

SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM MEETING ON LAW OF THE SEA

SPEC Headquarters, Suva

13 – 14 October 1976

COMMUNIQUÉ

In accordance with the declaration issued by the Seventh South Pacific Forum held in Nauru from 26-28 July 1976, a Forum meeting on the Law of the Sea was convened by SPEC in Suva on 13 and 14 October, 1976, to consider the timing and terms of the creation of 200 mile zones; the problems and opportunities associated with them; the conservation of marine resources; the possible creation of a South Pacific fisheries agency; and the prospects for joint action and regional co-operation in matters such as surveillance and policing. The meeting was preceded by informal discussions at head of delegation level on 12 October 1976.

The meeting was formally opened on 13 October 1976 by the Acting Prime Minister of Fiji, Hon Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau who welcomed Forum Leaders and delegates. The Acting Prime Minister referred to the importance of the resources of the sea to the Pacific island countries and said that it was vital that these countries secure rights to control these resources around their islands and have the capability to safeguard and harvest them for the benefit of Pacific island peoples. In this endeavour there was a need to take regional co-operative action.

The meeting was attended by the President of the Republic of Nauru, the Prime Ministers of New Zealand, Tonga and Western Samoa, the Acting Prime Minister of Fiji, the Premiers of the Cook Islands and Niue, the Chief Ministers of the Gilbert Islands, the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia and the Minister for Justice of Papua New Guinea. The Minister for Labour of Fiji represented the Government of Fiji when the Acting Prime Minister was unable to be present. The Acting Prime Minister of Fiji the Hon Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau was elected as chairman of the meeting and Sir Albert Henry, Premier of the Cook Islands deputy chairman. The Prime Minister of Western Samoa the Hon Tupuola Efi was appointed press spokesman for the meeting.

The meeting reviewed developments at the recent Fifth Session of the Law of the Sea Conference, concentrating on aspects of special relevance to the South Pacific.

The meeting made a joint Declaration underlining the common concern to achieve a new and comprehensive international Convention on the Law of the Sea which would take account of the interests of the region. The Declaration is attached.

SUVA

14 October 1976