



Pacific CONNECTION

Issue Two, Spring 2004

The magazine of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation



2004
Pacific Arts Festival
Palau

IN THIS ISSUE: New Momentum for Pacific Islands Forum • Long Road to Peace in Solomon Islands • Tuna Treaty

Contents

03	New momentum for the Forum
04	Pacific Plan takes shape at Apia summit
06	Palau festival captivates Pacific visitors
08	Long road to peace in Solomon Islands
10	Tuna treaty a triumph
11	PNG "coat of arms" for Foundation Pacific films fly high

About Us

The Pacific Cooperation Foundation is an independent public sector/private sector Trust whose mission is to benefit the peoples of the Pacific Islands and the people of New Zealand by increasing cooperation and understanding among those peoples. In pursuit of our mission the objects of the Foundation are:

- (a) To promote:
- Media, cultural and public affairs programmes which increase mutual awareness and understanding;
 - Cooperative projects which benefit New Zealand and Pacific Islands businesses;
 - The contributions of Pacific Islands communities to New Zealand's identity as a Pacific nation;
 - Academic excellence in Pacific Islands issues.
- (b) To be a centre for information and a forum for the exchange of views about issues affecting New Zealand and the other countries and peoples (tangata Pasifika) of the islands of the Pacific Ocean.
- (c) To promote and assist activities that increase mutual understanding and constructive linkages between New Zealanders and Pacific peoples.
- (d) To provide a focal point and catalyst for the development of networks among New Zealanders and Pacific Peoples, to the benefit of both.
- (e) To promote increased awareness by New Zealanders of Pacific Islands' and Pacific Peoples' issues and aspirations.
- (f) To work in partnership with the New Zealand and Pacific Islands business communities.

The Pacific Cooperation Foundation, a registered charitable trust, is an independent public/private partnership which works to increase understanding and cooperation between New Zealand and her Pacific neighbours.

Executive Director:
Vince McBride

Programme Managers:
Tina McNicholas, David Vaeafe

Administration Manager:
Florence Aiono

Academic Projects Manager:
Gerald McGhie

Tel: 0064-4-473 9402
Fax: 0064-4-473 9404
Email: info@pcf.org.nz
Web: www.pcf.org.nz

Level 2, Tourism and Travel House
79 Boulcott Street
PO Box 10 467
Wellington
NEW ZEALAND
ISSN: 1176-7278

The information contained in this magazine may be reproduced with appropriate acknowledgement of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation.

Cover: Tokelauan performer Fapiano Pesa from the island of Nukunonu calls out a chant.
Photo: Karen Nero.



Welcome to the second issue of "Pacific Connection".

Feedback from the first issue is still coming in and we have been very pleased with the response so far.

Many people hearing about the Pacific Cooperation Foundation for the first time comment that it is a most welcome initiative and a development that is long overdue. With no disrespect to our cousins in the Asia 2000 Foundation, some have expressed surprise that we did not have a Pacific Foundation first.

In this issue we are delighted to have a feature article from Prime Minister Helen Clark reflecting on her year as Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum. Also included are articles on the 35th Forum meeting in Apia, the new regional fisheries convention, the Pacific Festival of Arts held in Palau in July, and the situation in Solomon Islands one year after the arrival of the Regional Assistance Mission.

Private sector support for the Foundation is growing and with this issue I am pleased to welcome the Fonterra Cooperative Group via its New Zealand subsidiary, Mainland Products Ltd, as our newest Founding Partner sponsor.

In the centre of this issue are a brief questionnaire and a free subscription form. Please do complete them and return them to us. The questionnaire will help us produce the sort of magazine you want to see.

Looking ahead, we would like to hear the views of readers from around the region on issues of importance to us all as Pacific peoples. We intend to include a letters column and we invite all those with a thoughtful view on aspects of Pacific cooperation to write to us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Warm Pacific Greetings

Executive Director



New Zealand Government

New momentum for the Forum

New Zealand's term as Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum came to an end during the August summit meeting in Samoa. New Zealand **Prime Minister Helen Clark** reflects on the Apia gathering, her subsequent trip to Tokelau and her 12 months at the helm of the Pacific's principal regional grouping.

New Zealand's year as Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum was busy and challenging, but also very productive. The Forum was reinvigorated through the review of its focus by the Eminent Persons Group and the agreement to a new mandate for the Forum's work.

The region was challenged by significant natural disasters in the past year. Niue was devastated by Cyclone Heta, and cyclones and/or flooding also affected Vanuatu, Fiji and New Zealand. Our climate seems to be becoming more extreme and unpredictable than in the past.

There were new faces at the meeting in Apia resulting from changes of government and from new relationships the Forum is developing in the region. It was a proud moment for French Polynesia as it took its place as an observer at the Apia Forum.

Now the development of a Pacific Plan will provide a strategy and mechanisms for creating stronger and deeper links within the region. The plan will be based on four key goals: economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security.

It must also take into account the region's special characteristics, in particular by recognising the special needs of small island states and the importance of cultural identity.

The challenge now is to turn our vision and direction into action. The Forum must not slip back into mere process. Concrete, practical and early benefits are needed for Forum member countries. The Plan Taskforce, managed by the Secretary General and made up of senior officials of member countries and key regional organisations, is now looking at how that can be achieved.

The past year has seen other achievements, too.

The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands has been a success. In 2000, in the Biketawa Declaration, Forum countries pledged to act when a member nation faced difficulties. When the time came in Solomon Islands, we did act. Other regions and international institutions are now looking at what has been achieved, and have remarked on the way in which the region worked together as a Pacific family.



PM Helen Clark chats with a Tokelauan policewoman during her post-Forum visit to the islands. Photo: Office of the Prime Minister.

The result has been a new sense of stability in Solomon Islands, and a great sense of relief from the local population that security has been restored.

But, as with the Pacific Plan, there is more to do. The Regional Assistance Mission needs our continuing support as it moves into its second and critical phase of supporting Solomon Islands with economic and social development, and the rebuilding of its institutions.

There are other challenges facing the region which were given considerable attention at the Apia Forum. Improving the region's transport infrastructure was a major issue, as were HIV/AIDS, communications, fisheries, tourism, and the environment. Work has commenced in these areas but much more remains to be done.

The Apia Forum was also notable for the historic first speech before the Forum by a leader from Tokelau, Pio Tuia. Tokelau is moving toward a referendum on its proposed future status of self government in free association with New Zealand. Before long, it is likely that Tokelau will be sitting behind its own name-plate as a member of the Forum. I look forward to this, if it is the wish of its people.

New Zealand's special relationship with Tokelau was made apparent to me during my visit, following the Forum, to each of its three atolls: Faka'ofu, Nukunonu and Atafu. The warmth of our reception reinforced for me the need for New Zealand to stay engaged with Tokelau, whatever future its people choose.

As the world and our region changes, so the Forum is also showing that it can adapt to meet new needs and challenges. This past year will go down in the history of the Forum as the year when the Forum, our leading regional institution, decided to take up the challenge of change and look for renewal.

A new "Pacific Way" is being forged. We still have a unique way of doing business, but one that is better designed to allow us all to develop and prosper in the 21st century. ☘

Pacific Plan takes shape at Apia summit

Pacific Cooperation Foundation Executive Director **Vince McBride** was in Apia during the Pacific Islands Forum meeting and offers his views of the progress made – and the challenges that lie ahead.

In contrast to the highly charged atmosphere of the 2003 Auckland meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum, which for the first time saw leaders vote for which country should provide the new Secretary General, the Apia Forum was a relatively quiet affair.

In fact, media coverage in Samoa during the week focused more on the imminent homecoming of former wrestler turned movie star Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson.

The Forum agenda was substantial, however, and leaders and officials were kept busy discussing the framework for a Pacific Plan that leaders agreed to at a special meeting in Auckland in April.

The plan was recommended early this year by a Pacific Eminent Persons’ Group (EPG), which consulted widely around the Pacific with extensive support from the New Zealand Government. Prime Minister Helen Clark took a close personal interest in the work of the group and in the establishment of a reflection process that assisted EPG members as they shaped their report, “Pacific Cooperation – Voices of the Region”.

In Apia, leaders approved the terms of reference for the preparation of the Pacific Plan. A Plan Taskforce drawn from the ranks of senior officials and key regional organisations will prepare the plan which will be presented to the 2005 Forum in Papua New Guinea. The first meeting of the Taskforce was held at the Forum Secretariat in Suva on

27 August. Twelve countries participated, together with representatives of several regional agencies. The Marshall Islands, Niue, Palau and Vanuatu were unable to attend.

One of the key themes of the EPG report, endorsed by leaders, is the need for wider and deeper regional cooperation. A great deal is already being done through the various regional agencies but there is a need for more cooperation yet. This is particularly so in the transport sector. A preliminary report on transport issues was considered by leaders and they agreed that the Taskforce should identify “specific actions” in the context of the Pacific Plan.

It is not hard to identify air services as one of the first areas needing attention. A number of Pacific nations have operated national airlines in the past and have found they could not sustain them. Most recently Royal Tongan Airlines ceased operating after amassing huge debts through its leasing of a Boeing 757 aircraft and being unable to attract sufficient passengers to make ends meet. In his address at the Forum opening ceremonies, Samoan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi also referred to the urgent need for Polynesian Airlines to find a commercial partner because the Samoan Government could not sustain funding for the airline.

Interestingly, the chief executive of the region’s newest airline, Palau Micronesia Air, which operated its first flight (from Koror to Darwin) on 27 August commented, “PMA is not a national airline. We don’t have government trying to run an airline. We have professionals.”

Prime Minister Helen Clark’s term as Chair of the Pacific leaders’ group brought exceptional progress in the evolution of the Forum.

A great deal remains on the Forum agenda and it is essential that the momentum generated is maintained. This will mean major challenges for the Forum Secretariat, but we at the Pacific Cooperation Foundation are confident Secretary General Greg Urwin and his team are well placed to meet those challenges.

We wish them well. ✪



Below: Attending the Forum Opening Ava Ceremony were from left: Samoan Catholic Archbishop Alapati Mataliga, Samoan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, Australian Prime Minister John Howard, Cook Islands Prime Minister Robert Woonton, Federated States of Micronesia President Joseph Urusemal and Fijian Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase.



Soaking fails to dampen opening

The Apia Forum began with a colourful opening ceremony on the Tiafau Malae in front of Samoa's parliament, the Fale Fono.

Following the opening prayer and speeches by the outgoing and incoming chairs and by Forum Secretary General, Greg Urwin, there was a traditional chiefly ava ceremony. This was followed by entertainment provided by hundreds of matai and school children. One group of matai had travelled all the way from their village of Palauli on Savai'i island.

Our photograph shows the matai and school children sitting in the sunshine waiting for the ceremonies to begin. Unfortunately, just as the ava ceremony was drawing to a close, the heavens opened and before long everyone was thoroughly drenched by a tropical downpour that did not stop until all the entertainment was over.

High praise went to the school children who performed last. They must have been soaked to the skin and chilled by the rain, but their performance was spirited and an impressive display of entertaining movements and split-second timing.

Breakthrough for civil society

Held in Apia at the same time as the Forum meeting was a parallel forum that brought together non-government organisations, churches and other civil society representatives from around the region.



The fifth meeting of the Pacific Civil Society Forum was the first to be directly linked to the Pacific Islands Forum.

It concluded with the presentation to Forum Secretary General Greg Urwin (left) of a statement with a series of recommendations on governance, security, economic development and trade, self-determination and

human rights. Mr Urwin in turn presented the recommendations to leaders at their formal meeting. This was a milestone, placing the concerns of civil society squarely on the agenda of the region's governments.

The Forum communique records that the Forum Secretariat has been tasked with developing consultative arrangements between civil society and the Forum.

Presentation of the statement arose from a recommendation made in the Eminent Persons' Group review of the Forum and endorsed by leaders at their special meeting in Auckland on 6 April

This advocated strengthening Forum engagement with civil society and echoes a wish of leaders that their emerging Pacific Plan should "deliver real benefits for the Pacific peoples".

The Apia Forum may well be remembered as the one at which a real breakthrough was made in bringing governments and civil society together in a more positive and productive relationship.

There are bound to be some testing times ahead, but there are encouraging signs of progress. The new government in Vanuatu has led the way by signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on cooperation with VANGO (the Vanuatu NGO umbrella body). This MOU is aimed at strengthening the relationship between the Vanuatu Government and NGOs in recognition of the role played by civil society in the delivery of social services as government services are downsized.

Palau festival captivates Pacific visitors

Some three thousand artists, performers and their supporters came together in Palau in July to celebrate the 9th Festival of Pacific Arts. The 10 day festival, which has been held every four years since 1972, was this year structured around the theme Nurture, Regenerate and Celebrate. Among the visitors was **Professor Karen Nero**, Director of the MacMillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies at Canterbury University. These are her impressions.

The festival opened at dawn on 22 July as spectators gathered to welcome the arrival of canoes carrying the heads of the national delegations.

Seven new Palauan kabekl war canoes were joined by four sailing canoes from Palau and Guam; two additional Carolinean sailing canoes were delayed due to adverse winds and currents.

Palau Minister of Culture and festival Director Alexander Merep addressed the audience in Palauan, translated into English. His words emphasised culture, not politics, but the politics of culture did creep into the festival – for the first time delegations from the Aboriginal peoples of Taiwan, West Papua, and Japan joined the performances.

The power of Pacific canoe cultures and knowledge was highlighted with a week long programme on traditional navigation and canoeing. This included races, and the auction of canoes built during the festival.

There was tremendous breadth to the festival offerings: included along with the many musical and dance performances were applied arts, culinary arts presentations, a literary arts and writing workshop, natural history and environmental displays and excursions, navigation and canoeing, traditional architecture, health arts and traditional skills and games. And that is only a small part of the list. The only possible complaint was that one couldn't be at all the venues at one time! At least the small size of the festival site – the island of Koror is just 5 square miles – proved an asset.



It is impossible to provide more than a glimpse of all performances viewed. In my opinion New Zealand led the way, in its contemporary arts and theatrical performances and its inclusion of our Pacific brothers and sisters from Aotearoa. Some of the performing arts highlights included Nina Nawalowalo's 'Bula.'

Other highlights were Solomon Islands pan pipe players, Rapa Nui dancers, and young Palauan and Yapese dancers. Palau's traditional leaders broke new ground by forming a national dance group of young women from the top two clans of each village, all in their clan's formal attire.

Everyone wondered how Palau, with fewer than 20,000 people, could host the 3000 plus delegates and spectators. The government organising committee negotiated financial support to build the new Belau National Museum and Ngarachamayong Culture Centre. Then, in true Palauan/Pacific fashion, each of Palau's states hosted one or more delegations, oversaw their accommodation and ensured they visited some of the other states. The food was superb and plentiful. Local foods including taro and seafoods were a highlight.

A strong feeling of camaraderie developed during the festival despite (or perhaps because of) the frequently hot weather combined with heavy rains.

New Zealand delegation head Elisabeth Ellis reported that all delegations learned lessons from Palau's style of hosting, not only in terms of looking after guests but also for its contribution to reinforcing the Palauan culture of hospitality. 🌿



Above: Women of Ontong Java, Solomon Islands entering the stadium at the opening ceremony.
Photo: Karen Nero.



Left: Torres Strait Islands dancer.
Photo: Karen Stevenson.



Centre Spread: Marshallese musicians and dancers.
Photo: Karen Stevenson.

Opposite page top: Vibrant Cook Islands dancers liven things up.
Photo: Karen Nero.

Long road to peace

Solomon Islands remains fragile a year after intervention from Pacific neighbours including New Zealand. In this edited article, *The Waikato Times'* Sid Pickering, on an assignment sponsored by the Pacific Cooperation Foundation, visits villages where memories of brutality are fresh, and fear and suspicion still hold sway.

A spectral light looms around an almost naked boy as he blows on the embers of a flax torch. A small group of villagers is gathered nearby, unloading the tiny fibreglass boat from Honiara, the Solomon Islands capital. Beyond them the jungle stands dark and silent.

These are the Gari-speaking people of Marasa village, tucked into the Weather Coast of Guadalcanal.

Seventeen months ago, these people, and about 250 other villagers, were being held at gunpoint on the beach, watching flames and smoke pour from the jungle. Boy soldiers, under orders from a local warlord, had murdered villagers they suspected of being government spies, and were burning their village to the ground.

It was a neutral village caught up in a civil war that threatened to turn the Solomon Islands - an archipelago of more than 900 islands, about 1800km northeast of Australia - into a failed state and a haven for terrorists.

Months after the Marasa attack, the Solomons Government made an international plea for help, and an Australian-led force of soldiers, police and advisers arrived in July last year to stop the fighting. Named RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands), the force has arrested hundreds of militants, and is now in the

second phase of its involvement: rebuilding government systems to ensure the peace lasts.

New Zealand made the second-biggest contribution to the force, with 35 police and 105 members of the armed forces. It has also committed millions in aid dollars, principally in education. New Zealand's military commitment has been winding down in recent months, but will continue with two three-month deployments of 33 infantry between now and 2006.

New Zealand Deputy High Commissioner, John Mataira, is clear about the need for the intervention.

"We're helping them to become the country they should be. Before RAMSI, the country was a mess, now there is hope. It's that simple."

But people like Marasa villager Nicodemus Valena will never forget, and they want specific demands met before forgiveness is likely.

Sitting cross-legged on the floor of the newly built school at Marasa, he tells the story in a quiet monotone.

He was near his brother Charlie's house on the morning of March 16 last year, when he heard a village boy call out that rebel warlord Harold Keke's men were at the beach. Nicodemus knew there was going to be trouble - the militants mistakenly thought the village had aligned itself with the Government, and they were there to teach villagers a brutal lesson in loyalty.

Nicodemus' cousin, 19, and nephew, 14, were picked from the crowd of villagers and accused of being government spies. Their hands and feet were bound in rope and they were tied to logs on the beach. At 8am the beatings began. The boys were hit with stones, knees, fists and feet, intermittently, until early afternoon.

"We saw them not moving. They died. I ask them to give the body so we can bury. They say no. They say they are the animals, we cannot bury the animals."

The villagers were held on the beach for two further days while Keke decided what to do with them. It was dark at the end of day three when the boys with guns left the beach. The warlord had spared the villagers' lives but burnt to the ground all that they owned.

Since that day, RAMSI police and soldiers have arrested Keke and many of his followers. But many remain hiding in the jungle, in the belief Keke will be released from prison and come back to lead them.

One hour's walk from Marasa, the village of Mbambanakira comes into view. It's much bigger than Marasa, made up of 14 clusters of thatch-roof houses made from scavenged wood.

In the village's main square are a school, a small clinic, and a police station - a reminder of the contribution RAMSI has made to restoring order on the Weather Coast.



Two Australians, a Fijian and a Samoan staff the police station. On the face of it, Solomon Islander police - with their knowledge of customs and pidgin language - might be more effective, but among the locals they still have a reputation for corruption.

But nobody is thinking about that today.

The RAMSI big-wigs, including its Australian head Nick Warner and outgoing Assistant Police Commissioner Ben McDevitt, are here to celebrate the mission's first anniversary. A few short speeches, praising the resilience of the villagers, and a couple of songs later, they are gone.

The whole visit is over in minutes, but the villagers continue celebrating well into the night. RAMSI's critics say its chief skill - especially during its one-year anniversary celebrations - is self-congratulation. RAMSI did end the fighting, and no Solomon Islander would argue with that. But one year on, there is an underlying tension about its presence. In Honiara, it's the tension of a people who feel outsiders are taking over their country. In the village, it's more about basic cultural misunderstandings.

"Our customs are different from the white man's customs," says Mbambanakira man Memani Sonia. "In our custom, if I hurt you or your family, I give you some shell money, some pigs and some food, and we move on."

The militants have harmed the people of the nearby villages, so it's up to them to pay the compensation, he says. The problem is, the militants have nothing to give. "We have been negotiating with them. It's difficult."

But wouldn't the main difficulty be that the militants are in prison?

"No, no. There are many still here. We talk to their chief. He lives just up there," says Sonia, as he points back over his head towards the jungle. "I'll send a message, later we will go there."

The river is usually a lot higher than this, but two rare days of sunshine in a row have made it easy to wade across. "This," says Sonia, when he makes the opposite bank, "is their territory now."

After about an hour's walk, we arrive at a small hill. At the top, a dirt clearing reveals a small group of men, a cooking area, and what appears to be a lookout. On a well-worn seat fashioned from a fallen log, sits Stanley Joash.

Sonia introduces him as "Commander Joash" but, reacting unexpectedly quickly, Joash jumps in, "Not commander: chief. Chief of this area."

Dressed more like a tourist than a militant, and with a slow, engaging voice, Joash epitomises the police's difficulties on the Weather Coast. They have a fair idea he was involved in the fighting but, without witnesses, they can do nothing to bring him in.

He says the accusations were based on "rumour" and that all the militants who were directly involved in the fighting have already been arrested. Joash denies he was ever directly involved in the fighting. He says he was only "giving them moral support".

Back at Mbambanakira police station, Joash's claims

raise tired laughter.

Station Sergeant Joshua Sing knows he has his work cut out for him. He says he can't discuss how Joash fits into the picture, but it's clear he is seen as a major impediment to peace.

Sing, an Australian, and the other three officers stationed in the village, roam the surrounding area, building contacts with village chiefs and elders, and resolving minor disputes between villages.

Most crimes are still dealt with using customary law, but more serious crimes, such as assault, are investigated and put through the court system in Honiara.

At last count, the investigation team in Honiara sent a list of 22 people in the immediate area who were wanted in connection with crimes committed during the fighting. But even in such a small area, knowing the suspects' names and catching them are worlds apart.

"Throughout all the villages, everyone pretty much knows each other. The unfortunate thing is, we don't know who they are."

Sonia puts it more simply: people often lie to and misdirect the police when asked direct questions because they don't want to become involved.

But as registered nurse Victor Atu explains, the people of Mbambanakira have more to worry about than hiding militants. He runs the village clinic, a wooden building with a constant crowd of people waiting outside.

AusAID has been providing some food to the people of the Weather Coast but, Atu says, malnutrition is still the biggest health problem facing the area. It has been on the rise, partly as a result of the fighting when large stocks of pigs and chickens were stolen.

"Most of them eat only the carbohydrates, root crops and rice. They don't have enough protein."

The night brings a welcome relief from the heat but Mbambanakira never relinquishes its humidity.

It's too hot to eat inside, so when the chilli chicken, skillfully made by Fijian inspector Nacani Vitamani, is ready we go out on to the dimly lit porch to eat. The sound of singing and dancing drifts through the dark.

The villagers have set up a competition for the best peace song, and competitors from surrounding villages are calling out their encouragement.

But not everybody is celebrating. Figures, framed by doorways, hunch down only metres away, watching us eat. ☹



Above: NZAID has contributed to Solomon Islands principally in education. Photo: Julie Affleck, NZAID.

Left: Some of the almost 4000 guns RAMSI has confiscated in Solomon Islands since it arrived a little over a year ago. Photo: New Zealand Defence Force.

'Long Road to Peace', Waikato Times, 24 August 2004.

Tuna treaty a triumph

A landmark treaty governing the Pacific's main tuna fishery came into force this June. **Feleti Teo**, Director of the Forum Fisheries Agency that coordinated much of the Pacific negotiating effort, considers the deal a highly successful example of regional cooperation.



The emergence of a major regional tuna treaty has heralded the dawn of a new era in fisheries management.

Negotiating the Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks for the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPFC) took some six years of intensive meetings between members of the Forum

Fisheries Agency (FFA) – local coastal states – and nations further afield that fish in the region.

The convention is the sort of cooperative management arrangement envisaged by Pacific leaders when they established the Forum Fisheries Agency in 1979. They acknowledged then that the conservation and optimum use of highly migratory fish species – tuna, in short – would require new machinery to provide for cooperation between all the states involved.

Throughout the convention negotiations the member countries of the FFA banded together and negotiated as a solid group. Their approach was based on a realisation that this was the only way they could face up to the influential and powerful distant water fishing nations.

The FFA members all had an interest in preserving their sovereign rights to manage tuna resources within their exclusive economic zones. The distant nations, on the other hand, were looking for less stringent measures and believed the commission established under the convention should have a role in managing resources even within the national waters of the convention area. The two interest groups negotiated hard to safeguard their different interests.

The FFA secretariat played a significant role in coordinating the negotiating positions and strategies of its member countries. It became a tradition for FFA members to meet for a couple of days prior to the negotiation sessions. These meetings were designed to allow the members to consider negotiating briefs prepared by the FFA secretariat and try to agree on common positions that members would pursue.

This strategy proved effective in that it allowed most of the FFA members' negotiation objectives to be achieved. The most fundamental of these was to ensure that the Fisheries Commission being set up under the convention late this year to administer the resource should be effective in carrying out its core functions. This was not the experience of similar bodies in other regions.

Although the convention did not incorporate all the goals of FFA members, it did provide a good basis for further cooperation with all other stakeholders. However members must not be complacent - the conclusion of the convention is not the end of the fisheries management story. It is in fact just the beginning of more serious work and members must continue to work together. ❀

Son of Tuvalu heads regional fishing body

Before he took up his current position as Director of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) in late 2000, **Feleti Penitala Teo** – a self-described “son of Tuvalu” – was leader of the Tuvalu delegation to the WCPFC negotiations.

Now he has to consider the bigger picture.

“The only way for Pacific Island countries to influence the work of the new Fisheries Commission is to stick together and work as a single bloc that is committed to safeguarding their common interest - that is, to maximise benefits from sustainable use of tuna resources.”

Mr Teo, who is based in Honiara, was educated at Motufoua Secondary School in Tuvalu, St Andrew's College in Christchurch and the University of Canterbury.

He was Tuvalu's first ever law graduate, and is a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand. He also has a Master of Laws in public law from the Australian National University in Canberra.

Mr Teo joined the Tuvalu Public Service in 1987 and spent 14 years as a legal officer, rising to the position of Attorney-General before joining the FFA.



PNG “coat of arms” for Foundation

Papua New Guinea High Commissioner Lucy Bogari has commended the Pacific Cooperation Foundation for being at the leading edge of promoting understanding between New Zealand and Pacific peoples.

Ms Bogari was speaking at a formal visit to the Foundation’s Wellington office on 1 September. She presented the Chair of the Foundation’s Board of Trustees, Michael Powles, with the special gift of a spirit mask.

Ms Bogari explained that the presentation of a “ko’topu”, or sacred item, was like the bestowing of a clan coat of arms as a mark of honour. The person or clan on whom the ko’topu is bestowed acquires the right to display that ko’topu either by wearing it or displaying it on their house, especially during ceremonies. As a result, a union exists between the two clans.

Ms Bogari said that in presenting the ko’topu to the Foundation, it signified that the Foundation was accepted as part of the PNG clan. “Through that we are one people of the Pacific with a unity of purpose,” she said.



From left are: PCF Board member John Mills, Papua New Guinea High Commissioner Lucy Bogari, PCF Board member Graham Walshe, PCF Executive Director Vince McBride, PCF Board of Trustees Chair Michael Powles, John Emilio of the PNG High Commission, PCF Board member Giff Davidson and PCF Programme Manager David Vaeafe. Photo: PCF.

Pacific films fly high



Two New Zealand films with Pacific themes have been making an impact on this year’s film festival scene.

Children of the Migration is a documentary directed by Lala Rolls that records the experience of the parents and offspring of Pacific Island families who came to live in New Zealand between the 1950s and the 1980s.

Rolls said the impetus to make the film came from her own story: her arrival as an immigrant from Fiji in 1981.

“If I, a Fiji born European, found it hard, what was it like for other Pacific Islanders?”

In answering that question the production team interviewed more than 40 people, some of them famous – Tana Umaga, for instance – and others not-so-famous.

“The stories are told with warmth, humour and a touch of hard-edged truth,” Rolls said.

Children of the Migration has been a part of the 2004

New Zealand Film Festival and was expected to be screened on TV1 in mid-October.

Also appearing in cinemas has been Tongan Ninja, a “martial arts musical parody” directed by Jason Stutter.

The film features first generation Tongan New Zealander Sam Manu (left), who grew up in the Hutt suburb of Wainuiomata.

Manu, a national theatresports champion at high school, is an experienced martial arts exponent, with a 20 year background in a host of different martial arts.

The film’s promoters say it has been sold for release in the USA, France, Germany, the UK, Australia, Russia, South Africa, Turkey and several countries in Asia.

A third Pacific film looking at the lives of 10 Papua New Guineans living in Wellington has been completed and shown in time to mark Papua New Guinea’s 29 years of independence. Yu Bilong Weh (Pidgin for Where Are You From) is directed by Veialu Aila-Unsworth.



Children of the Migration production team members David Sa’ena (left) and Vela Manusaute. Photo: Island Productions.

Mainland Products Limited, proud supporter of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation

FANCY, BUT NOT TOO FANCY.

MAINLAND'S SPECIAL RESERVE RANGE



Good things take time