

26 September 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić,  
President of the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Pacific Island Forum**

Mr. Secretary-General,  
Mr. Prime Minister,  
Distinguished Pacific Islanders,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to address this meeting. I welcome the opportunity to add my voice of encouragement to this joint UN-PIF initiative to support the Pacific Island States in addressing your particular needs and vulnerabilities.

One of the most important features of the UN Charter is the emphasis it places on the sovereign equality of Member States. As President of the General Assembly, I have pledged to exercise my authority with the utmost respect for this fundamental tenet of the United Nations, especially as it applies to countries such as the ones represented here.

I am confident that your knowledge and experience on a number of issues will contribute significantly to the work of General Assembly.

I believe many Member States can learn from your best practices. For instance, the recent accord between seven Pacific Island countries on eight Maritime Boundary Agreements is an excellent example of the Forum's commitment not only to implement uniform standards and good governance, but also conservation efforts, sustainable development, and respect for national jurisdictions. It also shows the importance of regional coherence and coordination.

Allow me also to underscore the significance of your work in countering the proliferation of small arms in the Pacific region, as well as your efforts to encourage countries across the globe to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Excellencies,

The General Assembly and the Pacific Island Forum share many of the same priorities. One of them is following up on Rio+20.

As President of the General Assembly, let me assure you of my full support and commitment towards this process. I look forward to engaging with you and the other Member States on fully implementing the mandate the General Assembly received from world leaders in June.

Another is climate change. Together with oceanic acidification, this remains a great threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific.

I would like to reassure you that as President, I will continue to encourage Member States to implement agreed commitments on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As the globe continues to warm up and sea-levels rise, a number of Pacific Island States rely on the concerted action of all UN members for their very survival.

Excellencies,

The Pacific Island Forum outreach is becoming truly global, as you build partnerships with nations and regional organizations across the world, while deepening your engagement with the United Nations.

Today's meeting should identify specific areas of enhanced collaboration, as well as the appropriate mechanisms for follow up action.

This will undoubtedly involve the General Assembly, and I want you to know that you can count on my full support.

As President, I look forward to working closely with all Pacific Island Member States on how we can strengthen across-the-board cooperation.

I wish you a productive and successful meeting.

Thank you.