS positions and development priorities are reflected in briefings for sector and CROP meetings and for the consultations with Forum Dialogue partners.

Institutional Arrangements

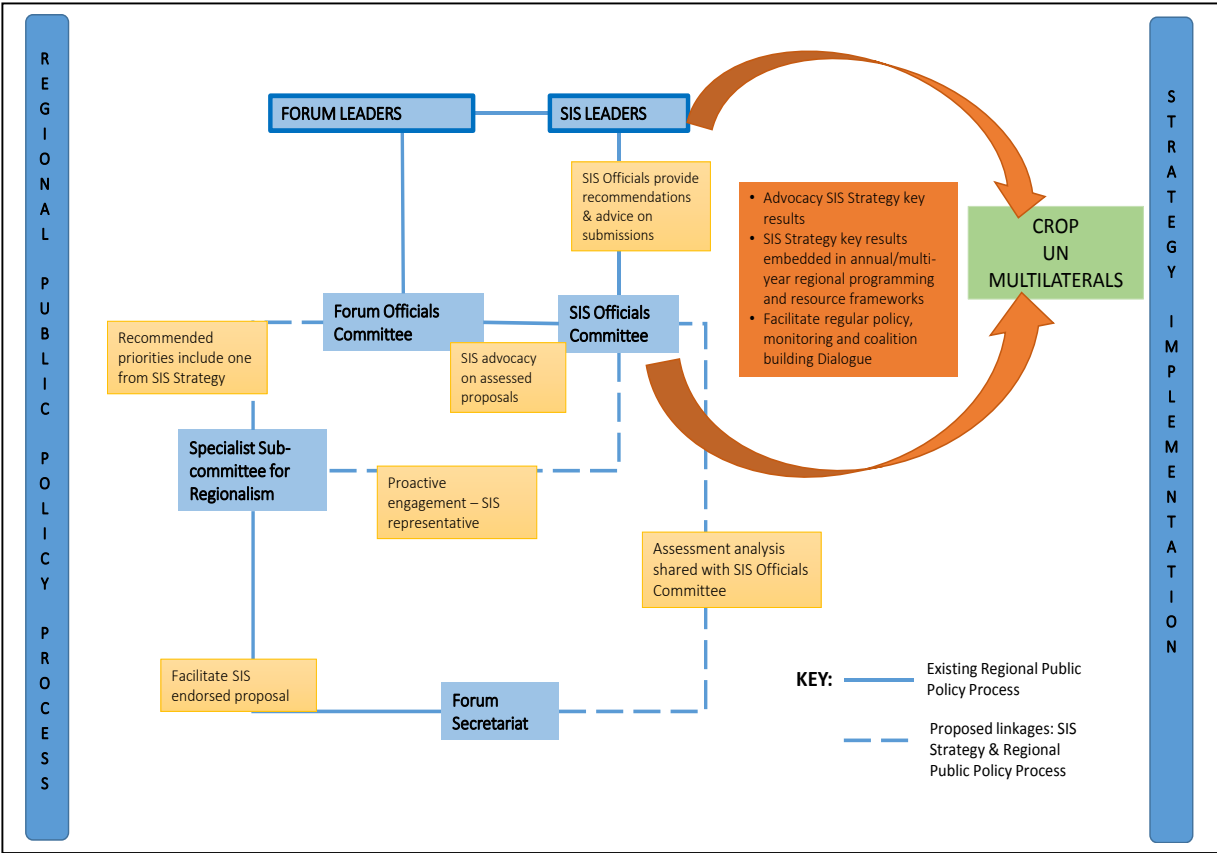
16. In line with the decisions of Forum Leaders, the SIS recognises the utility of existing arrangements and processes within the regional architecture and seeks to engage fully in ensuring SIS issues are reflected and actioned in these processes. In particular, the regional public policy process of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism; and the governance mechanisms of relevant regional and international organisations.

17. Within the regional public policy process, SIS commit to:

- a) Contribute to the review and analytical assessment of proposals received by the Secretariat, to ensure the applicability to SIS priorities of proposals analysed against the tests for regional action. The Secretariat together with the SIS Regionalism Officers, review each submission/proposal as part of the detailed analysis and SIS benefits test;
- b) Through the Secretariat, in the review and analytical assessment of proposals, include detailed consideration of how the SIS priorities outlined in the Strategy are or can be reflected;
- c) Developing a joint SIS submission where needed, for consideration and analysis under the tests for Regional Action;
- d) Consolidating and updating policy, technical and strategic advice to the SIS representative on the Specialist Sub-Committee for Regionalism (SSCR);
- e) Through the Secretariat, to make available to the SIS Officials Committee, the detailed analysis and assessment of proposals as part of meeting papers of their annual meeting, and in preparation for the Forum Officials Committee;
- f) Ensuring recommendations of the SSCR to the Forum Officials Committee on reviewed submissions; identify the implications; including potential benefits and the contribution of the SIS to advance proposed initiatives;
- g) Making clear and concise recommendations to the Forum on the proposed list of priorities to be pursued under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, including the specific SIS submission;
- h) Advocating to ensure SIS recommendations are reflected explicitly in the decisions of Pacific Island Forum Leaders; and
- i) Identifying and proposing SIS initiatives within the Pacific Islands Forum

18. Within regional and international governance mechanisms, SIS commit to:
- a) Developing and exercising a consistent *whole of government* narrative and position on SIS issues, in line with the Strategy;
 - b) Collaboration with the Secretariat, to develop, resource and action the Strategy Implementation Plan, which will include the identification of specific SIS results and resources; key implementation partners, including CROP and the UN system, and monitoring process;
 - c) Advocating SIS priorities within the annual and/or multi-year programming and resource frameworks of regional and international agencies; and
 - d) Establishing a SIS personnel attachment scheme, through which SIS personnel are attached for up to 2 years with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and other CROP agencies.

Table 1 – Proposed SIS Strategy linkage with the Regional Public Policy Process



Resources

19. To ensure the effective delivery of the SIS priorities it is important that there are available resources which can be utilized in a flexible manner to help build capacity and implement key activities. Specific attention needs to be given to building human capacity through strategic staff

attachments; south-south cooperation; targeted technical assistance and opportunities for learning from each other.

20. The role of the SIS Adviser, through the office of the Secretary General in the Secretariat is a central enabler in mobilising and coordinating a “whole-of-Secretariat” approach to the implementation of the Strategy. This will include embedding relevant SIS priorities within the organisations Results Framework; providing strategic and regional policy advice to SIS through the SIS Regionalism Officers; advocacy of SIS issues and priorities with CROP and other development partners; and as a conduit in strengthening SIS linkages with the regional public policy process, including the SIS representative on the SSCR.

21. The SIS Development Fund will be deployed to promote resource mobilization efforts and provide leverage for the design and implementation of the SIS Strategy. To demonstrate commitment to the Strategy, SIS will make an annual financial contribution to the Fund.

Monitoring and Review

22. Recognising that the strategy is a “living document”, monitoring the performance of the Strategy will be at two levels:

- a) Cooperation and coordination of SIS priorities by PIFS
- b) Implementation of key priorities using appropriate SDG targets and indicators by the SIS in line with National Strategic Plans.

23. To ensure the relevance and utility of the Strategy, a mid-term review of the strategy be undertaken in 2018.

Reporting

24. A report on progress on the implementation of the Strategy and the priority initiatives will be provided annually to SIS Leaders through the SIS Officials Committee.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
Suva, Fiji. 6 May 2016

*Leaders' Summit of the 13th International Coral Reef Symposium
Monday 20th June 2016*

Call to Action

Coral reefs are the foundation of life in our island nations. They are extremely important for our food security, economic well-being, livelihoods, protection from natural disasters, and cultural identity and traditions. Policy is a critical cornerstone of effective coral reef stewardship. We believe that the ultimate value of science is to inform our policies and guide decision making. We recognize that to take appropriate action, it is critical that we have a convergence of the best available science with bold commitment from political leadership. By working together, political and scientific leaders can promote the effective stewardship of coral reefs, not only locally and nationally, but also regionally and internationally.

We face many challenges. Our coral reefs are currently experiencing an unprecedented level of impacts from climate change, ocean acidification, land-based sources of pollution, overfishing, and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. If our coral reefs are further degraded, then our reef-dependent communities will suffer and be displaced. Unfortunately, our islands lack the adequate financial, human, and institutional capacity to meet these challenges, including accessible sustainable financing mechanisms. Existing national coral reef stewardship policies need to be strengthened with solutions-oriented science, traditional knowledge, and relevant cultural practices. Further, while we share concerns and aspirations, we recognize that solutions need to be tailored to a country-specific level due to inherent differences between our island nations.

Because of these daunting challenges, immediate and bold action is required. It is imperative that we act.

As national leaders, we boldly commit to strengthen our coral reef stewardship efforts across Micronesia by:

- Refining and strengthening the bridge between scientific knowledge and policies by making management decisions based on sound science that can be immediately acted upon;
- Strengthening the technical and financial capacities of our island nations through partnerships with the international scientific and technical community;
- Collaborating and supporting one another's coral reef stewardship efforts in an open, transparent, and adaptive process;
- Using successful national and regional frameworks-including our existing national protected area networks and national and regional financing mechanisms-to leverage new regional initiatives; and
- Increasing the integration of traditional knowledge, customary practices, and scientific research in guiding national coral reef policies.

We challenge our neighbours in the Pacific and throughout the global community to join us.

Tommy E. Remengesau Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau

Peter M. Christian
President of the Federated
States of Micronesia

Hilda Heine
President of the Republic of
the Marshall Islands