

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat's Contribution to Part II of the Secretary General of the United Nations' report on Oceans and Law of the Sea

June 2015

1. Activities, including the adoption of measures, development of programmes, etc. which have been undertaken or which are ongoing in the implementation of specific provisions of the resolution 69/245 relevant to your organisation.

Section XIII (Regional Cooperation), Provision 284: The General Assembly,

284. Welcomes regional cooperation, and in this regard notes the Pacific Oceanscape Framework as an initiative to enhance cooperation among coastal states in the Pacific island region to foster marine conservation and sustainable development.

The newly established Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, housed within the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, is responsible for the coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape ("the Framework"), which was endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in 2010.

This is an ongoing initiative which acts as an umbrella mandate, guiding the rest of the work of the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner ("the Office"), described in further detail below.

2. Highlight the main developments in your organisation in the field of ocean affairs and the law of the sea that have occurred since the last reporting period, with references to sections of General Assembly resolution 69/245.

The main developments in the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner (the Office) and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) since August 2014 include:

(a) July - September 2014: Establishment and launch of the Pacific Ocean Alliance at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States

The Pacific Ocean Alliance ("the Alliance") was called for by Leaders under Action 2B of the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape. In late 2014, the Alliance was established via charter then officially launched at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. The Alliance is facilitated by the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, and seeks to bring together the large and varied collection of stakeholders from various sectors, organisations and levels of ocean development.

This development is particularly relevant to sections XIII (Regional Cooperation) and XV (Coordination and Cooperation) of Resolution 69/245.

(b) November 2014: Establishment of the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner

The position of Oceans Analyst was recruited and commenced work. Commencing this dedicated, full time staff member marked the establishment of the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner as its own independent unit to support the Commissioner.

This development is particularly relevant to sections XIII (Regional Cooperation) and XV (Coordination and Cooperation) of Resolution 69/245.

(c) February 2015: New Secretary General of PIFS confirmed as the Pacific Ocean Commissioner

Dame Meg Taylor commenced the role of Secretary General of PIFS in late 2014. At the February meeting of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP), CROP Executives confirmed that the title of interim Pacific Ocean Commissioner was to remain linked to the title of Secretary

General of PIFS, and welcomed Dame Meg Taylor as the new Pacific Ocean Commissioner, along with the establishment of the Office, and works towards management arrangements for the Pacific Ocean Alliance.

This development is particularly relevant to sections XIII (Regional Cooperation) and XV (Coordination and Cooperation) of Resolution 69/245.

(d) May 2015: Inaugural Meeting of the Pacific Ocean Alliance on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, and the Pacific Ocean Alliance Technical Working Group on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction

The first meeting of the Pacific Ocean Alliance was held in May 25. The meeting drew over 120 participants including Pacific Island State representatives from 13 Pacific Island countries. The remaining participants included representatives from Pacific Island Missions to the UN, CSOs, NGOs, regional organisations, international organisations, academia, the private sector, undergraduate and graduate students, youth organisations and development partners.

The objective of the meeting was to provide information and to seek feedback on the issue of areas beyond national jurisdiction, in the context of upcoming negotiations for a new implementing agreement on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction under UNCLOS.

The main meeting was followed by a one day meeting of the Pacific Ocean Alliance expert Technical Working Group on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction to inform the development of an options and implications paper on the issues to be addressed by a new Implementing Agreement under the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea, in the context of Pacific priorities.

This development is particularly relevant to sections II (Capacity Building), V (the Area), IX (Marine Environment and Marine Resources), X (Marine Biodiversity), XIII (Regional Cooperation) and XV (Coordination and Cooperation) of Resolution 69/245.

(e) December 2014 – Present: World Bank’s Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP)

PIFS is responsible for leading delivery of Component 3 (Sustainable Financing of the Conservation of Critical Fishery Habitats) and Component 4 (Regional Coordination, Implementation Support, Training and Monitoring and Evaluation) of the newly approved World Bank Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP). PIFS, the Office and the World Bank commenced substantive project planning for Components 3 and 4 in June 2015.

This development is particularly relevant to sections II (Capacity Building), V (the Area), IX (Marine Environment and Marine Resources), X (Marine Biodiversity), XIII (Regional Cooperation) and XV (Coordination and Cooperation) of Resolution 69/245.

(f) May 2014 – Present: Advocacy Support to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community’s Pacific Islands Regional Maritime Boundaries Project

Strategic Priority 1 of the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape is establishing jurisdictional rights and responsibilities over maritime zones for Forum island countries. This regional work is led by CROP agency Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). SPC has a Maritime Boundaries Unit within the Geoscience Division for this purpose. Despite having operated since 2001, only four Forum Island countries (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Nauru) have fully completed and formalized all aspects of their maritime boundaries. The Pacific Ocean Commissioner, noting how crucial and important this work is, has offered her support to SPC in the form of high level advocacy in order to progress this work in those areas where it is stalling.

This development is particularly relevant to sections IV (Peaceful Settlement of Disputes), VII (The Continental Shelf and the Work of the Commission), VII (Maritime Safety and Security and Flag State Implementation), VIII (Regional Cooperation), and XV Coordination and Cooperation of Resolution 69/245.