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President Heine Attends 47th Pacific Islands Forum in Pohnpei, FSM



Photo: President Heine & Foreign Minister Silk at the SIS Leader's meeting at COM in Palikir, Pohnpei.

President Dr. Hilda C. Heine joined Pacific Island Leaders for the 47th Pacific Islands Forum, an annual meeting of Forum Leaders to develop collective responses to regional issues. This year's Forum was held in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia from 7-11 September 2016 under the theme "Small and Far: Challenge for Growth."

Forum Member countries include Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

This was President Heine's first time to attend the Forum since assuming office. The Marshall Islands last hosted the Pacific Islands Forum in 2013 which is considered the biggest Forum in history, with more countries in attendance than ever before.

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This was the third time the Forum has been held in the North Pacific since 2013. Forum Leaders discussed two priority issues – responding to the effects of climate change and disaster risk management and increasing economic returns from regional fisheries. Other key issues identified by Leaders under the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* include implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, upholding human rights in West Papua, reducing the burden of cervical cancer, coordinating regional information and communications technology, trade integration, and a framework to support the rights of persons with disabilities.

As part of this year's Forum, President Heine and the Marshall Islands delegation attended a series of meetings, including, the Smaller Island States (SIS) meeting (7 September) that represents the region's and the world's most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change followed by the Pacific ACP Leader's meeting (8 September), and the Forum Plenary Session (9 September). President Heine returned to Majuro on Friday, 9 September, due to the scheduled Government funeral service for the late Iroijlaplap Anjua Loeak, held on Saturday, 10 September.

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Accompanying President Heine to this year's Forum were: Foreign Minister John M. Silk, Foreign Affairs Secretary Bruce Kijiner, Suva-based Deputy Chief of Mission Albon Ishoda, Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Doreen de Brum, Marshall Islands Marine Resource Authority Director Glen Joseph, President's Legal Advisor Bernard Adiniwin, President's Chief of Staff Christopher de Brum, Protocol and Logistics Officer Evelyn Lanki, and Climate Advisors Thom Woodroffe and Kaveh Guilanpour.

To continue discussions with regional Leaders and others, President Heine will depart later this week for the United Nations General Assembly in New York.



Photo: President Heine (C) presents Marshalllese handicrafts and Tobolar products as gifts to FSM President Christian (R) & Palau Minister of State Billy Kuartei (L) at Cliff Rainbow Hotel

Statement following 47th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Minister John M. Silk, released the below statement today (10 September) following the 47th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting in Pohnpei:

"Today's communique is a clarion call to action that even with the Paris Agreement, there remains a lot of work to do to guarantee there will still be 16 seats at the Pacific Islands Forum in a hundred years from now."

"The Pacific is strongest when we come together and fight as one. Along with our big brothers and sisters in Australia and New Zealand, we have declared that we will continue to push for an ambitious amendment to the Montreal Protocol in October, and to see ambitious climate action across all sectors. This must include reducing aviation and maritime emissions in line with the 1.5°C temperature target we all agreed in Paris."

Photo: Foreign Minister Silk (R) & PNG Prime Minister O'Niell at the Forum Plenary Session at COM

"I want to particularly thank President Christian for the Federated States of Micronesia's tireless leadership in the Montreal Protocol negotiations, beginning with their first submission in 2009. If we succeed in Kigali, it will be one of the best examples of island leadership that we have ever seen and help us avoid up to half a degree of warming – the biggest chunk yet off the ambition gap."





group photo following SIS Leaders' meeting L-R: PIFS Secretary General Dame Meg Taylor, Nauru President Baron Waqa, Palau Minister of State Billy Kuartei, FSM President Peter Christian, RMI President Dr. Hilda C. Heine, Cook Islands Prime Minister Henry Puna, Tuvalu Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga, Kiribati High Commissioner Reteta Rimon.

President Heine Attends 26th Smaller Island States Leaders' Meeting

President Heine was given a warm Pacific welcome by SIS Leaders to her first Forum Leaders meeting during the 26th Smaller Island States Leaders' meeting, the first of a series of consultations leading up to the Pacific Islands Forum official opening. The one-day meeting, held on 7 September, is an annual gathering of SIS Leaders to discuss a range of issues significant and specific to SIS, to ensure that issues are reflected in the annual PIF Leader's Communique.

In his remarks, the SIS Chair, Cook Islands Prime Minister Henry Puna, acknowledged and welcomed President Heine, noting that although President Heine attended the Special SIS Leaders' meeting in Palau earlier this year, this is her first "full" Forum Leaders' meeting. In addition, Prime Minister Puna recognized President Heine as "the first elected female Leader of an independent Pacific Island nation." SIS Leaders joined Prime Minister Puna in congratulating and welcoming President Heine, including Kiribati High Commissioner Reteta Rimon who said President Heine's successful election as the first elected female of an independent Pacific Island nation is an inspiration. President Heine expressed appreciation to SIS Chair

and Leaders for the warm welcome. She thanked to outgoing SIS Chair, Prime Minister Sopoaga, for his leadership in the past twelve months and expressed confidence that Prime Minister Puna will continue with the excellent work by Prime Minister Sopoaga. Moreover, President Heine conveyed appreciation to the host, FSM President Peter Christian, the Government and people of the FSM, for the excellent arrangements, and hospitality extended to her and the members of the Marshall Islands delegation since arrival to Pohnpei.

During the SIS Leaders' meeting, Leaders discussed an implementation plan for the recently endorsed SIS Strategy. The Strategy serves as a platform to ensure greater influence and presence by the SIS in shaping the regional policy agenda and direction. Five key areas highlighted under the Strategy are as follows – climate change finance, air and sea transport, marine, mobility, and health – that, "due to the unique circumstances and vulnerabilities of the SIS, require specific attention."

The Federated States of Micronesia became the newest member of the SIS. The Smaller Island States membership now comprises Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau & Tuvalu. FSM President Peter Christian stated, “The Federated States of Micronesia takes this as a great honor to be included as a member

of SIS. It is something that we have wanted for a long time.” Since its formation twenty-six years ago, the SIS has now grown to represent a substantial block in the wider Forum group and had been, on many past occasions, the platform upon which many of the important regional initiatives were first introduced.



FLAGS HALF-MAST IN HONOR OF IROIJALAPLAP ANJUA A. LOEAK

Acting President Mattlan Zackhras issued an Executive Order on 8 September 2016 to “proclaim the period from September 09, to September 15, 2016, as a time of national mourning in observance of the passing of the Late IroiJalaplal Anjua A. Loeak.” Furthermore, “during the hours they are flown, the flag of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and all other flags shall be half-mast during the said period of observation.”

Statement following Pacific Smaller Island States Leaders’ Meeting

The President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Her Excellency Dr. Hilda C. Heine, released the below statement today (7 September) following a meeting of Pacific Smaller Island States* today in Pohnpei.

“Today some of the smallest and most vulnerable countries on the planet have said loud and clear that even with the Paris Agreement in-hand, the fight against climate change is as urgent as ever before.”

“Once again, we have committed to lead the world and pursue ambitious action to reduce emissions, including through phasing down HFCs under the Montreal Protocol, curbing greenhouse gases from aviation and shipping, and raising the ambition of all countries by 2020.”

“The fact that the Pacific may also be the first region in the world to complete its ratification of the Paris Agreement is another great example of our determination to continue to lead by example.”

“After the [decision of my Cabinet on Monday](#) to signal our intent to join ICAO’s new global market-based measure from the beginning, I was thrilled to hear from a number of my Pacific counterparts that they are actively considering doing the same.”

“We are looking forward to taking these issues up with our bigger Pacific brothers and sisters in the next few days.”

Pacific ACP (African, Caribbean, and Pacific states) Meeting

President Heine attended the Pacific ACP meeting to discuss issues of importance and of common interest to the Pacific ACP Member countries. The meeting was held last week Thursday, 8 September, at the College of Micronesia in Palikir, Pohnpei.

During the meeting, Leaders considered the progress on the Pacific Regional Indicative Programme (PRIP) under the 11th European Development Fund, the PACP – EU comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations, Private Sector Development issues, the future of the ACP Group, PACP representation in Europe, and the preparatory work towards the negotiation of the successor to the Cotonou Agreement.

[Click here to read the Summary of Decisions by the PACP Leaders.](#)



Photo: President Heine & Foreign Minister Silk at the Pacific ACP meeting at COM in Palikir, Pohnpei

Pacific ACP Countries include the Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Niue, Nauru, RMI, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Monocle Magazine Interviews President

At the margins of the 47th Pacific Islands Forum in Pohnpei, President Heine was interviewed by a correspondent for Monocle Magazine, a publication that's global in scope and regularly profiles world leaders. When asked about her landmark status as the first female President of the Marshall Islands, President Heine said her election as President marked the first step toward assuring constitutional guarantees of equality are fulfilled and may that be an inspiration to future generations of women to believe that they can lead and that there are no gender limits to leadership. President Heine was also asked to share her views on the 'soft power' of the Marshall Islands. "We may have a small economy, be one of the isolated countries in the world, and not have a military, but we can still play a big role on the world stage," said President Heine.



She further stated, "We do this by bringing a moral voice of leadership to discussions that impact us most, even when played no role in creating these problems. Two of the world's biggest threats—nuclear weapons and climate change—have impacted us most, but we are also leading the global fight against them."



FFA Interviews President

President Heine was interviewed at the margins of the 47th Pacific Islands Forum by Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) media team following the SIS Leaders' meeting. During the interview, President Heine discussed women in fisheries, noting that in recent years, women have taken up active roles in fisheries management in the RMI. She said women dominate management posts in both oceanic and coastal sectors of fishery at MIMRA.

RMI'S COMMITMENT TOWARD MTEC

At the margins of PIF Leaders Meeting in Pohnpei, President Dr. Hilda C. Heine presented a check of \$20,000 to the Micronesian Trade and Economic Community (MTEC) Secretariat. The President reaffirmed the Republic of the Marshall Island's commitments under the Treaty of the Micronesian Trade and Economic Community (MTEC) endorsed in 2015. President Heine reiterated that strengthening regional integration in the area of trade is the key to economic prosperity. "In order to fully integrate and realize the benefits at the regional and international level, it is paramount that we begin by prioritizing sub-regional initiatives," the President added. As a token of continued support towards a greater trade within Micronesia, the President presented RMI's monetary contribution to the host of the MTEC Secretariat – the Federated States of Micronesia. This is RMI's 2nd contribution, and the President looks forward to reciprocity from FSM and Palau, including the ratification of the MTEC Treaty.

AT THE MARGINS OF THE 47TH PIF

*RMI had Bi-laterals with the World Bank, the United Nations, the United States, ROC (Taiwan), New Zealand, Japan, Australia, Solomon Islands, Germany, France, Cuba, Thailand, Spain, and Canada

*RMI had a tri-lateral with FSM and Palau

Photo: President Heine & Foreign Affairs Secretary Kijiner meet with New Zealand Foreign Minister McCully & New Zealand officials at COM in Palikir, Pohnpei



PRESIDENT HEINE SENDS LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA ON OCCASION OF 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF SEPT. 11TH

In a letter to United States President Barack H. Obama, President Dr. Hilda C. Heine expressed, on behalf of the People and Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, solidarity and sympathy with the People and Government of the United States of America on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001. "On this solemn day, the People and Government of the RMI remember and pay tribute to the more than 3000 lives lost during the horrific attacks," wrote President Heine. "Our prayers and thoughts are with those who lost loved ones and continue to struggle with their loss." "We must continue to work together to ensure the security and safety of our people, and to protect our freedoms."