

Policy on Consultative Status and Accreditation between the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and Non-State Actors (NSA)

Part I

PRINCIPLES TO BE APPLIED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSULTATIVE RELATIONS WITH NSA ORGANISATIONS

1. Consultative relationships may be established between the PIF Secretariat (hereafter 'PIFS') and Pacific Regional NSA organisations in conformity with the principles and criteria established under this policy.
2. Organisations eligible to apply for consultative status to PIFS and accreditation to specific PIF-related meetings shall be Pacific Regional NSA organisations (hereinafter "Organisations") concerned with matters falling within the competence of the Pacific Islands Forum (hereafter 'PIF') through the PIF Secretariat (hereafter 'PIFS').
3. For the purposes of the consultative relationship, a Pacific Regional NSA organisation is defined as one which:
 - is headquartered in a PIF member state;
 - has an established presence in at least one third of the member states of the Pacific Islands Forum;
 - is legally registered in a PIF member state as a civil society organisation and/or charitable trust;
 - is actively involved in the implementation of regional initiatives at national level; and
 - is organized and led in a democratic and transparent manner.
4. In establishing consultative relationships with each organisation, due regard shall be given to the nature and scope of its activities and to the assistance it may offer the PIF or its members in carrying out its functions.
5. As mandated by PIF member states, a Consultative Status Committee (CSC) shall be established comprising representatives of the past, present and future Forum Chairs plus a representative of the PIFS, and is open to other Forum members plus an agreed CSO member. The CSC shall be responsible for the granting, suspension and withdrawal of consultative status, as well as the interpretation of norms and decisions relating to this matter. The granting, suspension and withdrawal of consultative status as well as the interpretation of norms and decisions relating to this matter are the prerogative of PIF member states exercised through the CSC. An organisation applying for consultative status shall have the opportunity to respond to any queries being raised by the CSC before the CSC takes its decision.

6. In recognizing the evolving relationship between the PIF and NSA's, the PIFS in consultation with NSA's will review the consultative arrangements as and when necessary, to facilitate the contributions of NSA's to the work of the PIF.

CONSULTATIVE STATUS

7. Organisations that meet the requirements of this policy as specified in Paras 3 and 8 of this policy and are concerned with the activities of the PIF and are closely involved with the economic and social life of the peoples of the region; may apply for consultative status to the PIFS.
8. All applications for admission to consultative status must be accompanied by information on the competence of the organisation and the relevance of its activities to the work of the PIF, and should include the following information:
 - (a) The purpose of the organisation;
 - (b) Information as to the programmes and activities of the organisation in areas relevant to the PIF member states in which they are carried out. Pacific regional NSA organisations seeking consultative status shall confirm their interest in the goals and objectives of the Forum;
 - (c) Confirmation of the activities of the organisation at the national and regional level;
 - (d) Copies of the annual reports of the organisation with audited financial statements for the preceding three years;
 - (e) A description of the membership of the organisation, indicating the total number of members, the names of organisations that are full or associate members and their geographical distribution;
 - (f) A copy of the constitution and by-laws of the organisation;
 - (g) Evidence that the organisation has a regular consultative mechanism with national NSA members in at least one third of the PIF member states that the organisation represents at a regional level; and
 - (h) Evidence that the national affiliates and partner NSA members in at least one third of the PIF member states mandate the Pacific regional NSA organisation to speak and/or act on their behalf.
9. Following an assessment of applications by the Consultative Status Committee based on guidelines in this policy, the committee will forward its recommendation to the Secretary General of the PIFS, who will then inform the applicant organisation and PIF members.
10. The PIFS shall be responsible for the receipt and preliminary evaluation of requests from organisations seeking consultative status.
11. Upon formal admission to consultative status, the organisation will have a consultative status with the PIFS for a period of 3 years which shall be renewed upon expiry if the organisation still meets the criteria in this policy.

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

12. Decisions on arrangements for consultation should be guided by the principle that consultative arrangements are to be made for the purpose of enabling the PIF to secure expert information or advice from organisations having special competence and would enable regional organisations that represent important elements of public opinion to provide an alternative perspective to the subjects for which consultative arrangements are made.
13. While recognising that PIF members remain the priority for participation and implementation of Forum decisions, PIFS shall facilitate the participation of organisations with consultative status to contribute on issues relating to their speciality.

Part II

NSA ACCREDITATION TO PIF-RELATED MEETINGS

14. Organisations with consultative status, that wish to attend a relevant regional meeting convened by the PIF and that is open to observers, may apply for accreditation of a representative to attend on their joint behalf as an NSA Observer to the meeting. The Secretary General of the PIF, in consultation with PIF Member States and any co-host of the meeting, will advise the requesting organisation of the decision as to the request. Where organisations are permitted to attend a Forum-related meeting as an NSA Observer, the following should be noted:
 - Accredited organisations, through their nominated NSA Observer, may be invited to provide written papers or submissions for the information of participants in such meetings.
 - The representative of such organisations will be expected to fund their own attendance at PIF-related meetings and activities.
 - In their engagement with the PIF, accredited organisations and their nominated NSA Observer will be expected to respect, and to act in accordance with, the vision and purpose of the PIF.
15. The Secretariat shall publish and disseminate on a periodic basis the updated list of applications for admission to consultative status and, where applicable, accreditation of a nominated NSA Observer to a PIF-related meeting.
16. Subject to the approval of PIF members:
 - (a) The draft provisional agenda of Ministerial or Officials-level meeting under the auspices of the PIF shall be communicated to non-PIF entities including organisations with consultative status.
 - (b) Organisations with consultative status may request the Secretary-General of the PIFS to place items of special interest to the organisations in the provisional

- agenda of the PIF-related meetings.
- © Organisations with consultative status may designate one authorized Pacific regional NSA representative to sit on their joint behalf as an NSA Observer at open meetings under the auspices of the Forum.
17. Upon invitation by the PIFS, written statements relevant to the agenda of meetings under the auspices of the PIF may be submitted by organisations with consultative status on subjects in which they have a special competence.
 18. The following conditions shall be observed regarding the submission and circulation of such statements:
 - (a) The written statement shall be submitted in the English language;
 - (b) It shall be submitted at least six weeks before the scheduled date of the start of the meeting for appropriate consultation to take place between the PIFS and the organisation before circulation;
 - (c) The organisation shall give due consideration to any comments that the Secretary-General of the PIF may make in the course of such consultation before transmitting the statement in final form.

Part III

SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF CONSULTATIVE STATUS

19. An organisation with consultative status may voluntarily withdraw, giving reasons, and may reapply at a later date subject to meeting eligibility criteria.
20. Organisations granted consultative status shall conform at all times to the principles governing the establishment and nature of their consultative relations with the Forum. If an organisation does not conform to the principles outlined in Part I of this policy and/or breaches the rules and procedures of Forum meetings, its status shall be suspended or withdrawn in line with the provisions of Para 5.
21. An organisation whose consultative status is withdrawn may be entitled to reapply for consultative status not sooner than 12 months after the effective date of such withdrawal.

Part IV

SECRETARIAT SUPPORT

22. The Secretary-General of the PIFS will seek to ensure that the Secretariat has sufficient capacity and resources for the purpose of fulfilling the commitments defined in this policy.
23. The PIFS will make this policy widely known through proper channels to facilitate the involvement of Pacific regional NSA organisations in the work of the

PIF.

Part V

REVIEW

24. The Policy on Consultative Status and Accreditation between the PIF and NSAs is subject to amendments upon the mutual agreement of both PIFS and Pacific regional NSAs at a specifically convened meeting.

ADDENDUM:

For the purposes of this policy, the term Non State Actors shall mean non-profit, voluntary groups such as a Non Government Organisation (NGO); Civil Society Organisation (CSO); Community Based Organisation (CBO) and Faith Based Organisation (FBO), organised at a regional level.