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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO THE 35<sup>th</sup> PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM PLENARY**  
**Apia, Samoa, 7 August 2004**

*Delivered by Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury,  
Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries,  
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States*

It gives me great pleasure to send my greetings to His Excellency the Prime Minister of Samoa and to all other Heads of State and Government attending this year's summit meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum.

Over the years, your Forum has become an important regional platform for coordinating efforts to achieve economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security. Despite vast differences in size, population and level of economic development, you have shown yourselves ready and able to cooperate on the basis of equality and mutual respect, with due regard for what each of the Forum's members can afford to contribute.

You meet amid preparations for the ten-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action. The main issues to be addressed there – from climate change and rising sea levels to the spread of AIDS and the need for better trading opportunities – are central to your peoples' future well-being. I urge you to pay even more attention to them, and to show your personal support for this review exercise by attending the summit segment of the January meeting in Mauritius.

You also meet against a backdrop of advances in efforts to promote peace and security in the region. I attach great importance to the successful completion of the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in Bougainville, where steady progress has become possible thanks to the commitment of the parties to the Peace Agreement. In the Solomon Islands, the situation is much-improved following the deployment of the Regional Assistance Mission, supported by your Forum and the United Nations. I am also encouraged by the increased contacts between our respective secretariats, including at meetings of the Forum's Regional Security Committee. These exchanges and the sharing of information are enabling us to better understand the roots of conflict, and to ensure that our efforts complement each other.

Indeed, while responses to the vulnerabilities and challenges in the Pacific region should come first and foremost from your communities, our joint efforts and international solidarity can make a critical difference in responding to your peoples' aspirations. I am strongly committed to an ever stronger partnership between our two Organizations across the full range of our common concerns. Together, we can achieve the Millennium Development Goals and fulfil the vision set out in the Millennium Declaration. In that spirit, please accept my best wishes for a successful Summit.