



Agenda item 6: Results Management Suite Output 2: A regional coordination point for immigration, liaison, advocacy, representation and agenda setting

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to **consider** recommendations proposed under each of the agenda sub-items discussed below.

Purpose

This paper seeks to provide the Board with an update regarding key activities undertaken by the Secretariat during the reporting period to advance the Results Management Suite Output 2. This output aims to establish and maintain PIDC as a regional coordination point for immigration, liaison, advocacy & representation and agenda setting. Agenda items to be discussed include:

- a) Pacific Humanitarian Pathway – COVID-19
- b) Pacific Multi-Agency Table Top Exercise Update
- c) Stakeholder Agencies Annual Conferences Update (OCO & PICP)
- d) Operation Akamau Update

Agenda Item 6 (a) Pacific Humanitarian Pathway – COVID-19

Background

2. In response to the significant challenges caused by the global pandemic COVID-19, the Pacific Islands Forum established the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway for COVID-19 (PHP-C) under the Biketawa Declaration¹ on 7 April 2020. The PHP-C objective was to ensure that Forum Members' requests for medical and humanitarian assistance for their preparedness and response to COVID-19 were addressed in a timely, safe, and effective manner that did not undermine national border protection efforts already in place.

3. The PIDC was invited to join the PHP-C Regional Taskforce (RTF) to operationalise the PHP-C reporting to a Forum Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FEMM) Ministerial Action Group (MAG). As part of the RTF, the Secretariat worked with Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) and other RTF Members to develop regional:

- a) Common Protocols for the Deployment of Technical Personnel;
- b) Common Protocols on Customs and Biosecurity;
- c) Common Protocols on Immigration (**drafted by PIDC**);
- d) Common Protocols on Repatriation of Forum Nationals; and

¹ The Biketawa Declaration is a regional response mechanism to support Pacific Islands Forum Members during times of crisis and has been activated previously under RAMSI and PRAN to support Solomon Islands and Nauru respectively.

- e) Common Protocols on Clearances for Aircraft and Ships Transporting Medical and Humanitarian Assistance, Technical Personnel, and Repatriating Nationals.

Update

4. The MAG tasked the RTF to coordinate the implementation of the regional common protocols and the operationalisation of the PHP-C. Part of this work has included looking to support activities related to two taskforces established by the FEMM to conduct an assessment on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on Pacific Islands Forum Members and the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Taskforce to look at how the PHP-C can assist with the region's recovery.

5. In terms of operational support, by the end of January 2021, in addition to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that had been moved commercially to support various Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), the PHP-C through the World Food Programme's (WFP) Pacific Humanitarian Air Services had transported into and across the region:

- a) over 177,000 kilograms (just over 1315CBM) of health and humanitarian supplies; and
- b) 48 technical health and humanitarian personnel.

6. The RTF met on 5 February 2021 to coordinate additional activities including possible issues regarding the distribution of vaccinations to PICTs. In addition, the RTF discussed ongoing and emerging issues for the PHP-C including:

- a) assisting with the transportation of the COVID-19 vaccinations;
- b) supporting PICT efforts to reopen their borders;
- c) ensuring alignment and non-duplication of international (UN), regional (CROP) and national efforts through bilateral and multilateral engagement;
- d) balancing the need for urgency and the need for due diligence and risk management; and
- e) options for financing and resourcing for the PHP-C.

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- a) **note** the progress of activities under the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway – COVID-19;
- b) **task** the Secretariat to continue support for this important activity ensuring that PIDC Members' interests are well represented; and
- c) **task** the Secretariat to ensure that Members remain briefed on relevant ongoing matters.

Agenda Item 6 (b) Pacific Multi-Agency Table Top Exercise Update

Background

7. The PIDC, OCO, Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP) and Australia Pacific Security College (APSC) hosted a multi-agency desktop exercise on 25th of February and 4th of March 2021 in Fiji, Samoa, and the Solomon Islands to strengthen interagency law enforcement cooperation at the national and regional levels. (Joining Instructions and Participants List attached as Attachments One and Two) The main learning objectives for the exercise included (a) leadership and collaboration in a multiagency context; (b) the role of, and requirement for, analysis, and; (c) risk management. The exercise focused on promoting

collaboration between operational leaders to strengthen how law enforcement agencies cooperate, how they share information, and how they work with other parts of government to deliver security outcomes.

8. As part of the exercise, in each participating country, Police, Customs, Immigration and Transnational Crime Unit Officers formed national teams to work through scenarios that dealt with transnational crime. Participants were tasked to work as a team deciding on:

- a) how their team was going to operate;
- b) how decisions were to be made;
- c) which officer and agency was best placed to lead;
- d) what information requests were to be sent out and what networks to use;
- e) what information was to be shared; and
- f) what legal grounds was available to share information and on what basis there was to prosecute potential criminal behaviour.

9. The exercise was delivered by on-site facilitators in Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and coordinated by APSC from Canberra using the Zoom platform. Facilitators included: **Fiji** – Ms Daphney Stone, Operations Manager for Oceania Customs Organisation; **Samoa** – Mr Ioane Alama, Head of Secretariat for PIDC; and **Solomon Islands** – Ms Karen Whitworth, International Operations, Australian Federal Police.

10. While the final outcomes statement for the exercise is still being completed, the Secretariat found great value in the exercise for several reasons.

- a) Firstly, it established a very effective workshop model that the Secretariat can now seek to utilise to coordinate upcoming regional trainings. The exercise scenario provided by the lead facilitator while very complex given the multi-agency national and regional components involved, provides a template that can now be scaled down for immigration purposes. The Secretariat in informal discussions with representatives of the OCO and the Pacific Transnational Crimes Network saw great opportunities for running additional exercises with other PICT participants in 2021 and 2022.
- b) Secondly, the Facilitators noted a lot of useful knowledge was gained by the Participants. Participants were able to examine their legal powers for information sharing and were also made aware of the various sources of information that they had access to through the regional bodies. Training was provided on the usefulness of APAN and also the need to utilise the PIDC Information and Intelligence Network and the PIPDC national contact points.
- c) Most importantly, the majority of Participants in their feedback recognised the need to strengthen operational collaboration and communication at the national and regional level. The Samoan participants as part of their draft national exercise outcomes looked to recommend possible steps to formalise operational arrangements between their administrations.

11. The Secretariat plans to run additional exercises for PIDC Members and will discuss the possible schedule with the Board at its next meeting.

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- a) **note** the completion of the Pacific Multi-Agency Table Top Exercise Update;
- b) **welcome** the support provided by Fiji, Samoa and the Solomon Islands;
- c) **task** the Secretariat to continue to advance exercises such as these for the rest of the membership; and
- d) **task** the Secretariat to table the final outcomes document to the Board when completed with final recommendations on the way forward.

Agenda Item 6 (c) Stakeholder Agencies Annual Conference Update (OCO & PICP)

Background

12. Regional cooperation and coordination are important elements to PIDC's networking and advocacy programme in the Pacific especially with Members and partner stakeholders like the OCO and PICP. These networking partnerships are deemed valuable to PIDC and have been formalised through regional agreements like the Joint Declaration of Partnership.

Update

13. In anticipation of PIDC's approaching Regular Annual Meeting (RAM) and to support our coordination responsibilities, sharing of organisational calendars with partner stakeholders becomes critical in the lead-up to this year's RAM. Consequently, support for regional coordination is initiated through sharing of annual conference meeting schedules prior to these major events being hosted to avoid possible conflicting dates.

14. The OCO has set a tentative date for its annual conference on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021. The PICP is celebrating its 50th Year Anniversary and is looking to host its annual conference on the week of 8 November 2021. Both organisations have not hosted any face-to-face regular annual meetings since 2020 and it is probable that the OCO and PICP meetings will be virtual in 2021 due to the ongoing restrictions on international borders travel.

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to **note** the update provided on the planned tentative dates for the OCO and PICP 2021 annual conferences.

Agenda Item 6 (d) Operation Akamau Update

Background

15. Operation Akamau is a joint OCO-PIDC initiative led by the Australian Border Force (ABF) on behalf of the OCO and the PIDC that seeks to complement Pacific Islands Forum PHP-C. Operation Akamau aims to ensure that OCO and PIDC members have appropriate operational readiness to coordinate the movement of trade and travel requirements in light of the COVID-19 crisis. The main goal of Operation Akamau is to help OCO and PIDC members maintain secure and functional borders should the COVID-19 pandemic continue to escalate

in the region. Since its establishment, the Secretariat has had a number of meetings with ABF representatives coordinating possible support from Operation Akamau specifically around PPEs and possible supplies to be made available to PIDC Members in the Pacific.

16. While the Secretariat has progressed COVID-19 support for members through the PIDC COVID-19 Support Programme's provision of communication packages and PPEs, there remains an ongoing need from members around the continued supply of PPEs. To sustain the supply of PPEs in the coming months as international flights begin to increase, PIDC has consequently been exploring (a) additional PPE supply options from Australia and (b) the development of a PPE Guide with the ABF to support Members. On this basis, the Secretariat will continue to hold discussions with ABF on possible additional PPE supplies that could potentially be provided through Operation Akamau.

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to **note** the update provided by the Secretariat on Operation Akamau and the discussions regarding possible PPE support.

