

Pacific ACP Leaders' meeting outcomes

41st PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM
PORT VILA, REPUBLIC OF VANUATU
3 – 6 AUGUST 2010

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The 8th meeting of the Pacific ACP Leaders was held in Port Vila, Republic of Vanuatu Tuesday 3rd August to discuss the progress of European Union assistance through the European Development Fund (EDF) to the region as well as trade issues.

Leaders from the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Palau, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu and representatives of the Republic of Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Timor Lester and Tuvalu attended the meeting chaired by the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, Hon. Edward Natapei.

The PACP Leaders expressed deep appreciation for the signing of three Financing Agreements early this year under the European Union's 10th EDF Pacific Regional Indicative Programme for a total value of 21.9 million EUROS. The three projects are:

- Deep Sea Minerals – 4.7million EUROS to be implemented by the Pacific Islands Applied Geo-science Commission (SOPAC) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC);
- Scientific Support for Management of Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries – 9 million EUROS to be implemented by SPC; and
- Development Tuna Fisheries in the Pacific Phase II – 8.2 million EUROS to be implemented by the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and SPC.

Six more proposals including the Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Programme, Trade Facilitation in Customs Cooperation, Enhanced Sustainable Livelihoods through Facilitating Increased Trade and Product Diversification, Pacific Regional Tourism Capacity Building had progressed to the final stage in the approval process under the Annual Action Plan for 2010.

Further projects have also been identified for possible funding under the Annual Action Plan for 2011.

The PACP Leaders urged CROP agencies, international organizations with regional offices and Non-State Actors to submit high quality regional projects in order to minimize any unused funding.

On trade issues, the PACP Leaders noted the developments and issues surrounding the implementation of the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and the broadening of PICTA to include trade in services. Seven of the 14 Forum island countries (FICs) namely the Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are ready to trade under the provisions of PICTA. Leaders encouraged those FICs yet to announce their readiness to trade under the Agreement to make the necessary arrangements to enable them to announce their readiness to trade under PICTA before the end of 2010.

The Leaders were updated on the state of play of the Pacific ACP – European Union Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union and the way forward for EPA negotiations. The PACP Leaders agreed that PACP States should continue negotiating the EPA as a single region; States which had not already done so to be encouraged to submit their trade is goods offers for inclusion in the EPA ; and a PACP – EC Joint Technical Working Group meeting was a proposed to resolve the outstanding.

The PACP Leaders agreed to do a full feasibility study to assess the cost of setting up a Pacific Regional Office in Brussels. The findings of the full feasibility study will be presented to PACP Trade Ministers for their consideration and guidance.

ENDS.