

**SUMMARY RECORD**

**U.S./Pacific Island Nations Joint Commercial  
Commission Officials Meeting**

*Direction for the Utilization of JCC To Its Full  
Potential*

**East-West Center ♦ Honolulu, Hawai‘i  
May 16, 2005**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The United States/Pacific Island Nations Joint Commercial Commission (JCC) convened on May 16, 2005 at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. Officials from the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and the Kingdom of Tonga were in attendance. An observer from the Forum Secretariat also attended. The meeting was co-chaired by the Honorable Dr. Fred Sevele, Minister of Commerce, Labour and Industries, Kingdom of Tonga and Secretary of Foreign Affairs Honorable Sebastian Anefal, Federated States of Micronesia.

**WELCOMING REMARKS**

Dr. Charles Morrison, President of the East-West Center welcomed the delegates and wished the meeting success. Dr. Morrison committed the East-West Center to help make the JCC as strong as it could be and suggested that while there may be limitations on available resources, there should no limits on imagination.

Dr. Sitiveni Halapua, Director of the Pacific Islands Development Program welcomed the delegates and offered some background on the meeting. Dr. Halapua stressed the importance of the meeting since it would determine where the JCC goes in the future. Dr. Halapua proposed two issues that the meeting might consider: 1) How does the JCC work more directly and practically with the private sectors; and 2) How does the JCC better link with the activities of the Forum Secretariat.

### **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

The proposed agenda was adopted as written.

### **REPORTS**

Co-chair Hon. Dr. Sevele called on Mr. Scott Kroeker, JCC Project Officer to report on the JCC history and activities.

Mr. Kroeker gave a brief summary of the history of the JCC from its proposal by former President Bush in 1990 until today. Mr. Kroeker concluded by highlighting the changed circumstances between when the JCC was proposed and formalized to the reality today.

Dr. Halapua presented to the delegates a summary of the paper “Draft Proposal on Ways to Reinvigorate the U.S./Pacific Island Nations Joint Commercial Commission.” The proposal highlighted the need to be very specific in its focus—identifying a limited number of goods and services it wishes to promote to the U.S. and subsequently identifying policies that need to be put in place and/or barriers to be removed for this trade to be enhanced. Dr. Halapua also stressed that this narrow focus will allow PIDP

to evaluate whether the JCC is being successful. Dr. Halapua suggested that the Meeting should consider the right balance to be pursued between the political and practical level of the JCC.

## **JOINT STATEMENT**

The Meeting Agreed:

- 1) That the JCC remains an important agenda item at the meetings of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders and its Standing Committee.
- 2) That the policy aspects of the JCC/MOU (see Attachment I) remain with the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders and its Secretariat, PIDP.
- 3) That the proposals for reinvigorating the JCC as outlined in the Director's paper (see attachment II) be endorsed.
- 4) That PIDP/JCC seek additional resources to effect greater direct and practical engagement between the private sectors in the Pacific Island Nations and the United States.
- 5) That an additional measure for reinvigorating the JCC is for PIDP and the Forum Secretariat to work out how best to cooperate in this task in light of their respective resources and expertise; and for this cooperation to be set out in an arrangement to be submitted to the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders in 2006.
- 6) That in tandem with a more proactive role both by the PIDP Secretariat and the Forum Secretariat in pursuing regional Pacific Islands trade and investment interests in the U.S. individual Forum Island Countries will themselves do all they can to promote the private sector and private sector industry associations to facilitate direct contact with the U.S. private sector.

- 7) Given the changing regional and international political and security environment, the PICL, in promoting greater cooperation with the U.S. in the furtherance of the JCC, can also lay stress on our joint and collective interests in maintaining the security of our region.
- 8) That the above understandings on measures to strengthen the JCC to the mutual advantage of the Pacific Island Nations and the U.S. be conveyed to the government of the U.S. for its information before the 2006 PICL.

### **PRIVATE SECTOR PRESENTATION**

After the Meeting agreed on the Joint Statement above, a special request was made by Fiji to hear a brief presentation from Mr. Tui Foukimoana, a Tonga-born private sector representative who lives in Seattle, Washington. Mr. Foukimoana described a survey project he is undertaking for the PIDP that involves the real life experience of a small-scale taro exporter trying to sell a container of taro to the United States market. The report highlighted the challenges and risks taken by exporters from the Pacific Islands when trying to ship and market products to the U.S. and points out the information and skills needed by these small-scale exporters that the JCC can help provide.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Co-chair Hon. Dr. Fred Sevele thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting.