

**Pacific Declaration from the Pacific Regional Conference on the Forest
Investment Program Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and
Local Communities**

We, participants, being members of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the Pacific

Having met in Sydney on February 7- 8, 2011 at the National Center of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) to discuss the Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, within the Forest Investment Program (FIP);

Acknowledging with appreciation the work of the other three regions, which met prior to our own conference;

Aware that the Pacific region currently has no FIP pilot country;

Anticipating that countries in the Pacific region may be considered for participating directly in the FIP (or in a possible subsequent program) in the future, when substantially more resources become available;

Realizing the urgency of the completion of the consultative process to develop a full design proposal for the dedicated mechanism as envisioned by the Terms of Reference for the Development of the Dedicated Grant Mechanism;

Appreciating, therefore, the opportunity to participate now in the design of the Dedicated Grant Mechanism, with an eye to: (a) future country participation; (b) aspects of the Dedicated Grant Mechanism that will benefit non-pilot countries; and (c) the distinctive experiences, conditions and priorities of the Pacific region;

Noting that the other three regions all endorsed activities supported by the grant mechanism that would benefit Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in countries that are not currently FIP pilots, notably in the areas of: participatory sharing of lessons, experiences and information; capacity development; and networking;

Intending to orient our contribution to the design of the Dedicated Grant Mechanism to specific recommendations (to the forthcoming global meeting) that build on or add to the work of other regions, particularly with respect to activities that will benefit non-pilot countries;

Reaffirming the principles set forth in the Terms of Reference for the Dedicated Grant Mechanism adopted by the FIP Sub-Committee, and in the Forest Investment Program Design Document, including *inter alia* the importance of: (a) inclusive processes and participation of all important stakeholders, particularly, in the present context, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities; (b) securing and strengthening customary land tenure and resource rights and traditional forest management systems of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities; and (c) according equal emphasis to the rights of people of all genders and ages in all activities relating to the grant mechanism;

Emphasizing the provisions of the FIP Design Document that call for: (a) “the full, effective and continuous participation” of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities; (b) “strengthening the capacity of these groups to play an informed and active role in national REDD¹ processes in general and FIP processes in particular;” (c) “mechanisms for learning lessons from both successes and failures in collaboration with relevant stakeholders;” and (d) “incorporat[ing] into its activities lessons learned from other relevant initiatives;”

Highlighting our experience that true effective participation requires direct involvement and empowering of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities at the local and grass roots level, including, *inter alia*, elders, women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable peoples

Recognizing the importance of respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 2007, with Free, Prior and Informed Consent as one of those rights;

Also recognizing the importance of respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities under other human rights instruments and under the recently adopted “Nagoya Protocol on access on genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity;”

Concerned that if land reforms are initiated without taking full account of the points noted above, they may have the effect of alienating customary lands of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and making the achievement of FIP goals and objectives impossible;

Noting that there are already REDD projects being implemented in Pacific countries, and that experiences and lessons emerging from these projects can be a useful contribution from the Pacific region to the work of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in other regions;

Realizing that the Dedicated Grant Mechanism could play a critical complementary role in relation to the development and implementation of FIP programs and projects, as a means to enhance the capacity of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to participate fully, effectively and continuously in FIP activities, and to assure active, participatory sharing of lessons, experiences and information gleaned from both FIP pilot and non-pilot countries, in a manner that leads directly to securing both forest resources and community livelihoods;

¹ The term “REDD” as used in this declaration has the meaning assigned to it in the FIP Design Document, as set forth in footnote 1 of that document: “For purposes of the Forest Investment Program, REDD means REDD+ and should be construed to include activities consistent with paragraphs 1(b)(iii) of the Bali Action Plan and modified, as necessary, to be consistent the decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC.”

Envisioning that, in light of our relevant experiences and of the priority other regions may naturally assign to their respective pilot country activities, the Pacific region could play an active and valuable role as a hub for the sharing of lessons, experiences and information as highlighted above;

Hereby recommend, to the participants in the global meeting and to the members of the FIP Sub-Committee as they continue to deliberate on these matters, that the following be considered, for inclusion and elaboration in the ultimate design proposal for the Dedicated Grant Mechanism, as additions to the recommendations already documented by the other regions:

1. Definitions and Concepts Central to Interpreting the Pacific Region's Recommendations

- The cultural concept of a “forest” among peoples of the Pacific is spiritually linked to the land, the ocean, the sky and the entire biodiversity of life, so any references below that relate to protecting, managing or enhancing forests (including also aforestation and reforestation) must take this full definition into account. In particular, references in this declaration to forests cannot include monocultures (which do not share the full biodiversity of life), and forests cannot be considered, or allowed to become, commodities.
- Our recommendations regarding the design of the Dedicated Grant Mechanism are intended to relate specifically to that portion of the grant mechanism that will be used to support activities (such as sharing lessons) going beyond pilot country investments; these recommendations are meant to add to, and in no event to exclude, the recommendations of other regions which, in general, we have strived not to repeat.
- Even where not explicitly specified, all of our recommendations are intended to apply to activities involving Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and falling under the general umbrella of the FIP. At the same time, the Pacific Indigenous Peoples take an inclusive view of their activities, and welcome partnerships with other stakeholders.
- The term “sharing and learning” is used in this declaration as an abbreviation for information, lessons and experience sharing and related capacity development and networking.

2. Scope and Objectives

Sharing and learning programs supported by the Dedicated Grant Mechanism may include, *inter alia*:

- Regional and global meetings or workshops focused on particular themes, with strong preparation around specific cases and opportunities to share lessons;
- Capacity development, especially at the grassroots level;
- Developing connections among Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and utilizing and enhancing existing networks for sharing and learning;
- Data bases, centers of excellence and web-based sharing and networking tools;
- Wide dissemination of reports from FIP monitoring and evaluation activities and lessons learned.

These activities may be carried out or implemented at the global, regional, national and local levels, and involve FIP pilot countries and non-pilot countries as both sources and receivers of the lessons, experience and information to be shared.

Objectives of the sharing and learning program should be closely tied to forest-related priorities and needs of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, including for example:

- Protecting customary and indigenous land tenure systems and resource rights;
- Eradicating poverty and enhancing livelihoods;
- Respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities;
- Protecting, maintaining, and sustainably using biodiversity.

3. Overarching Principles

- Collective ownership, responsibility and accountability must be upheld at all times in FIP and REDD programs, in order to achieve their objectives; thus, sharing and learning activities should both respect and enhance such ownership, responsibility and accountability.
- Sharing and learning activities should include work on strengthening linkages of forest programs to the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities under applicable human rights instruments, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Sharing and learning programs must include the grassroots level. A community-driven, demand-pull approach to planning and implementing such activities should be used, so that these programs benefit the grass roots as far as possible.

- Vital lessons and experience are also often rooted at the local level, and should be shared “horizontally” – with other communities – as well as “vertically,” through national, regional and global information sharing activities. Such activities should in all events respect the intellectual property rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in, for example, their traditional knowledge.

4. Governance

- The sharing and learning program should be governed by a Global Coordinating Committee (GCC) already envisioned in other regional recommendations. The Pacific Region should be represented on that committee, and we propose that the initial representatives of our region be the two Co-Chairs elected for that role at the present meeting. The GCC should take all final decisions regarding how the funds allocated to the sharing and learning program should be spent, with fast disbursement assured through the use of a Financial Intermediary.
- The secretariat of the GCC should act as an international secretariat for the sharing and learning program.
- Bearing in mind the community-driven objectives of the sharing and learning program, international or regional sharing and learning projects (such as thematic meetings) initiated by the GCC should be based on full regional, national, and grassroots consultation, and should have a component specifically designed to include the grassroots level.
- The GCC should also establish and operate a funding window for the sharing and learning program that receives, reviews and decides upon proposals from the regional, national and local level, with priority given to those proposals that originate in, or show clear connection to, the community level.
- As part of the sharing and learning program, the GCC should assure ongoing input, feedback and communication regarding the dedicated mechanism as a whole, assuring that all regions are kept apprised of relevant developments and opportunities, including future opportunities in the potential expansion of the FIP or a successor program.
- In designing and implementing sharing and learning activities, the GCC may collaborate with governments and regional and global bodies, as appropriate. In particular, the sharing and learning program should take into account the role of governments in assuring the sustainability of both forest and forest-relevant programs.

5. Scope of Activities Eligible for Financing

The sharing and learning program may support any of the five areas listed in Section 2 above (Scope and Objectives) and, or more specifically:

- Workshops and information sharing activities designed to engage the grassroots level;
- Calls for submission (e.g., on websites, and for reports at meetings) of lessons, experiences, case histories, and ideas;
- Identification from wide-ranging sources, and broad dissemination, of models that work and relevant best practices (including in both cases countries and regions where there are no FIP pilots) – the models and best practices referred to here should be for projects, policies or strategies that are part of, or share objectives and principles with, the FIP and the Dedicated Grant Mechanism;
- Proposals for south-south sharing and learning, and for enhancing the sharing and learning capacities of existing networks at the local, national, regional and global levels, including existing groups and organizations of indigenous and local landowners.

Content of the learning and sharing program (including, where appropriate, enhancing capacity) may include the four areas listed in Section 2 and, or more specifically:

- Ways to link REDD activities to livelihoods, rights and biodiversity;
- Ways to secure land tenure, resource rights, and carbon rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, including fair sharing of, for example, benefits under REDD;
- Ways to effectively participate in FIP and other REDD activities;
- Ways to assure that partners – including funding partners and others – follow through on their commitments;
- Ways to mainstream the activities and projects of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities with other forest programs or with national forest policies;
- Sustainable ways for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to develop and market timber and non-timber forest products;

- Building awareness, especially at the local level and using appropriate media, of the grant mechanism, the FIP and REDD, including the potential impacts of REDD;
- Ways to assure benefit sharing and compensation for the use of traditional knowledge;
- Ways to engage and educate youth, elders, women and other vulnerable groups in forest and forest-relevant programs; to use indigenous languages in such contexts; and to support women-led forest-related projects;
- Sustainable forest and land management, forest restoration, reforestation and governance,.

6. Operational Procedures and Funding Modalities

- Proposals for sharing and learning activities can be initiated either (a) by the Global Coordinating Committee (GCC) or its International Secretariat, based on broad consultation; or (b) in the form of applications submitted by regional, national or local indigenous or community organizations.
- The GCC should establish and publicize clear eligibility and proposal-rating criteria for proposed activities under the sharing and learning program, and clear procedures for submitting and handling applications under that program.
- Funds would pass from the FIP (World Bank Trust Fund) → a Financial Intermediary (the institution that hold the money for rapid disbursement) → approved sharing and learning activities (as determined by the GCC).
- The Financial Intermediary needs to be identified, and preferably included in the design document for the Dedicated Grant Mechanism, to avoid loss of time;
- The design document for the Dedicated Grant Mechanism should include a fully developed set of operational procedures for the sharing and learning program, analogous to those recommended by the other regions for pilot country activities of the Dedicated Grant Mechanism.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The GCC will establish a monitoring and evaluation framework for the learning and sharing program based on the objectives set forth above.
- Monitoring and evaluation should be participatory, including direct involvement at the grassroots level.
- All regions should be included among those designing and implementing the monitoring and evaluation system.
- Results should be reported to the GCC, which will in turn report them to the FIP Sub-Committee and assure they are circulated widely, including to non-pilot countries.

8. Grievance and Compliance Mechanisms

- The GCC will address any grievance or compliance issues relating to the learning and sharing program.

9. Additional Comments, Observations and Recommendations with Scope Broader than the Grant Mechanism

- REDD programs should recognize that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities have conserved forests all their lives, and allocate benefits accordingly.
- REDD activities should always respect the land tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and in no event have the effect of alienating Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities from their land. Any REDD programs in geographical areas where there are Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities should explicitly recognize the rights of those peoples and communities before proceeding.
- Forest programs should adopt reef to ridge approaches where appropriate.
- Specific priorities of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the Pacific region in relation to climate change in general and forest-related climate programs in particular include: (a) to combat climate change through implementing programs and projects that attain sustainable development goals, in particular alleviating poverty and achieving secure livelihoods; (b) to focus especially on the small island states and the most vulnerable groups such as the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities that make up more than 90% of Pacific populations (c) to avoid the dual burden on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities arising *first*, from direct, devastating impacts of climate change, and *second*, from the potential impacts of debt servicing on loans taken out by Pacific countries for climate mitigation or adaptation; (d) assuring food security and food sovereignty.
- The proposed levels of mitigation emerging from Copenhagen and Cancun are insufficient, and could be disastrous for peoples and forests in our region. Mitigation should be better tied to scientific assessments of potential impacts. Mitigation should be based on real and sustainable environmental protection, and not strategies such as geo-engineering.

The participants wish to acknowledge and thank: the Australian indigenous leader who welcomed and inspired us in the opening ceremony for the conference; IUCN as hosts and logistical supporters throughout; the international donors who made the event possible; the Center for Indigenous Excellence for housing us; and each other, for patient and thoughtful contributions, in a spirit of cooperation, flexibility and understanding.

Attached to this declaration are an offer to host the global meeting; the results of the self-selection process for Pacific representation at that meeting; and a list of participants in the Pacific conference that produced this **Pacific Declaration from the Pacific Regional Conference on the Forest Investment Program Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, DATED this 8th Day of February 2011, Sydney, Australia**

**Appendix 1:
Offer to Host the Global Meeting**

The participants of Pacific Regional Conference welcome the hosting offers received from Asia (Bangkok) and Latin America (Brasilia) and wish to extend their own offer as well, to host the meeting in Vanuatu. The participants selected Vanuatu based on a variety of factors, including ease of access by air, lack of visa requirements, and, most importantly, the presence of a willing and active indigenous host, so the meeting would be directly imbedded in a local indigenous environment.

The dates proposed for this meeting are April 7 – 9, 2011. Add the offer to host the global meeting in Vanuatu.

The participants recognize that a range of considerations will enter into the final selection of the venue for the global meeting and will not take it amiss if a different site is ultimately chosen.

Appendix 2: Pacific Representation at the Global Meeting

Selection of representatives to the global meeting was a complex process, given the richness and diversity of Pacific indigenous cultures and the multiplicity of relevant considerations. The participants agreed on the following primary criteria for selection:

- Gender balance
- Geographical balance
- Knowledge and experience
- Representation of Melanesian, Polynesian and Micronesian cultures
- A delegations whose members attended the Sydney conference
- An exception to the above criterion for the case of Papua New Guinea, where visa complexities prevented attendance in Sydney

Based on these criteria, the participants selected representatives as follows:

The two Co-chairs of the present conference:

- Malia Nobrega
- Fiu Mataese Elisara

PLUS representatives from:

- Fiji
- Papua New Guinea
- Vanuatu
- Solomon Islands (in case one of the above cannot attend, or the allowed delegation is expanded to six)

**Appendix 3:
List of Participants**

NAME	COUNTRY	ORGANIZATION
Michael West	Australia	Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council - MLALC (Australia)
Etika Qica	Fiji	FSPI
Jalesi Matebote	Fiji	SPC Forestry Program
Malakai Mo Vonokula	Fiji	DRAFCO Fiji
Akosita Lolohea Seru	Fiji	Viti Landowner Association
Malia Nobrega	Hawaii	Waikiki Hawaiian Civic Club
Monica Hau'oli Waiiau	Hawaii	Waikiki Hawaiian Civic Club
Aokuso Leavasa	Samoa	Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment - Forestry Division
Fiu Mataese Elisara	Samoa	Ole Siosiomaga Society (OLSSI)
Alick Sanau Houaoli	Solomon Islands	Village Eco Timber Enterprise
Malia Talakai	Tonga	Pacific Indigenous Peoples Environment Coalition
Tevi Maltali Obed	Vanuatu	FSP Vanuatu
Hilda Lini	Vanuatu	Vanuatu Indigenous Peoples Forum