



10th PACIFIC IMMIGRATION DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE

New Zealand, 17 - 19 October 2006

COMMUNIQUÉ

The 10th Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference (PIDC) was convened in Wellington, New Zealand, at the Te Papa Tongarewa Museum from the 17th October to the 19th October 2006. Thirty-eight participants from 17 countries attended the Conference including: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, The Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Participating Observers included: Anti-Money Laundering Assistance Team (AMLAT), Inter-Governmental Asia Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC Secretariat), Canada Border Services, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Regional Maritime Programme (SPC – RMP).

OFFICIAL OPENING

Delegates were welcomed to the 10th PIDC by the Deputy Secretary for Immigration New Zealand, Dr. Mary Anne Thompson. In her address, Dr. Thompson noted the movement of people was an important global phenomenon that brought many benefits and challenges to the Pacific. She stressed that working together was an imperative for the future if the Pacific were to keep abreast of changing technologies, and to keep ahead of the increasing sophistication of those involved in illegal activities in the Pacific. She noted that for this reason the PIDC was vitally important in the work that it did and the aims and objectives that it had set itself to achieve. She stated that the PIDC provided the environment for the Pacific to share its successes and failures and learn from each other to move forward as a region.

Pushing borders offshore in an attempt to deal with risk before it arrived was a primary driver of NZ's own strategy. She noted the Pacific's participation in the international environment was also important, that international partners needed to have confidence in the integrity of Pacific border systems and there was real potential for them to learn from PIDC how we have worked together to achieve great results in the Pacific. She spoke on the future focus for New Zealand including greater NZ presence 'on the ground' in the Pacific and better border security intelligence, networking, and liaison.

The Honourable David Cunliffe, Minister of Immigration, NZ, delivered the keynote address. Mr. Cunliffe opened with the reminder that immigration was first and foremost about people. He spoke briefly on New Zealand's own experiences and processes, noting that "it's about *people* that New Zealand wants to attract for their skills; the *people* want to come to New Zealand for a better life and the *people* that will ultimately enrich the country with their vibrant culture". He noted that New Zealand's Department of

Labour was now more proactive in that they targeted skilled people that New Zealand needed. He stressed the need for complementarity of security measures across countries in light of the heightened threat of international terrorism, illegal migration and trans-national organised crime, noting the importance of conferences such as the PIDC to facilitate effective dialogue between countries on these issues.

He acknowledged that Pacific nations faced many challenges that were real and substantial and could only be solved through meaningful strategies and communication, stating that the New Zealand government believed smart engagement was one of the keys to developing effective strategies for Pacific Island countries. He stressed the importance of the Pacific Plan and its vision of economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security for the Pacific region. He noted that this vision could not be pursued by governments alone, but needed to be adopted and carried out at all levels of society to be successful.

He noted the importance of the message from Pacific Island countries on improved access to temporary and seasonal work opportunities.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Following the official opening, New Zealand was elected Chair and Samoa the Vice-Chair. The following members were elected to the Drafting Committee: Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Samoa.

The Conference expressed its sincere appreciation for the exemplary leadership and commitment of the outgoing Chair, Dr Lesi Korovavala, CEO of Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration of Fiji, and thanked the government of Fiji for allowing Dr. Lesi Korovavala to steer the PIDC over the last 12 months.

The Head of the Secretariat reported on the previous year's activities. He noted the rapid expansion in the range and scope of the work programme coordinated and undertaken by the Secretariat and the PIDC.

The Conference welcomed the increased recognition regionally and internationally of the PIDC over the last year and its key role in Pacific immigration.

TOPICS CONSIDERED BY THE CONFERENCE

Identity fraud

The Department of Labour – Immigration, presented a perspective on identity fraud in New Zealand and the implications of identity fraud for the Pacific. Also discussed was the future development of Biometrics and the New Zealand Identity Management Strategy to strengthen management of customer identity in the migration environment and frame the introduction of biometric technologies to support service facilitation and enhanced management of identity fraud.

PIDC Website

Digitalstream provided an introduction to the newly developed PIDC Website and provided ideas for the future development and security of the Website

Movement and Management of Third Country Nationals

In closed session discussions, the PIDC considered the movement and management of third country nationals in the Pacific region. A number of members noted the difficulties surrounding the care, management and return of third country nationals and requested the Secretariat to continue to gather information and report to the Management Board.

Pacific Regional Immigration Identity Project (PRIIP)

New Zealand introduced the PRIIP, a project intended to strengthen the capability of PIDC member jurisdictions to manage identity fraud and share information on identity issues between PIDC members. The project envisaged three phases beginning with a needs analysis and stock take involving several Pacific islands.

PIDC Secondment Programme

A report was provided by Tonga as the first secondee under the new Secondment Programme. The Secondment Programme was endorsed by the PIDC as an excellent opportunity for PIDC member jurisdictions to expose their immigration officers to a wider range of experiences and for the value the programme added to the Secretariat.

Secretariat Support Group (SSG)

Fiji introduced the Secretariat Support Group initiative intended to provide additional resources and assistance to the PIDC Secretariat. The PIDC endorsed the Fiji initiative and encouraged other member jurisdictions to establish the SSG concept within their own government immigration agencies.

Voluntary Member Contributions to the PIDC

The 2005 PIDC endorsed voluntary member contributions to the PIDC. Contributions or undertakings for the 2006/07 year were received from American Samoa, Fiji, French Polynesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, Palau, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu.

Establishment of the PIDC in Fiji

A submission to the Fiji Cabinet establishing the PIDC as an officially recognised regional organisation in Fiji had been approved and a Headquarters Agreement had been drafted for the consideration of PIDC member governments. The PIDC noted that the Management Board at its first meeting in 2007 would discuss in detail the implications of the change in legal status including for members and for Secretariat staffing and financing.

Revenue Generation through Immigration Fees

Fiji introduced discussion on the benefits and challenges of generating revenue through charging for immigration services, recognising the value of bi-lateral support and capacity enhancement.

Member Country Reports

Written country reports were submitted by American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

These will be analysed by the Secretariat to identify training and capacity building needs, which might be addressed through PIDC cooperation. Oral discussion reflected a strong desire to strengthen border management and regional cooperation on the implementation of API. The discussion also focused on training and capacity building,

information sharing, dealing with illegal migrants and review and update of legislation. Members also noted the value of coming together to share knowledge and experiences with their counterparts and other agencies from the Pacific.

Observer Statements

Presentations to the PIDC were made by the following observers: AMLAT, APC, IOM, OCO, PICP, PIFS and SPC – RMP.

KEY DECISIONS FOR ACTION

The PIDC endorsed the 2006/07 Work Plan, which included convening two Management Board meetings and meetings of the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) and one Working Group to discuss regional exercises in conjunction with the Management Board meetings. The PIDC noted the 2006/07 Research Plan, which included areas of unique research on immigration issues on: care, management and return of third country nationals; care of asylum seekers and refugees; and human trafficking. Other decisions for action included: implementation of the first phase of the PRIIP; continuation of the secondment programme; implication of official recognition and legal status of the PIDC in Fiji; and core skills and knowledge of immigration staff.

OFFICIAL CLOSING

Participants expressed their gratitude to the government of New Zealand and the Secretariat for hosting a very successful PIDC, with a special note of thanks to the Chair, Api Fiso for guiding the discussions and contributing greatly to the overall success of the meeting.

The Conference expressed appreciation to Samoa for volunteering to host the 11th PIDC, taking advantage of the opportunity to convene the 2007 PIDC along side the Pacific Games in late August in Apia. The Conference thanked Papua New Guinea for its gracious offer to defer hosting the PIDC until 2008.

The high level of representation, active participation and positive steps taken to progress the objectives of PIDC at this Conference was further evidence that the organisation was indeed the pre-eminent immigration organisation in the Pacific region. The 2005/06 year saw a consolidation of the new strategic direction agreed at the 2005 PIDC in Nadi, Fiji and which contributed to making this year's Conference the most successful yet.

Wellington, New Zealand
19th October 2006