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Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Draws Attention to Need for Action

BY PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

Press Statement - 12 February 2010 - Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Tuiloma Neroni Slade, today highlighted the importance of action, partnership and coordination to support Pacific Communities combat the continuing effects of the recent Global Economic Crisis on the region.

In his closing remarks at the conclusion of the Pacific Conference on the Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis held in Port Vila, Mr Slade commended the informed and productive discussions. He also noted the enormous challenges for all Pacific communities and the need for substantive regional action for moving forward.

"We must use opportunities like those presented in the last three days to take stock of our efforts, and more importantly, consider ways forward with a view to focusing our initiatives in a harmonised manner on tangible outcomes for the benefit of Pacific Peoples," said Mr Slade.

The conference, called for by Forum Leaders during their annual meeting in Cairns 2009, sought to bring together national, regional and international stakeholders to address the impacts of the Global Economic Crisis on the Pacific.

With its effects in the Pacific often overshadowed by its impacts in other parts of the world, the recent Global Economic Crisis has highlighted the region's vulnerabilities especially in eroding economic growth, stalling development efforts and hindering employment opportunities in many Pacific Island Countries.

Mr Slade expressed support for the agreed outcomes and actions of the conference and remained committed to ensuring these would be presented to Forum Leaders during their deliberations later this year in Vanuatu.

With very strong high-level attendance from within the region and the international community more generally, discussions over the Conference's three days covered a range of topics. Among them, the broader social impacts of the Crisis on families, stresses on the delivery of essential health and education services, efforts to alleviate poverty and the region's progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

"The region has worked hard over recent decades to improve living standards, reduce infant mortality and better skill its people to pursue opportunities," said Mr Slade.

"While we have achieved much, we cannot become complacent. We must look for

innovative and sustainable regional solutions to lift our people out of poverty. This will require Pacific Islands Countries to take a strong leadership role in their development efforts and continue to work in partnership with the international community."

The Conference which was opened earlier this week by the Prime Minister of Vanuatu, the Honourable Edward Natapei, concluded today.

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