

# PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT



Telephone : (679) 331 2600  
Facsimile : (679) 3220266  
Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji  
Email : [info@forumsec.org.fj](mailto:info@forumsec.org.fj)  
Website : <http://www.forumsec.org>

## **Oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic**

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat is an international organisation that aims to stimulate economic growth and enhance political governance and security for the region, through the provision of policy advice; and to strengthen regional cooperation and integration through coordinating, monitoring and evaluating implementation of Leaders' decisions. The organisation's mandate is set by decisions made at annual meetings of Leaders from the 16 Pacific Island Forum member countries, ministerial meetings convened by the Forum Secretariat, and decisions made under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

(i) *Information regarding the relevant activities of your Organisation fostering an integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development with regards to oceans*

The Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP), endorsed by Pacific Island Leaders in 2002, and its companion *Our Sea of Islands, Our Livelihoods, Our Oceania* - Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape (FPO), approved in 2010, are the region's primary ocean policy instruments. The more recently approved FPO represented a major step forward for Pacific Ocean policy, intended to catalyse action and political will to ensure the sustainable development, management and conservation of the diverse ocean and island ecosystems within the region. In particular, the FPO provides stronger provisions for coordination and resourcing across the three dimensions of sustainable development.

In the FPO, Pacific Island Leaders called for establishment of a Regional Ocean Commissioner, with dedicated professional support, to provide the necessary high level representation and commitment that is urgently required to ensure dedicated advocacy and attention to ocean priorities, decisions and processes at national, regional and international levels. This position currently sits with the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, with technical support provided by the CEOs of other regional organisations in the Pacific, particularly the Forum Fisheries Agency, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program, and the University of the South Pacific. Secretariat support is provided by the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, housed in the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Most recently support by the Office has been through the consolidation of advice from regional organizations, with different economic, social and environmental mandates, on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction.

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat is also responsible for implementing the *Forum Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination*, which was agreed to by Pacific Island Leaders in 2009. The Forum Compact encourages Forum Island Countries to systematically examine and improve how national plans and budgets, public financial management systems, development partner coordination, monitoring and evaluation of results, and engagement between governments, parliamentarians, private sector and non-state actors, contribute to overall national sustainable development efforts.

One of the mechanisms set up through the Forum Compact is the Peer Review, where Forum member governments and development partners volunteer to have their systems of development planning, aid and financial management reviewed by a team selected from Forum member

governments and partners within the region. The review aims to help strengthen national institutions and capacities to more effectively plan for, resource, deliver and monitor the priorities of sustainable development and development coordination. Good development practices are identified for regional learning and recommendations are made to the governments and development partners to address remaining challenges. A total of 13 Forum Island Countries have undertaken peer reviews and the first peer reviews of developed country partners are underway.

*(ii) Challenges and opportunities in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in that regard, including matters which may require further consideration with a view to fostering integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development with regards to oceans, with an emphasis on areas where coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels could be enhanced.*

An emerging opportunity to improve intergovernmental coordination and cooperation is the Framework for Pacific Regionalism that was agreed by Pacific Island Leaders in 2014. The Forum Secretariat is mandated to coordinate the implementation of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. The focus of the Framework is improving the effectiveness of regional mechanisms in supporting national priorities. The Framework sets out the:

- Pacific Vision, for a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives;
- regional values, which include our oceans, our culture, good governance, peaceful societies, inclusivity and equality, and durable partnerships; and
- strategic objectives for Pacific regionalism, which cover sustainable development, inclusive and equitable economic growth, strengthened governance and security.

The Framework also specifies a robust process for high-level priority setting and progress monitoring. It thus provides a broad structure under which Pacific regional organisations and development partners can work together in support of countries to deliver the sustainable development with regards to oceans.

Pacific Islands Leaders also called for a Regional Ocean Alliance/Partnership mechanism, facilitated by the Regional [Pacific] Ocean Commissioner, to provide effective ocean policy coordination and implementation, facilitate regional cooperation for the high seas, as well as support for national ocean governance and policy processes when required, and support inter-regional cooperation. The mechanism, now known as the Pacific Ocean Alliance, was launched at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Samoa in 2014. The Alliance is a multi-stakeholder partnership that provides member countries, private sector, civil society, donors and regional and international organizations a central platform to engage with the region on ocean issues. The Alliance is facilitated by the Pacific Ocean Commissioner and supported by the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, housed in the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Whilst not a decision-making forum, the Alliance provides the only platform in the region at which all ocean stakeholders are represented. Membership is open-ended, with new members participating as awareness grows and new issues arise. The Alliance aims to strengthen coordination and collaboration among stakeholders, particularly different stakeholders who may not necessarily have opportunities to interact, hence providing opportunities to improve integration across the three dimensions of sustainable development.