

## **COMMUNIQUE OF THE 22<sup>nd</sup> PACIFIC IMMIGRATION DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY REGULAR ANNUAL MEETING**

The Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) held its 22<sup>nd</sup> Regular Annual Meeting in Rarotonga, Cook Islands on 4 – 6 June 2019. The meeting theme “*Staying the course: welcoming differences and sharing solutions*” recognised the need to enhance collaboration amongst PIDC Members to ensure the continued growth and success of the organisation. Hosted by Cook Islands Immigration (Chair), 17 Member countries and territories were represented including Republic of Fiji (Outgoing Chair), Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna with the Republic of the Marshall Islands participating through teleconference for several sessions. During the meeting, PIDC welcomed Tokelau as its newest Member.

2. Also present at the meeting were representatives from partner organisations including the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Bali Process Regional Support Office (Bali Process RSO), the Platform for Disaster Displacement, Pacific Transnational Crime Network (PTCN), University of the South Pacific (USP), UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Joint Inter Agency Task-Force West, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, US Customs and Border Protection, and New Zealand Police, Aviation Security and Transnational Crimes Unit (TCU).

### **Opening**

3. The Conference was opened by the Prime Minister for the Cook Islands Honourable Henry Puna who called for delegates to embrace the Pacific regional approach by sharing ideas, solutions, and resources to collectively strengthen national security and economic development.

### **Statement by the Chair**

4. The Chair, Ms. Kairangi Samuela of Cook Islands Immigration encouraged members to engage actively with the Secretariat for support and networking resources. She also advised that we have a strong mandate within the Boe Declaration for interagency cooperation and strengthening of partnerships. The signing of the Declaration of Partnership between PIDC, Oceania Customs Organisation and Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police at last years’ Regular Annual Meeting in Fiji is the beginning of this journey together at the regional level. In 2019, the Cook Islands is Chair of both the PIDC and the OCO, and as such would wholeheartedly encourage progress between the regional organisations, and national cooperation between our law enforcement partners.

### **Tokelau Membership**

5. Members unanimously welcomed Tokelau to the PIDC family. Tokelau representative, Director Simona Mei of the Department of Transport and Support Services signed the PIDC Memorandum of Understanding signifying not only the expansion of the organisation but also emphasising the continued value of the PIDC to the regional community.

## **Secretariat Report**

6. Members welcomed the Secretariat's report on activities undertaken in 2018 – 2019 which highlighted several key PIDC activities to coordinate regional positions and initiatives as well as build national policy, legal, procedural and staff capacity.

## **PIDC Board Report**

7. Members noted the significant achievements of the PIDC Board over the past twelve months under the guidance of Director Nemani Vuniwaqa of Fiji Immigration in providing vital oversight and direction to Secretariat activities.

## **Significant PIDC Issues discussed and achievements**

8. PIDC Members celebrated a number of key successes achieved since the last Regular Annual Meeting in June 2018.

### ***Launch of Online Postgraduate Award with University of the South Pacific***

9. Members welcomed and endorsed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of the South Pacific for the provision of an online Postgraduate Diploma in Border Security. The Postgraduate Award will be available to the region and is scheduled to commence in 2020 with PIDC support for at least three cohorts from Member countries.

### ***Near Universal adoption of the PIDC Memorandum of Arrangement for Immigration Information Sharing***

10. Members welcomed the signing by a further five Members of the Memorandum of Arrangement (MoA) on Information sharing which had been launched at the 2018 RAM leaving only one Member yet to sign. The Secretariat noted that while Members were still working to finalise the establishment and training of some structures of the PIDC Information and Intelligence Sharing Network that would support the MoA, PIDC through existing processes had in the past 12 months begun sharing border enforcement related information to unprecedented levels.

### ***Establishment of highly effective Profiling and Intelligence Support Group***

11. To ensure vital real time information was effectively communicated across the region by PIDC border officers, Members welcomed the successful establishment of the operational information sharing group that allowed Members to: (a) share inter-agency immigration law enforcement information and intelligence in real-time for front line staff; (b) provide real-time support to information requests from Members; and (c) coordinate regional operations and develop regional passenger risk indicators for PIDC purposes.

### ***Draft PIDC Immigration Framework to Combat Human Trafficking and People Smuggling***

12. Members welcomed the development of a draft Regional PIDC Immigration Framework to Combat Human Trafficking and People Smuggling to identify priorities and coordinate activities of both Members and partner organisations. Based on discussions held in Apia in early 2019 at a PIDC hosted Regional Executive Seminar on Human Trafficking and People Smuggling, the draft Framework identifies key interventions at the national and

regional level for Members to select and implement based on domestic priorities and circumstances.

### ***Common PIDC Issues and Joint Solutions***

13. Members discussed a number of common issues and through panel discussions and workshop sessions shared national experiences and developed possible joint responses regarding: (a) aircraft and maritime clearance procedures; (b) transnational crime threats including outlaw motorcycle gangs and criminal deportees; (c) processing high risk visa applications; (d) increasing PIDC maritime domain awareness; (e) introducing/ upgrading automated border management systems; (f) developing evidence based research and policy; (g) workplace wellbeing activities; and (h) integrated border management systems for the future.

### ***Institutional strengthening***

14. Members discussed PIDC initiatives to strengthen national institutional capacity and promote modernisation and reform. Members welcomed the development of PIDC resources and the provision of ongoing national technical assistance missions to strengthen Members' key institutional areas.

#### **a) Strengthening National Data Collection**

Members welcomed the introduction of PIDC technical support to strengthen national immigration data collection and analysis through the successful trialling of the PIDC Enforcement Data Collection Tool (PEDCT) in two pilot countries being Solomon Islands and Palau. Developed to complement existing border management systems and support Members collect and analyse data in electronic form, the PEDCT provides a simple, cost-effective and robust analysis tool that can be readily introduced and tailored by Members based on national priorities and circumstances.

#### **b) Capacity Building and Training**

Members welcomed the provision of a Train the Trainer workshop which familiarised trainers from Member countries with the immigration training curriculum and associated modules provided to PIDC by the Bali Process RSO and IOM. Members: (a) noted the proposed national support to be provided by the Secretariat to Members for the adaptation of the training curriculum with the support of partner organisations; and (b) recognised the crucial support being provided by the Secretariat, larger Members (Australia's International Border Cooperation Programme and New Zealand's Hakili Matangi), and partner organisations in providing training on priority technical areas such as strategic leadership, data collection, labour mobility, law enforcement intelligence, document examination, immigration standard operating procedures, profiling, vessel search, and investigations.

#### **c) Legislative Modernisation**

Members welcomed the work undertaken in the third year of the PIDC immigration legislation modernisation programme (both through PIDC and through New Zealand bilateral support) to modernise and update Members' legislation. Members welcomed the support provided to the national legislative review committees of the Cook Islands,

Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tonga and the drafting assistance provided in partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to Tuvalu and Samoa.

### **Boe Declaration on Regional Security**

15. Members discussed the important role PIDC had in implementing the Boe Declaration on Regional Security endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in 2018. Members noted the establishment of a new coordinating mechanism based on the previous Forum Regional Security Committee but with an expanded security mandate beyond transnational crime and border management. Members also discussed how PIDC would support the related regional security initiatives being advanced by Australia such as the development of the Regional Pacific Fusion Centre and the Australian Pacific Security College. Members noted the importance of this work and the need for PIDC to remain engaged in these activities to ensure effective coordination across all law enforcement and border enforcement agencies.

### **Observers**

16. The Membership welcomed presentations made by Observers on common issues and areas of concern and acknowledged the wide range of work that was already being undertaken in partnership with partner organisations for the benefit of PIDC Members and the wider regional community.

### **Election of New PIDC Board**

17. Members welcomed the new Board Members being Tuvalu (Incoming Vice-Chair), Fiji (Outgoing Vice-Chair), Kiribati (Small Island States), Vanuatu (Melanesia), Federated States of Micronesia (Micronesia), Tonga (Polynesia), and Samoa (host country).

Rarotonga, Cook Islands  
June 2019