**3rd POLYNESIAN LEADERS GROUP MEETING**

**Auckland, New Zealand**

**30 August 2013**

**COMMUNIQUE AND OUTCOMES**

The Heads of Government of the member countries of the Polynesian Leaders Group (PLG) met in Auckland, New Zealand on 30 August 2013 for the third time since its inception in November 2011. The 3rd Polynesian Leaders Group Meeting was attended by the Prime Ministers of the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tuvalu, the Premier of Niue, the President of French Polynesia, and Ministers from Tokelau and the Kingdom of Tonga. Apologies were conveyed from the Prime Minister of Tonga, Governor of American Samoa, and the Ulu of Tokelau for their non-attendance.

In the capacity of Observer, Aotearoa New Zealand was represented by Hon. Tariana Turia, Minister of Disabilities and Whanau Ora and Hon. Alfred Ngaro, National List MP; and Hawaii by Dr. Kamana’opono Crabbe, CEO of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

The Leaders, in their deliberations, confirmed the importance of the PLG Meeting to advance the interests of Polynesian peoples.

The Leaders welcomed and endorsed the remarks of the Outgoing Chair, Hon. Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands. The Leaders also acknowledged his significant contributions as Chair of the PLG for 2012-2013.

The Leaders unanimously elected and welcomed the President of French Polynesia as Chair of the PLG for 2013-2014, following a recommendation by the Outgoing Chair.

**MAIN OUTCOMES**

On procedural matters, the Leaders:

* **Reaffirmed their commitment to** the continued preservation of Polynesian culture, traditions and languages as the common uniting foundation of the PLG, as per its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
* **Agreed** that the Chair of the PLG would be rotated on an alphabetical basis. Furthermore, a joint Working Group of Officials would act as the Secretariat to support the Chair and advise Leaders as appropriate on any outstanding issues, including those that may impact upon the MOU.
* **Reiterated** the need for the PLG in these formative years to operate in a cautious and flexible manner, considerate of the respective resources of the members.
* **Directed** the Working Group to develop and strengthen its working procedures and communication guidelines as soon as possible.

**POLICY ISSUES**

The Leaders, in discussing priority areas for cooperation:

**Mobility Between PLG Countries (Visitors, Labour, Goods and Services)**

* **Supported** the need to increase quotas under the individual Seasonal Employment Schemes extended to Pacific Islanders by the Governments of New Zealand and Australia; and to expand sectors covered by such schemes, including trades related to reconstruction efforts, and agriculture.
* **Noted** that a number of PLG members already enjoy movement of workers between their respective countries, and there is scope for expansion to alleviate pressures on labour supply and demand.
* **Encouraged** the consideration of opportunities for labour mobility schemes amongst PLG countries, acknowledging that members should create sustainable employment for their own people in the first instance.
* **Considered** it incumbent on all PLG members to review respective labour requirements and consider how best to encourage and strengthen cooperation amongst PLG members in mobilising a sub-regional labour force.
* **Noted** that the freedom of mobility of tourists throughout the PLG could be facilitated by cross-border relaxation and schemes such as a **Polynesian Pass** (single entry authorisation to all PLG countries) or re-visitation of the Island Hopper initiative.

**Renewable Energy Cooperation**

* **Recognized** the significant achievement of Tokelau in becoming the first small island nation producing 100% of its electricity from solar power.
* **Acknowledged** the advantage of a coordinated approach to RE financing by development partners, and the need to streamline the growing number and cost of regional organisations involved in RE development.
* **Noted** and **supported** the Draft Declaration on establishing a Regional Data Repository (RDR) presented by the Minister of Education & Training of Tonga proposed to be signed by Pacific Island Leaders and Development Partners during the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York later this month.

**Other**

* **Noted** the opportunities, which could be created by a **sub-regional airline.**
* **Noted** opportunities created by sharing best practices among PLG member countries, e.g. **Fisheries**
* **Noted** the resolution adopted by the French Polynesia Assembly reaffirming the democratic choice of its population to remain the strongly autonomous overseas country that it is.

**NEW INITIATIVES**

**Hawaiki Submarine Cable**

* **Noted** the presentation by Hawaiki Submarine Cable to lay a broadband communications trunk-line between Australia, New Zealand and the United States, and the development opportunities presented to Pacific Island Countries as a result of this private sector initiative.
* **Noted** Hawaiki Submarine Cable’s offer to visit PLG member countries, upon request. Such visits would provide PLG member countries with further clarification on technical, financial and legal implications of the cable project. The timing of requests to be considered in the context of a projected deadline of December 2013.

**Nansen Initiative**

* **Noted** and **supported** a presentation by the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Hon. Henry Puna on the Nansen Initiative and **endorsed** the submission of the Initiative to the 44th Pacific Islands Forum in the Marshall Islands for the consideration of Leaders. The Nansen Initiative being a state-led, bottom-up consultative process intended to build consensus on a protection agenda addressing the needs of people displaced across international borders in the context of natural disasters, as well as the effects of climate change.

**Oceania 21**

* **Noted** and **supported** a presentation by the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Hon. Henry Puna on Oceania 21, and the tabling of this concept at the 44thPacific Islands Forum Meeting in the Marshall Islands for the consideration of Leaders. Oceania 21 is a regional platform established to promote and engage the international community on the region’s common concerns pertaining to climate change, environmental preservation and sustainable management.

**Marshall Islands Declaration on Climate Change for 44th Pacific Islands Forum**

* **Noted** the resolution passed by the French Polynesia Assembly highlighting concerns at the proliferation of climate change related organisations and the need to ensure that climate change financing is clarified and channelled to population needs.
* **Welcomed** recommendation by French Polynesian President Gaston Flosse encouraging PLG member countries to embrace our Polynesian people displaced by climate change.
* **Agreed** that French Polynesia President Gaston Flosse table this resolution at the 44th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in the Marshall Islands.

**Hawaiian Affairs**

* **Noted** and **welcomed** a presentation by Dr Kamana’opono Crabbe, Chief Executive Officer for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), on the functions and responsibilities of OHA, and the governance issues related to the aspirations of Native Hawaiians.
* On behalf of the PLG, French Polynesia President Gaston Flosse expressed the appreciation of Leaders for the presentation of gifts and the warmth of *aloha* from OHA.

**Concluding remarks**

* Leaders **expressed** deep appreciation to the New Zealand Government for use of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) Auckland Office for the PLG meeting.
* French Polynesia President Gaston Flosse **extended** his appreciation to Leaders for their confidence in his Chairmanship and offered French Polynesia as host venue for the next PLG Meeting.
* Leaders **noted** the offer from French Polynesia President Gaston Flosse to host the Secretariat of the PLG.
* The Prime Minister of Samoa Tuilaepa Malielegaoi, on behalf of Leaders, **conveyed** appreciation for the competent Chairmanship of President Flosse.