

## **The CROP Charter July 2004**

### ***Leaders' Vision for the Region***

*“Leaders believe the Pacific region can, should and will be a region of peace, harmony, security and economic prosperity, so that all its people can lead free and worthwhile lives. We treasure the diversity of the Pacific and seek a future in which its cultures, traditions and religious beliefs are valued, honoured and developed. We seek a Pacific region that is respected for the quality of its governance, the sustainable management of its resources, the full observance of democratic values, and for its defence and promotion of human rights. We seek partnerships with our neighbours and beyond to develop our knowledge, to improve our communications and to ensure a sustainable economic existence for all.”*

### **CROP Mandate**

The Forum Leaders established the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific, CROP (formerly the South Pacific Organisations Coordinating Committee, SPOCC) in 1988 with the mandate to improve cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among the various intergovernmental regional organisations in order to work toward achieving the common goal of sustainable development in the Pacific region. CROP comprises the heads of the intergovernmental regional organisations in the Pacific.

2. The 1995 Forum mandated the Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat to be the permanent chair of CROP, a decision reaffirmed at the Special Leaders Retreat in April 2004. Leaders also mandated the ‘coordination role’ of CROP to the Secretary General. The Secretary General reports to Leaders on CROP matters.

### **Role of CROP**

3. CROP functions as (i) a coordination mechanism between the heads of the regional organisations in the Pacific, and (ii) a high-level advisory body, which provides policy advice and may assist in facilitating policy formulation at national, regional and international levels. CROP also provides a forum to enable CROP heads to annually review progress on their respective organisations’ contributions to the Pacific Plan, which is the new overarching regional framework for achieving the Forum Leaders’ vision.

4. CROP is a family of highly professional, transparent, accountable and dynamic organisations, working together and with others (including member countries and territories of CROP organisations, development partners, international and regional bodies, and non-state actors) to honour, promote, implement and realize the vision of the Forum Leaders. CROP will collectively contribute to the realisation of the Leaders' vision by assisting member countries and territories achieve their common goal of sustainable development and peaceful co-existence, and by enabling the people of the Pacific to live free and worthwhile lives.

5. CROP will take advantage of opportunities to pool and share expertise and resources to optimize benefits to member countries and territories of CROP organisations. Particular emphasis will be accorded to 'coordinated CROP action', particularly on tasks such as the provision of support to members at international conferences/negotiations, reporting on international commitments and setting of relevant indicators and targets. Joint CROP response to crisis situations in the region will be another coordinated function. Where CROP outputs (recommendations and conclusions) may have major policy implication or require the approval of the respective governing bodies, CROP heads will present such matters to their respective governing bodies for their endorsement/approval.

6. CROP will build upon the existing and more formal mechanism of cooperation between CROP organisations through specific 'agreements' or 'Memorandums of Understanding' that more clearly define the nature of cooperation between participating organisations in areas of mutual interest and/or responsibilities.

7. Where CROP sees the need, it will establish specific working groups with clear terms of reference to address important emerging or on-going priority issues of a cross cutting nature. The outputs from these working groups will inter alia lead to clearer understanding of the issues, or become the basis for regional policy or strategy that will benefit member countries and territories of CROP organisations. Participants in the working groups will comprise representatives of relevant CROP organisations, and, where appropriate, non-CROP organisations such as international IGOs, multilateral implementing organisations, and non-state actors. CROP working groups will be time-bound and output oriented. When outputs are achieved the working groups will be dissolved. The lead CROP organisation for the working group will provide the chair.

## **Guiding Principles**

8. CROP is a partnership of equals with the chair of CROP playing a vital coordination role. It is neither a legal entity nor a separate organisation. The guiding principles of CROP organisations will be to:

- a. *Promote sustainable development and alleviate poverty for the people of the Pacific.* CROP organisations will commit to the principles of

sustainable development in the Pacific with a focus on the alleviation of poverty<sup>1</sup> and the enhancement of human resource capacity and supplementation. Gender, youth, the environment and respect for cultural and linguistic diversity will be mainstreamed as essential elements of the work programmes of CROP organisations.

- b. *Focus on the priorities and needs of members.* CROP organisations will deliver regional services and advice to member countries and territories in line with their priorities, with particular emphasis on Small Island States. The CROP emphasis will be on efficiency and optimising opportunities to maximise benefits to members.
- c. *Maximise opportunities for and value of cooperation between organisations.* CROP organisations will maximise opportunities for effective partnerships, cooperation and collaboration amongst themselves through governance initiatives, joint programming, and pooling of resources and expertise. This will promote complementarity and reduce the potential for wasteful duplication and overlap.
- d. *Listen, understand, anticipate and respond to global and regional trends, opportunities and threats.* CROP and CROP organisations will proactively coordinate research and analyse key strategic and/or emerging issues and provide advice to member countries and territories of CROP organisations. Assistance may be inter alia in the form of advice or formulation of regional strategies, models, standards, policies, guidelines and information for advocacy. CROP will advocate and promote the interests of the PICTs and the region at international and regional fora.
- e. *Ensure Best Practice.* CROP organisations will adopt the principles of good governance and work to the highest professional and ethical standards. They will recruit the best and the brightest and will implement effective quality assurance and review systems. CROP organisations will also adopt a results-based approach to programming and management. Simple and pragmatic policies and procedures will be key to ensuring transparency and accountability in the operations of CROP organisations.

## **CROP Membership**

9. Forum Leaders in 2002 agreed that to be eligible for membership in CROP, organisations will have:

- a. *“Governing bodies which determine the organisations’ policies and work programmes and on which the Forum Member governments have a*

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<sup>1</sup> Recognising that poverty includes absolute poverty, poverty of opportunity and vulnerability to poverty.

*majority, and which between them provide a region-wide representation; and*

- b. *Activities that include provision of advice to Member governments and implementation of region-wide programmes aimed at assisting in the sustainable development of Member countries (and territories) and the region.”*

10. CROP may from time to time, and depending on the nature of business involved, invite observers to its meetings. Invited observers will be from a partner/collaborating organisation, and delegates attending the CROP meeting will be at the appropriate level of representation.

11. Annex 1 lists the organisations that are currently members of CROP with their respective mandates, programme focus and membership.

## **Governance and Accountabilities**

12. The Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat will chair CROP and will be accountable to the Leaders for the coordination of CROP and full and effective reporting on CROP related issues<sup>2</sup>.

13. The Forum Secretariat will provide the secretariat for CROP.

14. The Forum Secretariat's Deputy Secretary-General will be responsible for representing the Forum Secretariat at the CROP meetings.

15. The heads of other CROP organisations will be accountable to and report to their governing bodies on their membership and participation in CROP and on the performance of CROP as a whole.

Endorsed by CROP in Port Vila, Vanuatu  
3<sup>rd</sup> July 2004

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<sup>2</sup> The Secretary General will report to FOC and Forum on Forum Secretariat specific matters.