

PACIFIC AGREEMENT ON CLOSER ECONOMIC RELATIONS PLUS

18 DECEMBER 2020

PP.MIN.002/C/FINAL

COMMUNIQUÉ

We, the Ministerial representatives¹ of the Parties to the *Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus* (PACER Plus), welcome the entry into force of our Agreement on 13 December 2020.

2. We recall that PACER Plus is both a trade and development agreement. At its heart, PACER Plus is intended to maximise opportunities for Forum Island Countries to use trade and investment as engines of growth, to create jobs, and ensure higher incomes and living standards.

3. Since we met in February², our region has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The entry into force of PACER Plus is a welcome development for our Blue Pacific. We look forward to PACER Plus supporting our recovery from the impact that COVID-19 has had on our economies and building a more prosperous and resilient future for our countries.

DEVELOPMENT FOR PROSPEROUS AND RESILIENT ECONOMIES

4. Development and economic cooperation will be a critical mechanism for delivering on PACER Plus' promise as a development tool for the Forum Island Countries that are a Party to our Agreement.

5. We note the intensive work that our officials have undertaken this year in designing a PACER Plus Implementation Package to deliver a work programme to enhance the capacity of Forum Island Countries to benefit from trade and investment opportunities.

6. Our new Implementation Unit will be at the centre of our collective efforts. Accountable to the Joint Committee, our Implementation Unit will work closely with other regional and multilateral organisations and development partners in the Pacific. We look forward to establishing the Implementation Unit in Samoa in 2021. We are grateful to, and also appreciate, the offers from Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu to host our unit.

7. We also welcome the work by our officials to ensure that there are transition arrangements in place to support the delivery of development and economic cooperation until such time as the Implementation Unit is operational.

¹ See Annex 1 for the List of Representatives

² PP.MIN.001/C/FINAL (13 February 2020).



AN INCLUSIVE AGREEMENT FOR THE BLUE PACIFIC

8. PACER Plus is an inclusive agreement for the Blue Pacific. To that end, we look forward to PACER Plus signatories – Nauru, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – completing their necessary internal procedures to ratify and become a Party to our Agreement. We encourage and welcome interest from all Forum members who are not signatories, as well as other partners with an abiding connection to the Pacific, to join PACER Plus.

9. We want to ensure that PACER Plus is implemented as an inclusive agreement that builds and strengthens regional economic integration in the Blue Pacific. To that end, we consider it is important that signatories, accession partners, and regional and multilateral organisations are able to participate as observers. We therefore call on our Joint Committee to consider at its first meeting guidelines for observer status for non-Parties.



ANNEX 1

List of Representatives

- (i) Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Australia
- (ii) Hon Mark Brown, Prime Minister, Cook Islands
- (iii) Hon Bootii Nauan, Minister for Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives, Kiribati
- (iv) Hon Phil Twyford, Minister of State for Trade and Export Growth, New Zealand
- (v) Hon Dion Taufitu, Minister for Ministry of Natural Resources, Niue
- (vi) Hon Lautafi Fio Selafi Purcell, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour, Samoa
- (vii) Hon Jeremiah Manele, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Solomon Islands
- (viii) Hon Samiu Vaipulu, Minister for Trade and Economic Development, Kingdom of Tonga

