



Australia
Federated States of Micronesia
Fiji
Kiribati
Nauru
New Zealand
Palau

Papua New Guinea
Republic of Marshall Islands
Samoa
Solomon Islands
Tonga
Tuvalu
Vanuatu



Samoa
Chairman of Pacific Islands Forum

Pacific Islands Forum Group

Pacific Islands Forum
United Nations Member States

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AL'PIOAIGA FETURI ELISAIA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SAMOA
ON BEHALF OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM GROUP**

**TO THE FIFTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

ON

**INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF AND
FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOMES OF THE MAJOR UNITED
NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS IN THE
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS**

FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT

NEW YORK, 6 APRIL 2005

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Mr President,

I take the floor today to speak on behalf of the 13 members of the Pacific Islands Forum Group in New York, namely Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Samoa.

The Pacific Islands Forum Group welcomes the Secretary-General's report "*In Larger Freedom*" as a timely challenge to the UN member states to take bold and decisive steps in 2005 to confront the world's deeply interrelated and interconnected challenges of development, security and human rights.

The report is recommended as an integrated package of early achievables amongst the primary, yet complementary UN global challenges. The complementarity of these issues is underpinned in the report, according to the Secretary General, by giving equal weight and attention to all three.

While we had been assured that a narrow focus on any one challenge only, or an attempted prioritization of the three could be counterproductive, the reality of the world we live in, the regions we inhabit and call our homes, makes it intrinsically unavoidable that states, and groups of states will continue to view the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report, and any report for that matter, primarily in terms of their immediate impact, positive or negative, on them. This will continue to be the litmus test applied to any proposal no matter how well-meaning and well intentioned it might be.

Mr. President,

We thank you for the opportunity to provide our views on the Secretary General's report. To be productive, we will be making only general comments during this forum. We will articulate our views more persuasively, we hope, during the focused discussions of the individual clusters in the coming weeks.

The Pacific Islands Forum represents a happy and functional family of developed, developing and least developed countries that have partnered successfully over the years to address the very challenges of development, security and human rights as identified in the report. All but two of our group's members are SIDS.

The special circumstances of the majority of our members and their particular vulnerability to environmental, economic and social shocks are well known to all, and also well documented by the UN Secretariat.

Our Group believes that "development" is a central issue on the agenda of the United Nations and is the basic foundation on which peace, security and human rights can be achieved. Peace, freedom and human dignity are greatly enhanced as tangible results when more people enjoy the benefits of prosperity.

The report is energetically bold and innovative in some of its recommendations on security, development and human rights issues and in placing them squarely in the centre of the global agenda. However, the Mauritius Strategy, which only a few months ago was overwhelmingly endorsed by the international community as a practical blueprint to address SIDS' sustainable development needs, hardly rates a single mention at all in the report. This is unfortunate given that the Mauritius Strategy means so much to SIDS, to our governments and peoples.

Hopefully, all is not lost.

With your support Mr. President and that of our UN community, we trust that this oversight can be rectified during the consultation process in progress which you so ably initiated. We must work to ensure that the high level session in September produces a win-win situation for all stakeholders of our organization, including our Pacific region.

The Pacific Islands Forum Group in New York therefore asks for two additional elements to be added to the Summit outcome. First: that it acknowledges and reaffirms the Mauritius Strategy as SIDS' comprehensive plan for meeting their Millennium Development Goals. Second: that the Summit outcome acknowledges the "special needs" of SIDS. The Millennium Declaration referred to the "special needs" of SIDS. The 2002 Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Programme of Action both referred to the "special case" of SIDS. Mr. President, there are 43 SIDS, and we ask that their needs not be forgotten in 2005.

Mr. President,

We support the call for an enhanced role for ECOSOC as the principal body to ensure stronger system-wide coherence of the various development and humanitarian agencies while at the same time avoiding duplication in the system

On the issue of UN reform, we agree that this is long overdue.

The General Assembly should reclaim its stature as the highest deliberative decision-making and representative body the framers of the UN Charter had envisioned it to be. By focusing on the practical challenges suggested by the Secretary General as initial first steps to breathe new life back to the General

Assembly, this, in our view, would be a pragmatic and realistic way to start the reform process.

Similarly, we support the recommendation for an enlarged Security Council. The need to act decisively on this issue cannot be overemphasized. We must capitalize on the current momentum and enthusiasm, and act in-tandem with what appears to be an environment of "tolerance to change" on the horizon.

On a "persona note", one of the truly positive gestures to come out of the High Level Panel's report on the Security Council reform, was the proposal for an Asia & Pacific grouping. Naturally, our members were hoping that the Secretary-General would endorse this proposal. Much to our regret, the report is silent on the Asia & Pacific constituency. We hope however that in time the panel's proposal will take roots and will bode well for the Pacific in the years ahead in a reformed and reinvigorated United Nations.

Mr. President,

The proposal for the creation of a Human Rights Council is a bold proposition. The Secretary-General has certainly made a strong case for it. We caution however against making a rushed decision. Lets move cautiously and evaluate the proposal in its entirety. Only after we are convinced without a shadow of a doubt that the end product will serve the interests of all 191 member states justly, equally and effectively, should we implement it.

Mr. President,

On the Secretariat reform, we support the proposal to align the structure of the secretariat to reflect current realities and to allow it to better respond to the priorities in the report and the global agenda of the UN to be agreed by the leaders at the September High Level session. The Secretary General should be given the resources and the necessary leverage to implement this critical dimension of the overall reform.

His own wish to give greater support to regional organizations and to engage them in more meaningful and cooperative ways is one we would particularly like to encourage, given that in some cases, the regional organizations provide the physical interface between the UN and some of the member states. The roles of the two organizations should be demarcated clearly to ensure complementarity of purpose and support without undue influence and encroachment in each others mandates and spheres of competencies.

We thank you again for the opportunity to provide our views. We firmly believe that the Summit in September will be a momentous occasion for the international community to come together to act in unity and good faith for the future of mankind.

Now that will be an enduring 60th birthday gift ever, that we can possibly give to our people to remember the United Nations by.

Thank you.