



## **Pacific island power recognised at UN**

By Online Editor

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The Asian group of nations at the United Nations has changed its name to the Asia-Pacific group in what diplomats have called a sign of the growing importance of the region's island nations.

The change this week comes ahead of Ban Ki-moon becoming the first UN secretary general to attend a Pacific Islands Forum summit in Auckland next week.

The 193-state United Nations has been divided into five regional groups since 1965 to negotiate responsibilities and elections to UN bodies.

Pacific island nations, starting with Fiji, started joining the Asia group from 1970 as they started to become independent.

With Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu now in the group, they make up more than one fifth of the membership and started pressing for the name to change last year.

Diplomats said that at China's insistence the group will be officially called Group of Asia and the Pacific Small Island Developing States. But documents will be allowed to use the Asia-Pacific Group.

“This is definitely historic,” said Fiji's UN ambassador Peter Thomson. “It shows that the Pacific island states have come of age at the UN and they are wanting to play their full part and assume their rights and responsibilities.”

The UN secretary general will attend the Pacific Islands Forum summit on September 6 as part of a tour of the region.

Ban will hold talks with Pacific leaders, including New Zealand Prime Minister John Key.

He will also visit Australia, the Solomon islands and Kiribati on the tour during which his talks will focus on international security, development, and climate change.

SOURCE: AFP/PACNEWS