

Pacific Regional CSO Forum 2008
12-14 August, 2008
Auckland, New Zealand
“Consolidating the NGO Sector for a Better Pacific”

OUTCOMES STATEMENT

PREAMBLE

The Pacific Regional Civil Society Organisations (CSO) Forum 2008 was held at the Rendezvous Hotel, Auckland, New Zealand, from 12-14 August, 2008. The CSO Forum was co-hosted by the Niue Association of Non Government Organisations (NUANGO), the *Matakau Vagahau* Niue and the Pacific Regional Non Government Organisations (PRNGO) Alliance.¹ CSO representatives from American Samoa, Bougainville, the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Guam, Hawaii, Kanaky, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna and West Papua, including Australia and New Zealand, also attended the CSO Forum.

The Pacific Regional Non Government Organisations (PRNGOs) Alliance intended the 2008 CSO Forum to be a time for Pacific CSOs to formulate collaborative actions and strategies to effectively engage in Pacific Forum Leaders meetings. Past experience has shown that the conveying of CSO Outcomes Statements and Communiqués to Pacific Forum Leaders between 2004 to 2007, has proven ineffective in influencing the highest political decision-making body.

The CSO Forum agrees that the priorities identified at this Forum be addressed by the PRNGOs Alliance and their national partners. It was further agreed that the PRNGO Alliance, along with other Pacific NGOs at national and regional level, collaborate effectively to tackle the multiple challenges facing our Region. To do this, PRNGOs need to have measurable goals and objectives, offer creative solutions and work proactively and collaboratively together. There is also a need to strengthen links between PRNGOs and national NGOs to ensure that the Alliance represents and communicates with its constituency.

¹ The PRNGO Alliance consists of the Pacific Islands Association of Non Government Organisations (PIANGO), the Foundation of the Peoples' of the South Pacific International (FSPI), Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC), Council of Pacific Education (COPE), Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women (PACFAW), Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC)/Pacific Network Against Violence Against Women, Greenpeace, WWF South Pacific Programme, Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) and the South Pacific and Oceanic Council of Trade Unions (SPOCTU).

The PRNGOs Alliance also reiterated their requests to Pacific Forum Leaders vis-à-vis implementation of the *Pacific Plan* in the areas of HIV/AIDS and Energy as stipulated in their *2007 CSO Communiqué*.

1. ADVOCACY & ENGAGING FOR POLICY CHANGE IN FORUM PROCESSES

Pacific CSOs identified the need for the following consolidated actions:

- (i) Resolve issues such as clarity in mandates, accountability, understanding our roles as civil society, while maintaining independence, recognition, commitment to capacity building and improved communication at all levels without replicating Pacific Islands Forum bureaucracy.
- (ii) Build national CSO capacity on the benefits and advantages of utilising Forum and CROP processes, ways to engage, the roles of CROP agencies and their accountability mechanisms.
- (iii) Obtain feedback from Pacific regional CSOs that have Consultative Status in Pacific Island Forum processes of their experiences in seeking accreditation.
- (iv) Advocate for meaningful engagement in regional processes in particular in relation to accreditation processes including the disclosure policies of CROP agencies.
- (v) Ensure Pacific regional CSOs continue to seek accreditation to CROP meetings and further develop dialogue with CROP agencies.
- (vi) Develop mechanisms for better information sharing at all levels ensuring that appropriate facilities are in place.
- (vii) Consolidate national-regional CSO interfacing and partnership with the general aim of making timely and relevant regional interventions in Forum and CROP processes.
- (viii) Establish issue-focused CSO platforms at national level and strengthen smart partnerships for advocacy and change, and build linkages with the PRNGOs' Alliance on activities related to regular CSO Forum meetings and interventions in national and regional Pacific Island Forum and CROP processes.
- (ix) Formulate an action plan of all Forum meetings to be targeted in the next year and assess the timing of the CSO Forum in view of the Pre Forum Officials Committee Meeting (FOC), the Pacific Plan Action Committee (PPAC) meetings including Ministerial meetings and the Pacific Forum Leaders' annual meetings.
- (x) Utilise the media and explore additional and effective means of communication and advocacy to influence Forum governments' positions.

- (xi) Lobby CROP agencies to establish a post of CSO Liaison Officer to assist in ensuring CSO concerns are included and implemented at regional level and support CSOs in understanding the processes of regional agencies.
- (xii) Assess/audit actions agreed from 2008 CSO Forum Meeting at the next meeting.
- (xiii) Develop a mechanism to enable the NSA representative at the Forum Secretariat to provide ongoing feedback to the CSO Forum and its Members.

2. CLIMATE CHANGE

Pacific CSO's identified the need for the following consolidated actions:

- (i) Move towards a regional Climate Action Network (CAN) and establish a CAN organisation in each Pacific country.
- (ii) Continued engagement with Pacific governments on the issue of climate change including CSO representation on Government delegations to international climate change negotiations.
- (iii) Sharing of information and learning on practical projects such as mangrove replanting. – Action: FSPI/WWF South Pacific Programme².
- (iv) Capture and share stories and materials (including DVDs) on climate change in the Pacific. – Action: Dev Zone, Pacific Co-operation Foundation (PCF) web-site to host
- (v) Educate the Pacific media on climate change issues – Action: PINA³, Commonwealth Foundation, Pacific Co-operation Foundation (PCF) to make training materials and funding available.
- (vi) Raise issues of morality, ethics and human rights for the Pacific in polluting nations like the United States and the European Union with a tour by “champions” and young people.
- (vii) Form alliances of churches, NGOs, media, trade unions, Pacific businesses and polluting nations to push the issue of climate change.
- (viii) Support initiatives to raise the profile of climate change publicly, including an initiative where the CSO Forum could commit to supporting Earth Hour and the focus of Climate Change - Conference of the Parties (COP 15) on the Pacific in 2009.

2 World Wide Fund (WWF)

3 PINA–Pacific Islands News Association

- (ix) Pressure Australia and New Zealand to reduce emissions, support binding international targets for developed countries and provide new money for adaptation. – Action: Oxfam, CID⁴, ACFID⁵ and other Australia and NZ NGOs.
- (x) Identify sources of funding and lobby to make more funds available to Pacific CSOs, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), bilateral donors, international agencies. – Action: FSPI⁶, Oxfam NZ, WWF South Pacific (as think tank).
- (xi) Increase capacity building for CSO members – Action: PIANGO, WWF South Pacific and Oxfam (NZ and Australia).
- (xii) Undertake concerted moves towards improvements to regional, secular and religious curriculum education on global warming.
- (xiii) Lobby Australia, NZ and other donors for the commitment of substantial resources for community adaptation programmes and funding for resettlement for Tuvalu, Kiribati and other affected island countries and communities and call on Pacific Governments to support and welcome people affected by climate change.

3. PEACE AND SECURITY

Pacific CSOs identified the need for the following consolidated actions:

- (i) Educate our communities on peace and security policy initiatives at every level
- (ii) Use education initiatives in peace building processes throughout the Pacific with a view to incorporating a holistic indigenous perspective on peace building.
- (iii) Advocate that all churches across the Pacific address violence against women and identify and support women's unique contributions to resolving conflicts and restoring peace and in keeping with the World Council of Churches 2000-2010 Decade to Overcome Violence.
- (iv) Contribute to a safe and secure environment to reduce the risk of increasing the number of people with disabilities.
- (v) Ensure that people with disabilities receive adequate assistance and are included in peace and security programs.
- (vi) Support international disarmament initiatives that seek to prevent civilian casualties and the use of weapons as tools of repression.

4 CID-Council for International Development

5 ACFID-Australian Council for International Development

6 FSPI-Foundation of the South Pacific International

- (vii) Lobby our Pacific governments to sign the Convention banning Cluster Munitions on 3 December, 2008.
- (viii) Encourage Pacific States to call for negotiations on a treaty to control the transfers of small arms and light weapons and an international treaty on the abolishing of nuclear weapons and recognition by former nuclear powers of their responsibilities to the communities affected by nuclear testing.
- (ix) Support efforts to retain Article 9 in Japan's Constitution stipulating the prohibition of a standing army.
- (x) Demand justice and reparations for the victims of nuclear weapons testing in particular pressure our governments and the European Union to open dialogue with France on the establishment of a Trust Fund for compensation to repair damages caused at all levels.
- (xi) Mobilise our communities to call on France not to use Kanaky as an additional site for French army facilities.
- (xii) Express our strong objection to our governments on the recruitment of Pacific Island nationals as workers in the construction of the United States naval base planned for Guam.

4. HEALTH

Pacific CSOs identified the need for the following consolidated actions:

- (i) Lobby Governments, CSOs, regional and international agencies and donors to invest more in public health and health care to improve the quality of life for Pacific people and their environments.
- (ii) Lobby Pacific Island governments to commit to raising their investment in health above the five percent of GDP threshold. To also call on donors and governments to build partnerships with CSOs and stakeholders to form health coalitions to co-ordinate research, policy, advocacy and implementation to improve quality of health outcomes.
- (iii) Call upon governments and CSOs to create policies where traditional healing and medicine are integrated into health plans and the health sector.
- (iv) Increase the emphasis on health promotion and protection and prevention of ill health through the development of a Regional Health Strategy to support and enable implementation of The "Healthy Islands", *Yanuca Declaration* (1995).
- (v) Encourage more investment in primary health care, public health, environmental health and initiatives to counter the negative health impacts of

climate change, in particular, water sanitation and hygiene, in co-ordination with the Ministries of Environment and Education.

- (vi) Increase recognition of the need for resources to invest in mental health awareness and care, across all sectors of society, particularly focusing on the mental health of our youth.
- (vii) Encourage more investment in recruiting additional health workers and provide training opportunities to develop and sustain them.
- (viii) Protect, collect, house and ensure accessibility of indigenous and traditional health knowledge and other health materials and information.
- (xiii) Encourage more investment in resources to promote “good holistic health practices” to reduce the increased risk of ill health and disability from “lifestyle conditions” and acknowledging the impact of communicable disease in Melanesia.
- (xiv) Advocate to reduce the risks to Pacific people’s health of unprotected trade in food, tobacco, drugs, alcohol and expired medication as well as oppose health-related commitments in trade agreements.
- (xv) Recommend that all government policies be viewed through a “health, family, disability and gender lens” to assess health impacts.
- (xvi) Lobby Pacific Governments to develop health policies that protect intellectual property rights and are supportive of the accessibility and usage of herbal medicine and traditional healers in the health sector and integrate this into National Plans.
- (xvii) Lobby all Pacific Governments and health-related donors to ensure that clear implementing and reporting policies are in place for partnership between CSOs and Governments and to ensure resources are available to build capacity based on good management and governance to ensure successful implementation of all health-related projects.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS AND SELF DETERMINATION

Pacific CSOs identified the need for the following consolidated actions:

- (i) Lobby Pacific Islands Forum Members that either voted against, abstained or were absent from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) vote on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP, September 2007) to formally support the Declaration.
- (ii) Lobby the Pacific Islands Forum to initiate a process to establish a mechanism to implement the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP) with a process that engages input from Civil Society Organisations.

- (iii) Lobby the Pacific Islands Forum Countries to immediately support the re- inscription of nations that were removed from the UN list of decolonisation, including but not limited to Hawaii, West Papua, Rapa Nui, Tahiti, Wallis & Futuna.
- (iv) Lobby the Pacific Islands Forum to secure, on behalf of Pacific peoples, free and unfettered travel in all Pacific countries and territories.
- (v) Lobby Pacific Forum Leaders to dialogue with civil society and indigenous communities with the intent to free our people, land and natural resources from foreign investment and privatisation.
- (vi) Lobby the French Polynesian government to halt phosphate mining projects on Mataiva Atoll and any other atolls in the Tuamotu Islands.
- (vii) Lobby Pacific Island Countries to consult with communities, take note of and learn from the Samoa experience with regard to reforms affecting customary land, state control and privatisation of water and other public goods, and learn from the devastating experiences of other Pacific Island countries, including Hawaii and Vanuatu in this regard.
- (viii) Lobby Pacific Island Forum countries to cease participation in RIMPAC⁷ military exercises in Hawaii.
- (xiii) Lobby the Pacific Islands Forum to collaborate with CSOs to develop our own declaration on the rights of Pacific peoples.
- (xiv) Invite Prof. James Anaya, the UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Rights to provide recommendations to the CSO Forum on how Pacific peoples can address their issues related to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- (xv) That Prof. Anaya's visit focus on the advancement of indigenous peoples' human rights, including exploring the possibility of establishing a regional Human Rights Commission.
- (xvi) Commit to collectively taking on the issues of concern for People With Disabilities and raise awareness at the grassroots, national and policy levels.
- (xvii) Lobby Pacific Island Forum Leaders to report on the implementation of the Biwako Millenium Framework as endorsed by the Pacific Leaders Forum in 2003.

7 RIMPAC – Pacific Rim

- (xviii) Lobby and encourage Pacific Island Forum Countries to sign, ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- (xix) Commit to raising awareness on human rights and its intrinsic link to democratic principles.
- (xx) Support and establish, through Forum Leaders, a Fiji Forum Joint Working Group to assess the state of the Fiji Judiciary.
- (xxi) Advocate that national elections are held in Fiji by March 2009, under the provisions of the 1997 Constitution.
- (xxii) Support, as much as possible, peaceful dialogue between the leaders of Tonga during the process of political reform.
- (xxiii) Conduct training in human rights on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous people with chiefs, traditional and emerging leaders.

6. SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Pacific CSO's identified the need for the following consolidated actions:

- (i) Contribute to the design and delivery of National Development Plans by working towards linking community plans to district, provincial, national, regional plans and strategies.
- (ii) Link community sustainable livelihoods to market demands and local and international consumer standards.
- (iii) Mobilise resources from bilateral and multilateral agencies, including the private sector, to build capacity for sustainable livelihoods in areas such as financial literacy, skills training and business management.
- (iv) Actively engage at the national level with governments to integrate CSO and government programmes.
- (v) Establish national groups to support communities and co-operatives for the sustainable marketing of products and services.
- (vi) Recommend that Pacific Forum Leaders include the achievement of the sustainable livelihoods of Pacific Island communities as part of the "Sustainable Development" pillar of the *Pacific Plan*.
- (vii) Improve partnership and networking amongst CSOs and other development partners for resource sharing, expertise, joint programme development and information sharing.

7. EDUCATION

Pacific CSOs identified the need for the following consolidated actions:

- (i) Lobby and engage with Pacific Ministers for Education to review education legislations to address changing trends and issues in education.
- (ii) The Council of Pacific Education (COPE) to network and closely collaborate with regional stakeholders in education.
- (iii) Advocate and lobby governments to integrate adult education/community and parental education into mainstream education. Education should be made free and compulsory, at least at primary school level.
- (iv) Lobby for a more relevant curriculum development process in PICs and ensure curricula is tailored to meet the needs of Pacific communities. Advocate to insist that Education Ministries ensure that curriculum developers have the appropriate qualifications and skills.
- (v) Advocate the importance of values, culture, vernacular languages and spiritual development, including the integration of sports, arts, music and dance and ensure they are mainstreamed into Pacific education systems and curricula.
- (vi) Review the situation of boarding facilities for girls in secondary schools, technical and vocational institutions in PICs to ensure equal access to a safe educational environment.
- (vii) Advocate that schools recognise and accept payment of education fees using “indigenous wealth” or currency such as mats, tapa, food crops, pigs, shell money, kava and whales tooth as a means to combat economic hardship and ensure access to education for all.
- (viii) Advocate for PIC education ministries to consider a student exchange scheme between Pacific Island nations.
- (ix) Advocate with Pacific governments to consider placing an injunction on current negotiations on agreements such as Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), PACER+ and PICTA⁸ relating to the liberalisation of services such as education and health.
- (x) Organise adult literacy programmes.
- (xi) Address the needs of children and persons with disabilities through the introduction of an early identification and detection system, and teacher and community training on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

8. TRADE JUSTICE

8 PACER – Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic relations. PICTA – Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement

Pacific CSOs identified the need for the following consolidated actions:

- (i) Conduct research to inform and provide credibility to CSOs position prior to crucial negotiations with donors and the international community.
- (ii) Identify key research areas to assist CSOs to campaign on Trade Justice issues such as in the areas of the impacts of labour mobility; links between trade policy and the food crisis; links between trade and land tenure; alternatives to a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and social impact assessments.
- (iii) Capacity building at the national level to empower and equip national CSOs, trade unions and NGOs to engage effectively with their own governments and encourage quick responses from key regional NGO partners to support national consultation processes.
- (iv) Identify a local trade advocacy and networking contact in each Pacific country.
- (v) Advocate with and train Pacific media practitioners on trade issues and strengthen regional partnerships between PANG⁹, PIANGO, FSPI, Oxfam and PCC¹⁰ in order to take on trade justice issues.
- (vi) Network and identify new partners and build alliances in the campaign for trade justice.
- (vii) Explore potential legal avenues to ensure that any new agreements conform with domestic and international law.

9. GOVERNANCE

Pacific CSOs identified the need for the following consolidated actions:

- (i) Develop a regional communication and information sharing strategy to enhance work on governance issues in Pacific Island Countries.
- (ii) Develop a regional process via a “solidarity and alert” mechanism to support efforts and issues at national level.
- (iii) Continue advocacy and awareness on governance and accountability with all national and regional CSO and government leaders.
- (iv) Define, examine and own governance issues from a Pacific perspective.

9 PANG-Pacific Network Against Globalisation

10 PCC-Pacific Conference of Churches

- (v) Ensure and encourage the participation at grassroots level through awareness raising activities on processes such as constitutional reforms and legislative and policy development.
 - (vi) Mobilise Pacific communities to ensure governments undertake meaningful consultation with civil society in various decision-making processes.
 - (vii) Lobby Pacific governments for the inclusion of CSO issues and concerns in national development plans.
 - (viii) Provide more information and education on traditional models of governance versus introduced models of governance and where relevant, include these into various educational programs.
 - (ix) Coach young chiefs and emerging leaders on the expectations and demands of their roles.
 - (x) Support the establishment of a Regional Human Rights Mechanism and Regional Court of Appeal and explore the possibility of a subregional government accountability mechanism eg. Regional Ombudsman's Office.
 - (xi) Promote the introduction of a national Leadership Code of Conduct and Freedom of Information legislation.
 - (xii) Promote the inclusion of gender issues in governance, in particular, the promotion of gender equality and women's participation and representation at all levels in political and decision-making processes.
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