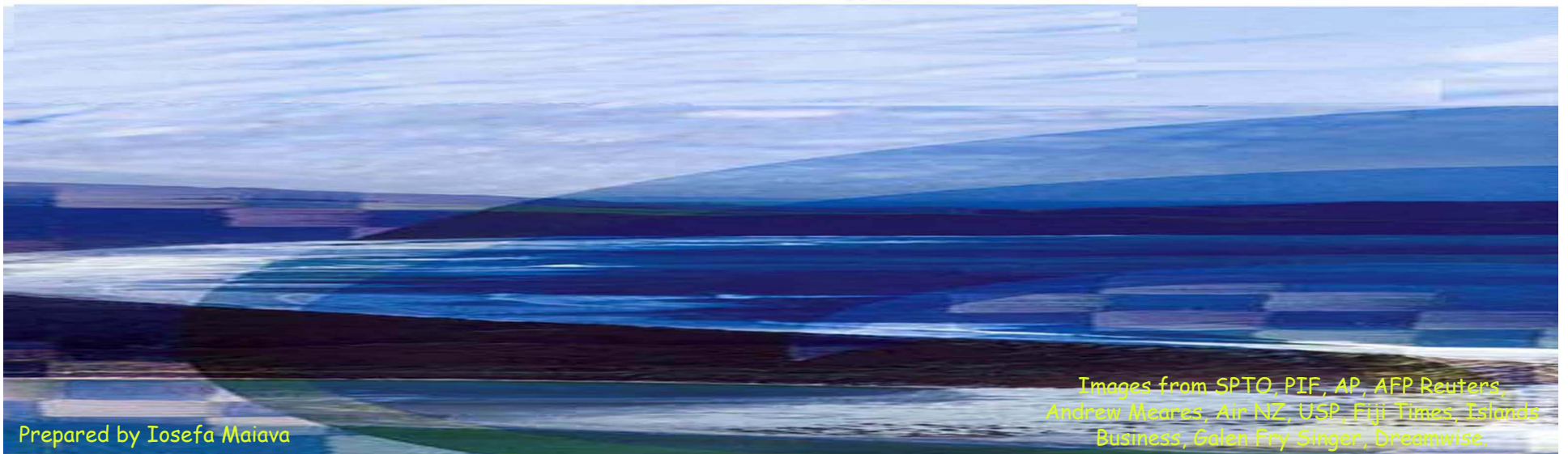




# ***PACIFIC REGIONALISM***



Prepared by Iosefa Maiava

Images from SPTO, PIF, AP, AFP Reuters,  
Andrew Meares, Air NZ, USP, Fiji Times, Islands  
Business, Galen Fry Singer, Dreamwise.

## WHY REGIONALISM?

Regionalism presents opportunities for Pacific Island countries to overcome problems related to smallness and remoteness.

It also creates a bigger cooperative region in which Pacific peoples will have more opportunities for activities not viable at the national level.

The Pacific Plan the most ambitious regional innovation for far provides the most comprehensive and integrated regional framework for all stakeholders and partners to support through regionalism national efforts at improving good governance and economic opportunities.

Visit the Pacific Plan website [www.pacificplan.org](http://www.pacificplan.org) for all your information need on the Pacific Plan process (ToRs, Consultation Reports, Analytical Studies, Cost-Benefit Analyses, Written Submissions, Updates etc) and activities.

# WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR THE REGION?

## *The Leaders' Vision 2004:*

- a region of peace, harmony, security and prosperity
- where we can lead free and worthwhile lives
- where cultures, traditions & religious beliefs are valued, honoured & developed
- a region respected for its governance, sustainable management of resources, democratic values & human rights
- a region with partnerships - our neighbours and beyond.

## HOW CLOSE ARE WE TO ACHIEVING THAT VISION?

- Most Pacific peoples have made great strides in terms of development since independence. Yet we face many challenges.
- Our countries face constraints from their smallness: 5 have populations under 20,000; 2 less than 100,000, 6 less than 1 million, and only 1 has more than 5 million.
- Five are classified by the United Nations as Less Developed Countries (LDCs).
- In many instances the policies & infrastructure inherited at independence have not been effective in meeting the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

## We face threats:

- To our health from communicable diseases;
- To our environment from pollution & unsustainable resource management;
- To our economies from low economic growth, the loss of preferential market access and a globalized market;
- To our security from cross-border terrorism; &
- To our political voice from poor governance, corruption & lack of transparency

## Because of these threats:

- Some Pacific countries have experienced severe crises.
- What should be our strengths - our isolation and our diversity - are beginning to look like weaknesses.

## WHO CAN HELP?

- **Pacific people** are skilful and work together well to solve problems. But many don't have the resources to meet these challenges on their own.
- **Local & national governments** can help, but they face tight budget constraints and communications difficulties. They find it difficult to retain the expertise they need, and find smallness a constraint when dealing with crime.
- Because of these constraints, Pacific governments find it hard to make good policies *and* at the same time provide essential services like health and education.
- So, service provision usually suffers, and governments are less effective. Our autonomy - the ability to carry out the policies we choose - is being eroded.

**Regionalism can help.**

## WHAT IS REGIONALISM?

It is the creation of institutions and processes at the regional level.

The goal of regionalism is to:

- Strengthen the ability of Pacific citizens and governments to identify and tackle our shared challenges - addressing capacity constraints,
- Get us working more closely together, and
- Reduce our vulnerability.

## WHAT ARE THE TYPES REGIONALISM?

There are three main types:

- **Regional cooperation:** dialogues and agreements between governments (eg. Pacific Islands Forum ministerial meetings, declarations, treaties).
- **Regional provision of public services:** the pooling together of national services at the regional level (eg. USP, FFA).
- **Regional integration:** lowering barriers for goods, services and people between countries (quarantine measures, import taxes, passport requirements -eg PICTA).



## EACH TYPE BRINGS DIFFERENT COSTS AND BENEFITS.

- Regional cooperation:

- Setting up forums or dialogues, or coming up with regional strategies, means moving people around the region for meetings etc. In the Pacific, this can be expensive - especially as more and more countries participate ("diseconomies of distance").

- But it also allows for increased consensus-building, mutual coordination and trust and is an essential part of the 'Pacific Way'.

- Regional provision of public services:

- Like cooperation, providing regional service requires moving people and goods around over large distances'.

- But it also provides higher levels of services with less money, more efficiency and a higher degree of shared knowledge ("economies of scale") leaving governments to focus on policies that suit their countries' needs and freeing resources to invest in their people.

## Regional integration:

-Breaking down market barriers can mean stronger competitive pressures for Pacific companies.

-But it also enables a larger market for Pacific firms, with more production at a lower cost ("economies of scale"), more choice for Pacific consumers, and more jobs and economic opportunities for Pacific workers.

*When regionalism works, its benefits outweigh its costs.*

## HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

*First, we can build on what we have.*

- The Pacific already has many forms of regional cooperation whose benefits are an essential part of the 'Pacific Way'.
- Since 1971 the Pacific Islands Forum and its Secretariat have coordinated annual meetings of Leaders and Economic Ministers, as well as meetings on foreign affairs, aviation, commerce, communications & trade.

- Our existing regional architecture also incorporates an advisory **Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP)** made up of 10 intergovernmental organizations which already demonstrate the value of regionalism for Pacific Island countries.

- \*Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)
- \*Fiji School of Medicine (FSchM)
- \*Pacific Is Development Program (PIDP)
- \*Pacific Is Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
- \*South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC)
- \*South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA)
- \*Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
- \*South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
- \*South Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO)
- \*University of the South Pacific (USP)

*Second, we can look at where deeper regionalism has benefited us already.*

*The Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) is a good example of how providing services at a regional level has enabled the voice of the Pacific to be heard more widely.*

- Joint advocacy gave us 200 nautical mile EEZs covering 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the globe & creating the largest fisheries in the world.
- Cooperation with Australia has enabled us (through the Pacific Patrol Boat Programme) to police these fisheries.
- Cooperation gained US & distant water fishing nations' recognition of Pacific fisheries.
- It also enabled the development of frameworks for surveillance, & the conservation & management of migratory fish stocks.

- **Security cooperation and sovereignty-sharing** has also produced a determination to address issues collectively across the region.

-The Biketawa Declaration in 2000 provided the regional mandate for the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in 2003 and Pacific Regional Assistance to Nauru (PRAN).

-The Nasonini Declaration in 2002 committed members to address the movement of small arms, money laundering, and police training.

*Third, we can look at what kinds of deeper regionalism might benefit us in the future.*

- One possible outcome of regional integration -labour mobility - already has precedents in the region:
  - Cook Is & Niue have access to the NZ market.
  - NZ has full access to the Australian market.
  - Australia already allows some 74,000 annual working holiday visas

Australia could easily absorb 20,000 Pacific peoples for periods up to 2 years, NZ - 3,000. With low population growth and aging populations, both countries will require additional labour in critical areas.



**The Pacific Plan** is the first comprehensive roadmap or framework for deeper regionalism and partnerships.

It lays out the strategic objectives, processes and timing of Pacific regionalism.

## **THE PACIFIC PLAN**

### **THE "FOUR PILLARS"**

1. Good governance
2. Economic growth
3. Sustainable development
4. Security

### **KEY GOALS OF THE PLAN**

1. Increase levels of sustainable returns
2. Implement regional cooperation at the national level
3. Meet common responsibilities regionally & provide services cost effectively
4. Develop partnerships with neighbours & beyond

### **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

1. Promoting Partnerships
2. National Ownership and Commitment
3. Mechanisms to Stimulate Debate

## GOOD GOVERNANCE

*Goal: Transparent and accountable leadership and management.*

For example:

- Support national integrity institutions and look at creating a regional ombudsman, regional customs service and a regional court of auditors.
- Strengthen regional adherence to the FEMM Eight Principles of Accountability.
- Develop common approaches to financial regulation, by aligning legislation and pooling prudential capacities.
- Harmonize domestic legislations with relevant international law.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- **Promoting Partnerships (sustainability):**  
between Pacific territories, sub-regional groupings, development partners, international organizations, and non-state actors.
- **National Ownership and Commitment (sustainability):**  
mainstreaming Regionalism and the Pacific Plan at the national level and Pacific Plan Action Committee
- **Mechanisms for ongoing development (sustainability):**  
PPAC, M&E and Review Frameworks, Workshops, seminars, working groups and national consultations.

THANK YOU