

**SOUTH PACIFIC DEFENCE MINISTERS' MEETING  
1 MAY 2015, PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

**Joint Communiqué**

1. We, the Defence Ministers from Papua New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand, and Tonga, the Chilean Ambassador to Australia, and the Director General for International Relations and Strategy from the French Ministry of Defence, met in Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea on 1 May 2015 for the second South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting.
  - a. Representatives from the United States and the United Kingdom were present as observers.
2. Ministers and other representatives of this forum thanked the Papua New Guinea Government for hosting this Meeting, and sincerely appreciated the kind hospitality extended to them during their visit.
3. Ministers extended their condolences to those nations devastated by Cyclone Pam, in particular the hardest hit Vanuatu and Tuvalu. We welcomed the regional nature of the response and noted the significant contribution regional defence forces made to this.

*Regional Security*

4. We reaffirmed the enduring importance of security in the Pacific, which underwrites the region's continued stability and prosperity.
5. We noted the range of challenges to security and prosperity in the Pacific, including the continuing potential for inter- and intra-state conflict, transnational crime including illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing, and natural disasters.
6. We noted that this broad array of challenges, exacerbated by the enormous scale of the Pacific, mandates that cooperation between states will be crucial to achieve regional security.
7. We further noted the many successes already achieved through regional cooperation to address security challenges, including growing collaboration on maritime security, responses to humanitarian and disaster relief situations such as Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu, as well as the extensive cooperation in regional security operations such as RAMSI.
  - a. We further noted Pacific states have made important contributions to global security, including to multinational operations in Afghanistan and the Middle East.
  - b. Such contributions demonstrate the willingness of Pacific states to contribute to the security of the broader global community.
8. We again agreed on the need to deepen and expand cooperation between our respective military forces to help respond to these regional challenges.

*Governance Framework for Future South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meetings*

9. We welcomed the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting as an important avenue to improve regional security cooperation and coordination.
  - a. We reinforced that this Meeting provides a useful forum to share perspectives on key regional security issues, and which helps align the participants' respective policies and approaches.
10. We agreed to the Governance Framework developed by the SPDMM Secretariat to provide guidance for the conduct of future South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting iterations.
  - a. This Framework includes guidance on membership, liaison with other regional fora and organisations, responsibilities of the host country, and the role of the Secretariat.
11. Under the Governance Framework, we agreed to hold Meetings on a biennial basis, to maintain frequent communication between Ministers and enable them to review the implementation of outcomes from previous Meetings.
  - a. We further agreed that the next South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting will be held in 2017, with New Zealand to host.

*POVAI ENDEAVOUR Exercise Framework*

12. To help further enhance cooperation and develop greater interoperability between our militaries, we agreed to the new regional security exercise framework, known as POVAI ENDEAVOUR.
13. The POVAI ENDEAVOUR exercise framework captures existing bilateral and multilateral exercises in the region to enable more effective and efficient coordination of effort, and to facilitate a transfer of skills between regional defence forces.
14. We further agreed that the POVAI ENDEAVOUR exercise framework will foster greater regional cooperation and interoperability in responding to key security challenges, and develop skills amongst contributing militaries in core areas including but not limited to;
  - a. humanitarian assistance and disaster relief;
  - b. maritime security; and
  - c. peacekeeping and stabilisation operations.
15. We noted that since the POVAI ENDEAVOUR framework was proposed in 2013, it has successfully captured exercises across the South Pacific and has generated new or enhanced cooperation between members

*Maritime Security Cooperation*

16. We highlighted maritime security as a key priority for all Members' present at the forum, and for the South Pacific region more broadly.
17. We emphasised that illegal maritime activity presented a threat to the shared security and stability of the region.

18. We expressed our firm commitment to increase cooperation in this area, both with countries around the region, with regional agencies such as the Forum Fisheries Agency, and through the Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP).
  - a. We agreed to address this threat through more coordinated information sharing, surveillance and patrols, and through regional programs and frameworks.
19. We further welcomed Australia's continued intent to implement the PMSP as a follow-on to the Pacific Patrol Boat Program.
  - a. The PMSP will strengthen and broaden the region's capacity to secure maritime resources, and will enable greater cooperation between regional states in achieving this goal.
20. Australia's Minister for Defence noted that Australia had recently released the Request for Tender (RFT) for Project SEA 3036 Phase 1 – Pacific Patrol Boat Replacement to industry.
21. He also noted that Australia was undertaking consultation with regional states, key regional institutions, and partner nations to help inform and refine options for the additional elements of the PMSP, including aerial surveillance and efforts to enhance regional coordination.

*New Initiatives for Further Development*

22. We welcomed the two new initiatives focused on the professional development of military personnel and officials working on security and defence issues in the South Pacific region.
  - a. We endorsed these two initiatives for further development by the Secretariat, in consultation with members, with the intention that they be presented for agreement at the next SPDMM in 2017.
23. In support of the increased participation of women in regional military operations, and our defence forces at large, we welcome the South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting as a forum to look at the professional development of women in our defence forces.
  - a. We welcome the 'Women in Pacific Defence Forces' initiative, and propose to hold a series of reciprocal visits or seminars involving female military officers and non-commissioned officers from the region to discuss their experiences of working in the military and share lessons learned.
24. We also welcome the proposal to establish a whole-of-government 'Future Leaders Summit on Security in the Pacific', which would encourage junior military officers and civilian officials to think about emerging regional security issues.

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