

REPORT OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia

6–7 December 1999

including:

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS

Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia

1–3 December 1999

and:

COMPENDIUM OF DECISIONS OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

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REPORT OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY
Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia
6-7 December 1999

Chairperson:

His Excellency, Mr Gaston Flosse
President of French Polynesia

Vice-Chairperson:

The Honourable Dr Langi Kavaliku
Deputy Prime Minister of Tonga

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AGENDA OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

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**SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF
THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**

REPORT

AGENDA ITEM 1 – OPENING/ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

**Flag-raising ceremony
Sunday 5 December 1999**

1. Heads of Conference delegations were traditionally and ceremonially welcomed at Mahora Taraho'i, Papeete with a flag-raising ceremony and traditional music and dance items.
2. Dr Langi Kavaliku, Deputy Prime Minister and Head of Delegation of the Kingdom of Tonga, delivered a brief address on behalf of all the delegations present. Dr Kavaliku thanked the President of the Government of French Polynesia and through him the people of his country for their warm welcome and especially for their generous hospitality. He stressed that the name used in the past to describe Tonga, 'the Friendly Islands', seems much more suited now to French Polynesia. He welcomed the fact that the First Conference of the Pacific Community was being held in a country where the Pacific spirit prevailed – that spirit which unites Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. He stated that this is important, because as Kierkegaard wrote, 'Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards'. Furthermore, the Pacific Community must meet its mandate for the benefit of all Pacific peoples, not only for the present, but the future. He was sure that the Pacific Community would not want to find itself in a situation so aptly described by the poet Sa'di, who wrote that 'A man who learns the ways of wisdom, but who does not apply them ... is like a farmer who ploughs his field but does not sow it.' He was sure that with the leadership of President Gaston Flosse, the Chairperson of the First Conference of the Pacific Community, and especially at the threshold of the 21st century, the Conference would ensure that the ways of wisdom would be applied to its work and that the fields will not only be ploughed but seeds sown for the benefit of all people of the Pacific Community and its contribution to the global society.
3. Following the address, delegations enjoyed performances by three traditional dance groups: Henua Enana from the Marquesas Islands, O Tahiti E, and Heikura Nui, as well as a performance by students from the Conservatoire de Tahiti.

Opening Ceremony

4. The opening ceremony of the First Conference of the Pacific Community was held at the Outrigger Hotel in Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia, on Monday 6 December 1999.

5. As the Chairperson of the last South Pacific Conference, the Representative of Australia made opening remarks. He stated that the First Conference of the Pacific Community was a historic and special occasion for all members, and particularly for Australia as a founding member. Australia also hosted the Fiftieth Anniversary Conference in Canberra where the Agreement that established the organisation had been signed in 1947. He noted that, according to the Conference Rules of Procedure, the host country of the Conference normally provides the chairperson. On behalf of the Conference, he thanked the President of French Polynesia, His Excellency Mr Gaston Flosse, for taking time in his busy schedule to be present, and invited him to chair the First Conference of the Pacific Community.
6. The President of French Polynesia thanked the Conference for the trust accorded through him to his country and assumed the chair of the first meeting of the Conference of the Pacific Community.
7. The Conference prayer was offered by the Representative of Vanuatu, the Honourable Serge Vohor.
8. Miss Emmanuelle Vidal-Hiomai, a well-known and accomplished Tahitian opera singer, accompanied by her musicians, sang exquisite renditions of Pacifica and Pahoho.
9. The President of French Polynesia, His Excellency Mr Gaston Flosse, welcomed all delegates and officially opened the First Conference of the Pacific Community. His inspiring opening statement is appended as Annex 1 to this report.
10. The Secretary of Defence of France, His Excellency Mr Jean-Pierre Masseret, made some opening remarks. His address is appended as Annex 2 to this report.
11. The Director-General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Dr Dun, presented his opening speech. He welcomed delegates to the meeting, expressed thanks to the host country and the President of French Polynesia, and thanked him for his kind remarks regarding his “most pleasurable” four years of office. He wished the delegates success with their meeting.

Administrative Matters

12. The Conference adopted its agenda.
13. The Conference elected its Drafting Committee, composed of the Representatives of Australia, France, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and the United States of America, and chaired by the Vice-Chairperson, the Deputy Prime Minister and Representative of Tonga.
14. The Conference adopted its hours of work.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – CRGA 29 CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT TO CONFERENCE

15. The Chairperson of CRGA 29 presented his letter to the Chairperson of the First Conference of the Pacific Community. The letter highlighted some of the important issues discussed by CRGA 29, and included an attachment containing the complete list of recommendations made by this Committee. The Chairperson’s letter is appended as Annex 3.
16. The Chairperson of CRGA 29 thanked the Committee for its hard work. He called Conference’s attention to those issues appearing on the Conference Agenda that require discussion, and gave a brief outline of these.

17. He drew the attention of the meeting to the issues that CRGA 29 had already discussed and recommended for approval to Conference, namely:

- The Annual Report and Review of Achievements, of the Director-General;
- SPC's Organisational Structure;
- The SPC Programme Presentations;
- Remuneration of Seconded Staff;
- Changes in Staff and Finance Regulations;
- SPC's Budget Strategy: Core and Non-core;
- The 1999 Budget Revision;
- Applications for Community Membership; and
- The Developments with the Tuna Management.

18. The Conference endorsed all of the recommendations included in the Chairperson's letter, as listed above.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

AGENDA ITEM 3.1 – REPORTS OF THE 1998 AUDIT OF THE SPC

19. SPC's Deputy Director-General (Noumea Headquarters) introduced the Reports of the 1998 Audit of the SPC, by the firm Price Waterhouse Coopers. She noted that, for the third year in a row, SPC's financial statements had been accepted "without qualification". She described the letter to the SPC from the auditors, who recommended that SPC consider changing its policy, decided by Conference, that there should be no depreciation of fixed costs. She noted that SPC was happy to work together with the auditors to develop a new policy, which, upon completion, will be brought before CRGA 30. She said the benefits of such a change in policy were twofold: it would ensure that fixed assets were listed appropriately with their actual costs, and it would allow an adequate replacement budget for fixed assets.

20. She acknowledged the value of the auditors' recommendations and noted that CRGA requires that the auditors' reports be accepted and approved by Conference.

21. Conference approved the recommendations by CRGA 29 to accept the audit report and endorsed the Secretariat's response to the auditor's management letter without further comments.

3.2 – REMUNERATION – CROP UNIFORMITY

22. The Deputy Director-General (Suva Operations) presented an update on the process of developing the concept of harmonising the terms and conditions of the staff of regional organisations. CRGA 29 had been presented with a report on progress since 1998 (Working Papers 4.5, 4.5a), acknowledging the lead role played by the Forum Officials Committee (FOC) in developing a strategy applicable to regional organisations. The Special Session of CRGA 28 convened in November 1998 to consider and approve a 9% salary increase for professional staff, following the similar increase a year earlier for FORSEC professional staff. This increase has been paid as an interim bonus to staff since the beginning of 1999, pending the recommendations of the second consultancy.

23. A FOC committee was held on 24 and 25 November, and the SOPAC and SPREP governing councils met on 26 November to consider the consultant's recommendations. FOC approved 11 of the recommendations (CRGA WP 4.5a), and only rejected one, which proposed salaries be linked to the Australian dollar, preferring instead in the interim to remain linked to the SDR. The SOPAC and SPREP governing councils endorsed the FOC decision for adoption by these organisations, and approved an interim 9% salary increase pending the outcome of an inter-agency working group, consisting of all CROP members plus Suva-based diplomatic missions, to work out the details of implementing the recommendations.

24. The Secretariat was essentially in accordance with the decision taken by FOC, and endorsed by SOPAC and SPREP, apart from some specific amendments to take account of the particular circumstances of SPC: salaries for Suva support staff were provided on a net basis (untaxed), salaries for support staff in Noumea fall in line with those of the local market, and the decision regarding incorporation of the 9% increase for professional staff. There would be no impact from the implementation of the recommendations on the Year 2000 Budget.

25. The Conference:

- (a) Approved adoption by SPC of the recommendations relating to a new methodology for setting remuneration levels approved by FOC and the respective Councils of SOPAC and SPREP for adoption respectively by the three organisations;
- (b) Noted that the application of the new methodology would not be automatic, and that salary adjustments would need to be approved by CRGA/Conference in the budget context;
- (c) Deferred the incorporation of the current interim 9% salary increase into the base contracts of professional staff, pending the results of the job sizing and market comparator exercise;
- (d) Noted that the FOC salary structure for Support Staff in Fiji is based on taxable income and that SPC will have to revise the salary scales for its Fiji-based support staff whose income is not taxable;
- (e) Noted that the salary scales for SPC Professional Staff based in Noumea and other locations outside of Fiji will be revised on the basis of the ECA Survey, using the Suva Professional Staff salaries as the base salaries;
- (f) Noted that the Secretariat will seek the inclusion of the non-Forum member countries which have missions in Suva to be part of the Inter-Agency Working Group set up to facilitate implementation of the Remuneration Strategy across all relevant CROP Agencies.

AGENDA ITEM 3.3 – THE YEAR 2000 BUDGET

26. The Deputy Director-General (Noumea Headquarters) introduced The Year 2000 Budget. She noted that the organisation is in a healthy financial state, illustrated by the level of reserves (500,000 XPF units), bank investments (6.5 million XPF units), fixed assets and cash flow. However, the Secretariat was required to proceed with caution in its budget preparation because the level of unpaid assessed contributions had increased in recent years. The Secretariat noted that this trend adversely affected its ability to plan, and restricted its cashflow.

27. The Year 2000 Budget was presented in a new format reflecting the current divisional structure, and split between Noumea Headquarters and Suva Operations. Programme narratives followed the presentation of the non-core budget. The general guiding principles were transparency and accountability.

28. The total Year 2000 Budget proposal was around 25.7 million XPF units, of which 8.1 million was for the Core Budget and 17.5 for the Non-core Budget. Overall, this represented an increase of about 5.7% over the current 1999 Budget level. In calculating the assessed contributions, the 'same-real' increase adjustment for inflation (calculated at 2.5%) had allowed for an extra 187,000 XPF units. The Secretariat noted that such an adjustment would not be used in the preparation of the 2001 and subsequent budgets given Conference's decision to adopt a 'same-nominal' approach. The option of levying an administrative charge on project funds would be discussed in a paper to be submitted to CRGA 30.

29. The Year 2000 Core Budget was balanced, with expenditure at 8.1 million XPF units. Administrative costs had been reduced even further (by 5.7%), while work programme allocations had been increased (by 6%). Earnings from bank investments had decreased to 250,000 XPF units, but miscellaneous income had increased as a result of more facilities and staff hire (to 70,000), and dividends from the Housing Units and the Canteen had increased (to 50,000 and 18,000 respectively). Overall, the projected increase in core income over the revised 1999 levels was 2.2%.

30. Several critical programme components would come under Core which had previously been funded by project funds (project co-ordination in Forestry, and the Maritime Programme). The Core Budget implication of the 9% increase for professional staff was 240,000 XPF units. The Information Technology area would see a core funding increase of 170,000 XPF for next year, to comply with the Secretariat's medium term IT plan. The Secretariat had tried to find an extra 600,000 XPF units to cover these commitments, well in excess of the 187,000 XPF units gained from the inflation adjustment, but had produced a balanced budget meeting as many of these high-priority needs as the financial constraints would allow.

31. It should be noted that in the Non-core Budget, although the Secretariat has attempted to reflect as much as possible the predicted level of project funding to be provided by its donor partners, the exercise can never be completely accurate given the dynamic nature of project funding. The Secretariat has just completed fruitful consultations with New Zealand and Australia, and looks forward to negotiations with France and the EU. The percentage of donor funding has increased by 8%, the lowest annual increase since 1996. However, the level of 17.6 million XPF units demonstrates the continuing donor confidence in the SPC's ability to deliver services.

32. Notable developments of the Non-core Budget include a reduction overall in funding for the Community Health Programme, although the Secretariat is expecting a nutrition and non-communicable diseases project funded by Australia to join the programme next year; the new Renewable Energy Project, funded jointly by France and Australia; expansions in the Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries Programmes, with the help of Australia, EU, ADB, Japan through FAO, GEF and Taiwan/ROC; and the EU's continued support of the Agriculture Programme after the conclusion of PRAP and Australia's interest in the agriculture sector.

33. The Year 2001 Budget looks like it will contain even greater challenges than the Year 2000 Budget, given the need to move certain XB-funded projects into Core (Maritime Legal Services, Regional Health Management and the Planning Unit), and the possibility of extra expense should the Second Conference of the Pacific Community be held outside Noumea.

34. The Representative of the USA drew Conference's attention to her delegation's reservations recorded in the Report of CRGA 29. US Government policy regarding all international organisations would not allow support for a year 2000 Budget higher than the level of the Revised 1999 Budget, and therefore the USA would be unable to join in consensus endorsement of the Year 2000 Budget.

35. The Representative of Nauru noted his delegation's concern that the Triennial Women's Conference was not included in the Year 2000 Budget, and hoped this important event would be funded in 2001.

36. The Deputy Director-General (Noumea Headquarters) assured the Representative that the Secretariat would endeavour to seek funding for this meeting in the preparation of the Year 2001 Budget, taking into account the constraints outlined in her earlier presentation.

37. The Representative of the Republic of Palau thanked the Secretariat for this response, and the clear and transparent presentation of the Budget documents. However, he expressed concern at the significant decrease in funding for the Community Health Programme, a reduction of 17% in Core and Non-core allocation. He asserted that health should never be compromised for the sake of economic development, and that the two must go hand-in-hand; health should be one of the key development priorities of the Pacific region.

38. The Representative of Vanuatu congratulated the Chairperson on his election to this post, and thanked the people and Government of French Polynesia for their hospitality. He commended the Director-General, Deputy Directors-General and all Programme heads for their clear budget presentation.

39. The Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga congratulated the Chairperson on his election, and noted that he had two observations regarding the 2000 Budget. First, he suggested that the Secretariat consider presenting budget summaries for CRGA and Conference to consider, on the basis of three approaches: real growth, zero real growth and zero nominal growth. It is Tonga's view that these approaches would allow the meeting to reflect on the options and their costs and benefits and to make a much more informed decision regarding budgetary matters. Secondly, his delegation was concerned by the Secretariat's assessment that the preparation of the Year 2001 Budget would be even more difficult. He suggested that perhaps a projection of significant budgetary constraints three years ahead would be valuable, to inform countries of the possible effects on their assessed contributions of developments in the Core Budget.

40. The Deputy Director-General (Noumea Headquarters) noted that the Secretariat was guided by Conference's decisions regarding its approach to budget preparation, and that Conference had decided to instruct the Secretariat to prepare the Year 2001 and subsequent budgets on a 'same-nominal' basis. This policy change would pose a particular challenge to the Secretariat in preparing the next budget. In forming a budget for the organisation, the Secretariat needed to ensure that the priorities of member countries and territories were balanced with financial constraints. One option that would provide the organisation with more flexibility was the suggested administrative surcharge on project funds that would be discussed at CRGA 30.

41. The Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga noted that his delegation's suggestion was that by providing a variety of budget scenarios, CRGA and Conference might better evaluate how to best prioritise the allocation of core funds. One submission was not sufficient to allow full consideration of the issues.

42. The Conference, taking into account the position recorded by the Representative of the USA, and noting the comments of other delegations, adopted the Year 2000 Budget (Core and Non-core).

AGENDA ITEM 3.4 STATEMENTS BY DELEGATIONS ON MEMBERS' ASSESSED AND XB CONTRIBUTIONS FOR YEAR 2000

43. The Representative of Australia congratulated SPC on the comprehensive Budget document and for the improvements, attributed to the efforts of the Executive and the Planning Unit. He also placed on record the excellent co-operation of Programme Managers. In relation to the Budget, he noted that Australia had moved to triennium budget funding for SPC and would provide a contribution of 5.7 million AUD annually in advance. After payment of the assessed contribution, the balance of these funds would help fund selected programmes as agreed at annual consultations. This was designed to give SPC greater certainty and flexibility in programme planning. Programme funding would be divided among the Coastal Fisheries Programme, the Community Health Programme, Statistics, the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau and the Planning Unit. Australia's project funding totalling around 4.5 million AUD in 2000 would be shared among the Oceanic Fisheries Programme, the Pacific Regional Vector-Borne Diseases Project, the HIV/AIDS and STD Project, and the Renewable Energies Project. Other projects were in the pipeline for likely implementation in 2000 and beyond. This demonstrated Australia's confidence in SPC to deliver quality programmes for the benefit of island membership.

44. The Representative of Cook Islands congratulated the Chairperson on his appointment and greeted the members on behalf of the newly-elected government. In pledging its assessed contributions for 2000, he confirmed that the two outstanding contributions, for 1996 and 1999, had been paid.

45. The Representative of the Federated States of Micronesia congratulated the Chairperson on his election and thanked the people and Government of French Polynesia for the hospitality that had been extended to his delegation since CRGA. He stated that the assessed contribution of the Federated States of Micronesia to SPC had been made a permanent item of appropriation on the national budget, and that this was a testimony to the importance given to the Pacific Community. The Year 2000 assessed contribution had been approved by Congress several months ago and was currently being processed.

46. The Representative of Fiji Islands congratulated the Chairperson on his appointment and, through him, thanked French Polynesia for the warm hospitality. She extended the greetings of the new Fiji Islands Government, acknowledged the contribution of the previous government to the development of SPC, and said that Fiji would continue to support the organisation. She acknowledged the hard work of CRGA 29 in forming its recommendations to Conference. She further acknowledged the contribution of donors to SPC and looked forward to their continued support. She congratulated the Director-General on his achievements during his four years in office and hoped that the new Director-General would build on these achievements in the new millennium. With respect to the Budget, she understood that the Secretariat had considered all sectors very carefully in the budget preparation, but also cautioned that social programmes should not be adversely affected when trimming down the budget.

47. The Representative of France confirmed that France would pay its own contributions (assessed and project funding), and noted that France was also indirectly contributing to SPC via the European Union funding. He announced that France would provide an additional 2 million FRF for the Renewable Energy Project, in partnership with Australia.

48. The Representative of Guam assured the Conference that Guam would pay its assessed contribution, together with any arrears due. As a member of the legislature, she indicated that she would take measures to get the appropriation approved by the legislature and meet Guam's obligations, in order to enable SPC to continue its valuable and important work.

49. The Representative of the Republic of Kiribati congratulated the Chairperson on his election to guide this important meeting of the First Conference of the Pacific Community. She conveyed her regrets that her government was not able to be represented at ministerial level, due to the convening of the National Parliamentary Session at this time. However, she stressed, this in no way diminishes Kiribati's firm commitment to the Pacific Community. She registered her government's appreciation for the good work carried out by SPC over the years, and acknowledged the importance of this work to the development of the region, and to Kiribati, in particular. She reaffirmed Kiribati's continuing commitment to the work of SPC and that her government was therefore fully committed to meeting its assessed contribution to the organisation. Her government always made appropriate provision for this in its National Budget, and is pleased to note that Kiribati has no arrears. The Year 2000 assessed contribution has also been budgeted. She also acknowledged with sincere appreciation the generous assistance and support of the donors in enabling SPC to deliver the important programmes of assistance to the region. She expressed her hope that donors would continue to provide the needed support to SPC for the continuing service of the region into the new millennium.

50. The Representative of the Republic of the Marshall Islands joined other members in extending congratulations to the Chairperson on his election and on his willingness to accept this responsibility. He also expressed gratitude for the hospitality extended to his delegation. He commended the Secretariat on the Budget, reaffirmed the Marshall Islands' commitment to the organisation and to meet its contribution. He also expressed his government's gratitude to the donor community for their continuing contributions that have enabled the work programme of SPC to progress.

51. The Representative of Nauru echoed the sentiments expressed by previous delegations in thanking the President of French Polynesia for chairing this historical meeting of the First Conference of the Pacific Community. Despite current economic constraints, Nauru would strive to meet its contribution by the end of the year.

52. The Representative of New Zealand expressed thanks to the Chairperson for the splendid hospitality at this Conference, and thanked the CRGA for the vital preparatory work done by this Committee. As is its usual practice, New Zealand paid both its assessed and extra-budgetary contributions early, a total of 3.2 million NZD. New Zealand was funding projects in Community Education, Health, the Maritime Programme, the Planning Unit and the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau amongst others. The Representative noted the outstanding effort put in by the Director-General to ensure the highest standards of integrity and professionalism in the organisation. New Zealand looked forward to further improvements in operations, particularly harmonisation with other organisations to eliminate duplication and increase efficiency.

53. The Representative of New Caledonia congratulated the Chairperson and extended appreciation to the people and Government of French Polynesia for their warm welcome and hospitality. He thanked the Director-General and his team for the quality of the work accomplished. He explained that the Congress of New Caledonia had not yet passed the budget for the incoming year, but pending this, New Caledonia would pay a total contribution of 17,207,000 XPF, including assessed contributions, a special host grant of 5,230,000 XPF, and 7 million XPF in extra-budgetary contributions. The latter would consist of 750,000 XPF for the Nutrition and Lifestyle Diseases Section, 3 million XPF for the Cultural Affairs Programme, 1 million XPF for training of youth workers, 1.25 million XPF for language training of francophone women and 1 million XPF for training carried out by the SPC/Nelson Polytechnic fisheries course. New Caledonia also offers access arrangements with a preferential price under the ComET project, in order to meet the telecommunications needs of SPC and to meet the financial concerns expressed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

54. The Representative of the Republic of Palau extended Palau's congratulations to the Chairperson and warmly thanked the hosts for their hospitality. He also expressed good wishes to the outgoing Director-General. He reaffirmed Palau's full support to SPC. He confirmed that Palau would continue to meet its assessed contribution and noted that it was in fact ahead on its payment.

55. The Representative of Papua New Guinea stressed that, although his country was not represented at ministerial level, this in no way diminished Papua New Guinea's commitment to the Pacific Community. He joined other delegations in commending French Polynesia for the excellent Conference arrangements. He stated that Papua New Guinea finds it increasingly difficult each year to meet commitments to all regional and international organisations of which it is a member, given its current economic situation aggravated by recent difficulties, including natural disasters. In this context, the Papua New Guinea Government has ordered a general review of its membership of regional and international organisations, with a view to addressing its overall budgetary problems. However, as a Pacific country, Papua New Guinea continues to give high priority to association with the Forum and the Pacific Community, and despite current economic difficulties, his government will be able to meet its assessed contribution to the organisation. With regards to SPC's budget, he urged the Secretariat to be more creative in sourcing resources and managing administrative inputs. He said that SPC's work programmes are heavily dependent on donor funding and that economic conditions in donor countries would affect implementation of projects when funds are reduced or cut.

56. The Representative of French Polynesia congratulated the SPC Executive team for their successful efforts in the administration, management and programme areas. He noted with satisfaction the transparency of the budget format adopted. He confirmed that French Polynesia would meet its assessed contribution as agreed. He endorsed the Year 2000 Budget and recorded support for the Director-General and the Executive team who have proved their efficiency over the last few years.

57. The Representative of Pitcairn Islands noted that the Representative of the United Kingdom would speak on behalf of her delegation.

58. The Representative of Samoa warmly congratulated the Chairperson and placed on record his delegation's appreciation for the wonderful hospitality. He also recorded his thanks to the outgoing Director-General for his contribution to SPC over the past four years. In confirming that Samoa would meet its assessed contribution for 2000, he urged the Secretariat to give priority to social programmes in the Budget.

59. The Representative of Solomon Islands joined other delegates in congratulating the Chairperson. He stressed the importance of the decisions made at this Conference in determining the work of the organisation in the new millennium. He congratulated the outgoing Director-General for his achievements during the four years of his mandate. He noted that it would be difficult to replace Dr Dun, but expressed confidence that in their collective wisdom, the delegates would make the right decision to enable the organisation to meet the uncertainty, challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. He conveyed gratitude to the Government of Australia for allowing Dr Dun to be part of the organisation and wished him God's blessing. In relation to the Budget, he was pleased to report that, despite economic difficulties, Solomon Islands had cleared its outstanding assessed contributions and is committed to paying next year's assessed contribution.

60. The Representative of Tokelau said that it was a real privilege to be present at the First Conference of the Pacific Community. He conveyed congratulations to the Chairperson, and expressed warm thanks to the people of French Polynesia. He said that Tokelau would naturally consider the impact of any increase in its assessed contribution on its limited budgetary resources, but felt that, given the assistance provided by SPC since Tokelau joined the organisation, the contribution is warranted. Tokelau will honour its assessed contribution for the year 2000, although it will still require formal approval by its paramount decision-making body, the National Fonu.

61. The Representative of Tonga expressed appreciation to the founding donor members for the generosity of their contributions not only to core, but also for their voluntary contributions to the work programme. He thanked the Director-General for a job well done over the four years of his mandate, particularly with respect to the integrity of SPC, which has generated increased confidence, resulting in increasing membership and contributions of donors. With respect to the budgetary system he stressed the value of exploring new systems. He said that Tonga would meet its assessed contribution, but emphasised that there was an issue of principle. He quoted Darwin, who said it is not necessarily the strongest or most intelligent but those who are most responsive to change who survive.

62. The Representative of Tuvalu noted the Tuvalu Government's regret at its inability to send a Minister to the Conference as the Tuvalu Parliament was currently meeting in its budgetary session. On behalf of the Government however, he warmly thanked the outgoing Director-General for his dedicated work for the social and economic development of the people of the region. He reaffirmed that Tuvalu has benefited greatly from the work of the Secretariat through its technical support services and thanked particularly the donors and development partners. He expressed special appreciation for the activities focusing on the smaller Pacific Island states, in recognition of the situation of smaller islands states. He confirmed that, subject to approval and Parliamentary appropriation next week, Tuvalu would pay its assessed contribution for year 2000.

63. The Representative of the United Kingdom stated that his country remains firmly committed to the Pacific region and the welfare of its people. The United Kingdom is committed to halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, focusing on universal access to health care and basic education. The United Kingdom's Pacific regional strategy confirms that working in partnership with regional organisations is a priority, particularly building-capacity to meet the priorities and needs of Pacific Island countries. The United Kingdom and Pitcairn would meet their assessed contributions; he also noted that United Kingdom funding was also channelled to SPC through the European Union funding. Discussions on extra-budgetary funding were under way with the Secretariat to assist the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau with CEDAW implementation, the Maritime Programme with the Pacific seafarers' training project, the Pacific Youth Resource Bureau with advocacy, skills development and capacity building, and CETC with enabling more candidates to attend the annual training course.

64. The Representative of the United States of America congratulated the Chairperson and expressed warm thanks for the hospitality of French Polynesia. She thanked the Secretariat for the excellent Conference arrangements. She reaffirmed the US's support for the Pacific Community in its development work. She indicated that the US had paid its assessed contribution for 1999 and expected to pay its 2000 contribution. With respect to the US arrears, she informed the Conference that a written agreement between the President and the Congress had paved the way for payment in the not too distant future, although some other international organisations had to meet some conditions before any arrears could be paid.

65. The Representative of Vanuatu said that the budget for Year 2000 had not been passed yet. Given the natural disasters that Vanuatu suffered, his government would probably have to review its contributions to all international organisations next year. However, in recognition of the critical role played by SPC, the Government of Vanuatu will honour its assessed contribution.

66. The Representative of Wallis and Futuna extended congratulations to the Chairperson and thanked the people and Government of French Polynesia for their warm hospitality. She expressed particular appreciation to the donor countries for their financial support to various programmes of SPC and particularly to Social Resources programmes, including the PWRB and PYRB. She noted with much interest the undertaking by the Secretariat to give more support to the PWRB. The Territorial Assembly of Wallis and Futuna had recently agreed to take into account all arrears to SPC, and Wallis and Futuna would pay its assessed contribution in the coming weeks.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – POLICY ISSUES **AGENDA ITEM 4.1 – SPC-SOPAC INTEGRATION**

67. The Deputy Director-General (Suva Operations) invited Conference to consider this item which had been fully discussed by CRGA concerning the approval of a study of possible integration between the two regional organisations, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC). This study, if approved, would be conducted early next year. He pointed out that the background papers to this item (The SPC-SOPAC Relationship: A Planning Sequence for Integration (CRGA W.P 6.3, and 6.3/Add.1)), had been fully discussed at CRGA 29, and were a joint initiative of the two chief executives of the two long-established regional organisations. He noted that the item had already been presented to the SOPAC Governing Council in Nadi and referred delegates to documentation on the conclusions and recommendations of this meeting. The SOPAC Council's decision (WP 6.3/ Add.1) reads as follows:

Council therefore agreed to examine the concept of integration ofSPC and SOPAC, and, should the SPC CRGA also agree in their December meeting, that the following action be taken:

- (i) In the first quarter of 2000, the Secretariats of the Pacific Community and SOPAC jointly manage a consultancy (terms of reference attached) to examine the options for SPC-SOPAC integration.*
- (ii) The consultants' report be considered by both governing bodies in the second half of 2000.*

68. He highlighted that the two organisations shared a common vision and service, and that there was very little overlap in their services and a great deal of complementarity. The benefits of integration he described as rationalisation of services and economic savings.

69. He noted that the Terms of Reference for the consultancy were:

1. Analysis of the benefits and costs of the concept, and, if favourable,
2. Formulation of an implementation plan.

70. The feedback from the SOPAC Governing Council Meeting was that members welcomed the joint initiative, and agreed that the benefits and the challenges of the concept would need to be fully investigated. There was strong support for the existing SOPAC technical services, and agreement that these should be maintained. The SOPAC Council agreed with the recommendations for a consultancy, but preferred a slower process for implementation. The Deputy Director-General (Suva Operations) also invited the meeting to take advantage of the presence of the Director of SOPAC at the meeting, if there were any questions concerning the views of that organisation.

71. The Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga supported the proposal but stated that under the Canberra Agreement, and the Déclaration de Tahiti, any major restructuring of SPC needs the approval of Conference, not CRGA. He asked whether the decision should wait until the next Conference in 2001, rather than be taken by CRGA 30, thus breaking the rules on major structural changes.

72. The Deputy Director-General (Suva Operations) pointed out that the Saipan Conference had delegated decision-making powers to CRGA, but that, because this was such an important policy change, the Secretariat was asking Conference to specifically delegate this power to CRGA 30. He further explained that the report to CRGA 30 will be one of two types: either the result of the consultancy will be that integration is not recommended, in which case no further action would be required, or, if the outcome is favourable, that it would recommend further investigation of, for example time frames, but would not take a decision on whether or not to integrate. This decision would be put before the next Conference in 2001.

73. Given this explanation the Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga moved to adopt the Recommendations.

74. The Representative of Fiji Islands drew attention to the value of drawing together the technical organisations that were already based in Fiji on one site, particularly the likely reduction in administrative overheads. She pleaded however that any adverse effects be fully considered. She felt that the amended terms of reference of the study took all concerns into account and recommended that the study be carried out and the report of the consultation be tabled at CRGA 30 for further action.

75. Conference joins with SOPAC's Governing Council in requesting joint action by the Secretariats as follows:

- (a) In the first quarter of 2000, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and SOPAC jointly manage a consultancy to examine the options for SPC-SOPAC integration;
- (b) The consultants' report be considered by both governing bodies in the second half of 2000;
- (c) Those conducting the study should consult as widely as possible, especially with non-members of SOPAC, taking into account the limited proposed budget for the consultancy, and especially making use of the improved telecommunications technology.

Conference delegates the authority to CRGA 30 to take the appropriate decisions depending on the outcome of the consultancy regarding further investigation, but not the decision to implement.

AGENDA ITEM 4.2 – THE DÉCLARATION DE TAHITI

76. The Deputy Director-General (Noumea Headquarters) introduced the Déclaration de Tahiti. She noted that this Declaration was a non-legal document that encapsulates the working practices of the SPC on the eve of the new millennium. She noted that since the establishment of SPC in 1947 there have been many decisions by Conference that amend the operations of the SPC. The cumulative result of these resolutions has changed the face of the organisation considerably since 1947, although the basic goals of the organisation remain the same. There have been numerous attempts to bring the Canberra Agreement up to date, but these have been difficult to accommodate given the diverse membership and the diversity of legal systems. The Déclaration de Tahiti is not a legal document and thus should be easier to keep current. Questions were raised at CRGA 28 concerning the legal implications of the name change and other changes, and the Committee had gratefully accepted an offer by the Government of New Zealand to examine these legal implications. The result of the legal investigation presented at CRGA 29 was that the changes could be accommodated without invalidating the Canberra Agreement, and this Declaration is the result. The Declaration is intended to complement the Corporate Plan and describe the operational rules, set by Conference, under which the organisation actually works. The document itself was drafted by the Director-General and circulated to members for two rounds of comment and redrafting in 1999. All of these comments have been taken into account, and some useful comments were also received at CRGA 29. The Deputy Director-General (Noumea Headquarters) noted that this would be a living document and one which could be easily updated, so that changes in operational procedures after CRGA or Conference could be incorporated annually. It was designed to be a companion document to the Corporate Plan.

77. The Representative of French Polynesia requested that the name of the document be changed from 'Déclaration de Tahiti', to 'Déclaration de Tahiti Nui'. The Conference adopted this name change and the following resolutions:

The First Conference of the Pacific Community:

- *Recognises the importance and continued relevance of the Canberra Agreement as the founding document of the Pacific Community;*
- *Recalls the constitutional changes to the organisation agreed by Members since the conclusion of the Canberra Agreement;*
- *Notes that these constitutional changes have generally been incorporated into the document known in French and in English as 'Déclaration de Tahiti Nui';*
- *Adopts the 'Déclaration de Tahiti Nui' as a factual statement of the current organisational structure and operational policies of the organisation; and*
- *Requests the Secretariat to print the 'Déclaration de Tahiti Nui' as a companion document to the Secretariat's Corporate Plan.*

AGENDA ITEM 5 – APPOINTMENT OF SPC’s CHIEF EXECUTIVE

78. The Conference appointed Ms Lourdes Pangelinan of Guam to the post of Director-General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

79. The Conference applauded the appointment.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – THEMATIC DISCUSSION

‘The upsurge of New Technologies and their Impact on Information and Knowledge’

80. The Chairperson introduced the Director-General of the French Polynesian Post Office, the next Director of Telecom, Mr G. Salmon. Mr Salmon, using modern communication tools, made a presentation entitled, ‘[Metu@. The Outburst of the New Technologies of Information and Communication](#)’. The presentation outlined OPT’s strategy enabling isolated rural communities in French Polynesia to link up with global satellite networks. Copies of the project are available from Mr. Salmon, OPT, French Polynesia. The Chairperson introduced SPC’s Manager of the Information Technology Section, Mr Al Blake, who gave his presentation, entitled ‘Communications: the Pacific Predicament’. Copies of Mr Blake’s presentation are available from SPC Information Technology and Communications unit. The Chairperson thanked Mr Salmon and Mr Blake for their clear and informative presentations, which had given the Conference a comprehensive picture of the status of communications technology in the Pacific and clear indications of problems and solutions.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY’S LOGO AND FLAG

81. The Director-General introduced Information Paper 2.3 – The Pacific Community’s Logo and Flag. He summarised the logo design process, including the two designs that were rejected by CRGA 28. On the basis of the Committee’s decision, the Director-General had decided to prepare another design for the consideration of Conference, taking the existing logo as a base point, incorporating the spirit of earlier proposals, and taking into account the comments that had been made at CRGA 28.

82. The proposed design was highly symbolic. The unfinished circle of stars representing the Community’s membership was retained, but the stars were five-pointed to give better definition, instead of the six points that symbolised the founding members of the SPC. The arc in the circle represented the Secretariat completing the circle of members, and coincidentally has the shape of a satellite dish, bringing to mind the critical impact of communications technology in transforming Pacific insularity into Pacific Community.

83. The coconut palm was retained, but had become central to the design instead of peripheral, and also filled up the space on the sail to prevent the design being altered. The sail of a canoe bursting out of a harbour symbolised movement and change – both essential parts of the new philosophy of the SPC. In the new design, the circle of stars framed two traditional symbols of the Pacific – a sail and an ocean, symbols of linkage and interchange. Regarding colour, the light blue had been replaced by the deep blue of Oceania, and gold stars had given way to the reality of the Pacific’s clear night skies. The turquoise sail suggested youth, and the Community’s island chains. One practical weakness of the existing logo had been rectified – the empty circle that attracted a wide variety of additions. It would be much more difficult to alter the new logo, which would be registered to protect it as a trademark.

84. Conference participants viewed a short video presentation produced by the Regional Media Centre describing the history of the existing SPC logo and the preparation of the new design.

85. The Representative of French Polynesia supported a minor amendment to the logo suggested by the Representative of Federated States of Micronesia during CRGA 29: that the six stars beneath the prow of the canoe be increased to seven, to represent the Southern Cross. He noted that the proposed design symbolised Pacific seafarers, and would inspire the Pacific Community for the next millennium.

86. The Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga suggested that rather than the prow of the canoe dividing the stars, the arc might be moved in the design so that it was beneath the canoe, symbolising the great Pacific seafarers who sailed between the ocean and the stars that guided them, to the horizon of the unknown future.

87. The Representative of Australia noted his delegation's support of the proposed design. It would always be difficult to agree on a single design given the varying ideas and individual interpretations people had about the best way to symbolise the organisation. He praised the efforts of the two SPC graphic artists, Mr Jipé Le-Bars and Mr Ian Rolls, who had put many hours of unpaid time into the preparation of the proposed design. He noted that such projects were often undertaken by external consultants, costing organisations thousands of dollars. He proposed the Conference record its appreciation to these two dedicated members of the Secretariat.

88. The Representative of Guam noted that a number of delegations had expressed concerns at CRGA 29 that the division between the stars was not desirable. The membership was united in the Pacific Community, and it would be unfortunate if one group, for example the donor countries, was considered to be separate from the rest. She supported the suggestion by the Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga that the logo be altered so that the stars were not separated from one another.

89. The Representative of Solomon Islands suggested that the canoe's sail be reduced in size as it seemed to dominate the circle of stars, and be bursting out of it, rather than keeping the membership of the Pacific Community together.

90. The Representative of Fiji Islands supported the suggestion made by the Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga, taking into account the suggestion by the Representative of Solomon Islands.

91. The Director-General thanked the Representatives for their advice, and suggested that the Secretariat produce a revised design, taking into account the suggestions made by various delegations, and submit the amended logo to the membership for approval via correspondence. He noted various delegations' concern that the stars should not be divided from one another, and this would be rectified, but hoped that the movement and spirit of change conveyed in the original proposal might be retained.

92. The Representative of Solomon Islands noted that if the design was computer-generated, it might be possible to revise it in Noumea and transmit the amended design to Tahiti during the Conference.

93. The Chairperson (speaking as the Representative of French Polynesia) supported the spirit of the proposed design, but proposed that the canoe looked fragile compared to the great canoe that had sailed from Hawaii to Tahiti and Easter Island and back, and might be replaced by a more robust representation of a twin-hulled canoe. He supported the suggestion by the Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga that the stars should not be divided; no one group should be marginalised.

94. The Conference, recording its appreciation for the excellent work of SPC's graphic artists, requested the Secretariat to:

- a) Revise the proposed logo design as soon as possible, according to the suggested changes made during the deliberations of Conference; and
- b) Submit the revised design for the consideration of the Pacific Community membership during the Conference.

95. The Conference reconvened to consider the proposed revised design. It also examined a separate logo design submitted by the Government of French Polynesia and expressed appreciation to the Government of French Polynesia for proposing an alternative design. The Conference approved the proposed revised design as the new official logo and flag of the organisation.



AGENDA ITEM 8 – THE PACIFIC VILLAGE

96. The Deputy Director-General (Suva Operations) presented the progress report on the Pacific Village project (presented as Conference 1 Working Paper 8) for the consideration of Conference. He noted that the Pacific Village concept was originally presented to CRGA 28 as the Suva Land and Buildings Project. The Pacific Village was intended to provide office accommodation for SPC's Suva branch, the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and the Tourism Council of the South Pacific (TCSP). The concept of headquarters for the three regional organisations originated at the 1992 South Pacific Forum in Honiara, when the Fiji Islands Government offered to build three separate headquarters for SPC, SOPAC and TCSP. In 1997, at the South Pacific Conference in Canberra, the Fiji Islands Government offered land located beside the University of the South Pacific valued at approximately 1 million FJD. CRGA 28 delegated to the project's Planning Committee the authority to run a competition among architects from Fiji.

97. In January 1999, Fiji Islands took ownership of the project in line with its 1992 and 1997 commitments. The design competition produced the winning design from Architects Pacific that was presented to CRGA 29. The Fiji Islands Government was seeking Conference's endorsement of the winning design, and the lead role of Fiji Islands Government in seeking funding for the project, both internally and externally.

98. CRGA 29 highlighted a number of areas of concern that had been taken onboard. The recommendations of CRGA 29 were attached to the Letter from the Chairperson of CRGA 29 to the Chairperson of the First Conference of the Pacific Community. The Committee had thanked the Government of Fiji Islands for its initiative, commended the winning design, highlighted areas of where costs might be reduced, endorsed Fiji Islands Government's lead role in finding funding for the project, and noted that its endorsement of the design did not imply any commitment to assist with funding its construction.

99. The Representative of Fiji Islands acknowledged the introduction by the Deputy Director-General, and suggested that CRGA 29 had very adequately covered the issues involved during its deliberations. She noted that there had been considerable progress with the project in the past 12 months, and that the recently elected Fiji Islands Government had also endorsed the project. The Government of Fiji Islands would appreciate the approval and concurrence of Conference to do further work, and take the lead role in seeking funds both internally and externally to make the Pacific Village a reality. Fiji would keep all member governments and administrations informed with the continuing progress of the project, and report to CRGA30. She noted that the Governing Council of SOPAC had already endorsed the proposals, and would appreciate the concurrence of Conference.

100. The Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga noted that his delegation supported the winning design concept, and Fiji's request to take the lead role in sourcing funding. He expressed surprise that CRGA 29 had recommended that the size of the project be reduced, and disagreed with recommendations c) and d) as attached to the Chairperson's Letter. He surmised that the initial hesitancy of a number of CRGA delegations to support the project was because they assumed they would be asked to assist with funding it. However SPC's Suva Office, SOPAC and TCSP all needed the office space, and there seemed no reason why the project should not go ahead. He supported the recommendation contained in CRGA 29 Working Paper 8a, the original paper submitted by Fiji, rather than the recommendation of CRGA 29.

101. The Representative of the Republic of the Marshall Islands noted that his delegation welcomed the recommendation as proposed by the Government of Fiji Islands in CRGA 29 Working Paper 8a, and registered Marshall Islands support for Fiji's role in the project to house the three regional organisations in Suva.

102. The Representative of Solomon Islands endorsed the request of the Government of Fiji Islands, and noted that many member countries had feared the cost implications of the Pacific Village, but should be reassured that Fiji was prepared to seek funding for implementation. He wished the Government of Fiji Islands every success with the project.

103. The Chairperson, speaking as the Representative of French Polynesia, asked for information regarding cost implications of the project. He queried whether the project would be funded by the Government of Fiji Islands alone, or if there would be other external funding sources involved.

104. In response to the Chairperson's first question, the Deputy Director-General (Suva) noted that the cost estimate for the project was 25.4 million FJD. The project had been purchased in four approximate components: the SPC component amounted to 12 million FJD; the SOPAC component amounted to 6 million FJD; the TCSP component amounted to 1.7 million FJD; and the Conference centre amounted to 5.1 million FJD.

105. In response to the second question from the Chairperson, the Representative of Fiji Islands noted that as outlined in her earlier remarks, Fiji had offered to take the lead role in sourcing funding, both internally and externally.

106. The Chair asked the Secretariat whether the intention was for CRGA 30 or the second meeting of the Conference of the Pacific Community to take the appropriate decision when more specific information was available, or to proceed with implementation in the near future.

107. The Deputy Director-General noted that through CRGA 29 Working Paper 8a, the Government of Fiji Islands had indicated that it had taken ownership of the project because of its earlier commitments, and was seeking support for its role in acquiring the necessary funding. Should the project progress sufficiently, it might be possible to hold the Second Conference of the Pacific Community there in 2001. Thus, the endorsement of Conference would greatly assist the Government of Fiji Islands to source funds, and determine whether the project proceeded or was delayed. Fiji Islands had responded to its responsibility as a host country, and the commitments made in 1992 and 1997. He noted that one of his major tasks subsequent to having been transferred to Suva from Noumea had been to assist in advancing the project along with the heads of SOPAC and TCSP. Fiji Islands was asking for Conference's endorsement of the design and its lead role in finding funding for construction to make the Pacific Village a reality, and perhaps the venue of the next Conference.

108. The Representative of Samoa expressed support for the Pacific Village project. He said that all the members supported the need for new headquarters for TCP, SOPAC and new regional offices for SPC, and for new Conference facilities of an international standard in Suva, but pointed out that the Conference needed an assurance that there would be no cost impact on SPC.

109. Speaking on behalf of French Polynesia, the Chairperson noted that if the Pacific Village project had not been as advanced, French Polynesia would have been more than willing to offer facilities to accommodate the regional organisations' requirements for meeting facilities.

110. The Representative of Cook Islands commended the Government of Fiji Islands and offered them the Cook Islands' sincere appreciation for kindly donating prime real estate for the development of the Pacific Village for the benefit of the region. He expressed his country's gratitude to Fiji Islands for the decision to proceed with this project as a Fiji Islands Government project. He believed that the winning design for the Pacific Village was going to be a great challenge for Fiji to undertake in terms of construction. He also thanked Fiji for taking on board the suggestions by CRGA 29 to review the project with a view to reducing costs both in the construction and maintenance of buildings. He expressed full support for the project in order to get it completed in the shortest possible time and looked forward to progress reports from Fiji at CRGA 30 on this major regional development initiative.

111. The Representative of Papua New Guinea thanked Fiji Islands for taking the initiative and the lead role in this project. He stressed that the project would benefit not only Fiji but all the Pacific Islands, as the facility was needed to cater for regional and international conferences in future, and would benefit the Fiji Islands Government rather than the hotel industry as was usually the case when hosting international meetings. This was his only concern related to the cost factor but he was satisfied that Fiji would take the lead role in exploring funding arrangements for this project. He encouraged Fiji to look at funding sources internally first and then look outside. He expressed full support for the project.

112. The Representative of Nauru supported the Pacific Village project presented by Fiji and endorsed with gratitude the Fiji Islands Government's lead role in exploring funding arrangements for this project.

113. The Conference

1. Commended the Government of Fiji Islands for its initiative and efforts on the proposed Pacific Village project;
2. Noted that the Pacific Village project had become a Fiji Islands Government Project;
3. Further noted that the Government of Fiji Islands was not asking members to fund construction of the project;
4. Endorsed in principle the winning design of the competition presented by the Government of Fiji Islands;
5. Further endorsed Fiji Islands Government's lead role in exploring funding arrangements for this project;
6. Requested the Government of Fiji Islands to report back to CRGA 30 on the progress of this project.

114. On behalf of the Government of Fiji Islands, The Representative of Fiji Islands thanked the Conference for its endorsement and blessing of the Pacific Village project.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – THE YEAR 2001 CONFERENCE: VENUE AND ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

115. The Representative of Nauru thanked the Chairperson and the Government and people of French Polynesia for their warm hospitality. He noted that the meeting had been very informative and educational. He recognised the achievements of SPC and the outgoing Director-General who will be sorely missed. He expressed confidence that the Director-General Designate will continue to provide excellent service.

116. He noted that the last Conference to be held in Nauru was in 1975, and offered Nauru as a venue for the Second Conference of the Pacific Community to be held in 2001.

117. The Chairperson thanked Nauru for this offer which was accepted with acclamation, as was the proposal that the Chairperson of the next Conference will be the Representative of Nauru and the Vice-Chairperson the Representative of Vanuatu.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – OTHER BUSINESS

118. The Representative of Wallis and Futuna regretted that the two very important SPC work programmes, namely the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau and the Pacific Youth Resource Bureau, were currently sharing the same secretary, due to budget restrictions. She urged SPC to review this situation and amend its budget accordingly in order that each programme achieve its goals.

119. The outgoing Director-General assured the Representative of Wallis and Futuna that SPC would do its best to allocate the necessary funds to these programmes.

Statements by Observers

120. The United Nations Resident Co-ordinator in Fiji, Mr Romulo V. Garcia delivered his congratulatory message to Conference as Representative of the UN Secretary-General. His statement is contained in Annex 4.

121. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Fiji Islands, in his statement (contained in Annex 4) to Conference, pledged 50,000 USD to the Pacific Community for Year 2000.

122. The Chairperson thanked the Ambassador and asked him to convey to his government the gratitude of the Pacific Community for its support.

Closing Remarks

123. The Representative of Australia welcomed the opportunity to be present for the first time at the Conference and noted his appreciation of the co-operative approach adopted in the meeting. He suggested that the agenda of the next Conference in 2001 include presentations of the key priorities of the major SPC work programmes and an opportunity for further discussion. He thanked the organisers of the Conference for the excellent arrangements and praised the warmth and friendliness of the people of French Polynesia. The outgoing Director-General thanked the Representative of Australia for his suggestion and assured him that his message would be seriously considered for the next Conference in Nauru.

124. The Representative of Fiji Islands formally congratulated the Director-General Designate Lourdes Pangelinan. She stated that her appointment was an achievement for all the women of the region. She said that the fact that her own government had appointed a woman as leader of the Fiji delegation to the Conference was a testimony to the recognition it accorded women. She stressed that her Government would continue to support the organisation and make true its commitment to the development of the region. She appreciated French Polynesia's generous offer of making facilities available to host regional organisations and hoped that French Polynesia would consider making a financial contribution to the Pacific Village project.

125. The Representative of Tokelau commended the outgoing Director-General Dr Bob Dun for his visionary leadership of SPC over the past four years. The renewed interest of donors in the organisation was indeed a testimony to his hard work. He expressed appreciation to Dr Dun for having led a mission of SPC Programme Officers to Tokelau early this year and hoped that it would not take another 21 years for such a mission to take place. He noted that Tokelau was expecting and looking forward to the follow-up work on the programme discussions during the mission. Discussions with the Maritime Programme staff have commenced. He warmly thanked the President of French Polynesia for his leadership as Chairperson, and the people and Government for their hospitality during the CRGA and Conference.

126. The Representative of the Federated States of Micronesia extended the congratulations of the government and people of his country to the Director-General Designate. He expressed full confidence in her ability to continue the hard work of the current Executive team and bring a new perspective to the organisation based on her leadership and experience. He alluded to her impressive performance as Deputy Director-General (Noumea Headquarters). He assured her of his government's continued support for the work of SPC in years to come. He expressed his government's gratitude to the outgoing Director-General for his outstanding leadership and his immense contribution to the Pacific region and the organisation. He said that although he was sad to see Dr Dun go, he would take comfort in their enduring friendship. He thanked the Deputy Director-General Jimmie Rodgers for his dedicated and diligent work in the service of the organisation and his contribution to the welfare of the people of the region. He expressed gratitude to the Chairperson for the wonderful hospitality of his country and said that all the delegates would return home with very fond memories of their stay in French Polynesia.

127. The Representative of Guam extended Guam's compliments to the Chairperson for the excellent hospitality and Conference arrangements. She thanked the Conference organisers and in particular the Honourable Alexandre Moeava Ata for their hard work. She expressed her appreciation to all members for their contribution to the success of this Conference. She extended her congratulations to the Director-General Designate, noting that Lourdes Pangelinan would be the first woman to hold the position of Director-General of the organisation and that her appointment was an honour to Guam. She thanked Dr Rodgers for his outstanding contribution to the organisation and paid tribute to Solomon Islands for making the services of Dr Rodgers available. She expressed every confidence that he would continue to work for the development of the region and assured him of Guam's support.

128. The Representative of Solomon Islands thanked the Chairperson and the Government and people of French Polynesia for their hospitality. He congratulated the new Director-General Designate, and assured Ms Pangelinan and Solomon Islands' candidate for the post of chief executive, Deputy Director-General Dr Jimmie Rodgers, that Solomon Islands would provide strong support to both of them in the years to come.

129. The Deputy-Director General (Suva Operations) warmly congratulated Ms Pangelinan on her appointment. He noted that the theme of CRGA 29 had been guardianship, and that it was in this spirit that both CRGA and Conference had deliberated during the selection process. He noted the excellent working relationship and friendship between himself and the Director-General Designate, and assured her of his strongest possible support. He thanked all delegations who had participated in the appointment process, the first time that this methodology had been used since its adoption by the 1996 South Pacific Conference in Saipan. He thanked the Government of Solomon Islands for its trust and confidence in nominating him. He offered special thanks to the outgoing Director-General, for inspiring an exciting period in SPC's history, of vision, strength and enthusiasm. Through the Chairperson, he gave his sincere appreciation for the people and Government of French Polynesia for their hospitality towards the SPC's Secretariat, and the Solomon Islands delegation.

130. The Director-General Designate thanked the Chairperson and the people and Government of French Polynesia for their warm hospitality at the historic gathering of the First Conference of the Pacific Community. She thanked the Conference for bestowing the honour and privilege of the position of SPC's chief executive on her. She said that she felt humbled by the decision, and that she would tackle this enormous challenge with dedication, energy and enthusiasm for the Pacific Island region, guided by the wisdom of the Conference, the people of the Pacific Islands, SPC's development partners, and the staff of the Secretariat. She noted the strong professional relationship and friendship between her and Dr Rodgers, which had developed even further throughout the Conference, and valued him as a good friend, skilled colleague, and an honest man. It had been an honour and a privilege to work with Dr Rodgers for four years side-by-side, and it would be an honour to continue to work together in the same way in the future. She expressed particular thanks to Dr Dun, noting that his was a very hard act to follow, and thanked him for having guided and nurtured his deputies throughout an exciting time of change for SPC and the region. She saw a bright future for the region and Pacific Island development, and assured the membership of the Pacific Community of her strongest commitment to meet the challenges ahead.

131. The Representative of New Zealand, noted that her government was well aware of the difficulties involved in choosing between two excellent candidates, having sponsored a candidate four years ago when Dr Dun was selected as Director-General. She appreciated the difficulties of the debate during the selection process, and was grateful for the Pacific consensus that now prevailed. She was confident that Ms Pangelinan and Dr Rodgers would continue to work together as a winning team. She thanked Dr Dun for his outstanding contribution to SPC.

132. The Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga assured the Director-General Designate that there would continue to be the highest level of support for her and her team to achieve SPC's mandate. He encouraged the incoming chief executive with the following words: 'Great are the things we see, even greater are the things we understand, and greater still are the things we are yet to accomplish.'

133. The outgoing Director-General thanked the Conference delegations for their kind words, and particularly the Representative of Tokelau for mentioning the mission he had undertaken there, which had felt like a trip back in time to the culture and community of the traditional Pacific. He had enjoyed his time at SPC so greatly that he felt unworthy of the praise given him throughout the meeting. He was proud to have served the Pacific Community during an exciting period, but noted that it was time to return to Australia to be reunited with his family. He noted his great pride in the performance of his deputies throughout the Conference. He congratulated Ms Pangelinan on her appointment, commending her to the Membership as a wonderful successor, and congratulated Dr Rodgers, as a great gentleman and colleague. He thanked CRGA and Conference for the faith it had placed in him, and noted that the Secretariat and its ruling body had come a long way together through the sea of change. He felt privileged to have received such strong support. In conclusion, he thanked the Chairperson, the Government of French Polynesia, all member Governments and Administrations, the observers and the Secretariat for their contributions to the First Conference of the Pacific Community.

134. The Chairperson's closing address to the Conference is attached as Annex 6.

AGENDA ITEM 11 - ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

135. The Conference adopted its report as amended.

136. The Chairperson declared the First Conference of the Pacific Community closed.

**OPENING ADDRESS BY
THE PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF FRENCH POLYNESIA
FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY
TA'IMOANA CONFERENCE
6 DECEMBER 1999**

To express the sense of honour and, sincerely, the very great pleasure I feel in delivering the Conference opening address would be a somewhat vain endeavour, although that is what tradition would certainly require.

It is, therefore, more with suitable humility that I address you and thank the heads of delegation for according me the chairmanship of this First Conference of the Pacific Community.

We say farewell together today to the South Pacific Commission, which has lived a very full life for the past 52 years. Between the venerable Pentagon buildings at Anse Vata to the present outstanding headquarters architecture, lies a great span of our history, our problems and our meetings to look back upon.

Of the three broad areas of activity identified by the founding fathers of the SPC, the third, considered the least urgent, was to address "problems relating to nutrition, conservation of the nature heritage, the influence of modern civilisation on native societies and work conditions for natives so as to bring them into harmony with the recommendations of the International Labour Office".

Half a century on, in re-reading these objectives, we can measure, I believe with relief, don't you?, how far we have come.... Other milestones too have been passed during this long period.

One example was the 1983 Saipan Resolution, which at last gave full force to the participation of the non self-governing territories.

More recently, we experienced the unpleasant surprise of the United Kingdom's withdrawal, which many of us feared as a sign of ill omen.

We would salute the return of this country, with its extensive overseas experience.

Happily, we now seem to be together for the duration, at least into the foreseeable future. For us, this is a source of great satisfaction.

It is fair to say today that a single, united commitment is now manifest in our organisation, which in itself justifies our new name of "Community".

"Welcome" to you all.

Maeva and Manava.

Our sympathy goes out to our ni-Vanuatu friends, whose country, after Papua New Guinea last year, has just been struck by a series of disasters which, alas, have left casualties in their wake.

Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vanuatu, a country which is our friend, please be assured of our compassion.

Our congratulations are due to the new team that the electorate has just chosen to lead New Zealand.

We are sure that this generous neighbour will continue to nurture our organisation with its proposals and indeed contributions, which, in fact, have been constantly maintained. We also know that the New Zealand Director of the World Trade Organisation will be sensitive to the fragile state of our islands.

On your behalf, I would greet His Excellency, the Governor of Rapanui, and the Mayor of that island, which is dear to our hearts.

Our organisation is extending a welcome to them, as observers, for the first time. Therein, we would hope to see an encouraging sign for more institutionalised relations in the future.

The very recent landing on our shores of the *Hokulea "vaa"*, or double-hulled Polynesian voyaging canoe is, in addition, a highly symbolic coincidence, as we all sense and as everyone here understands.

And since I am also President of the Government of your host country, I wish to say to each and every one of you that you are indeed in the "Friendly Isles" as Hon Langi Kavaliku so kindly described our country yesterday.

May I also convey to you the warm and friendly greetings of the President of the French Republic, Mr Jacques Chirac, who, in the same spirit, on a number of occasions, has demonstrated that he was receptive to our region's concerns. And the presence of Mr Masseret, the Secretary of State for Defence, who has just arrived from East Timor, reflects the value and importance that the Government of the French Republic attaches to our region. Allow me, on this occasion, to also convey to you greetings from the Prime Minister, Mr Jospin.

The Programme prepared for you will enable you, over and above our collective deliberations, to gain a better understanding of French Polynesia, which is proud to be your host.

You will be aware that we have chosen an original form of destiny, autonomy within the French Republic. Our autonomy will be celebrated on 24 January next year when the Parliamentary Congress meets at Versailles to pass our Constitutional Act.

This choice, inexorably reiterated at each ballot, is both emotional and sensible. Emotional because, despite distance, we have so many reasons to be close that I cannot see how we could repudiate what we are, fully French and fully Polynesian.

Sensible, because we only seek new responsibilities when we have the human and financial resources to exercise them.

Which is the reason why, as you know, our priority is our country's development.

We have succeeded in moving from an economy dominated by the expenditure of the Pacific Testing Centre to an economy in which our own resources are beginning to achieve their fulfilment.

Many projects are emerging, not only in Tahiti but also in the outer island groups.

And our people are harnessing their initiative and inventiveness to build tomorrow's French Polynesia.

In the near future, and at our request, the Pacific Islands Forum will be sending a special committee here to report on current developments. My wish, distinguished Forum Director-General, is that this mission look at us specifically rather than taking a comparative approach, that it be open to differences and not take a stereotyped view and that it take the measure both of our achievements and of the tasks that still await us.

In this way, it will be acknowledged that our country can legitimately put forward its claim for full recognition.

Cherished Pacific Island Friends,

Our age-old traditions of welcome and hospitality, I believe you will agree, are above all expressed with warmth in our daily lives, in the way we enjoy each other's company and sometimes even connive in a manner characteristic of our instinctive sense of brotherhood.

We only meet irregularly, of course. But our real empathy lies elsewhere, in the spontaneity we bring to our way of life.

Our way of life has another special feature, the art of looking on with some surprise at other kinds of behaviour, the echo and often the effects of which find their way to our shores.

When they do, we look at each other, wonder, smile and take quiet amusement together.

Such is this Pacific Way, described by he who first coined the expression, His Excellency President Ratu Mara, as a way of seeing things, a way of being, a state of mind, more questioning than militant, more introspective than aggressive, turned more towards consensus than open conflict. May I on your behalf, salute this man as a great source of inspiration for our region.

But let us realise that the time for shoulder-shrugging, elegies or passive lamentation is over. Because the time of worrying uncertainties has come.

On a previous occasion, the fourth Pacific Leaders Conference in 1993 here in Tahiti, I drew my distinguished colleagues' attention to the distressing probability that the stunning pace of development in the Pacific Rim might leap over and exclude the central basin of this great ocean and reduce it to a soft underbelly, with no plans for itself and perhaps devoid of hope for a viable future.

To human impacts should be added the damaging whims of the elements, climate change, sea level rise and global atmospheric warming, in other words all those things which, since the generous but academic proclamations of the Rio Conference, followed by those of the Kyoto and Barbados meetings, have fuelled speculation on the chances of survival of island communities and the sustainability of the natural environment they live in.

And if we add the obstinate obstacle of poverty, stuttering health systems, lagging education and training structures, the difficulty of acclimatising to globalisation and the scarcity of financial resources, it is fair to say that the future cannot be looked into with total optimism.

As it was my honour to say to my distinguished colleagues at the PIDP Standing Committee meeting last March, for the moment the Pacific Community is no more than a misty and unsure concept, a geographical term, surely quite fascinating, but disconcerting and sometimes elusive.

I might add that this remark was also made by the incumbent chairman of the Forum, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Palau, in Koror in October this year.

Please permit me to quote his words: "Every member of the Forum shares a history of colonization and dependency.

It is time to rely more fully on the shared strength of our Pacific Island nations."

Strong words and strong words that, I believe, should be dwelled upon. The real message is that our Pacific Island region has yet to fully emerge into the common consciousness.

These words also hammer home the hope that the Oceania we aspire to can at last surge forth from the myths, the images and the fairly widespread feeling of conservatism, sometimes indeed chauvinism, to claim a shared destiny it can truly call its own, forged in diversity.

Our task and duty is to pursue a common destiny but not an inward-looking one, rather one of sufficient resilience for us to cope with the tremors reaching us from the outside, when they affect our own vision of ourselves.

The new knowledge and information technologies are bursting like a tidal wave into our region.

These events could be a welcome opportunity for imparting new skills to our young people, in keeping with the hope formed by the Conference for Pacific Youth in Tahiti in 1998.

From this could also flow the required impetus to tighten the bonds between our peoples, scattered as they are over a vast ocean, but perhaps now less isolated since communication has become such a rapid commodity and since talk and thought can be exchanged almost at will.

In this same room just a few days ago, there was extensive discussion on the METUA project, an ambitious endeavour on our part aiming to propel our country into the virtual arena, to learn how it operates and to offer its potential benefits to the greatest number. You will be hearing in more detail about this project tomorrow.

At this stage, tribute should be paid to His Majesty the King of Tonga, for alone and before anyone else, His Majesty had the impressive foresight to perceive that very fundamental aspect of globalisation-satellite communication. Tonga-Sat (I trust that my friend the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom will excuse me for "borrowing" this project to illustrate my point).

In the immensity of space, Tonga-Sat has become our regional signature in a way; that is not insignificant and we can share your pride.

And now the time has come for all of us, with a heady feeling, to move on to the information highway.

The path we now tread, however, is not without ambiguities, far from it. Because the new universe which is superimposing itself in a disorderly way over our own through these new tools is itself being pulled in so many directions that it is not sure where it is going.

Change is coming with great speed and sometimes a harsh edge.

Our message, whether heard or even just distantly perceived, runs the risks of not being heard at all amidst the storm of noise and images invading the World Wide Web.

The poster we are giving you as a gift this year is commemorative of this first Meeting of the Pacific Community. It also sums up the troubled and questioning stance I believe we are now taking. A new-born baby looks on with ingenuous surprise at the family, already ensconced in the virtual world which is sending out its signals.

The sacred drum of the Taputapuatea Marae also transmits, in its age-old way, these unusual signals. The two messages are almost symbiotic, as the infant child would seem to desire.

Disturbing messages, regrettably, are reaching us in more prosaic form: Sparteca is being wound up, European Union funding is being reviewed in a worrying way and a range of initiatives is targeting structural reforms and governance.

The combined effect of all this brings the fear of unfortunate consequences, including stagnation or even shrinkage in island economies. The Asian Development Bank has just recognised this publicly in connection with the situation in our nearest neighbouring country, Cook Islands.

Sudden changes, through the headlong pace they set, often have a deleterious and almost paralysing effect. Island rhythms are slow, as we all here know.

Yet what is needed is to gradually set in motion the decisive energies, especially those of youth and the private sector.

That is something that we leaders very well know and sometimes experience to our detriment. It takes time, a great deal of time.

We do not want to be satisfied with being viewed affectionately by others.

Just to be packaged for tourism would diminish our countries and us with them to nostalgic showcases, a lost dream, sad images of a part of humanity resigned to a destiny in shreds scattered over an ocean of indifference.

With quite remarkable perspicacity, the distinguished Representative of Papua New Guinea, speaking at the distinguished forum of the United Nations, relevantly referred to an attitude he called "island fatigue". He was not of course referring to the fatigue of islanders, but to the feeling of weariness with the islands, as if helping them was like the futility of pushing the rock of Sisyphus uphill.

In the more recent past, at the special United Nations session on Small Island States, which followed on from the Copenhagen meeting on the same issue, an even more debilitating image was given of our islands.

Uncertainty prevailed over their fate, torn between natural disasters, migrating populations, natural resources disappearing through pillage, imprudent management, technology lag or the attraction of outside products, amplified by the tempest of change commonly referred to as globalisation.

Honourable Minister of Health of Samoa, in this regard we have noted the judicious remarks made by your country's delegate at the fifth session on climate control in Bonn, Germany, on 26 October this year.

The discussion was about whether it was people or economies that needed protection; and whether the precautionary principle should be applied even before the production of any irrefutable scientific evidence. Now that it is a debate, it would be worth engaging in fully.

We must see this clearly. Great upheaval is occurring. For much of it there is no easy explanation. Some of the events of change happen so fast, so fleetingly but have such instant consequences that they counteract any inclination to respond appropriately.

But this should not prevent us from taking up the challenge, from where we stand and in a united way on some issues.

Shall we just concentrate our minds on one fact. Having outstanding people is not the privilege of great nations alone; accordingly we must show together and on our scale that competition genuinely exists.

A huge effort needs to be made to respond to the high mobility of capital. This will only happen if, one day, our human resources are respected, and as early as possible, as a reservoir of talent, singularity and creativity.

Such is the new culture, which brings together versatility, difference, qualifications, innovation and enterprise.

In Palau, last October, the Forum endorsed the principle of a free trade area.

Would this be an adequate response? That is debatable.

Recently, at the Maui meeting on 11 November this year, the Forum Secretary-General highlighted the difficulties inherent in this scheme which would, probably, have phased implementation over two decades or more.

Because the decline in aid in real terms and the erosion of the beneficial effects of the Lome accords as well as the requirements of the World Trade Organisation, are formidable constraints.

Is the embryonic example of the Melanesian Spearhead Group valid for the region as a whole?

It is no doubt too early to come to any conclusion at this stage.

The obstinately high costs caused by our remoteness and small scale will be with us for a long time to come.

Six million theoretical consumers might be able to give credence to an imaginary development model.

Our region's fragmentation dashes our unreasonable longing for a single entity.

Surely only the new information technologies, together with better communications and air and sea transport systems, could offer relatively encouraging prospects for the future.

As its mandate states, this is our organisation's concern. And very illustrative of this is the comprehensive and voluminous report on programmes which has just been drafted and which is being submitted for our consideration by His Excellency the United Kingdom Ambassador to Fiji Islands, as Chairman of CRGA.

It bears witness to the efforts being made to be specific, to gain a proper perspective on things and to patiently seek the least inappropriate solutions to the problems facing island member countries. This task is immense, as no-one would deny.

Testimony to this also is the regular letter from our Director-General, a praiseworthy initiative and very useful reference document. At this stage, I would restrict myself to three important remarks.

In the first place, our organisation has experienced change and almost transformation in recent years.

We owe Bob Dun our recognition for the work he has done. The changes he has made are remarkable because, on the one hand, they have happened in a gentle and almost imperceptible manner; and on the other, because these structural adjustments were the result of a thorough search for weak points and remedies and of skillful human resource identification and assignment, a very tricky job; lastly, because the scale of the reform has enabled our organisation to manifest the ambitious aim of undertaking the large-scale coordination of major programmes in the region.

Further, and particular testimony to this, is the proposed pelagic resource management regime, as the conclusion of the Multilateral High-Level Consultation process looms up, in which our organisation can perform the vital mission of providing scientific advice in what is unarguably a colossal endeavour to regulate a living resource which is of prime importance for the well-being of our peoples.

Secondly, the Land Resources and Social Resources divisions are now operating under an evaluation system based on performance-related criteria.

This is a welcome innovation and makes it possible to adjust when necessary and reassure our funding partners, as we should be able to.

Lastly, the relative but well controlled stability of the core budget is very noteworthy. The significant growth in non-core contributions demonstrates that the rigorous process of design and management of the core budget is being recognised and also that the investment in programmes is producing conclusive results.

We can rightly salute this remarkable achievement. It augurs well for a favourable general environment in which to pursue our goals.

This does not of course mean that all the difficulties will be overcome or miraculously evaporate.

In these times of generally tight financial circumstances and often unpredictable dangers, many unsuspected factors will continue to impact upon our ability to honour our assessed contributions. And even the SPC's present 24 million XFP unit budget, which would appear to guarantee effectiveness, pales into significance in comparison with the huge task at hand.

Should we perhaps think of persuading the private sector to support us in our efforts?

At this stage, I would restrict my remarks to the recommendation that an *ad hoc* committee be set up to report to the 2000 CRGA.

An approach such as this can no longer be overlooked, because one of the definite features of tomorrow's global culture will be the new pre-eminence of intellectual capital.

To successfully master these unprecedented events, we need not only to revolutionise our thinking and also our institutions and our educational systems but even more relevantly perhaps to extend our traditional range of human excellence. As we look on in wonder, technological innovation and magic have become determining factors in prosperity.

But neither would amount to anything without the active contribution of the outstanding human resource that it is our responsibility to bring forth as soon as possible and very fast.

Such is the exalting task that awaits us.

I have no doubt that all of us here need no convincing.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, our proceedings will set the course that our refurbished and rejuvenated organisation will be following for the next two years.

It is up to us to make it an example, based on the need to be open to the outside world, but also on a strengthened sense of belonging to an Oceania that was a long time emerging into the light cast by the new millennium on our doorsteps and on the clear awareness that our common future must be one that those watching us today will take responsibility for, to continue tomorrow the work we are starting today.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I declare the First Conference of the Pacific Community open.

Ia Orana.

**ADDRESS BY THE HON. SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE
OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC,
Mr JEAN-PIERRE MASSERET**

I would like to begin by thanking our host country, French Polynesia, for the perfect arrangements made for this Conference and the both traditional and warm welcome extended to us. Our acknowledgement goes to the authorities of French Polynesia through the President of the Government.

The offer made by French Polynesia in 1997 at the Canberra Conference to host here in Papeete this meeting, which will close the century and open the new millennium was received with great enthusiasm. This Polynesian land of which so many men and women around the world dream, still testifies to their peoples' qualities.

As privileged as we may be, however, to be working together in this setting, we must bear in mind the reason why we are here: I am referring to the First Conference of the Pacific Community. This new name, "Pacific Community", which supersedes the "South Pacific Commission", was decided by consensus by ministers at the Fiftieth Anniversary Conference in Canberra in October 1997.

It is, then, the first meeting of this Pacific Community which we are holding this year, a historical event, given added significance because we are called upon to appoint the new Director-General on this occasion.

This organisation, Mr Chairman, owes a great deal to the outgoing Director-General, Dr Bob Dun. It will be difficult to dissociate the Pacific Community from the person who has guided its work and introduced reforms over the past few years. Dr Bob Dun ended up identifying with what we continue to call the SPC to such an extent that he carried on a regular and strong relationship with member countries, expressed every six months in reports, in the form of personal letters. This reveals how strong are the bonds which have linked him, the organisation and the member countries over the years. On behalf of France I would like to convey to Bob Dun our respect, recognition and friendship. He has performed his mission in the most distinguished sense of the term, by making this organisation a productive tool for Pacific Island countries and territories. He has also been able to modernise the organisation's services as it turns today towards new information technologies with determination and confidence. These are at the heart of the Conference this year and rightly so, because, for the Island Pacific, they represent both an opportunity and a requirement. An opportunity, because distance is no longer the obstacle and hindrance that it for so long represented to Island States and Territories; a requirement, because it is necessary, while relying on existing regional bodies, to prepare our human resources and adapt our structures to meet these new developments. The Pacific Community is gearing up to do so.

Last year, France had already taken the initiative of supporting and co-funding with Australia the COMET satellite link project between the Noumea headquarters and the Suva offices, giving Internet access. We welcome the fact that this project has commenced and form the wish that its implementation occur rapidly in the interests of our organisation's effectiveness. I believe that positive developments have occurred recently in this area.

Further, one of the primary positive results of the use of new technologies, with the inception within the Community of the PACNET public health surveillance network is an early warning and reciprocal information system for epidemiological outbreaks or threats. In the long term, these instruments will, together with telemedicine, help us to save human lives. I note that the outstanding work already done by our organisation's Health Programme has been recognised in its short-listing for the Erica Prize.

Mr Chairman, I will be speaking to agenda items, as appropriate, throughout our proceedings, but please allow me during my opening remarks to restate the reasons which have led France and her government to provide its full support to the Pacific Community. The principles underlying the origins of this body have not only stood up to the test of time but remain just as valid today. France and her government, which supported them when the Canberra Agreement was signed in 1947, continue to subscribe fully to them today.

The first of these principles is the universality of this organisation which includes almost all Pacific States and Territories, whatever the subtleties of their constitutional status, and we know how much these statuses have evolved over the years.

The changes which have occurred in New Caledonia and which will be occurring in French Polynesia provide some recent examples. This principle of universality, already considered by President Ratu Mara, at the Fiftieth Anniversary Conference in Canberra, as one of the main reasons for this organisation's success, means the whole Pacific family can be brought together around the table without exception, together with the Metropolitan partners interested in the region, but particularly in its development. This is the case for France and I am anxious on behalf of our government, to restate our commitment to continue assisting in Pacific island development, in a region to which we are bound by so many historical and cultural ties.

The second principle to which we are of course also very attached is the organisation's bilingualism. As globalisation reaches our shores, we are anxious to preserve languages and cultures and what is normally referred to as "cultural diversity". The Pacific Community's bilingualism helps preserve these differences which are advantageous for a region which itself possesses many languages of great richness.

The third principle relates to the choice of regionalism to face up to the challenges awaiting countries and territories today. As the economy becomes globalised, each island country and territory feels increasingly vulnerable. Reflection is under way within the United Nations' development policy committee to define this notion of vulnerability and the relevant criteria. How can countries face up to this vulnerability, which is due to distance and a fragile ecological system, without joining forces and using the services of a body such as the Pacific Community with its technical vocation and ability to rapidly respond to member country needs?

The consolidation of regional institutions is therefore a necessity to address these new commercial, economic and technical issues, arising from these global disturbances. The Pacific Community plays a role in bringing all the technical agencies together to become more effective and have common rules of procedure and common services (such as information, dissemination, library and computer services and communications), which should gradually be introduced. The proliferation of organisations is not the best response to expressed needs in the region because it inevitably leads to the shrinkage of the shared resource base. Why not gather to strengthen a technical organisation with an universal vocation which acts as a credible interface with aid donors.

These three principles which have contributed to our organisation's success in the past will guarantee its future progress in the interests of Pacific Islands Countries and Territories.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, friends, as I come to the end of my address, I simply form two wishes:

- a very productive conference, and a
- long life to the Pacific Community in serving all our communities.

**LETTER TO CONFERENCE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF CRGA,
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF PITCAIRN**

The Honourable Gaston Flosse
President of the Government of French Polynesia
Chairperson of the First Conference of the Pacific Community

Papeete, Tahiti, French Polynesia

3 December 1999

Your Excellency, The Honourable Gaston Flosse

As Chairperson of the Twenty-ninth Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA), I would like to put on record CRGA's appreciation of you, Mr President, for taking time out of your very busy schedule to chair this first historic meeting of the Conference of the Pacific Community.

It has been a privilege for me personally, as the Representative of Pitcairn, to have chaired this recent meeting of CRGA in this beautiful island of Tahiti, and to enjoy the warm hospitality of your people. On behalf of CRGA, let me through you Mr Chairperson congratulate French Polynesia for the excellent arrangements for our meeting.

It is now my pleasure to present to you the Report of the deliberations of the Committee for the consideration of the First Conference of the Pacific Community.

Mr Chairman, attached to this letter are the actual recommendations adopted by the Twenty-ninth Meeting of CRGA and presented to Conference for deliberation and approval by the Conference. In order to facilitate your deliberations, however, I now wish to highlight some of the important issues discussed at CRGA 29.

Director-General's Annual Report and Review of Achievements

The Committee noted the Director-General's Report and commended it to Conference. It is my pleasure to point out that, in doing so however, CRGA 29 thanked Dr Dun for a magnificent achievement during his four years of office and for the way in which he has turned the organisation around during this time.

SPC's Organisational Structure

After hearing the Director-General's report on SPC's current organisational structure, the Committee agreed that the Director-General be allowed flexibility to make necessary structural changes aimed at maintaining organisational efficiency, as required by his or her responsibility to manage within the guidelines of established policy. However, where a planned structural change is of a major nature involving considerations of policy direction and/or cost increase, approval of CRGA and Conference should be sought.

Programme Presentations

Following a thematic presentation on “Guardianship of Pacific Island Resources: Land, Sea, People”, the Committee heard presentations from all three SPC Divisions: Land, Social and Marine Resources, on their highlights and achievements during the past year. This provided the opportunity for an interactive exchange between the Secretariat and the members and donor partners. The dynamic Powerpoint presentations were particularly appreciated and offered scope for members to evaluate the work carried out by the SPC in relation to the expressed priority needs of the members. The written presentations are appended to the report of CRGA.

Remuneration of Seconded Staff

Following a discussion on the question of remuneration of seconded staff, and current non-adherence to the relevant Conference decision, the Committee agreed to recommend to Conference that its 1983 Saipan decision not apply to a number of specific cases listed in the recommendation. Mindful of the need for both standardised, regional terms and conditions of employment and the need for effective co-operation with members, donors and other organisations contributing to Pacific development, the Committee recommended that the Executive seek a workable compromise between the two.

Changes in the Staff and Financial Regulations

In dealing with this item, the Committee focused on the question of equity between staff in their terms and conditions of service, and believes that the proposed change reflects this principle. The proposal is detailed in the actual recommendation.

SPC’s Budget Strategy: Core and Non-Core

The Committee recommends to Conference that it adopt a change from “same-real” to “same-nominal” approach to budget preparation, starting with the Year 2001 Budget. In connection with this change, the Secretariat and CRGA 29 were asked to look at options for levying administrative charges on project funding. The Secretariat is also asked to negotiate with Australia and New Zealand regarding an “insurance” mechanism for SPC against wide fluctuations in currency value. The Secretariat is instructed to continue to pursue non-core funding for new initiatives, noting that their inclusion in the work programme is ultimately determined by CRGA and Conference.

The 1999 Core Budget Revision

The Committee approved the revised budget as attached to its report, totalling 8,003,422 XPF units, noting that it was a balanced Budget reduced in size by 120,000 XPF. The Committee is satisfied that this revision is a best-fit compromise, cutting Administration costs to safeguard the Programmes, rendered necessary by substantial loss of income caused by unforeseeable events such as wide currency fluctuations, but also by additional and unforeseen funding requirements.

Applications for Community Membership

The Committee recommends to Conference a policy decision with respect to new and returning members which elaborates on the relevant decisions of the 1993 Conference. The proposed policy recognises that the Pacific Community is open to enquiries from interested member governments regarding application for new membership and outlines a procedure for such applications. In doing so, CRGA reaffirms however that such admission is a matter of policy where a decision can only be made by Conference and by consensus.

It is worth noting, Mr Chairperson, that the Committee directed the Secretariat to present a policy paper to CRGA 30, listing various options and their implications, financial or otherwise, for new members, and in particular exploring the concept of Associate Membership flagged by the Secretariat.

Developments with the Tuna Management

This item related specifically to the possible role of SPC's Oceanic Fisheries Programme in the provision of scientific advice for the regional management of tuna stocks, as currently under discussion at the ongoing series of MHLIC. Let me point out, Mr Chairperson, that the views of the Committee were sought for future planning but that no particular decision is required at this stage.

Issues Appearing as Separate Items on the Agenda of the Conference

A number of issues discussed at CRGA also appear on the agenda of the Conference. Let me mention them here for your information, even though they are not presented now for your consideration and approval, as the Conference will discuss them separately. These include major policy recommendations centred around issues of Pacific regionalism such as the SPC-SOPAC integration, and the proposed "Déclaration de Tahiti" which should serve a useful role in detailing clearly the current operational policies of the organisation. Other issues of regional importance to the organisation are the Fiji-Government project for a new regional office for SPC's Suva operations as outlined in the Pacific Village Project and the recommendation for adoption of a new logo and flag for the Pacific Community. CRGA 29 also discussed a number of important administrative issues and asks Conference to approve the Year 2000 Budget for SPC, and to consider the policy issue of harmonisation of employment terms and conditions for regional organisations and to receive the reports of the 1998 audit of the organisation.

Last, but not least, CRGA 29 discussed *in camera* the nomination of the Director-General and its recommendation is contained in a separate letter to you, Mr Chairperson.

SPC-SOPAC Integration

The initiative by the chief executives of SPC and SOPAC to examine the value and benefits of integration of the two organisations recently progressed with the approval by the SOPAC Governing Council to pursue this investigation.

After some discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend to Conference that it join with SOPAC's Governing Council in requesting the following joint action by the Secretariat. In the first quarter of 2000, the Secretariats of the Pacific Community and SOPAC will jointly manage a consultancy to examine the benefits of SPC-SOPAC integration. The consultants' report will then be considered by both governing bodies in the second part of the Year 2000. The Committee agreed that those conducting the study should consult as widely as possible, especially with non-members of SOPAC, availing themselves of the improved telecommunications to take into account the limited proposed budget. The Committee requests Conference to specifically delegate the authority to CRGA 30 next year to take the appropriate decisions depending on the outcome of the consultancy.

The State of the Canberra Agreement and the "Déclaration de Tahiti"

Although the mandate and role of the Pacific Community have remained the same since the signing of the Canberra Agreement that established the organisation in 1947, the operational structures and operational policies of the Pacific Community bear little resemblance to those of that time. Last year's CRGA accepted the offer by the Government of New Zealand to produce a legal opinion on whether the current status of the Canberra Agreement posed any problems for the Pacific Community. I am happy to report that the legal opinion clearly stated that it was not necessary to change the Canberra Agreement since many changes had taken place in practice without such amendment, including the change of name. Changes agreed by the Members have generally been incorporated into the "Déclaration de Tahiti", and suggested that if Members accepted the legal opinion, the CRGA could recommend to Conference adoption of the "Déclaration de Tahiti". The "Déclaration" clearly details the current operational structures and operational policies of the organisation. This document is presented for your consideration and approval.

The Committee recommends to Conference that it adopt a resolution that recognises the importance and continued relevance of the Canberra Agreement as the founding document of the Pacific Community, recalls the constitutional changes to the organisation agreed by Members since the conclusion of the Canberra Agreement, and notes that these constitutional changes have generally been incorporated into the document known in English and French as “Déclaration de Tahiti”. The resolution adopts the “Déclaration de Tahiti” as a factual statement of the current operational structures and operational policies of the organisation, and requests the Secretariat to print the “Déclaration de Tahiti” as a companion document to the Secretariat’s Corporate Plan.

Pacific Village

Since this item was last discussed at CRGA and Conference, this project for the new regional office for SPC and a new headquarters for SOPAC and TCP in Suva has been picked up by Fiji as a Fiji-Government project. The Committee thanked Fiji for its initiative and efforts. It endorsed Fiji’s lead role in exploring funding arrangements. The Committee however expressed concern about the estimated costs of construction and maintenance, and requested the Government of Fiji Islands, the architects and the three regional organisations to review the project with a view to reducing costs, particularly those relating to the Conference facility, and to explore the possibility of running the Conference facility separately and on a commercial basis. The Committee was impressed by the winning design of the competition organised by Fiji and commended the architects. The Committee endorsed the winning design of the Pacific Village project. The Committee however made it clear that its support for the work on the Pacific Village project did not imply that members had agreed to fund its construction. The Committee recommends to Conference to endorse the recommendations attached.

The Pacific Community’s Logo and Flag

The Committee recommends to Conference the adoption of the proposed new logo and flag for the Pacific Community.

The Year 2000 Budget

The Committee recommends to Conference approval of the proposed Year 2000 Budget based on a total expenditure of 25,707,527 XPF units, as attached to its report. Let me say, Mr Chairperson, that the Committee was pleased overall with the presentation of this Budget. The only concern registered was that of the United States of America who could not support the increase over the 1999 Revised Budget levels.

Harmonisation of employment terms and conditions for regional organisations

The Committee recommends for adoption the recommendations relating to a new methodology for setting remuneration levels approved by FOC and the respective Councils of SOPAC and SPREP for adoption respectively by the three organisations, while taking into account the specificities of SPC. The Committee deferred incorporation of the current interim 9% salary increase into the base contracts of professionals, pending the job sizing and market comparator exercise. The Committee also sought the inclusion of the non-Forum member countries which have missions in Suva in the Inter-Agency Working Group set up to facilitate implementation of the Remuneration Strategy across all relevant CROP Agencies. Mr Chairperson, the full text of the proposed recommendation is included in the Committee’s Report and is a separate item on the Agenda of Conference.

Audit Reports for the 1998 Financial Year

It is my pleasure to report that, similar to the previous year, the auditor’s report and financial statements for 1998 show a clean bill of health for the organisation. For the third year in a row, the auditors have given an unqualified report of SPC financial operations.

The only concern raised in the report is the need for the Secretariat to consider a policy of depreciation, which it has already begun to investigate. The Secretariat has also begun to implement a number of suggested improvements on the administration, accounting and internal control procedures in force during the 1998 audit year.

Appointment of SPC's Chief Executive

This item was discussed *in camera* between SPC members and in the presence of Director-General Dr Dun who served as the Secretary of the Selection Advisory Committee, with the services of the interpretation team.

As Chairperson of CRGA, I have written to you separately, Mr Chairperson, to advise the Conference through you of the outcome of the vote conducted by CRGA 29 for the nomination of Dr Dun's successor.

CRGA 30

Allow me to conclude, Mr Chairperson, by confirming that CRGA 30 will be held in October 2000 at SPC Headquarters in Noumea, with the Chair provided by French Polynesia and the Vice-Chair by Samoa.

Let me through you, Mr Chairperson, ask Conference to consider the report CRGA 29 and to approve the recommendations put forth by the Committee to Conference.

Yours sincerely

His Excellency, Mr Michael Dibben
High Commissioner
British High Commission, Suva, Fiji
Representative for Pitcairn

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS – CRGA 29

Director-General's Annual Report and Review of Achievements

The Committee noted the Director-General's Report and commended it to Conference.

SPC's Organisational Structure

The Committee recommended that the First Conference of the Pacific Community:

- (a) Note the nature of SPC's current organisational structure;
- (b) Note that the Director-General may continue to modify this structure from time to time in order to maintain organisational efficiency as required by his or her responsibility to manage within the guidelines of established policy;
- (c) Note that the approval of CRGA and Conference should be sought where a planned structural change is of a major nature involving considerations of policy direction and/or cost increase.

Remuneration of Seconded Staff

The Committee recommends to Conference that its 1983 Saipan decision be not seen as necessarily applying to:

- (a) Seconded staff being paid within the salary scales of their parent organisations;
- (b) Donor-funded experts where the donor's financial regulations don't allow further compromise;
- (c) Volunteers and trainees who have been welcomed to contribute within SPC programmes;
- (d) Staff located in member countries and territories where the rigid application of SPC salary scales would pose major personnel problems for the host Departments.

The Committee also recommends that the SPC Executive continue to seek a workable compromise between the need for both standardised, regional terms and conditions of employment – and the need for effective co-operation with members, donors, and other organisations contributing to Pacific development.

Changes in the Staff and Financial Regulations

The Committee recommended to the First Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- (a) Re-affirm the principle of equitable treatment of all SPC staff, by abolishing rule 7.1 b) of the Provident Fund Rules, which makes specific reference to increased employer's contribution for those staff employed prior to 1 October 1983. The abolition of the rule would take effect on 1 January 2000; and

- (b) Approve that those individuals currently enjoying this benefit would continue to do so for the remainder of their current contracts, and that should they be offered renewal of appointments, these should be under new and more equitable terms and conditions of service.

SPC's Budget Strategy: Core and Non-Core

The Committee recommended to the First Conference of the Pacific Community that it instruct the Secretariat to:

- (a) Prepare the Core Budget and the related calculation of members' assessed contributions on a 'same-nominal' basis as from and including the Year 2001 Budget;
- (b) Prepare a paper outlining options for levying administrative charges on project funding for CRGA 30, which should be circulated to members as soon as possible;
- (c) Negotiate with Australia and New Zealand regarding an 'insurance' mechanism for SPC against fluctuations in currency value; and
- (d) Continue to pursue non-core funding for new initiatives, noting that CRGA and Conference determine whether or not such projects are ultimately included in the Secretariat's work programme.

The 1999 Core Budget Revision

The Committee approved the 1999 Revised Core Budget as contained in Annex 8 of the report of CRGA 29.

Applications for Community Membership

The Committee directed the Secretariat to present a policy paper for presentation to CRGA 30, presenting various options for new members and the implications of each option, financial and otherwise, and in particular exploring the concept of Associate Membership.

The Committee agreed to recommend to Conference the following policy position with respect to new and returning members, elaborating on the decisions of the 1993 Conference on admission of new members:

- Admission of new members to the Pacific Community is a matter of policy where a decision can only be made by Conference and by consensus;
- Until decided otherwise by Conference, the Pacific Community is open to enquiries from interested governments regarding application for new membership;
- That the Director-General be empowered, when directed by CRGA and Conference, to enter into negotiations on financial details of membership with potential new and returning members. In the course of such negotiations, the Director-General must consult with and seek the direct assistance of particular Community members as appropriate. The Director-General must keep all members fully informed concerning the progress of any such negotiation;
- That the final formal offer on terms of entry be received by the Director-General from the applicant for relay to all Community members seeking advice and comment from them;
- Depending on the response from members, the Director-General would recommend on formal processing of the offer by Conference as regards likely acceptance;

- The prospect of likely rejection would lead to either continued negotiation as above or to cessation of the bid;
- There should be no agreement to either new or returning membership by Conference before the financial terms have been settled;
- The question of whether or not a new member's assessed contribution is additional to existing contributions should be decided before acceptance of membership.

SPC-SOPAC Integration

The Committee agreed to recommend to Conference that it join with SOPAC's Governing Council in requesting joint action by the Secretariats as follows:

- (a) In the first quarter of 2000, the Secretariats of the Pacific Community and SOPAC jointly manage a consultancy to examine the options for SPC-SOPAC integration;
- (b) The consultants' report be considered by both governing bodies in the second half of 2000;
- (c) Those conducting the study should consult as widely as possible, especially with non-members of SOPAC, taking into account the limited proposed budget for the consultancy, and especially making use of improved telecommunications technology;
- (d) The Committee requests Conference to specifically delegate the authority to CRGA 30 to take the appropriate decisions depending on the outcome of the consultancy.

The State of the Canberra Agreement and

The "Déclaration de Tahiti" – being the operational policies of the Pacific Community, year 2000

The Committee agreed to recommend to the First Conference of the Pacific Community that it adopt the following resolution:

The First Conference of the Pacific Community:

- *Recognises the importance and continued relevance of the Canberra Agreement as the founding document of the Pacific Community;*
- *Recalls the constitutional changes to the organisation agreed by Members since the conclusion of the Canberra Agreement;*
- *Notes that these constitutional changes have generally been incorporated into the document known in French and in English as "Déclaration de Tahiti";*
- *Adopts the "Déclaration de Tahiti" as a factual statement of the current organisational structure and operational policies of the organisation; and*
- *Requests the Secretariat to print the "Déclaration de Tahiti" as a companion document to the Secretariat's Corporate Plan.*

The Pacific Village

The Committee:

- (a) Thanked the Government of Fiji Islands for its initiative and efforts on the proposed Pacific Village project;
- (b) Commended the architects for their proposed design;
- (c) Expressed concern about the estimated costs of constructing and maintaining such a new facility;
- (d) Asked that the Government of Fiji Islands, the architects and the Secretariat review the project with a view to reducing its costs, in particular those of the proposed conference centre, including its ability to pay for itself, and report back to members;
- (e) Endorsed the Fiji Islands Government's lead role in exploring funding arrangements for this project, taking into account the concerns and suggestions expressed by members at CRGA 29;
- (f) Noted that its support for the work on the Pacific Village did not imply that members had agreed to fund its construction;
- (g) Recommended to the First Conference of the Pacific Community that it endorse the above recommendation.

The Pacific Community's Logo and Flag

The Committee recommended the new logo and flag proposed by the Secretariat to the First Conference of the Pacific Community for approval.

The Year 2000 Budget

The Committee:

- (a) Taking into account the position recorded by the Representative of the USA, and the comments made by the Representative of Australia;
- (b) Approved the Year 2000 Budget (Core and Non-Core) and recommended it for adoption by the First Conference of the Pacific Community.

**Impact on SPC of Forsec's Remuneration Review
(Harmonisation of employment terms and conditions for regional organisations)**

The Committee agreed to recommend to the First Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- (a) Approve for adoption by SPC the recommendations relating to a new methodology for setting remuneration levels approved by FOC and the respective Councils of SOPAC and SPREP for adoption respectively by the three organisations;
- (b) Note that the application of the new methodology would not be automatic and that salary adjustments would need to be approved by CRGA/Conference in the Budget context;
- (c) Defer the incorporation of the current interim 9% salary increase into the base contracts of professional staff, pending the results of the job sizing and market comparator exercise;
- (d) Note that the FOC salary structure for Support Staff in Fiji is based on taxable income and that SPC will have to revise the salary scales for its Fiji-based support staff whose income is not taxable;
- (e) Note that the salary scales for SPC Professional Staff based in Noumea and other locations outside of Fiji will be revised on the basis of the ECA Survey, using the Suva Professional Staff salaries as the base salaries;
- (f) Note that the Secretariat will seek the inclusion of the non-Forum member countries which have missions in Suva to be part of the Inter-Agency Working Group set up to facilitate implementation of the Remuneration Strategy across all relevant CROP Agencies.

**Audit Reports – Financial Year 1998
and
The Secretariat's Response to the Audit Reports**

The Committee considered the audited Financial Statements and submits them to the First Conference of the Pacific Community for acceptance.

The Committee considered and endorsed the Secretariat's response to the Auditors' management letter.

**Recommendation regarding the appointment of
SPC's Chief Executive**

[Discussed *in camera*]

The Committee agreed that the Chairperson of CRGA would write to the Conference Chairperson advising him of the results of the selection process at CRGA concerning the office of Director-General.

CRGA 30

The Committee noted that, according to CRGA's Rules of Procedure, the next meeting of the Committee of Governments and Administrations (CRGA 30) would be held at SPC Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, in October 2000. The Chairperson will be the Representative of French Polynesia and the Vice-Chairperson the Representative of Samoa.

STATEMENT BY OBSERVERS

Republic of Korea

Statement by H.E. Lim Dae-Taek Ambassador

Mr Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, it is an honour and privilege for me to address you today on behalf of *the Government of Republic of Korea* on this occasion of *TA'IMOANA*, the First Conference of the Pacific Community.

Mr Chairman,

I would like to extend my congratulations on your successful chairmanship of this important conference. I wish to express my deep gratitude to the Government of French Polynesia for the warm welcome and hospitality, and my sincere appreciation also goes to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for the excellent preparation and arrangement of this conference.

Taking this opportunity, I wish to pay tribute to the SPC, one of the oldest international organizations, and the Secretariat for their remarkable achievements in fulfilling its noble objectives for the sustainable social and economic development of this vast Pacific region.

Korea, as a Pacific-rim country, places great emphasis on regional co-operation with the member countries and territories of the Pacific Community. As you may know, Korea has been participating in this forum as an observer since 1982.

Korea's participation in this conference demonstrates not only the importance that we attach to regional co-operation with the Pacific Community as a whole, but also our will to further strengthen and expand the existing co-operative relations between my country and the Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

Now placed between the developing and developed countries, Korea has been pursuing a foreign policy of sharing with other developing nations the experiences and technology which the Korean people have accumulated in the course of their economic and social development of the last four decades.

In this spirit of co-operation, the Republic of Korea has endeavored to develop excellent ties of co-operation with the island member countries and territories of the Pacific Community not only on a bilateral basis, but also on the multilateral, through the SPC, SPF, FFA and SOPAC.

Even though the amount is very modest, the Korean Government has been continuing to provide financial and material contributions to the social and economic development of the Pacific region to promote ties of cooperation in such fields as fisheries, forestry, agriculture, health, human and natural resources development, and trade. In this regard, every year since 1996, Korea has contributed 100,000 - 150,000USD to the SPF.

Korea started to provide financial assistance to the SPC in 1998 through the donation of 50,000 USD toward the Forestry programme of the SPC. This year, we donated 30,000 USD to the SPC to finance a project for the development of the regional Kava

I am very pleased announce today the Korean Government will provide 50,000 USD to the Pacific Community for the Year 2000, for a project of the Community to be adopted through consultation between the Korean Government and the Secretariat.

As my country is recovering from the economic crisis which erupted around the end of 1997, it is hoped that the Korean Government will be able to gradually increase the financial assistance to the Pacific region in the years to come.

As you may very well know, Korea attaches great importance to co-operation in fisheries with the South Pacific region, one of its major fishing areas for tuna.

In this regard, we understand the concerns and interests of the island states and territories of the region over the long-term sustainable management and conservation of fish stocks in the Pacific Ocean. In the spirit of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1995 Agreement, Korea, as a responsible deep sea fishing nation, fully supports the efforts by the Pacific Community to achieve the sustainable use and development of fish stocks.

We highly appreciate the meaningful progress made at the Multilateral High-level Conference 5 (MHLC5) held in Hawaii last September for the conservation of marine resources. Korea will participate in the next MHLCs in a sincere and positive manner, hoping that the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Species in the Pacific region would be adopted as soon as possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Throughout history, there have always been challenges and changes, but their force and speed have varied. In the contemporary world, we are faced with the greatest challenges and the most rapid changes. Transportation and communication technology and the Internet (e-mail) have shrunk the world accordingly, the distance between the Pacific Islands and the other parts of the world has been tremendously shrunk.

In this context, as expressed by Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, former Australian Minister of External Affairs at the signing of the Canberra Agreement, I would like to call upon all of you present, here today to try and use these irresistible forces and changes *for the betterment of the lot of the peoples in this great and important area of the Pacific and to seek a better world for these people.*

As we are just on the threshold of the new millenium, I wish the Pacific Community every success in achieving its noble aims,

I thank you very much.

UNDP

Statement by Romulo v. Garcia,

United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

In my capacity as UN Resident Coordinator, I on behalf of the United Nations Team in the Pacific would like to express our appreciation to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for the invitation to participate as an observer in this Twenty-ninth Committee Meeting of Representatives of Governments and Administrations and on the occasion of this unique first but last Pacific Conference in this millenium. There are four of us from the UN participating : apart from me also representing UNDP, Dr Vili Fuavao of FAO, Ms Laufitu Taylor of UNIFEM and Mr Paul de Villers of ESCAP. We bring the greetings of our other UN agency colleagues.

The UN regards the CRGA as the most important regional forum for the providers and users of technical assistance (TA), SPC being the premier regional TA organisation. It provides the best opportunity for the UN

Pacific team to listen to the views of the wide membership of SPC countries on the key development issues and their feedback on SPC programmes.

Of course there is the added attraction of Tahiti this year and our team would like to express our deep appreciation to our gracious hosts, the Government and people of French Polynesia, for their warm hospitality and the excellent conference arrangements.

We congratulate SPC on the excellent programme presentations and overviews. While echoing other donor calls for closer coordination, greater cost-effectiveness and impact assessment, the UN agencies working with the different bureaux, has found our experience and working relationship with SPC to be very good. There is sharp focus, high quality of programme delivery and very good leadership at the helm.

The UN has been fortunate over the past years to be given this opportunity to share with members of the SPC's governing body the developments and challenges experienced by our organisation over the past 12 months and in doing so to highlight our collaboration with the SPC, in attempting to meet some of these challenges.

There are 11 UN agencies with regional offices in the Pacific: FAO, ILO, WHO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNOCHA, UNAIDS UNESCO and ESCAP. Together it is estimated the UN contributes approximately 30 million USD to the Pacific annually.

All agencies work with SPC over the broad spectrum of its mandate. As the presentations have described these programmes, I will not go into details but summarise our involvement with SPC. The main areas in health, agriculture, youth and women issues.

In health, WHO has an MOU with SPC covering its public health, tuberculosis and other health initiatives of the CHP. UNFPA has its large programme on population and reproductive health with the population and media divisions.

FAO provides technical expertise to SPC in agriculture and fisheries. There is the joint SPC/UNDP/AusAID/FAO Forestry and Trees Support programme which started in Vanuatu in 1991 and now extends to 22 PICTs. UNDP views its investment of 3 million USD in the programme as one of its best investments in the region. The Fruitflies Programme has been hugely successful; witness its eradication of two fruitfly species in Nauru. As the AusAID representative has stated, it is important for SPC to demonstrate clearly project outcomes and milestones and this is one of the best examples. Here I would like to pay tribute to both programme managers, Mssrs Tang Hong Tat and Allan Allwood who have greatly contributed to the success of these programmes.

In relation to the forestry and environment perspective of our programme, as part of UNDP's efforts to provide direct community-level support, a Small Grants Scheme was established in September 1998 under UNDP's regional Integrated Approach for Resource and Environment or ICARE Programme. This scheme aims to assist small-scale community projects that encourage sustainable use of natural resources.

I would like to mention here that there is a very good possibility of UNDP co-funding for the forestry and fruitfly programmes and SPC, AusAID and UNDP are in discussions on this matter.

The transfer of full execution on these programmes to SPC reflects the catalytic nature of FAP/UNDP assistance and ensures its sustainability. The UN is here in the Pacific to bring funding from outside the region and external expertise as required. The basic principle remains the same to help build up capacity and increasingly utilise local and regional expertise in planning design formulation, management of programmes in support of regional organisations.

UNIFEM is the lead UN agency on women's issues. It provides TA to countries in the follow-up to Beijing and in the implementation of the national plans of action. UNIFEM, UNDP and the other UN agencies work closely with the PWRB such as organising the first regional conference on CEDAW and the regional preparations for Beijing +5 .

We believe the SPC has a very important advocacy role to play. Towards this end, UNICEF launched with SPC the State of Pacific Youth Report at the Youth Ministers meeting here in Tahiti last year. At the Forum Economic Ministers, this year in Apia, UNDP launched its Pacific Human Development Report produced in close collaboration with SPC. The SPC has also been very supportive in follow-up to UN Global Conferences such as the CRC, Social Summit and the ICPD.

From the UN agencies perspective with human development indicators remaining low after many years, the development challenges remain as urgent as ever in the Pacific: to create opportunities for education, for good health, for job creation and sustainable livelihoods, all leading to the reduction of poverty and the betterment of the lives of women, youth and other disadvantaged groups.

To bring this all together, we believe that good governance is critical towards creating an enabling environment for sustainable human development. UNDP has been working with the Forum on the Eight principles of accountability and transparency. The joint programme on judicial training supported by AusAID, DFID, NZODA, ADB and UNDP was launched by the Chief Justices of the Pacific. In March 2000, UNDP will organise a major regional conference on the role of Parliamentarians in Good Governance.

I am not sure whether this is the right time to raise the issue of SPC support towards East Timor. I say this because our UNDP regional office and programmes are now being asked to contribute TA mainly in community rebuilding efforts and SPC as the regional organisation with the widest membership including now Easter Island may be asked to provide TA. East Timorese leaders have been saying publicly they regard their country more as part of the Pacific than East Asia. The Pacific Forum in Palau also provided a statement of support on East Timor. I am just flagging this issue as SPC may be considering this in the not too distant future due to the urgent need of the East Timorese people.

As a group, the UN agencies are working more closely and we will be preparing our first common country assessment together in Kiribati. In the future, we will be producing our first UN Development Assistance Framework for each country as well.

The UN agencies in the Pacific highly value its partnership with the SPC – the Forum, SOPAC, SPREP, USP and other regional organisations. We believe that we cannot operate our TA programmes in isolation. We can achieve much greater impact working in support of regional organisations and with the donors in the Pacific.

In closing, the UN team would like to join other delegations in thanking and congratulating Dr Bob Dun for his outstanding contribution to the region through his vision, dynamic leadership and bold new thinking which reinvigorated SPC at this critical juncture before the new millennium. We will miss him and would like to extend our sincere best wishes to him and his family in their life after SPC. Thank you.

Chile**Statement of the Chilean Representative Mr Fernando Perez,
Deputy Director, Asia Pacific Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

It is an honour for me to be present at the last Conference of the Pacific Community of this millennium, representing my government. The Pacific Region has been a priority for my country ever since its independence, and today, more than ever, we are willing to co-operate and learn from our Pacific neighbours.

One of the objectives of this conference is to review the problems facing the Pacific Region, in particular the economic restraints that distance has imposed on us. Easter Island is not immune from the same problems that face most of our Community. Distance from the mainland and from its Polynesian neighbours has imposed a certain amount of limitations to its social and economic development. In this context, the present conference seems timely and necessary.

We believe that Chile, and Easter Island in particular, should promote closer relations with the Pacific Community. Easter Island is already represented in the Council of Arts of the Pacific. Other areas of co-operation should be in studies that create the basis for a permanent and fruitful exchange of information and experience.

Once again I would like to convey my government's gratitude for being invited to this regional event, and its best disposition to collaborate within its means.

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**CLOSING ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT G. FLOSSE AT THE TAHITI CONFERENCE
TUESDAY 7 DECEMBER 1999**

Friends,

Please permit me to use this expression, because I believe that a real sense of friendship has emerged from our meetings, discussions and, perhaps especially, from our debates over the past few days. What could be more conducive to friendship than carefully exercising the art of listening, endeavouring to understand others, grasping the shades of meaning influenced by cultures, practices and attitudes that an opportunity such as our Conference gives us the invaluable good fortune of enjoying every day!

Perhaps therein lies the Pacific Way that I referred to in my opening address: that dialogue between two candidates about whose merits we entered into such long discourse and who this very morning have given us the illustration, in such an eloquent fashion, of their instinctively shared hopes.

But all of us have also shared our doubts, our fears and our hopes. Because we too decided that the issues at hand required us to mobilise our energies, each in our own way, not only to clearly perceive the world as it is, but especially to join forces in order to forestall the most foreseeable consequences with the means at our disposal.

There is real frustration and sometimes discouragement. What we should all say, then is that our organisation's mission extends over such a broad range of responsibilities that we need to apply reason and focus on clear and universal priorities, in other words priorities which are valid for the region as a whole. Hence the importance of pilot schemes and I could not suggest strongly enough to the new management team to show the greatest care when venturing into the perilous area of excessively radical innovation, because island time moves slowly and this pace of life cannot be ignored without risk.

On behalf of all of us, I wish fair wind to this young team. May they steer the canoe, which symbolises our eternal destiny with inspiration and talent. And may they tirelessly seek, as our logo seems to instruct, their inspiration and heading in the teachings of the stars, which shine in the night sky over Moana Nui.

To you, Mr Director-General, allow me to express the gratitude of our organisation and our region. Now, justifiably satisfied with your accomplishments, you can at last resume your family life and enjoy cheaper telephone bills...

We also thank the partner countries without whose support our organisation would have no reason to exist. To the nations and the organisations which make project proposals and provide financial support we would request that they continue to help us allocate our resource and our abilities more appropriately so that we can become even more effective and further improve our performance.

Together, we wish to thank France for having honoured our Conference by the presence of a member of the government.

We are entitled to say that we have put our time to good use and have been productive.

Let us thank the CRGA, which, under the able chairmanship of Pitcairn, has cleared the way on the issues of concern to the Conference.

Pitcairn, Rapanui: two islands so clouded in mystery that we need to think so hard to imagine what they are like. And yet they were present amongst us! This too is a good omen.

We regret the absence of three member countries. May they rest assured, however, that at no time did we lose sight of their destiny, which is inseparable from our own.

I hope Tokelau and the Marshall Islands are not offended: the former's flag and the latter's anthem do dwell in our hearts and they need not doubt that.

Finally, we would express our gratitude to each and every delegation and to the excellent Pacific Community Secretariat staff and to all those who, in our team, as was their duty, proved themselves, or so I hope, capable of performing their duties with efficiency, dedication and good humour.

We shall soon be parting. As distance comes between us, I would like to be certain that you will carry with you, from your hosts, the memory of a country on the move, a country of courage and a country of friendship.

Iaorana.

E ia maitai to outou ho'iraa i to outou mau utuafare.

E te hau ia vai.

Mauruuru.