

Concept Note: Regional Security Consultations: Biketawa Plus

Purpose

1. This note outlines a process and areas for consideration in undertaking consultations to develop a comprehensive 'Biketawa Plus' regional security declaration.
2. This initiative follows tasking by Forum Leaders for the Secretariat to initiate consultations on developing a comprehensive 'Biketawa Plus' declaration, for consideration at their next meeting to be hosted by Nauru in September 2018.
3. Members feedback is being sought on this concept note, in order to shape the work plan to develop a 'Biketawa Plus' declaration in 2018.

Background

4. Forum members have been discussing the future of regional security cooperation, following the withdrawal of the 14 year-long Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in June 2017, which had been mobilized under the Biketawa Declaration. Those discussions gained further traction during the meeting of Forum Foreign Ministers in August 2017.
5. Forum Foreign Ministers discussed a wide range of political and security issues, and emphasised the importance of enhancing regional cooperation to address all aspects of existing and emerging security threats - including health, environmental, economic, human and cybersecurity issues.
6. To that end, Forum Foreign Ministers considered it was timely to build on the Biketawa Declaration and other security related declarations of the Forum, and recommended that Leaders initiate consultations on developing a 'Biketawa Plus' regional security declaration, which would be a foundation for future regional responses.
7. In considering the recommendation of their Foreign Ministers, Forum Leaders recognised the importance of an **expanded concept of security** that was inclusive of human security, humanitarian assistance, prioritising environmental security, and regional cooperation in building resilience to disasters and climate change.

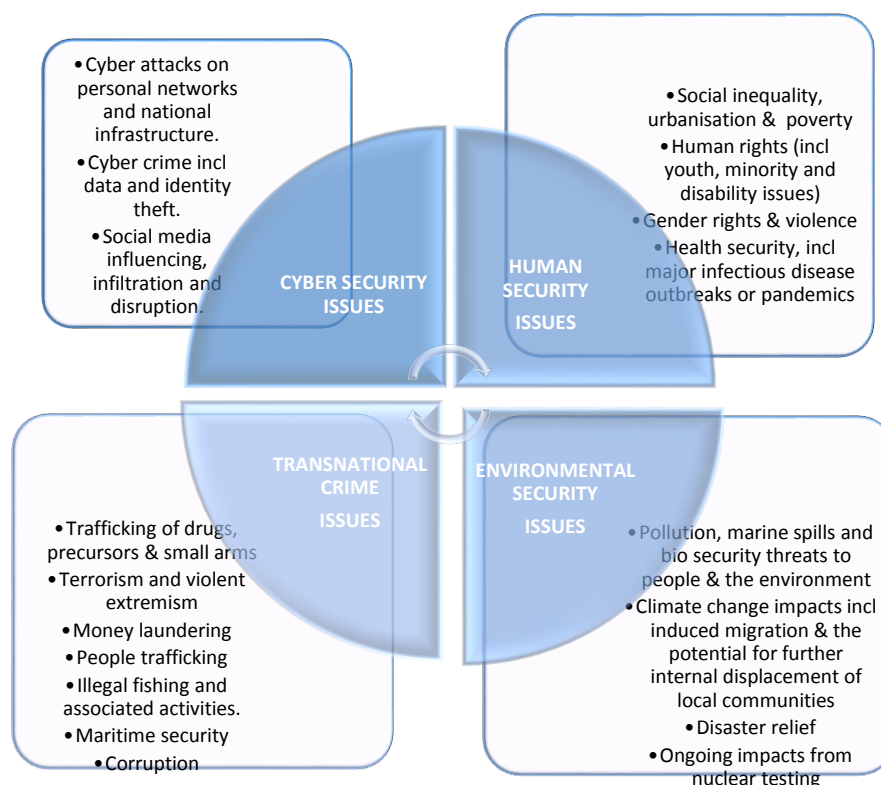
Policy Context: The Blue Pacific and the Framework for Pacific Regionalism...

8. During the 48th Pacific Islands Forum meeting held in Apia in September 2017, Leaders endorsed *The Blue Pacific* as a new narrative for how Forum members work together, and how the Forum engages with the world. *The Blue Pacific* calls for Forum Members to work together as one Blue Continent.
9. *The Blue Pacific* aims to harness our region's shared ocean identity, geography and resources, and by doing so, drive positive change in the Pacific's socio-cultural, political and economic development. This new narrative helps contextualise the potential for Forum policy action, such as in securing a peaceful, stable and secure Blue Pacific. In 2018 the Secretariat will support its members to articulate what the Blue Pacific identity means for regional security policy.
10. This work complements the development of a **Forum Foreign Policy** (see separate concept note), which is a tasking for the Secretariat by Forum Foreign Ministers.

11. The development of a 'Biketawa Plus' regional security declaration is firmly grounded in the 2014 *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* (FPR). The FPR represents a collective commitment to pursuing regional cooperation and integration in order to progress the region's ambitions for sustainable development, economic growth, strengthened governance and security. In doing so, the FPR guides policy development and implementation within the Secretariat.

....An expanded concept of security...

12. By working and consulting with Forum members, as well as partner organisations/agencies, the Secretariat has identified a range of non-traditional security issues that are relevant and fit within an **expanded concept of security**, and in today's context. The Secretariat recognises that the next decade and beyond will be critical to addressing the complex and growing challenges that are facing our region. These challenges include but are not limited to the social, economic, and environmental pressures arising from limited opportunities to economic growth, vulnerability to climate change and disasters from extreme natural hazard risk events, burgeoning youth populations, worsening health issues such as non-communicable diseases, and increasing issues related to urbanisation.
13. The region's economic prospects remain bleak. It remains disadvantaged by its remoteness to markets, small market size, weak governance and growing populations which constrain economic growth. Globalisation has not overcome the challenges of remoteness and size as had been hoped. While technological advances will improve connectedness, it will also raise its own security challenges for Forum members. Progress on governance remains stalled. Disasters from natural hazard risks and from climate change will be major obstacles to the future development of the region and the countries in the region. Compounding this situation is a significant youth bulge which is expected to grow by at least 40% in the coming 25 years. Regional cooperation to confront these challenges will be vital as no member country has the capacity to meet these challenges on its own.
14. This provides a useful context to draw on, in identifying the potential scope of a 'Biketawa Plus' regional security declaration. The Secretariat will confirm the scope of this expanded concept of security as part of the development of the 'Biketawa Plus' work. Notwithstanding this, a summary of some of these security issues is illustrated in the diagram, below.



Objective of a 'Biketawa Plus' declaration

15. Drawing on discussions at the Forum Leaders meeting and in conversations with some members, the primary objective is to design a 'Biketawa Plus' regional security declaration that is enduring and fit-for-purpose.
16. The Secretariat will work with members and relevant, key partners and stakeholders to identify and address gaps and/or shortcomings in the existing security architecture. The Secretariat will also test and consider potential regional responses to new and emerging security issues. In practical terms a 'Biketawa Plus' regional security declaration should:
 - Enhance security cooperation between Forum members, and with Forum dialogue partners;
 - Guide how Forum members can improve the way they work together in pursuit of regional and national peace and security, and how the relevant CROP agencies can support this; and,
 - Provide an enduring 'fit-for-purpose' security framework which will encourage greater regional security cooperation to achieve *"peaceful, safe and stable communities and countries, ensuring full security and wellbeing for the peoples of the Pacific"* – Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

Guiding principles for 'Biketawa Plus'...

17. Consistent with the principles of the Biketawa Declaration, the 'Biketawa Plus' declaration should also:
 - Respect the principles of sovereignty, non-interference in the domestic affairs of member states; and the right of Forum countries to pursue their own destinies - free of coercion or interference;
 - Commit to promoting peace and stability throughout the region; encourage regional cooperation, and the peaceful settlement of disputes;
 - Uphold the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone and supporting other efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation objectives;
 - Reaffirm the importance of rules-based international order founded on the UN charter; and adherence to relevant international law; and
 - Reaffirm the continuity of the existing regional security architecture¹, framed by the following Forum regional security declarations:

- 1992 Honiara Declaration	- 2000 Biketawa Declaration
- 1997 Aitutaki Declaration	- 2002 Nasonini Declaration

18. The Secretariat welcomes feedback on both the objectives; and guiding principles for this work from member countries.

Key areas for consideration...

19. Extensive consultations with members and other key stakeholders will be necessary to take forward the development of a 'Biketawa Plus' regional security declaration. Areas to be covered include:

Work areas

- *Clarifying the context:* this work will draw on appropriate lessons identified/learnt from RAMSI; and the Pacific Regional Assistance to Nauru on early intervention in averting possible causes of conflict. The Secretariat will also draw on relevant international/regional instruments, statements and commitments which contribute to regional security.

¹ There are other regional and international instruments, statements and commitments that contribute to the Forum's regional security architecture that for brevity have not been included.

- *Confirming the scope*: the Secretariat will consult widely to develop and refine an appropriate **expanded concept of security** to underpin the development of the 'Biketawa Plus' regional security declaration.
- *Identifying opportunities*: the Secretariat aims to identify any areas for further regional security cooperation. This could include leveraging off national 'whole-of-government approaches' to achieve a 'whole-of-region approach' amongst members, which could lead to:
 - Increased policy dialogue; and information sharing;
 - Enhanced security, legal (especially drafting legislation), and law enforcement training; and capability across the region;
 - Further regional resilience and disaster response cooperation;
 - Upgraded regional security analysis and assessment capabilities;
 - Improved operational security cooperation and coordination (and greater utilisation of regional assets and platforms); and,
 - Inclusion of accountability mechanisms for the implementation of the new Declaration.
- *Developing options and recommendations*: to support the 'Biketawa Plus' regional security declaration a set of options and recommendations will be developed. In preparing this advice the Secretariat would look to articulate the role of Forum Foreign Ministers in supporting Leaders in the regional security space including:
 - Providing advice on the strategic environment and regional security cooperation;
 - The role of official level committees in supporting this process (the Forum Regional Security Committee, and the proposed standing Forum Foreign Officials sub-committee); and
 - Progressing the implementation of the 'Biketawa Plus' regional security declaration;

Proposed Approach

Phase 1: Commissioning conversations (November 2017 to January 2018)

20. Phase 1 will seek Forum members perspectives on regional security, and their expectations with regard to a 'Biketawa Plus' regional security declaration.
21. The Secretariat will release a security questionnaire to members and key stakeholders; and seek their feedback.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
Comprehensive desktop review of the existing regional security architecture, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - analysis of the scope of security issues and challenges covered; - analysis of the key outcomes and impact of Forum related regional security declarations and commitments made by Forum Leaders; - analysis of possible areas for expansion of regional security agenda as well as areas that may no longer be a priority; and - explore modalities for a regional security strategy/declaration with the objective of identifying the most suitable for the Pacific (ie. declaration/strategy/framework/other). 	Completed by 15 Dec 2017
Initial consultations with Suva based Forum Diplomatic Missions	Meeting held on 13 Nov.
Draft Biketawa Plus concept note released to members seeking feedback	22 Nov 2017

Dedicated Biketawa Plus briefing in the margins of Budget FOC meeting	12 Dec 2017
Consultations send questionnaire under official circular to CROP, specialised law enforcement and legal agencies (PICP, OCO, PIDC, PILON)	Comments by 19 Jan 2018
Consultations send questionnaire under official circular to observers and international partners (including APCSS, UNODC, APG, etc)	Comments by 19 Jan 2018
Consultations send questionnaire under official circular to regional civil society and media	Comments by 19 Jan 2018

Phase 2: Policy Analysis and Exploration (February to April 2018)

22. The second phase will analyse and aggregate feedback received as part of Phase 1 including:

- identifying key themes and issues raised; and
- key stakeholder perspectives, and any accompanying information.

23. As part of this work the Secretariat will confirm the context, scope, and identify opportunities for further cooperation with members. Below outlines likely steps and indicative timings:

a. Consolidate outcomes of consultations and develop a policy paper for Biketawa Plus	Completed by mid Feb 2018
b. Disseminate outcomes of consultations and policy paper to members (via circular) and request feedback by 31 March 2018	28 Feb 2018
c. Consolidate all feedback and drafting of declaration/regional strategy for members consideration	All of April

Phase 3: Policy Advice (May to August 2018)

24. Following feedback from members on the draft policy paper, the Secretariat will produce a draft declaration, potentially with an accompanying strategy or implementation plan for member's consideration.

a. Consult draft declaration/strategy with members for consideration and comments	Comments by end of May 2018
b. Submit for consideration of Pre-Forum FOC and FFMM	By end of June 2018