



Australia
Federated States of Micronesia
Fiji
Kiribati
Nauru
New Zealand
Palau

Papua New Guinea
Republic of Marshall Islands
Samoa
Solomon Islands
Tonga
Tuvalu
Vanuatu



New Zealand
Chairman of Pacific Islands Forum

Pacific Islands Forum Group

Pacific Islands Forum
United Nations Member States

12TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, NEW YORK, 14-20 APRIL 2004: WATER, SANITATION AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

OVERALL REVIEW

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM BY NEW ZEALAND

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Chairman

As Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members, namely, Australia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, New Zealand.

Mr Chairman

The Pacific is a diverse region encompassing least-developed, developing and developed countries. Pacific Islands Forum members have vulnerable environments. Many are faced with difficult social and economic challenges in the pursuit of sustainable development. The work of the Commission on Sustainable Development is therefore of crucial interest to all members of our group.

Pacific countries have supported the reform of the work of the CSD. We welcome both its revised, two-year-cycle structure, and its concentration on thematic clusters. 2004 of course is a special year for CSD as well, given that it has also hosted the first intergovernmental preparatory meeting for the International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States, to be held in Mauritius later this year.

Mr Chairman

The Secretary General's overall review of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (E/CN.17/2004/2) presents a mixed bag of progress, and lack of progress, across areas of key interest to Pacific Islands Forum members. While many countries in our region have moved forwards socially and economically, several have fallen behind and have required increased external assistance.

HIV/AIDS is a growing problem in several countries in the region; Forum members welcome the increased international assistance to combat this pandemic, and the application of Global Fund monies to combat HIV/AIDS in the Pacific.

Protection and management of our natural resource base is of key significance in Pacific countries. For many, their terrestrial resource base is narrow, in contrast to their marine resources. Forum members are taking the initiative to protect and manage their marine environment, including through the Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy and associated Regional Oceans Forum, held in Fiji in February.

Action on climate change remains a priority for Forum members. At their annual meeting in New Zealand last August, Forum leaders noted that it is vital for urgent action to be undertaken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Forum members are taking concrete steps to mitigate climate change. Forum members who have targets under the Kyoto Protocol will meet these targets. To address climate change and protect those most vulnerable to its effects, further commitments must be made in the future by all major emitters to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Tourism is a major source of revenue for nearly all Pacific Islands Forum members. Sustainable tourism development remains a priority in the region.

Mr Chairman

I will now turn to the CSD12 and 13 thematic cluster of water, sanitation and human settlements, which is deeply relevant to Pacific Islands Forum members.

The small island developing states of the Pacific have made some measurable progress in these thematic areas in the last 12 years. Most effort has been focussed on the improvement and development of urban reticulated water supply systems, but at the same time we have seen a dramatic decline in the capacity of island states to monitor and manage their water resources. This

comes at a time when climate change and urban growth is putting increasing pressure on these water resources through both increased abstraction and pollution.

The economic and social well being of Pacific island countries depends upon the quality and quantity of their freshwater, their management of water supply and sanitation systems, and the consequences of inadequate water resources management on the coastal and marine environment. The challenges and constraints of sustainable water resources management in Pacific SIDS have recently been clearly articulated in the Pacific preparations for the Third World Water Forum. These challenges and proposed solutions were subsequently adopted in a global SIDS statement at the Third World Water Forum and can be categorised into three broad thematic areas:

- Fragile and scarce water resources due to small size, lack of natural water storage and vulnerability to natural and anthropogenic hazards;
- Water supply and sanitation service providers constrained by a lack of human capacity and financial resources; and
- Complex and interwoven social, cultural and legal governance structures surrounding resource use.

The global SIDS statement identified 3 priority strategic responses:

- Water resources monitoring and management and improved collaboration with meteorological forecasting services;
- Human resources development, water demand management and improved cost-recovery; and
- Awareness raising, advocacy, and political will at all levels to create a framework of integrated water resources management.

In response to these issues, the Pacific Islands Countries have developed the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Water Management and the Pacific Wastewater Policy Statement and Framework for action. These strategies have been incorporated into a World Summit on Sustainable Development Pacific Type 2 Partnership on Sustainable Water Management, and Forum members would welcome further involvement in this.

The South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), assisted by the University of the South Pacific, manages the initiative.

Mr Chairman

For the small island developing states of the Pacific sub-region, effective management of water supply and sanitation systems are vital for achieving long-term sustainable development. Improvements in water and sanitation will need to be integrated as priority actions into national sustainable development

strategies if the Pacific SIDS are to maximise the opportunity provided by CSD12 and 13, and the Water for Life Decade (2005—2015). These strategies are currently under development in our region as announced by the Pacific Islands Forum in our statement to CSD11.

Mr Chairman

The pattern of human settlements in the Pacific region is rapidly changing with increasing numbers of people moving to live in towns and cities. This is driven by education and life choices, employment opportunities, access to services and increased communications, as well as declining commodity prices, continuing high rates of population growth, lack of rural employment, limited education opportunities in rural areas and the need to financially support the wider extended family. Land shortages and complexities of ownership, inadequate planning and legislative frameworks, and limited institutional and human capacity have hindered Pacific Islands Countries' effective response to urbanisation. The provision of adequate services to urban populations remains a challenge in many countries, which will require ongoing support to address.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.