

EU – PIF SPECIAL DIALOGUE

(Nuku‘alofa, 19 October 2007)

JOINT EU-PIF NUKU‘ALOFA DECLARATION

1. The Special Dialogue between the European Union (EU) and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) was held in Nuku‘alofa on 19 October 2007. The PIF delegation was led by the Forum Troika consisting of the Prime Minister of Tonga and Ministers from Papua New Guinea and Niue, supported by the Secretariat General of the Pacific Islands Forum. The EU Delegation was led by Commissioner Louis Michel and Ambassador Antonio Mendes for the Portuguese Presidency. Representatives of United Kingdom, Italy and France as well as Pacific Forum Countries attended the meeting at Ministerial and senior officials’ level.
2. The Special Dialogue was the first high-level political meeting between the EU and the PIF. The Special Dialogue agreed to launch an enhanced EU – Pacific Islands Forum Political Dialogue. This will enable a structured interaction between the EU and the Pacific region to increase visibility of the EU in the Pacific and the Pacific in the EU.
3. The meeting took place in a friendly and constructive atmosphere. The EU recalled the Communication of the Commission “EU Relations with the Pacific Islands – A Strategy for a Strengthened Partnership” of May 2006. On the basis of this Communication, the EU Council adopted Conclusions which among other things, called for a strengthening of the political relationship between the EU and the Pacific ACP countries *inter alia* through an enhanced dialogue with the Pacific Islands Forum. The participants recalled that there was a strong tradition of co-operation and trust between the EU and the Pacific Island countries and that a Political Dialogue based on this foundation could make a valuable contribution to peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in the Pacific.
4. The participants in the Special Dialogue agreed that the EU-PIF Political Dialogue agenda should cover issues such as regional security and governance, economic stability and growth, international trade, the environment, development co-operation and, by consensus, any other item of topical interest. It was agreed that the enhanced structured EU-PIF Political Dialogue would consist of triennial meetings of a Ministerial Troika, with the first to be held

in Brussels in the second semester of 2008, and annual Senior Officials' Meetings in Fiji as the Headquarters of the PIF Secretariat.. The Senior Officials' Meeting would be open to other interested EU and Forum Member States represented in the Forum region.

5. It was agreed that the first EU-PIF Ministerial Troika in Brussels in 2008 would be prepared by a senior Officials Meeting in the first semester of 2008.

6. The Special Dialogue also discussed current issues of security in the Pacific Region, including updates on the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), on the Pacific Regional Assistance to Nauru (PRAN), on the situation in Fiji as well as issues of regional governance. It further provided the opportunity to exchange views on trade issues, including progress reports on the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA), and preparations for negotiations by Forum member countries of a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement under the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER).

7. The Special Dialogue also discussed the efforts toward conclusion of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) by the end of 2008 preceded by an Interim Agreement to be agreed in 2007, on the basis of the Ministerial Declaration adopted in Brussels on 2 October 2007. It noted the intention of the EU and the Pacific ACP to consider for possible inclusion either in the Interim Agreement or in the Comprehensive EPA, provisions on development. It also noted the intention of the EC quote – “to assist the PACP States in their ongoing work with the member states with a view to progressing the proposals contained in the PACP bilateral MOUs on temporary movement of persons” unquote.

8. Participants discussed development co-operation focusing on the programming process of the 10th EDF including social development, institution-building and governance issues as well as Aid for Trade. Considerable attention was paid to sustainable development, in particular measures to sustainably manage natural resources, cope with the effects of climate change, and to enhance efforts to address adaptation priorities and mitigation efforts, notably in the area of energy.