

ACP Secretary General calls for “eminent persons” group

Pacific discusses role and future in ACP Group

Addressing a press conference at the 40th Pacific Islands Forum on 6 August in Cairns, Australia, Secretary General of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, Sir John Kaputin, called on Pacific ACP leaders to provide effective leadership by proposing an ACP “eminent persons” group.



Sir John Kaputin. © ACP Secretariat

Pacific's leaders at the 40th Pacific Islands Forum. © Pacific Forum Secretariat

Sir John said the group of leaders would “make concrete proposals and recommendations on the future of the ACP Group to the next Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government”.

Highlighting the group’s potential and duty to combat poverty, he added that the ACP “can, and will make a difference to the lives of so many”.

“In this regard, the 15 Pacific ACP States can make an invaluable contribution and change the concept of development cooperation”, he added.

He continued: “We need to revitalise our relationship with our principle partner, the

European Union, and simultaneously, develop expanded relations with other global role-players to the benefit of our countries, and indeed the people. I believe that an eminent persons group from the ACP would be able to provide sound advice to our leaders.”

In the lead up to the forum, Pacific ACP governments and representatives from regional organisations discussed EU funding and trade relations in the region. Chaired by the Premier of Niue, the Hon. Toke Talagi, leaders expressed appreciation at the signing of the 2008–2013 10th European Development Fund Pacific Regional Indicative Programme between the European Commission and the Pacific region on 15 November, 2008.

Of the €95M allocated by the EC for the programme, €85M has been earmarked for two main focal areas: €45M for Regional Economic Integration and €40M for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment. €10M has been allocated for organisational strengthening and civil society participation.

The preliminary meeting and subsequent forum were attended by Pacific ACP leaders and representatives from the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Niue, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga and Vanuatu, Kiribati, Palau and Timor Leste.