



FFA

Media Coverage

**Visit by the Prime Minister of the
Cook Islands Hon Jim Marurai MP
to the Pacific Islands Forum
Fisheries Agency (FFA) Secretariat,
Honiara 05th–08th February 2008
Report 08/08
S Alfred Sasako**

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MEDIA COVERAGE

VISIT BY

**THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE COOK
ISLANDS**

HON JIM MARURAI MP

**TO THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM FISHERIES
AGENCY [FFA] SECRETARIAT, HONIARA**

05TH – 8TH FEBRUARY 2008

**Media Report on the visit by the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands
To the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA]**

Introduction

I was approached late last week on the possibility of providing media coverage on the visit of Cook Islands Prime Minister and his Delegation to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA] Secretariat, Honiara Solomon Islands.

The visit, on the invitation of the Director General of FFA, would take place from 05th February – 8th February 2008. The Delegation, which consisted of the Prime Minister, the Director, Pacific Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration and the Secretary, Ministry of Marine Resources, arrived in Honiara on Tuesday 5th February 2008.

A Term of Reference for the consultancy was provided. A copy is attached.

Under the Scope of the consultancy and Expected Outputs, the Consultant is required to:

- Work closely with and report to the Manager, Administration;
- Prepare and distribute press releases to the local media and overseas media, as well as all the FFA members; and
- Take photographs and attach to press releases as appropriate.

A Memorandum of Agreement between the FFA and the Consultant was signed on Monday 4th February 2008.

This report is intended to provide FFA with the outputs from the Consultancy's work over the last five days.

The Consultant and the Manager, Administration met on Sunday 3rd February to discuss the general scope of the consultancy. Views on media requirements for the visit as well as the visit in general were also exchanged.

Press Statements [Releases]

Media Statements went out on a daily basis from Monday 4th February 2008. In all, a total of seven [7] Press Statements covering various aspects of the visit, including bilateral talks with the Government of Solomon Islands, went out to the local as well as media outlets in the Cook Islands and throughout the Pacific region via PACNEWS. These Statements were posted on the FFA website on a daily basis.

The Press Statements were based on speeches and remarks made by the Hon Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, his Solomon Islands counterpart and the Director General at various functions in the course of the Prime Minister's tour of the FFA Secretariat.

Copies of the Speeches as well as the Press Statements appear as appendices to this Report. Photographs, taken by the consultant and others by local media representatives were also distributed to local and regional news outlets. A sample of the photographs appears in and forms part of this Report.

PRESS STATEMENTS



Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA], PO Box 629 HONIARA Telephone: [677 21124] Email: info@ffa.int

PRESS STATEMENT

PRIME MINISTER JIM MARURAI ENDS HIS TOUR OF FFA HEADQUARTERS, SATISFIED WITH BILATERAL TALKS

Prime Minister Jim Marurai of the Cook Islands has ended his three-day familiarization tour of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA] Secretariat, saying the outcome of his three-day visit has been very worthwhile.

The Prime Minister and his delegation left Honiara early this morning on their way home.

Prime Minister Marurai has become the first Forum Leader to visit the premier regional fisheries organization under an initiative designed to provide greater awareness at the highest political level about the work of the organization.

At a function which he hosted in Honiara last night, Prime Minister Marurai said he was also pleased with the outcome of his talks with his Solomon Islands counterpart, Prime Minister Derek Sikua and Foreign Minister, William Haomae on a number of important regional issues, including the FFA, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands [RAMSI] and the University of the South Pacific [USP].

"During our meeting, including that which I had with your Honorable Foreign Minister, it became very apparent that your Government is truly committed to fulfilling its obligations and responsibilities as hosts for our premier regional fisheries organization, the Forum Fisheries Agency," he told guests who included Prime Minister Sikua.

"Hon Prime Minister, many thanks for your positive approach to alleviating the urgent challenges that FFA currently faces and again may I take this opportunity to wish you, your Honorable Ministers and the people of the Solomon Islands all the very best".

In response, Prime Minister Derek Sikua described the visit by the Cook Islands to the FFA headquarters as "historic".

"It is also very timely given the increasing importance let alone the international politics surrounding fisheries issues in particular the concerns surrounding our region's tuna stocks.

"Your visit has undoubtedly contributed to the required political will and attention that we as leaders need to take in addressing our region's fisheries, especially following the Vavau Declaration on Fisheries adopted at the last Forum Leaders Meeting in Tonga," Dr. Sikua said.

He said it was his hope that other Forum Leaders would take up the initiative to visit the FFA.

Prime Minister Sikua also assured the Cook Islands Prime Minister that "Solomon Islands will do its best to fulfill its host country obligations and [to] ensure that the FFA operates in a conducive environment".

Dr. Sikua assured the visiting Prime Minister that the Solomon Islands government is firmly committed to addressing outstanding issues the host country needs to deal with quickly.

He also thanked the Cook Islands Government for supporting regional initiatives such as the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands [RAMSI].

"My Government will work closely with the region through the Forum processes to ensure that RAMSI remains a genuine partnership that is in tune with the needs and priorities of the Government and people of Solomon Islands," Dr. Sikua said.

Prime Minister Marurai also paid tribute to the FFA Director General, Mr. Dan Su'a for the initiative to invite him.

"I must admit that I feel very honored to be the first Leader of an FFA member country to take up this new and worthwhile initiative.

"There is no question in my mind that this visit, albeit very brief, has been extremely beneficial for me. Beneficial in terms of opening my eyes up to the one natural renewable resource that we all share and the important work that the FFA undertakes on behalf of its 17 members to ensure that this resource remains healthy for future generations to come," Prime Minister Marurai said.

He also thanked the technical staff of the FFA for providing member countries with what he described as "the best technical policy advice".

"The information and knowledge you possess is invaluable to our collective efforts to ensure the long term sustainability of our precious tuna resources," the Prime Minister said after two days of presentations by the staff," he said.

Prime Minister Marurai also acknowledged the work of RAMSI, saying the Cook Islands recognized the important contribution it has made in restoring peace, security and stability in Solomon Islands.

"As Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, I wish to take this opportunity to re-affirm my country's continued firm commitment towards this regional initiative," Prime Minister Marurai said.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Marurai traveled with RAMSI officials to Tulagi on Gela where a Cook Islands Sergeant serving with RAMSI was based.

Friday 8 February 2008



Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA], PO Box 629 HONIARA Telephone: [677 21 124] Email: Info@FFA.int

PRESS STATEMENT

FFA DIRECTOR GENERAL PAYS TRIBUTE TO COOK ISLANDS PRIME MINISTER'S SUPPORT FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY [FFA]

By Alfred Sasako

FFA HEADQUARTERS, HONIARA – 7 February 2008 - The visit by Prime Minister Jim Marurai of the Cook Islands to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA] this week has been described as exemplifying the true spirit of regionalism and the support for FFA at the highest level of national and regional governance.

FFA Director General Dan Su'a made the comment at a dinner he hosted in Honiara last night in honor of the visiting Pacific Forum Leader, the first to make such visit.

"Hon Prime Minister, your visit to the Secretariat is a milestone in the history of FFA. It exemplifies the true spirit of regionalism and the support for FFA at the highest level of national and regional governance," he told guests who included the Governor General Sir Nathaniel Waena and Lady Waena as well as members of the diplomatic corps.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Rural Development, Fred Fono also attended.

"It [the visit] demonstrates confidence of our members in the work of the Secretariat to enable our people to enjoy the highest levels of social and economic benefits through the sustainable development of our fisheries resources," Director General Su'a said.

He said the FFA is blessed with Prime Minister Marurai's visit.

"I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Hon Prime Minister for accepting my invitation to visit the FFA. ... I look forward to further dialogues with your good self and your government on issues pertinent to the long term sustainability of our region's most precious tuna fisheries," he said.

"May I also take this opportunity to thank the Government and people of the Cook Islands for the financial contributions they have made over the years that allow the Secretariat to discharge of its mandate successfully.

"Cook Islanders have been employed by the FFA over the years and this has been an invaluable contribution by your country," the Director General said.

It was during the Leaders' Forum meeting in Tonga last year that the Director General met with Prime Minister Marurai. There, pertinent fisheries issues which required the region's attention were discussed and an invitation to visit the Secretariat was extended.

He told last night's gathering that the three most important issues he raised with Prime Minister Marurai were:

- Fisheries awareness at the highest level of government;
- Political support for fisheries both at the national and regional levels; and
- Effective participation by representatives of FFA members at regional and international forums.

"These issues, if properly addressed, provide an integral mechanism that enhances the region's capability in addressing issues and challenges resulting from the dynamics of national, regional and global fisheries management and development".

The Director General said the Pacific is host to the last healthy fisheries stocks in the world, namely tuna, warning that over-fishing now threatens two of the four main tuna species if the current level of fishing activity is allowed to continue.

Because tuna resources are highly migratory, their long term sustainability is purely vested in the wills of the international community and the determination of all stakeholders to develop robust conservation and management measures that are supported by viable monitoring, control and surveillance [MCS] regime, he said.

Tuna, he said, is a USD3 billion global industry. Half the total catch is harvested from the Pacific. Eighty per cent [80%] of this is harvested from the waters of FFA members.

"It is therefore not surprising that the Hon Prime Minister and the Government of the Cook Islands is taking a keen interest to ensure the health of tuna stocks in our region. Cook Islands has one of the largest exclusive economic zones in our region that is host to some of the very rich fishing grounds for albacore tuna, bigeye tuna, yellowfin tuna and the most sought after, highly valuable swordfish," Director General Su'a said.

He said the challenges of fisheries in our region have never been pressing with the balancing act of trying to address national priorities against regional ones under severe scrutiny.

"The dynamics of fisheries at the national, regional and global levels is immense and is asking a lot of questions on our ability to manage and protect our fisheries," he said.

"In times like this, we panic. However, history tells us that FFA members have been very successful in addressing fisheries issues and challenges in this region simply by embracing the fundamental principle of regional solidarity," he said.

The Director General said Prime Minister Marurai's visit to the FFA Secretariat exemplified this.

The FFA Director General also thanked the Government of Solomon Islands as host of FFA for responding positively to the needs of FFA during what he described as "some trying times" here in Honiara.

"The mere fact that SIG has open dialogues with FFA to address issues such as security is sufficient to raise the level of confidence in the SIG both by the Secretariat and the other 16 FFA members," he said.



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PRESS STATEMENT

PRIME MINISTER JIM MARURAI ASSURES SOLOMON ISLANDS OF HIS COUNTRY'S SUPPORT FOR RAMSI AND ITS WORK IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

Visiting Cook Islands Prime Minister Jim Marurai has assured Solomon Islands that his country will continue to contribute to the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands [RAMSI] for as long as the people of Solomon Islands need it.

It is understood the assurance was given during bilateral talks with Prime Minister Dr. Derek Sikua in Honiara on Tuesday in which a wide range of issues were discussed.

RAMSI was one of the issues both Leaders discussed during the talks.

In a statement today, Prime Minister Marurai said he and his counterpart, Dr Sikua discussed a number of issues of common interest such as RAMSI as well as the need to enhance the work of the Honiara-based Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA].

Prime Minister Marurai is in Honiara at the invitation of the Director General of FFA, Mr. Dan Su'a. He is the first Forum Member Prime Minister to visit the FFA under an initiative designed to help Forum Leaders familiarize themselves with the important work of the region's premier fisheries organisation and to recognize the importance of protecting the tuna stocks in the region.

"The Cook Islands will continue to support the work of RAMSI for as long as it is required by the people of Solomon Islands," he said.

A Cook Islands police sergeant is currently serving with RAMSI in Solomon Islands.

In response, Prime Minister Sikua thanked his counterpart and the people of Cook Islands for their support, saying RAMSI's presence has and continues to have a positive impact in communities throughout the country.

In fisheries, the two men discussed the need to enhance the work of FFA, especially at a time when over-fishing by Distant Waters Fishing Nations has threatened the region's highly migratory fish stocks.

Dr. Sikua assured Prime Minister Marurai that as host of FFA, Solomon Islands will do all in its powers to support the organization and the important work it is doing in managing tuna stocks, the only renewable resource shared by all Pacific island countries.

Prime Minister Sikua reaffirmed his Government's support for the position taken by the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' summit held in Tonga last year relating to RAMSI's work in Solomon Islands.

Prime Minister Sikua also expressed an interest in learning about the tourism industry in the Cook Islands, which is largely locally owned and driven.

Both Leaders also touched on a number of other regional issues, including the University of the South Pacific [USP].

At the end of the talks, Dr Sikua issued a formal invitation to his counterpart to return on 7 July this year when Solomon Islands celebrates its 30th independence anniversary.

Wednesday 6 February 2008



Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA], PO Box 629 HONIARA Telephone: [677 21124] Email: info@ffa.int

PRESS STATEMENT

By Alfred Sasako

FORUM FISHERIES AGENCY [FFA] HEADQUARTERS, HONIARA – 6 Feb 2008 – Solomon Islands-based Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA] is today hosting the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Hon Jim Marurai, who is on three-day familiarization tour of the region's premier fisheries organization.

Prime Minister Marurai began his first formal engagement at a lunch with FFA staff, hosted by the Director General Mr. Dan Su'a this afternoon with. He later watched presentations by staff on the work of the organization, which was established in 1979 in an effort to help member countries maximize benefits from their tuna stocks and other fisheries as well as to manage the resources.

FFA, the region's premier fisheries organization, is the first regional organization to host a FFA Member country Prime Minister under an initiative designed to encourage Leaders of Pacific Islands member governments to see for themselves what the organization does.

Hon Marurai and his delegation arrived in Honiara from Brisbane yesterday. He was met at Honiara's Henderson Airport by Solomon Islands Foreign Minister, William Haomae, Director General of FFA, Mr. Dan Su'a and senior government officials.

In a round of courtesy calls this morning, Prime Minister Marurai called on the Governor General, Sir Nathaniel Waena, Prime Minister Dr Derek Sikua and Foreign Minister William Haomae.

Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Dr Derek Sikua last night hosted a dinner in honor of Mr. Marurai and his delegation which comprised the Director, Pacific Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Carl Hunter and the Secretary, Ministry of Marine Resources, Ian Bertram.

The Cook Islands Prime Minister told guests, mainly Government Ministers and representatives of the diplomatic corps that his visit was at the invitation of the Director General.

"I believe that this invitation is a new and exciting initiative from Mr. Su'a that basically seeks to invite the Leaders of the FFA member countries to visit the region's premier fisheries agency.

"An opportunity whereby we leaders can see for ourselves and experience firsthand the infrastructure and valuable work undertaken by the region's most important fisheries organization," Prime Minister Marurai said.

He said apart from gaining greater insights of and appreciation for what the FFA does, he hoped the visit would highlight the great importance that the Cook Islands and all the Pacific Island countries and territories attached to the very survival of the tuna species of the western and central Pacific.

Prime Minister Marurai warned that as a result of continued over-fishing.. "there is every chance that this shared renewable resource that we Pacific Islanders have taken for granted over thousands of years may in fact be seriously threatened in the next few years".

"As most of you present this evening will be aware, in recent years our region has witnessed unprecedented levels of increasing fishing activity undertaken by Distant Water Fishing Nations.

"At this point in time, we believe that such over-fishing is now threatening the very existence of both the big-eye and yellow-fin tuna species," he said.

He called for "fresh approaches so that we can establish conservation and management measures that really do prevent our tuna species from being threatened".

This, he said, would allow us Pacific Islanders rather than Distant Waters Fishing Nations, as currently appear to be the case, to determine the future destiny of the tuna stocks in our region.

Earlier, Prime Minister Derek Sikua acknowledged that Prime Minister Marurai was the first Forum Leader to visit the Solomon Islands this year.

"Hon Prime Minister, your visit to the FFA headquarters is significant as it reflects the importance our region has for this very important institution," Dr. Sikua said.

He said fish and other marine stocks are the sovereign resource of Pacific nations and they are the only ones who could decide their future.

"It is an important, shared renewable resource that must be conserved and managed from depletion," the Solomon Islands Prime Minister said.

Dr. Sikua also acknowledged the Cook Islands contribution to the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands [RAMSI].

"Since the inception of RAMSI to Solomon Islands, your officers have served with great dignity and pride and I salute them for this. Please convey our gratitude to the government and people of Cook Islands for your valuable assistance and contribution," he said.

Prime Minister Sikua said he looked forward to working closely with the Cook Islands on issues of concern to the region. As we both know, we are working in a new era within our region and I suppose we will continue to benefit from opportunities available so as facing new challenges. But I am confident we can overcome these challenges with our concerted efforts of regional cooperation," he said.



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PRESS STATEMENT

HON PRIME MINISTER JIM MARURAI OF COOK ISLANDS ARRIVES IN HONIARA ON A THREE-DAY FAMILIARISATION TOUR OF THE PACIFIC'S PREMIER REGIONAL FISHERIES ORGANIZATION

The Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Jim Marurai, arrived in Solomon Islands today on a visit intended to familiarize himself with the work of the Honiara-based Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA].

He was met by Solomon Islands Foreign Minister, Hon William Haomae MP, the Director General of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA], Mr. Dan Su'a, senior government officials as well as FFA's senior officials.

Prime Minister Marurai's visit follows an invitation extended by the Director General.

In accepting the invitation, Mr. Marurai becomes the first Prime Minister to visit the regional organization, underlining renewed interest at the highest political level to find ways to protect tuna stocks in the region.

Prime Minister Marurai was quoted as saying his trip was to visit the Pacific's premier fisheries organization to enable him to see for himself firsthand the infrastructure and the work of the organization which he described as the region's "most important".

"The visit also aims to highlight to both FFA members and Distant Water Fishing Nations the importance that the Cook Islands attaches to the future of the tuna stocks of the Pacific," Prime Minister Marurai said.

He said his country always had a vested interest in the future of the region's tuna stocks and believed that his visit would be "immensely beneficial".

"Not just for highlighting what we recognize as the one natural resource that we in the Pacific all share and value greatly, but also to heighten the role that we, as custodians, play.

"This is in terms of protecting the future of our tuna stocks through effective conservation and managements," he said.

In Honiara this evening, Prime Minister Marurai and his delegation will attend a dinner hosted in his honor by his Solomon Islands counterpart, Dr. Derek Sikua.

Tomorrow morning, Prime Minister Marurai will pay courtesy calls on Prime Minister Dr. Sikua as well as Foreign Minister, William Haomae before his formal program at the FFA headquarters begins.

He will be met at the FFA headquarters by Director General Mr. Su'a before he has an opportunity to watch presentations by FFA staff on the work of the organization.

On Thursday, he is expected to meet with the acting Special Coordinator of RAMSI, Dr. Jonathan Austin before he travels to Tulagi where a Cook Islands policeman, Sgf Rima Manavaikai, serving with RAMSI, is based.

The Cook Islands Prime Minister is being accompanied on the three-day visit by Mr. Carl Hunter, Director, Pacific Division of Cook Islands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration and Mr. Ian Bertram, Secretary of the Ministry of Marine Resources.

Tuesday 5 February 2008

For further information, please call Alfred Sasako on 21124 Ext 234 or on 72 509 [mobile]

05 February 2008



PRESS STATEMENT

HON PRIME MINISTER JIM MARURAI OF COOK ISLANDS ARRIVES IN HONIARA FOR A THREE-DAY VISIT

The Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Jim Marurai, is due to arrive in Honiara tomorrow afternoon, being the first Head of a Member Government to visit the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency [FFA] headquarters here.

The visit follows an invitation by the FFA Director General, Mr. Dan Su'a.

In accepting the invitation, Mr. Marurai becomes the first Prime Minister to visit the regional organization, indicating interest at the highest level of government in helping to look at ways of protecting tuna stocks in the region.

Prior to his departure from the Cook Islands yesterday, Prime Minister Marurai was reported to have said that his trip was to visit the Pacific's premier fisheries organization to enable him to see for himself firsthand the infrastructure and the work of the organization which he described as the region's "most important".

"The visit also aims to highlight to both FFA members and Distant Water Fishing Nations the importance that the Cook Islands attaches to the future of the tuna stocks of the Pacific," Prime Minister Marurai said.

He said his country always had a vested interest in the future of the region's tuna stocks and believed that his visit would be "immensely beneficial".

"Not just for highlighting what we recognize as the one natural resource that we in the Pacific all share and value greatly, but also to heighten the role that we, as custodians, play.

"This is in terms of protecting the future of our tuna stocks through effective conservation and managements," he said.

In Honiara, Prime Minister Marurai will pay a courtesy call on his counterpart, Prime Minister Dr. Derek Sikua as well as Foreign Minister, William Haomae on Wednesday morning before his formal program at the FFA headquarters begins.

At the FFA headquarters, Prime Minister Marurai will be met by Director General, Mr. Dan Su'a. He will later watch presentations by FFA staff on the work of the organization.

On Thursday, he is expected to meet with the acting Special Coordinator of RAMSI, Dr. Jonathan Austin before he travels to Tulagi where a Cook Islands policeman, Sgt Rima Manavaikai, serving with RAMSI, is based.

The Cook Islands Prime Minister is being accompanied on the three-day visit by Mr. Carl Hunter, Director, Pacific Division of Cook Islands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration and Mr. Ian Bertram, Secretary of the Ministry of Marine Resources.

04 February 2008

For further information, please call Alfred Sasako on 21124 Ext 234 or on 72 509 [mobile]

SPEECHES



STATEMENT BY HON PRIME MINISTER DR DEREK SIKUA DURING
THE DINNER IN HONOR OF COOK ISLANDS PRIME MINISTER,
HON. JIM MARURAI, 5TH FEBRUARY 2008, HONIARA HOTEL

Jim Hon. Jim Marurai, Prime Minister of Cook Islands & your distinguished delegation
Colleague Cabinet Ministers
Your Excellencies
Acting Attorney General
FFA Director General, Dan Su'a and your Colleagues,
Permanent Secretaries
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Kia Orana!

Let me begin by welcoming you Honorable Prime Minister and your delegation to Solomon Islands. *Big welcome to you and your delegation* I am very honored for you and your delegation *and we of the* to accept my humble invitation to share with us this evening. Welcome once *again* again to Solomon Islands!

As you know Honourable Prime Minister, the occasion tonight is a gesture of my Government's gratitude for your visit to Solomon Islands. In fact, you are the first Pacific PM to visit our shores this year and also I suppose a historic visit by a regional head of government to the FFA headquarters.

Hon. Prime Minister, your visit to the FFA headquarters is significant as it reflects the importance our region has for this very important institution. We know that during the past few years, the issue of amalgamation of Regional Institutions was a focus of attention and so much so that FFA institution is also under spotlight. I must say that Solomon Islands, along with other members of the region – including Cook Islands have been defending the amalgamation of FFA into a single body – for the very reason that FFA is about sovereign Pacific nations deciding over our sovereign resource, the Fish

and marine stocks. It is an important resource that must be conserved and managed from depletion. Now that FFA is a separate entity under the pillar one of the Pacific Plan requires us Leaders and relevant institutions to work together to ensure we continue to benefit from this very important institution. Hon. Prime Minister, I do not wish to dwell on this Fisheries issue as there are experts in this area but the fact that our region is guided by vast ocean, we became fisheries expert ourselves.

Hon. Prime Minister, it is also a fitting opportunity for me to register my government's appreciation for Cook Islands assistance through the provision of your Police officers in RAMSI. Since the inception of RAMSI to Solomon Islands, your officers have served with great dignity and pride and I salute them for this. Please convey our gratitude to the government and people of Cooks Islands for your valuable assistance and contribution.

On the regional level, Solomon Islands and Cook Islands are active members of the Forum and other regional bodies. On that note, I am looking forward to work closely with you Honorable Prime Minister on issues that are of concern to our region. As we both know, we are working in a new era within our region and I suppose we will continue to benefit from opportunities available so as facing new challenges. But I am confident we can overcome these challenges with our concerted efforts of regional cooperation.

Finally Hon. Prime Minister, I hope you will enjoy your short visit and stay in Honiara. May I wish you and your delegation a pleasant and safe journey back to Rarotonga.



Thank you.

Address by the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Hon. Jim Marurai
Welcome Reception by Hon. Dr Derek Sikua, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands

The Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, the Hon. Dr Derek Sikua,
Honorable Ministers
Mr Dan Sua, Director General of the Forum Fisheries Agency
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kia Orana,

On behalf of my delegation here this evening and as Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, may I first of all take this opportunity to express my deep felt appreciation to the Government and people of the Solomon Islands, in particular my colleague, good friend and Prime Minister, Hon. Dr Derek Sikua, for hosting this splendid reception tonight and the excellent hospitality accorded to both myself and delegation since our arrival into your beautiful country this afternoon.

Being the first time to visit the Solomon Islands, I must confess that the beauty of this country is breathtaking and I do hope to get the opportunity to see more of this remarkable country in the brief three days that my delegation and I are here.

At the outset, I wish to extend my outmost congratulations to the Honorable Dr Derek Sikua for his election as Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands and the formation of his Government. I wish you and your Honorable Ministers all the very best in your endeavors to govern your country, particularly at this time of mounting global economic, environmental, cultural, political and social challenges.

As most of you gathered here would know, the primary aim of my travel here to the Solomon Islands is to visit the Headquarters of the Forum Fisheries Agency at the invitation of its Director General, Mr Dan Sua. I believe that this invitation is a new and exciting initiative from Mr Sua that basically seeks to invite the Leaders of FFA member countries to visit the region's premier fisheries agency. So Mr Sua, thank you ma'ata for this opportunity.

An opportunity whereby we Leaders can see for ourselves and experience first hand the infrastructure and valuable work undertaken by the region's most important fisheries organization.

As custodians of our Pacific ocean, I firmly believe it is critical that we both recognize and play our part to ensure the long-term conservation and management of the region's tuna stocks. We have a moral obligation and duty to ensure that these stocks are not over-fished but harvested at sustainable levels, as clearly articulated in both the 2007 Leaders' Communique and the Fisheries Declaration.

And if we can fulfill this obligation, then I believe we Pacific Leaders can stand tall and proudly claim that unlike the other tuna management regimes around the globe we have not allowed our tuna species to become depleted to the point that the stock levels are unable to recover. Rather, we have adopted the necessary conservation and management measures to stamp out over-fishing. If this can be accomplished, it will almost guarantee that we have paved the way to allow future generations of Pacific islanders to harvest the four tuna species we enjoy today, just as we and our forefathers have done.

Before concluding, I am aware that a portion of my programme in the Solomon Islands will be devoted to meeting with the RAMSI executive, including the Cook Islands national who is currently serving with RAMSI. Like all Forum member countries the Cook Islands has recognized the important contribution that RAMSI has played in the restoration of peace, security and stability to the Solomon Islands. As Prime Minister of the Cook Islands I wish to take this opportunity to re-affirm my country's continued firm commitment towards this regional initiative.

To conclude, I am very excited about my visit here and truly believe that our long term dreams and aspirations of harvesting our tuna resources at both sustainable and optimum levels can be achieved if we strive to work closer together in adopting robust measures for the effective conservation and management of the region's fish stocks.

Again, on behalf of my delegation I would like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister Dr Derek Sikua and his Government for hosting tonight's function and thank you all for your time and patience in allowing me to share my thoughts on what I perceive as one of the region's greatest challenges of which I am very passionate about.

Meitaki ma'ata

Your Excellency Sir Nathaniel Waena, GG and your good lady
Hon Jim Marurai, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands and your delegation
Hon Fred Fono, Deputy PM of Solomon Islands and Mrs Fono
Hon Ministers of SIG
Heads of diplomatic Missions; distinguished FFA members
Senior SIG Officials
FFA Colleagues
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

From the outset, let me thank you all for accepting my invitation to attend this dinner tonite in honor of the visit by the Cook Island Hon PM to FFA headquarters.

It is indeed an honor for me and the FFA Secretariat to receive and host the Honorable Jim Marurai, the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands.

Last year at the Leaders Forum meeting in Tonga, I met with Hon Marurai and took the opportunity to discuss pertinent fisheries issues that require the region's attention. The three most important issues I raised with him are; Fisheries awareness at the highest level of government, political support for fisheries both at the national and regional levels, and effective participation by representatives of FFA members at regional and international forums. These issues, if properly addressed, provides an integral mechanism that enhances the regions capability in addressing issues and challenges resulting from the dynamics of national, regional and global fisheries management and development.

Our region is host to the last healthy fisheries stocks in the world, namely tuna. However, science has been consistently reminding us that two of the four main tuna species are threatened with overfishing if the current level of fishing effort is allowed to continue.

Tuna resources are highly migratory, foraging from region to region, and migrating from country to country. Thus their longterm sustainability is purely vested in the wills of the international community and the determination of all stakeholders to develop robust conservation and management measures that are supported by a viable monitoring, control and surveillance(MCS) regime. Globally, this is a 3 billion dollar industry where, 50% of the total global catch is harvested from our region. 80% of which is harvested from the waters of FFA members. It is therefore not surprising that the Hon PM and the Government of the Cook Islands is taking a keen interest to ensure the health of tuna stocks in our region. Cook Islands has one of the largest exclusive economic zones in our region, that is host to some of the very rich fishing grounds for albacore tuna, bigeye tuna, yellowfin tuna and the most sought after, highly valuable swordfish.

We are now witnessing pressing challenges of fisheries in our region like never before. The balancing act of trying to address national priorities against regional initiatives has never been under severe scrutiny as it is now. The dynamics of fisheries at the national, regional and global levels is immense and is asking a lot of questions on our ability to manage and protect our fisheries. In times like this, we panic. However, history tells us that FFA members have been very successful in addressing fisheries

issues and challenges in this region simply by embracing the fundamental principle of regional solidarity.

Hon Prime Minister, your visit to the Secretariat is a milestone in the history of FFA. It exemplifies the true spirit of regionalism and the support for FFA at the highest level of national and regional governance. It demonstrates confidence of our members in the work of the Secretariat to enable our people to enjoy the highest levels of social and economic benefits through the sustainable development of our fisheries resources.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Hon PM, for accepting my invitation to visit the FFA. FFA is blessed by your visit and I look forward to further dialogues with your good self and your government on issues pertinent to the longterm sustainability of our regions most precious tuna fisheries. May I also take this opportunity to thank the Government and the people of the Cook Islands for the financial contributions they have made over the years that allow the Secretariat to discharge of its mandate successfully. Cook Islanders have been employed by the FFA over the years and this has been an invaluable contribution by your country.

Hon PM, I hope the experience you gain from your visit to the FFA will assist the Cook Island Government in developing viable strategic directions that promote sustainable fisheries management and ensures maximum social and economic benefits to the people of the Cook Islands. As Director General of FFA, may I reiterate my endeavours to ensure that FFA serves its 17 members, including the Cook Islands, with due diligence.

I wish you and the people of the Cook Islands prosperity and happiness.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Solomon Islands, as the host to FFA, for responding positively to the needs of FFA during some trying times here in Honiara. The mere fact that SIG has open dialogues with FFA to address issues such as security is sufficient to raise the level of confidence in the SIG both by the Secretariat and the other 16 FFA members.

Through DPM, please relay to the Hon PM and the Government of the SI my sincere gratitude and appreciation for the good understanding shared between us and the concern shown by your government towards some of the challenges the Organization is now facing.

I look forward to our continue dialogues on issues pertinent to the obligations of the Solomon Island Government as host to this important regional organization.

Thank you

Propose toast to the health and prosperity of PM and people of Cook Islands.

**Address by the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Hon.
Jim Marurai**

Dinner hosted by Hon. Jim Marurai

**The Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, the Hon. Dr
Derek Sikua,**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Relations, Hon.
William Haomae,**

**Mr Dan Sua, Director General of the Forum Fisheries
Agency**

Distinguished guests

Senior Staff of the FFA

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kia Orana,

**Just a few words, on behalf of my delegation and as Prime
Minister of the Cook Islands, to personally express my
sincere appreciation to you all gathered here this evening for
the wonderful and sincere hospitality that my delegation and
I have experienced since our arrival to the Solomon Islands
earlier in the week.**

**To the Government and people of the Solomon Islands,
particularly my dear friend and Prime Minister, Hon. Dr
Derek Sikua, thank you so much for taking the time to both**

host my delegation and I to a wonderful reception on Tuesday night.

Thank you also for allowing time in your busy schedule to meet with me yesterday. During our meeting, including that which I had with your Honorable Foreign Minister, it became very apparent that your Government is truly committed to fulfilling its obligations and responsibilities as hosts for our premier regional fisheries organisation, the Forum Fisheries Agency.

Honorable Prime Minister, many thanks for your positive approach to alleviating the urgent challenges that FFA currently faces and again may I take this opportunity to wish you, your Honorable Ministers and the people of the Solomon Islands all the very best.

To the FFA Director General, Mr Dan Sua, again many thanks for taking the initiative to invite me to travel here to the Solomon Islands for the purpose of visiting the Headquarters of the Forum Fisheries Agency. I must admit that I feel very honored to be the first Leader of an FFA member country to take up this new and worthwhile initiative.

There is no question that this visit, albeit very brief, has been extremely beneficial for me. Beneficial in terms of opening my eyes up to the one natural renewable resource that we all

share and the important work that the FFA undertakes on behalf of its seventeen members to ensure that this resource remains healthy for future generations to come.

At this point, may I also take this opportunity to express my appreciation to your crew at the FFA, some of who are present tonight, for the critical work that they undertake, providing the best technical policy advice to all our FFA members. Thank you all for the informative presentations during my two-day tour of FFA. The information and knowledge you possess is invaluable to our collective efforts to ensure the long term sustainability of our precious tuna resources.

Before concluding, this afternoon I had the opportunity to meet with the RAMSI executive and travel out to one of the islands where RAMSI has undertaken work. Like all Forum member countries the Cook Islands recognizes the important contribution that RAMSI has played in the restoration of peace, security and stability to the Solomon Islands.

As Prime Minister of the Cook Islands I wish to take this opportunity to re-affirm my country's continued firm commitment towards this regional initiative.

Again, on behalf of my delegation I would like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister Dr Derek Sikua, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Honorable William Haomae asnd Mr Dan

Sua for accepting my invitation to attend this evening's dinner.

And thank you also for your time and patience in allowing me to share my thoughts on what I perceive as one of the region's greatest challenges, of which I have now become a lot more passionate about.

Meitaki ma'ata



**BRIEF THANK YOU SPEECH BY HON. PRIME MINISTER ON THE
OCCASION OF THE DINNER HOSTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF
COOK ISLANDS, JINA'S RESTAURANT, 7 FEBRUARY 2008**

The Honourable Jim Marurai, Prime Minister of Cook Islands, and
distinguished members of your Delegation;
Hon William Haomae, Minister of Foreign Affairs & External Trade
Director General of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and other
staffs of the Agency;
Senior Government Officials
Sgt Rima Manavaikai Cook Islands/ RAMSI Police Personnel
Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, I wish to sincerely thank our host for tonight's dinner, my
Colleague, Jim Marurai, the Prime Minister of Cook Islands, for inviting
all of us to join him for this lovely dinner.

Honourable Prime Minister, I wish once again to thank you for the
initiative that you and your distinguished delegation have taken to visit
the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency here in Honiara, Solomon
Islands. I am also grateful that during your visit you were able to call on
or meet with a number of Government dignitaries including the Governor
General and myself.

Colleague Prime Minister, as I have said a few nights ago, when I hosted you for dinner, your visit to the FFA headquarters is a historic one. It is also very timely given the increasing importance let alone the international politics surrounding fisheries issues in particular the concerns surrounding our region's tuna stocks. Your visit has undoubtedly contributed to the required political will and attention that we as leaders need to take in addressing our regions fisheries, especially following the Vavau Declaration on Fisheries adopted at the last Forum Leaders Meeting in Tonga. I hope that our other colleagues will undertake similar initiatives in the future to visit the FFA, our region's premier fisheries organization.

Colleague, Solomon Islands will do its best to fulfill its host country obligations and ensure that the FFA operates in a conducive environment. As we discussed there are a number of outstanding issues that the host country needs to quickly deal with. My Government is firmly committed to addressing these issues. We also value the recent establishment of a colloquim between the FFA and SIG, as an avenue to discuss and dialogue on matters of mutual interest between the host country and the FFA.

Furthermore, Colleague Prime Minister, my Government strongly values its relations with its Pacific neighbours including the Cook Islands. We are grateful for your country's and the region's assistance and contribution through RAMSI. My Government will work closely with the region through the Forum processes to ensure that RAMSI remains a genuine partnership that is in tune with the needs and priorities of the Government and people of Solomon Islands.

Finally, Colleague Prime Minister, I hope that you have enjoyed your brief visit to Honiara, Solomon Islands, in particular to the Pacific Islands

Forum Fisheries Agency headquarters. I trust that your visit has given not only a high profile to the excellent work that the FFA has done and continues to do but also serves as a reminder to us leaders to work collectively to protect our only common resource in the region - fish. With these few remarks I wish you bon voyage to the beautiful Cooks.

Thank you.

(Jim, I could have taken you home for another bottle of wine but I do not want you to miss your early morning flight and then you subsequently miss your Parliament meeting on Monday, which could be politically risky)!

Schedule A

TERMS OF REFERENCE

MEDIA OFFICER

Overview

The consultant is required to provide media coverage for FFA for the visit of the Prime Minister of Cook Islands, the Honourable Jim Marurai to FFA, Honiara, Solomon Islands. The Prime Minister's visit is scheduled for 5-8 February 2008 and his visit is on the invitation of the Director-General of FFA.

Scope of consultancy and Expected Outputs

The Consultant will work closely with and report to the Manager Administration. The Consultant will be required to follow the official activities of the Prime Minister.

The Consultant is expected to prepare and distribute press releases to the local media and overseas media, as well as all the FFA members. The Consultant is also required to take photos and attach to the press releases as appropriate.

All photos taken will become the property of the Agency.

Time Schedule

- This consultancy is expected to take five days. An estimate of three days will be spent following the Prime Minister's activities, one day for preparations before the visit, and one day to prepare the report.
- A brief report should be provided to FFA on completion of the consultancy outlining the work that the Consultant did, and attach all the press releases that have been released.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMMES

**VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF COOK ISLANDS, THE HONOURABLE JIM
MARURAI TO THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, 5-8 FEBRUARY 2008**

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME (draft V.8 as at 4 Feb)

Tuesday, 5 February

04:00pm ETA Honiara, flight IE713

07:00pm Function hosted by the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands,
the Hon. Dr Derek Sikua

Wednesday, 6 February

09:30am Courtesy call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs of SI, the Hon. William Haomae

10:00am Courtesy call on the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, the Hon. Dr Derek Sikua

10:40am Courtesy call on the Director-General of FFA, Mr Dan Su'a,
followed by FFA programme

12:00pm Lunch with all FFA staff at the FFA Regional Conference Centre

01:15pm Retire to the hotel for a break

02:30pm FFA Programme continues

04:45pm Retire to the hotel to prepare for the evening function

06:30pm Dinner hosted by the FFA Director-General, Mr Dan Su'a

Thursday, 7 February

09:00am FFA Programme continues

11:00am Retire to the hotel to prepare for RAMSI programme

12:00pm Lunch hosted by the Acting Special Coordinator of the RAMSI,
Dr Jonathan Austin followed by trip to Tulaghi

06:00pm Retire to hotel to prepare for dinner

07:00pm Dinner hosted by the Prime Minister of Cook Islands, the Hon. Jim Marurai

Friday, 8 February

02:30am Departure - ETD 0420, flight IE708

COOK ISLANDS ELEGATION LIST

The Honourable Jim Marurai, Prime Minister of Cook Islands

Mr Carl Hunter, Director, Pacific Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration

Mr Ian Bertram, Secretary, Ministry of Marine Resources