



Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference

Sydney, Australia: 06-08 October 2009

COMMUNIQUÉ

The 13th Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC) meeting was convened in Sydney, Australia on 6th-8th October. The theme of the conference was "Focus on the Future". Forty seven delegates from Samoa (Chair), Australia (hosts), Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and representatives from the Oceania Customs Organisation, Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Canada Border Services Agency attended the three day meeting.

OPENING

The 13th PIDC meeting was formally welcomed by Ms. Cathy Maurer, the Assistant Secretary for the International Cooperation Branch of the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). Ms Cathy Maurer introduced the Hon. Laurie Ferguson MP, the Australian Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, to officially open the conference.

The Hon. Laurie Ferguson expressed sorrow on behalf of the Australian Government for the loss of life and hardship caused by the recent earthquake and tsunami in the Pacific. Mr Ferguson further expressed the Australian peoples' sympathy and support for those affected. A minute's silence was observed by the conference as a mark of respect and condolence.

In opening the conference, he reiterated Australia's view on the significance of the PIDC forum in the Pacific and welcomed the opportunity to extend the hand of friendship to all regional neighbours and use the opportunity to discuss immigration issues.

The outgoing PIDC Chair and former CEO for Samoa's Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Auseugaefa Poloma Komiti, accepted another term as the PIDC Chairman. The Chair then expressed the PIDC memberships' appreciation for Australia stepping in to host this 13th PIDC meeting, reflecting the cooperative values of the PIDC family.

Mr Allen Madden, an Aboriginal elder of the Gadigal people, welcomed participants to the land of the Gadigal people. The Chair thanked Mr Madden for his warm words of welcome.

The Chair noted that the 13th PIDC meeting had representatives from 20 of the 23 PIDC member countries. He also referenced the challenges for the PIDC, including the appointment of a new Head of Secretariat and discussions on the recommendations of the PIDC Institutional Review. He also thanked the former Head of Secretariat and wished him well. He also thanked the acting head of the PIDC

Secretariat and his team for their commitment and diligence in executing their work responsibilities given staffing constraints.

ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE 13TH PACIFIC IMMIGRATION DIRECTORS CONFERENCE

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

PIDC members thanked Australia for hosting the 2009 conference and endorsed the nomination of Samoa to continue as Chair for 2009/10. They also endorsed the nomination of Vanuatu as Vice-Chair for 2009/10.

MEMBER COUNTRY REPORTS

Written country reports were submitted and presented by Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

These reports will be analysed by the Secretariat to identify training and capacity building needs. Members also noted the importance of coming together to share knowledge and experiences with counterparts and other law enforcement secretariats and agencies from the Pacific and beyond.

PIDC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

The PIDC Institutional Review considered current arrangements of the PIDC, assessed the effectiveness of the current arrangements and made recommendations on the arrangements needed to support the PIDC in the future.

PIDC Members noted the wide ranging findings of the Institutional Review. The review acknowledged that PIDC plays a pivotal role in uniting all their 23 members to benefit and learn from each other in order to improve policies and practices for managing immigration in the Pacific region.

However, with moves toward international best practice governance standards, the recommendations of the institutional review recognised the opportunity that the organisation has to implement a role model for governance in international agencies. PIDC can position itself as an effective regional force, making a major contribution to socio-economic development and security in the Pacific region.

PIDC members endorsed in principle the PIDC Institutional Review recommendations and tasked Australia and New Zealand to draft an implementation strategy document for further consideration and endorsement by the Management Board.

2009/10 ANNUAL WORK PLAN AND RESEARCH PLAN

PIDC members endorsed the Research Plan for 2009-10, and in particular noted the core aim and objectives of the proposed research topics which includes ongoing work into people smuggling, human trafficking and illegal migration (noting the data collected since its inception in 2003), and the progress in work on the PIDC Immigration Intelligence Bulletin. Initiatives being undertaken include research into

the costs of illegally resident population and a short paper relating to intra-regional migration within the Pacific.

PIDC Advocacy and Outreach Strategy 2009 - 2012

PIDC members endorsed the PIDC Advocacy and Outreach Strategy 2009-12 and its associated work plan for 2009-10. Members recognised the importance of raising the profile of PIDC and strengthening the working relationships of members through a more focused approach.

STRENGTHENING INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

PIDC members recognised the benefits derived from immigration information/intelligence and encouraged commitment to information exchange amongst members via the PIDC Immigration Intelligence Bulletin.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

PIDC members reflected on the processes of developing the PIDC Core Skills Curriculum and encouraged members to continue supporting and contributing to the work being undertaken to successfully complete the PIDC Core Skills Curriculum. Members also thanked the Australian Youth Ambassador for Development Ms Taya Fabijanac for developing the draft curriculum.

PACIFIC REGIONAL IMMIGRATION IDENTITY PROJECT (PRIIP)

New Zealand gave a joint presentation on the PRIIP with case study input from Palau, Samoa and the Federated States of Micronesia. PIDC members were impressed with the case studies from the different islands which highlighted the range of issues around identity crimes and the need to encourage interagency cooperation and leadership at a national and regional level.

PIDC thanked New Zealand for funding this project and encouraged the PRIIP team to continue with this work. PIDC acknowledged the support from OCO and PICP Secretariats.

OBSERVERS

Presentations were provided by representatives from the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The Oceania Customs Organisation briefed the meeting on the progress of work in relation to the Pleasure Craft study, noting the need to develop model legislation to assist members and to promote information sharing amongst border management and law enforcement agencies.

The Pacific Island Forum Secretariat provided an update on the outcome of the Forum Regional Security Committee meeting and the collaborative work it continues to undertake in the region with other law enforcement agencies including the PIDC.

The Pacific Islands Chief of Police (PICP) Secretariat acknowledged the collaborative work it continues to progress in the region with PIDC and other law enforcement agencies. PICP also updated members on the endorsement of its new strategic plan for 2009-14.

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) advised the PIDC membership on the training and border security issues that the CBSA continues to address in the region.

The IOM provided an overview of the Australian-funded Pacific Assisted Voluntary Returns Project which aims to assist PIDC members to manage voluntary returns of third country nationals who have irregular migration status.

UNHCR briefed the meeting on its programme to assist PIDC members to enhance their understanding of refugee and asylum issues and capacity to manage individual cases.

CLOSING

The Conference expressed their gratitude to the Government of Australia, the staff of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship for hosting and organising a very successful PIDC. Thanks were extended to the Chair, Auseugaefa Poloma Komiti, for guiding the discussions and contributing greatly to the overall success of the meeting.

The Conference expressed their appreciation for the continued work of the Secretariat in organising the Conference.

The Conference expressed appreciation to Vanuatu for volunteering to host the 14th PIDC. The members elected the management board for the 2009/10 year consisting of Australia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu.

The high level of representation, diverse and active participation and positive steps taken to progress the objectives of PIDC at this Conference was further evidence that the organisation is indeed the pre-eminent immigration organisation in the Pacific region. The 2008/09 year saw a consolidation of core work, an expansion in the area of advocacy and outreach and the completion of the Institutional Review which had all made this year's Conference highly successful.

Sydney, Australia

08 OCTOBER 2009