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EXTRACTS FROM THE COMMUNIQUE OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM

The Attachment to this document, containing extracts from the Communiqué of the Twenty-Fourth South Pacific Forum held in Nauru from 10 to 11 August 1993, is being circulated at the request of the Delegations of Australia and New Zealand.

**EXTRACTS FROM THE COMMUNIQUE OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH
SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM**

Nuclear Testing

The decisions of the United States, Russia and France to extend their testing moratoriums were warmly welcomed by Forum countries. The Forum Chairman, on behalf of Forum countries, had written to the Heads of Government of the five Nuclear Weapons States after the 1992 Forum meeting calling on them to cease testing permanently. Forum countries urged those countries now observing a testing moratorium to maintain it indefinitely and called on China and the United Kingdom to declare moratoriums on testing.

The Forum recalled its long standing opposition to French nuclear testing in the Pacific region, and expressed particular pleasure at France's extension of its moratorium. The Forum supported continued monitoring in the vicinity of the test sites to assess the nuclear contamination, if any, to the marine environment caused by past testing. The Forum noted that, if France were to cease testing permanently, this would contribute significantly to improving further the relations between France and Forum countries. Any resumption of testing would be a major set back to the current positive trend in relations between France and the region.

The Forum welcomed United States and French commitment to the early negotiation of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTB), and urged all the nuclear weapons states to participate actively in negotiations on a multilateral, universal and verifiable CTB through appropriate multilateral mechanisms.

Nuclear Liability

The Forum strongly underlined the importance of an enhanced international regime to cover possible transboundary damage arising from peaceful nuclear activity, and noted the absence of effective international rules for nuclear liability. It recalled the on-going deliberations by the Standing Committee on Nuclear Liability within the International Atomic Energy Agency, and encouraged Forum members to participate actively in the negotiations. The Forum expressed its strong support for the establishment of a comprehensive international legal regime on liability for nuclear damage which fully reflected the "polluter pays" principle, with absolute and unlimited state liability. It recommended maximum possible attendance by members in the upcoming conference for amending the Vienna Convention.

South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone

The Forum noted and welcomed the continued positive disarmament initiatives taken by the nuclear weapons states recently, including the United States' and Russia's signatures of the START II Agreement. In light of these developments, the Forum reiterated its call, made in recent joint démarches to the United States, the United Kingdom and France, for those nuclear weapon states which had not acceded to the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga to do so as soon as possible.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

The Forum welcomed the continuing growth in the number of parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Forum noted that in 1995 a conference would be convened to consider whether the NPT should continue in force indefinitely, or be extended for an additional fixed period or periods. The Forum expressed its member's desire to see

the NPT extended indefinitely. The Forum also noted its expectation that the Preparatory Committee for the 1995 NPT conference could once again task the Secretariat to prepare a background paper for the Conference on the operation of the Treaty of Rarotonga.

Ocean Dumping of Radioactive and Other Wastes

The Forum welcomed successful completion of studies carried out under the authority of the London Convention of 1972 (LC'72) on radioactive waste dumping at sea. The Forum urged those members party to the LC'72 to continue to support actively a total ban on dumping of radioactive wastes at sea when it adopts amendments this November. It also called upon its Post-Forum Dialogue partners to support such a ban, and called upon Forum members to attend the November LC'72 meeting. The Forum expressed its grave concern over the dumping of Russian nuclear wastes into the North Pacific, called for its immediate cessation, and called for retrieval of those wastes if feasible and safe.

The Forum also welcomed progress of the Amendment Group of LC'72 and reiterated its support for the amendment process generally. In particular, the Forum supported the Annex Amendment procedure ("fast-track") at the next Consultative Meeting of Contracting Parties as an interim step toward a comprehensive updating of the London Convention.

Plutonium Shipments

The Forum noted that Japan's first shipment of plutonium from Europe had transited the Pacific region. It also noted that Japan had responded to the Forum concerns by providing briefings and some information relating to safety and security arrangements it made for the shipment. It nevertheless recalled that the Forum had expressed its concern about the shipment in its 1992 Communiqué and it reiterated the risks inherent in such shipments.

It again stressed that they must be made in accordance with the highest international safety and security standards, and in a manner satisfactorily addressing all possible contingencies. The Forum considered the drawing up of a draft code of practice for the transport of radioactive materials by sea which was negotiated by the IAEA/IMO Joint Working Group and which the IMO will consider adopting this year, represents a positive development. The Forum expressed the desire that its members continue to monitor, and where possible actively participate in, further discussions on ways in which the code might be strengthened where appropriate. The Forum reaffirmed the importance of Japan consulting fully with Forum countries regarding such shipments, and providing information on its plutonium use programme.