Amena Yauvoli: Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation

ADDRESS AT THE PACIFIC ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT FORUM
SESSION 9: PIDF INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Nadi: 7 August, 2013

Excellencies
Ladies & Gentlemen.

Allow me to preface this presentation with some relevant quotations from the statements delivered on day one by my PM (of Fiji) - Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama and the PM of Timor Leste- Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao:

Let me begin with PM Gusmao:
• “Promoting a green economy means promoting sustainable development”.
• “Economic growth can only be considered a favourable indicator of national development if it observes two key principles: inclusiveness and equity”.
• “I think by now we all know that our voices will not be heard if we are speaking alone”.
• “We must be the agents of our own change, since it is we who will be the main winners, or losers, in this process”.
• “We need to ensure ownership over the development process. More than development for all, it is time to talk about development by all”.

And with PM Bainimarama:
• “We are building a new framework for Pacific Islanders- wherever they live- to confront the many challenges and opportunities that face us. And we are doing it in the Pacific Way- through genuine consultation between governments, civil society groups and the business community. It is a historic occasion”.
• “We need to listen more to our people and the common sense towards problem solving that comes with grassroots participation. We need to listen more to our business communities, whose investment generates the jobs we need to raise the living standards and improves the lives of our people”.
• “So for the first time, we are bringing all these stakeholders together to discuss common solutions to our common problems in a practical and holistic way. And we will take those ideas and contribute them to the global debate in other Forums- including the UN-, the Pacific speaking with one voice based on the consensus we reach here”.
• “Sustainable development can only be achieved with a broad alliance of people, governments, civil society and the private sector, all working together to secure the future for the present and the following generations”.
• “Why do we need a new body, a new framework of cooperation? Because the existing regional structure- PIF- is for Governments only and has also come to be dominated only by a few. In too many instances, it no longer genuinely represents our interests and needs”.
• “We want to stand up as Pacific Islanders and with one voice send a clear message to the world at large; that Pacific-SIDS are vulnerable and face unique sustainable development challenges”.
• “Now with PIDF, we bring together a grand alliance of sovereign nations, and territories with the political will to implement change, civil society groups with the passion to drive change, and businesses that are job creators for our people. This is a winning combination”.

The above excerpts from our two Leaders set the tone for our discussions under this item- An Institutional Arrangement for PIDF.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,
The PIDF deliberations of the last two and half days have emphatically confirmed the following key issues;
• that a community of interest currently exists in the Pacific around sustainable development and this community of interest primarily exists at national and regional levels amongst all national stakeholders;
• PIDF is a space created on how the Pacific-SIDS connects with the international community in international fora (such as the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and PSIDS grouping in the Global SIDS);
• PIDF acknowledges the complex interdependence between Pacific Peoples and their environment as a form of identity that binds the region. It accepts the need for the development of a unified Pacific voice to facilitate a strong outward looking regional approach to green-blue sustainable development.
• In recent times governmental interest in sustainable development has been matched by growing civil society and private sector interest. This is where much of the impetus for leadership and innovation is being expressed and must be brought together if PSIDS are to (a) effectively respond to environmental challenges and (b) to fully take advantage of the opportunities posed by sustainable development approaches and initiatives.
• PIDF acknowledges that the Pacific community of interest is in fact more accurately described as communities of interests that are focused on particular issues. These communities of interest cut across traditional boundaries such as government, private sector and civil society. Within these communities of interest, sectoral groups actively collaborate and cooperate across traditional boundaries and this interaction occurs nationally and across borders.
• Key sectors focus on fisheries, tourism, agriculture, forestry, mining, and are enabled by the transport, energy, communications and human resources and institutional capacity building sectors.
• Pacific communities of interest have never had an arena or space where they can cooperate and collaborate for sustainable development through the green-blue economies. PIDF will provide the multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral and regional framework to secure concrete outcomes and mobilize action in support of sustainable development through a green-blue economy.
• As such, PIDF is a ‘network of networks’ of sustainable development. It is a clearinghouse for
value adding innovations in the green-blue economy.
• Tapping into these communities will allow the PSIDS to more adequately address the impacts posed by environmental challenges and issues and take advantage of opportunities to promote sustainable development.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,
At this meeting, we have talked about “creating a space” for Pacific-SIDS to speak for themselves. We have now embraced the PIDF as that space that need an institutional structure to carry its work forward. In other words, we need to institutionalize the space we have created for ourselves to provide a “home for sustainable development” in the Pacific sub-region of the larger Asia-Pacific Region of the United Nations.

Some important principles of the PIDF’s institutional structure would include the following;
• The PIDF being a ‘network of networks’. That is, it is an institutional structure upon which future governance and funding arrangements are built;
• The focus is on developing regional approaches supporting national sustainable development challenges for opportunities premised on equal partnerships amongst all stakeholders.
• The PIDF will foster an environment within which leadership and innovation can occur to create of sustainable development of the green/blue economy. The governance structure will provide the catalyst to the development of a unified voice in relation to key sustainable developmental challenges and opportunities facing the Pacific.

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,
We are confident that we need to address the institutional issues without delay to facilitate an institutional arrangement for PIDF. Benefiting from a consultative process that engaged the views of your respective representatives in this inaugural meeting, including those of our Pacific-SIDS Leaders, a way forward has been supported, and this is submitted as below to the meeting for its considerations. Before presenting the arrangement I thank all delegation and senior advisers to respective Governments for your contributions in the discussion on this proposed arrangement.

PIDF INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT
The meeting agreed to:
(i) Strengthen coordination and collaboration on sustainable development issues at the national, regional and global levels engaging all sectors of society- public, private, and civil/non-government organisations;

(ii) Provide an effective mechanism directly linking with the Pacific SIDS Grouping in NY, AOSIS, UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, G7+, G77 & China, and other UN processes at the global level;

(iii) Establish a Secretariat. [My PM will make an announcement in his closing remarks on the modal of the secretariat]
(iv) Establish a Working Group with representatives drawn from all sectors of society to consult, assess and propose options for a long term institutional arrangement for the PIDF for consideration at the 2nd PIDF Meeting. (A TOR will be agreed to and made available out of
session).

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen, may I submit this proposal to the meeting for its consideration.

Vinaka vakalevu.

AY
PSFAIC
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