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Pacific Islands Forum

United Nations Member States

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Amraiya Naidu
Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations
on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Group
at the General Debate of the Third Committee
on Item 100 (Crime Prevention & Criminal Justice)
and Item 101 (International Drug Control)
2 October 2002, United Nations Headquarters**

Mr. Chairman, we warmly congratulate you on assuming leadership of this Committee. We are fully confident in your professional and personal ability to successfully conclude this session with your well-known efficiency. I have the honour to address this Committee on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum group in New York: Australia, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and my own country Fiji, in particular, this is the *first* such group statement before this very important committee. We thank Mr. Costa for his opening addresses and in addressing the two items under debate.

The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders, meeting in Suva, Fiji Islands, in August 2002, agreed on a range of actions to counter the threats facing the region from trans-national organised crime and new security challenges. Given the nature of international criminal activity and the regional spread of our countries, we can best hope to do this through regional co-operation in developing and strengthening our security and law enforcement arrangements.

We have made positive strides in the development of draft legislation on weapons control, illicit drug control and in sharing information through the creation of Domestic Financial Intelligence Units. Emphasis has been placed on integrity at the work place. There are also regional initiatives on joint specialist training and enhanced cooperation through the Combined Law Agency Groups (CLAGs). Such regional activities serve

not only to strengthen regional efforts to combat crime, but also to maximise returns through pooling of resources.

Nasonini Declaration

To highlight further the region's concerns over, and response to transnational crime and terrorism, the Forum agreed to adopt the *Nasonini Declaration on Regional Security*. The Nasonini Declaration further supports and updates the 1992 *Honiara Declaration on Law Enforcement Cooperation*, the 1997 *Aitutaki Declaration* and the *Biketawa Declaration* adopted in 2000 to act collectively in response to security challenges including the adverse effects of globalisation such as transnational crimes, and unlawful challenges to national integrity and independence.

Item 101 International Drug Control

Regional Illicit Drug Control

Shortcomings in the operation of illicit drug legislation within the region were noted by the Forum Leaders in their meeting in 2000.

As a result, a joint working group of Forum members and law enforcement agencies was convened to assess current legislation with a view to providing a common framework including model legislation.

The Forum Leaders, in Fiji, 2002, endorsed the draft Bill and encouraged all Forum Island Countries to examine the possibility of enacting the legislation in its entirety noting that jurisdictions have to vet and scrutinise the draft in accordance with their own procedures. The Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC) also approved the continuing work of the sub-committee to provide in-country support to law enforcement officers and prosecutors on implementing the *Illicit Drug Control Bill*.

The Pacific region is developing mechanisms for improved coordination of training and technical assistance, together with the collection of information and analysis of the status of the drug situation and illegal people movements in the region.

Mr. Chairman, the 33rd Forum Communiqué, which includes the Nasonini Declaration is being issued as UN document A/57/331 for referencing. Let me highlight its pertinent points for this debate, some of which were reflected in the opening discussion by the Executive Director.

NASONINI DECLARATION ON REGIONAL SECURITY

- In this regard, Leaders recalled their commitment to good governance practices at all levels as a key fundamental strategy for addressing some of the difficult and sensitive issues underlying the causes of tension and conflict in the region.
- Leaders expressed their concern about the recent heightened threat to global and regional security following the events of September 11th 2001, in particular, those posed by international terrorism and transnational crime.
- Recognising the need for immediate and sustained regional action in response to the current regional security environment, Forum Leaders affirmed the importance of the *Honiara Declaration*, in particular, as providing a firm foundation for action to address these new and heightened threats to security in the region.
- Forum Leaders underlined their commitment to the importance of global efforts to combat terrorism and to implement internationally agreed anti-terrorism measures, such as the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 and the Financial Action Task Force Special Recommendations, including associated reporting requirements.
- The Forum Leaders reaffirmed that law enforcement cooperation, backed by a strong common legislative base, should remain an important focus for the region and welcomed progress which has been made in regional law enforcement cooperation under the auspices of the relevant regional bodies.
- Forum Leaders noted however, that, while some progress had been made in the implementation of the *Honiara Declaration*, further urgent action was required of some member states and recommitted to full implementation of relevant legislation under the *Honiara Declaration* by the end of 2003.
- Leaders underlined the importance to Members of introducing legislation and developing national strategies to combat serious crime including money laundering, drug trafficking, terrorism and terrorist financing, people smuggling, and people trafficking in accordance with international requirements in these areas, taking into account work undertaken by other bodies including the UN and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

- Forum Leaders tasked the Forum Regional Security Committee to review regional implementation of UNSCR 1373, the FATF Special Recommendations and the *Honiara Declaration* and report back to the Forum at next year's meeting on these subjects.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, the Pacific Islands Forum group is addressing these emerging areas of concern seriously in our shared responsibility towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Technical assistance and cooperation that are available for both the MDGs and for integral treatment of these issues under discussion would provide added value to our regional initiatives.

I thank you.