

Joint Statement

The 4th Korea-Pacific Islands Foreign Ministers Meeting

16 November 2021

Overview

1. The 4th Korea-Pacific Islands Foreign Ministers Meeting, chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, was held in Seoul on 16 November 2021 via videoconference. Representatives from the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Fiji, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Nauru, Niue, the Republic of Palau, the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, the Independent State of Samoa, Solomon Islands, the Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu and the Republic of Vanuatu participated in the meeting.
2. Under the theme of “Partnership for a Resilient Pacific and a Co-prosperous Future”, the Ministers discussed ways to strengthen cooperation between the ROK and the PICs in the areas of development, climate, environment, maritime affairs, fisheries, and other matters of mutual interest.

ROK-PICs Relations

3. Recalling the outcomes of previous ROK-PICs Ministerial meetings, the Ministers recognized that the Foreign Ministers’ Meetings and Senior Officials’ Meetings have contributed as key consultative bodies to enhancing practical cooperation and mutual understanding between the ROK and the PICs. To further enhance ROK-PICs collaboration, the Ministers agreed to elevate the ROK-PICs dialogue mechanism to summit level and to shorten the host cycle of the Ministerial Meeting from three to two years.
4. The Ministers expressed deep concerns over the devastating health and socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and underlined the importance of cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international level in responding appropriately and in ensuring a global economic recovery that is climate smart, inclusive and builds resilience. The PIC Ministers acknowledged the ROK’s pledge of 200 million USD to COVAX AMC by 2022 to strengthen equal and timely access to safe and effective vaccines and its financial and in-kind contributions for the PICs to combat the pandemic. The Ministers underscored the need for continued close cooperation in responding to and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic in the Pacific region.
5. The Ministers, reaffirming that people-to-people exchanges and economic interaction between the ROK and the PICs serve as the basis for solid ties of partnership and cooperation, underlined the importance of restoring exchanges to pre-pandemic levels. The Ministers decided to actively seek ways to boost people-to-people exchanges and trade between the ROK and the PICs as the COVID-19 situation improves and travel restrictions are eased.

Development Cooperation

6. The PIC Ministers noted with appreciation the ROK's commitment to cooperate for the sustainable development of the PICs. The PIC Ministers noted the ROK's continued efforts to enhance the ODA both in terms of quality and quantity and welcomed its commitment to strengthen the development cooperation with the PICs, in line with national and regional priorities and policies. The Ministers looked forward to the continued positive role of the Fiji Office of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in development cooperation between the ROK and the PICs.
7. The PIC Ministers appreciated the ROK's continued contributions to the ROK-PIF Cooperation Fund (RPCF) for capacity-building and technological support for the PICs. The Ministers emphasized the importance of the effective operation of the RPCF and agreed to expand cooperation under the RPCF and continue to engage in communication to identify regional priorities. The Ministers looked forward to the effective implementation of "Climate Prediction Services Phase 2 (2018-2022)"; "Application of Multisensory Remote Sensing for Controlling Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing Activities (2020-2024)"; "ROK-PIF COVID-19 Recovery Project (2020-2021)"; and "Republic of Korea- Pacific Islands Trade and Tourism Promotion Project (2019-2021)", funded by the RPCF.

Climate and Environment

8. The Ministers highlighted the importance of close cooperation at the international and regional levels on urgent climate change action, noting that Pacific Leaders have recognised climate change as the single greatest threat to the Pacific region. The PIC Ministers welcomed the ROK's active efforts for tackling climate change, including its hosting of the 2021 P4G Seoul Summit, declaration of 2050 Carbon Neutrality, and its announcement of the enhanced NDC with the reduction target of 40% at COP26.
9. The Ministers underlined the importance of securing financial resources to address climate change, in line with commitments under the Paris Agreement and ensuring increased support for adaptation finance. The PIC Ministers noted the ROK's commitment to increase contributions to climate finance, including an increase in the Green New Deal ODA and Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF), the establishment of Green New Deal Trust Fund through GGGI and the initiation of funding to P4G.
10. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the continued role of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in the implementation of the Paris Agreement and response to climate change. The Ministers noted the role played by the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) for the sustainable development of developing countries and its support for the PICs' swift transition toward a low-carbon green economy. The Ministers noted the development of the Pacific Resilience Facility, as the Pacific's own designed and led initiative to strengthen community resilience to climate change and disaster impacts.
11. The Ministers noted the findings of the recent IPCC Working Group 1 report on the

threat of sea-level rise as a real and pressing issue, and further noted Pacific Leaders' new *Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the face of Climate Change-related Sea-level Rise*.

12. The Ministers, noting the risk of marine pollution caused by plastics and micro-plastics, oil spills and nuclear contaminants, emphasized the importance of the conservation and sustainable management of the marine ecosystem and environment for sustainable use of marine and fisheries resources as well as human health and safety. Recalling the concerns on the potential significant threat of nuclear contamination to the Blue Pacific expressed at the 2021 Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting held in July, the Ministers reiterated the importance of sufficient consultations with the concerned parties and agreed to work together to preserve a healthy ocean. Recognizing the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, the ROK Minister emphasized that the region should be free of environmental pollution by radioactive wastes and other radioactive matter. The PIC Ministers noted the ROK's suggestion with appreciation that the ROK and the PICs continue close communication for the prevention of marine pollution and the protection of marine environment.

Maritime and Fisheries Cooperation

13. The Ministers reaffirmed that effective conservation and management of marine and fisheries resources are vital for the sustainable development and economic growth of the PICs. The Ministers valued the ROK-PICs cooperation on scientific research on maritime affairs and fisheries, and capacity-building. The Ministers noted the cooperative endeavors between the ROK and the PICs in the fields of marine environment management and response to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. The PIC Ministers expressed appreciation for the project of the World Fisheries University (WFU) which the ROK Government initiated for capacity-building of its partner countries in the fields of fisheries and aquaculture.
14. The PIC Ministers noted with appreciation the ROK's ODA projects on maritime affairs and fisheries, including the fisheries resource management and marine environmental cooperation, to support the implementation of sustainable development of the PICs. The Ministers agreed to continue shared efforts in exploring joint projects on maritime infrastructure including the development of harbor facilities, and on renewable energy including ocean thermal energy conversion and other promising areas.

Regional Situation

15. The Ministers expressed their full support for diplomacy and dialogue in achieving complete denuclearization and establishment of permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers recognized the efforts made by all parties concerned to resume dialogue and advance the peace process on the Korean Peninsula over the past four years. The PIC Ministers also supported the ROK's efforts to advance inter-Korean dialogue, engagement and cooperation, and welcomed the ROK's proposal to declare an end to the Korean War.

Cooperation on Global Issues

16. The ROK Minister reaffirmed the ROK government's determination to play an active role for combatting climate change and requested the PICs' support for the ROK's bid to host COP33 to be held in 2028. The PIC Ministers valued the ROK Government's commitment to play a leading role in the international response to and discussions on climate change.
17. The ROK Minister expressed his appreciation for PICs' continued support for the ROK's initiatives and efforts in the international arena.

Next Meeting

18. The PIC Ministers, expressing their appreciation to the ROK Government for hosting the 4th Korea-Pacific Islands Foreign Ministers' Meeting, affirmed their will to work closely together with the ROK Government to prepare for and ensure the success of the 5th Korea-Pacific Islands Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the future. Recognizing the importance of face-to-face communication, the Ministers determined to seek to hold the next Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Senior Officials' Meeting in person once international travel returns to normal.

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