

**CLOSING ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT G. FLOSSE AT THE TAHITI CONFERENCE
TUESDAY 7 DECEMBER 1999**

Friends,

Please permit me to use this expression, because I believe that a real sense of friendship has emerged from our meetings, discussions and, perhaps especially, from our debates over the past few days. What could be more conducive to friendship than carefully exercising the art of listening, endeavouring to understand others, grasping the shades of meaning influenced by cultures, practices and attitudes that an opportunity such as our Conference gives us the invaluable good fortune of enjoying every day!

Perhaps therein lies the Pacific Way that I referred to in my opening address: that dialogue between two candidates about whose merits we entered into such long discourse and who this very morning have given us the illustration, in such an eloquent fashion, of their instinctively shared hopes.

But all of us have also shared our doubts, our fears and our hopes. Because we too decided that the issues at hand required us to mobilise our energies, each in our own way, not only to clearly perceive the world as it is, but especially to join forces in order to forestall the most foreseeable consequences with the means at our disposal.

There is real frustration and sometimes discouragement. What we should all say, then is that our organisation's mission extends over such a broad range of responsibilities that we need to apply reason and focus on clear and universal priorities, in other words priorities which are valid for the region as a whole. Hence the importance of pilot schemes and I could not suggest strongly enough to the new management team to show the greatest care when venturing into the perilous area of excessively radical innovation, because island time moves slowly and this pace of life cannot be ignored without risk.

On behalf of all of us, I wish fair wind to this young team. May they steer the canoe, which symbolises our eternal destiny with inspiration and talent. And may they tirelessly seek, as our logo seems to instruct, their inspiration and heading in the teachings of the stars, which shine in the night sky over Moana Nui.

To you, Mr Director-General, allow me to express the gratitude of our organisation and our region. Now, justifiably satisfied with your accomplishments, you can at last resume your family life and enjoy cheaper telephone bills...

We also thank the partner countries without whose support our organisation would have no reason to exist. To the nations and the organisations which make project proposals and provide financial support we would request that they continue to help us allocate our resource and our abilities more appropriately so that we can become even more effective and further improve our performance.

Together, we wish to thank France for having honoured our Conference by the presence of a member of the government.

We are entitled to say that we have put our time to good use and have been productive.

Let us thank the CRGA, which, under the able chairmanship of Pitcairn, has cleared the way on the issues of concern to the Conference.

Pitcairn, Rapanui: two islands so clouded in mystery that we need to think so hard to imagine what they are like. And yet they were present amongst us! This too is a good omen.

We regret the absence of three member countries. May they rest assured, however, that at no time did we lose sight of their destiny, which is inseparable from our own.

I hope Tokelau and the Marshall Islands are not offended: the former's flag and the latter's anthem do dwell in our hearts and they need not doubt that.

Finally, we would express our gratitude to each and every delegation and to the excellent Pacific Community Secretariat staff and to all those who, in our team, as was their duty, proved themselves, or so I hope, capable of performing their duties with efficiency, dedication and good humour.

We shall soon be parting. As distance comes between us, I would like to be certain that you will carry with you, from your hosts, the memory of a country on the move, a country of courage and a country of friendship.

Iaorana.

E ia maitai to outou ho'iraa i to outou mau utuafare.

E te hau ia vai.

Mauruuru.