

THIRD REGIONAL FISHERIES MINISTERS MEETING 2022

RFMM7

2050 STRATEGY FOR THE BLUE PACIFIC CONTINENT AND THE REVIEW OF REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Purpose and Recommendations

Purpose

This paper presents the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* (2050 Strategy) as endorsed by Forum Leaders at the 51st Pacific Islands Forum which took place from 11-14 July 2022. In presenting the 2050 Strategy, the paper highlights broad implications for Regional Fisheries Ministers to discuss.

Summary

Under the oversight of the FOC Sub-Committee on the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, co-Chaired by Fiji and Vanuatu, and following the completion of the two-stage methodology to develop the 2050 Strategy and an extensive, member-led drafting process, a final draft of the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* was conveyed to Forum Leaders for their consideration. At their retreat on 14 July 2022, Forum Leaders unanimously endorsed the strategy attached at **Annex A** for Ministers' consideration.

The 2050 Strategy sets out the region's long-term vision and aspirations, including in terms of economic development and resource development, among others. Following Leaders' endorsement of the Strategy, the next steps will focus on the development of an implementation plan for the strategy, which will identify key collective actions under each thematic area, delivery timeframes, implementation arrangements and partners, and resourcing requirements. Given these next steps, it is important to ensure alignment between the implementation plan and the existing regional oceanic and coastal fisheries management initiatives and strategies.

. The work anticipated in this phase will include the finalisation of the policy brief and TORs for the Regional Review of Architecture (RRA), and the development of an implementation and monitoring plan for the 2050 Strategy. Achieving these steps would in the first instance, require the consideration of the appropriate governance arrangements and an agreed processes for these steps to be taken forward.

Recommendations

Ministers are invited to:

- i. **note** the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and **discuss** its implications for the ongoing work of the RFMM;
- ii. **note** the linkages between the 2050 Strategy and existing oceanic and coastal fisheries management initiatives and strategies and related work, and **ensure** that these linkages are

- strengthened and appropriately aligned to the implementation plan for the 2050 Strategy; and
- iii. **note** the upcoming *Review of Regional Architecture* and the Leaders decision to expand the scope of the said review, and to **consider** its implications for RFMM.

A. Context & Progress Update

At the 2019 Forum Leaders meeting in Tuvalu, Leaders recognized that escalating climate change impacts and the intensification of geostrategic competition were exacerbating the region's vulnerabilities. Leaders noted that in order to secure the future of the Blue Pacific there was a need for a long-term vision and a carefully considered strategy for regionalism. Based on these considerations, they endorsed the development of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (the 2050 Strategy).

2. Leaders tasked the Forum Secretariat to work closely with Members to develop the 2050 Strategy and accordingly the FOC Sub-Committee on the 2050 Strategy was established¹, and Fiji and Vanuatu were nominated as Co-Chairs by the Sub-Committee. As part of the development of the Strategy, the Sub-Committee was supported by an Informal Working Group of Members, a CROP Taskforce on the 2050 Strategy, Non-State Actors, Regional Experts, and Technical Consultants. The Forum Secretariat provided coordination and administrative support.

3. In July 2020, the Sub-Committee endorsed a methodology for the development of the 2050 Strategy, consisting of strategic foresight and the identification of key thematic areas for the Strategy. The methodology also recognised and built upon existing Leaders' decisions and regional policy frameworks, and Leaders' values and aspirations for regionalism, such as those espoused in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR).

4. In developing the Strategy, the FOC Sub-Committee on the 2050 Strategy met for a total of twenty times. Its first meeting was held on 14 October 2019, while its twentieth and most recent meeting was held on 30 June 2022. The Sub-Committee has been ably supported by a number of working groups and taskforces, as well as by regional and international experts who have provided input as part of the development of the Strategy.

5. Following completion of the two-stage methodology, an extensive, national consultation and member-led drafting process was conducted from December 2021 to May 2022, to develop and refine the draft strategy. As an outcome of this process, a final draft of the strategy was conveyed to, and agreed by, the Forum Officials Committee and Forum Foreign Ministers who then conveyed the document to Forum Leaders for endorsement. Following their consideration, Forum Leaders endorsed the 2050 Strategy at the retreat segment of the 51st Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, held on 14 July 2022.

¹ The FOC Sub-Committee on the 2050 Strategy is a sub-committee of the Forum Officials Committee. This sub-committee is Co-Chaired by Fiji and Vanuatu and includes all Forum Members countries. CROP agencies participate as observers to the Sub-Committee.

B. 2050 Strategy – Overview & Strategic Linkages

6. The 2050 Strategy sets out our long-term approach to work together as a region. It includes the Leaders' vision for 2050, and frames our regional cooperation around seven key thematic areas:

- i. Political Leadership and Regionalism
- ii. People-Centered Development
- iii. Peace and Security
- iv. Resource and Economic Development
- v. Climate Change and Disasters
- vi. Ocean and Environment
- vii. Technology and Connectivity

7. Further to this, each thematic area has its own '2050 ambition' which serves as an agreed long-term objective for each thematic area, in support of the vision. At the same time, it encompasses 10 Leaders Commitments and numerous strategic pathways to guide the region's broad trajectory over the short, medium, and long term.

8. The thematic area of resource and economic development is of particular relevance to Regional Fisheries Ministers. Its focus includes accelerating the region's economic growth aspirations through strengthened ownership and development of the region's natural and human resources; diversifying investment portfolios and increasing the role of the private sector in key areas such as fisheries, agriculture, forestry, mining and tourism, and cultural industries, and through strengthened trade facilitation; as well as leveraging our collective solidarity and voice to continue to access climate and development finance, as well as to engage with financiers on debt issues.

9. To support this, the thematic area sets out a number of high level strategic pathways focused on strengthening regional mechanisms to ensure the sustainable management and development of shared resources; expanding opportunities for all peoples to engage in economic activity including through development of MSMEs, as well as expanding into underexplored areas such as cultural industries, professional sport, and through an expansion of labour mobility programs; developing innovative policy options based on the management and value-added development of our shared resources; and ensuring strategic and genuine regional and international partnerships to accelerate economic growth and trade, based on agreed priority areas.

10. In progressing these high-level aspirations as set out in the 2050 Strategy, Ministers are invited to consider how best to ensure current and proposed future policies and initiatives, including the Regional Roadmap for Sustained Fisheries and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries best align to these aspirations.

C. Next Steps

Development of an Implementation Plan for the 2050 Strategy

11. As per the decision of Leaders in the 51st Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Communique, the next steps in relation to the 2050 Strategy consist of the development of an implementation plan, which will identify key collective actions under each thematic area, delivery timeframes,

implementation arrangements and partners, and resourcing requirements. It is envisaged that the first implementation plan will take a 5-year time frame. This implementation plan development process will continue to be member driven, and will involve the input of CROP agencies, non-state actors, and wider stakeholders. It is important that Ministries of Finance/Economy be centrally involved in this process.

12. Added to this, Ministers are encouraged to discuss how to ensure existing work through the Regional Roadmap for Sustained Fisheries and the New Song for Coastal Fisheries aligns well to the implementation plan for the Resources and Economic Development and Ocean and Environment thematic areas under the 2050 Strategy.

13. In 2021, the Forum Economic Ministers agreed to develop a concept note for a Blue Pacific Economic Strategy (BPES) to be sequenced with the 2050 Strategy. The BPES is expected to capture the economic aspects of the 2050 Strategy with a focus on the Resources and Economic Development thematic area where blue economy will be a major component. The fisheries sector, being a key sector in the Pacific's blue economy, will be an important area in the development of blue economy initiatives under BPES. The BPES concept note will be presented to Economic Ministers for their consideration when they meet on 10 – 12 August in Vanuatu.

Review of Regional Architecture

14. Ministers will recall that in 2019 Forum Leaders tasked the review of the regional CROP architecture to re-examine and ensure the requisite governance and resourcing arrangements that promote, govern and deepen collective responsibility and accountability to deliver the 2050 Strategy. Further to this, Leader expanded the scope of the review to focus on broader issues including the political setting; institutional processes; governance mechanisms; and to review mechanisms in place to effect cooperation and coordination between the various regional entities, and their engagement with the Pacific Islands Forum; and engagements and partnerships.

15. Ministers are also advised that this work will also commence in earnest in light of Leaders' latest decisions, and that Fisheries Officials and Ministers, as well as the Forum Fisheries Agency, will be thoroughly consulted in this work.

D. Recommendations

16. Ministers are invited to:

- i. **note** the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and **discuss** its implications for the ongoing work of the RFMM;
- ii. **note** the linkages between the 2050 Strategy and existing oceanic and coastal fisheries management initiatives and strategies and related work, and **ensure** that these linkages are strengthened and appropriately aligned to the implementation plan for the 2050 Strategy; and **note** the upcoming Review of Regional Architecture and the Leaders decision to expand the scope of the said review, and to **consider** its implications for RFMM.

E. Regional Governance Implications

17. Ongoing progress regards the 2050 Strategy and the review regional architecture require ongoing coordination and consultation with key regional stakeholders including Members, CROP agencies, NSAs as well as other valued stakeholders.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
1 August 2022

Attach.
Annex A: 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent