Statement by

Mr. Fred Sarufa
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
Papua New Guinea Permanent Mission to the United Nations

On behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum to the

Sixty-Ninth Session of the United Nations General Assembly
on the Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum

10 September 2015, New York

"Check against delivery"

Mr President,

Two days ago, Papua New Guinea assumed the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum and as my first assignment here in this context, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution A/69/L.90 on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum members.

We are deeply pleased and grateful to the 50* co-sponsors of this draft resolution. We also welcome and note with appreciation the increasing co-sponsorship for this biennial resolution since 2011. This serves as a testament to the increasing recognition of the expanding cooperative relations between the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations.

Mr President,

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge and commend the pivotal and strong leadership role and valued contribution made by the outgoing Pacific Islands Forum Chair, the Republic of Palau, over the past year in guiding the work of the Forum.
Let me also place on record our appreciation, particularly to His Excellency Caleb Otto, Permanent Representative of Palau to the United Nations, for not only spearheading the resolution that is now before this august Hall but also for his stewardship of the work of the Pacific Islands Forum by fostering constructive and cooperative relations between the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations.

As the incumbent Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, Papua New Guinea pledges to strive to further consolidate the expanding and mutually beneficial ties between the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations as we embark on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and also the other internationally agreed outcomes. In this regard, we welcome and look forward to the meeting between the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and the UN Secretary-General at the margins of the High-level 70th session of the General Assembly.

I also applaud and thank the other members of the Pacific Islands Forum as well as other UN Member States who have played a distinguished role in the finalisation of the resolution now under consideration.

Mr President,

As a brief overview, particularly for the UN Member States who are not familiar with the Pacific Islands Forum, this Forum was founded 44 years ago (August 1971) as a regional intergovernmental organisation, where Leaders meet annually to develop collective responses to regional and international issues.

It currently comprises 16 independent and self-governing states in the Pacific region. It has 3 Associate Members, 12 Observers and 17 Post-Forum Dialogue Partners. The Pacific Islands Forum currently has a Observer status with the United Nations.

The Pacific Islands Forum’s vision is one of ensuring a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion, and prosperity, so that all people of the Pacific lead a free, healthy and productive lives.

The profile and influence of the Forum has also developed significantly and matured – once a relatively informal meeting of Leaders is now a major summit attracting the attention and participation of many other nations and international and regional organizations, including the United Nations. Coincidentally, the 46th Pacific Islands Forum is currently underway in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea and concludes tomorrow.

The Forum’s administrative arm is the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, based in Suva, Fiji. It acts as the Secretariat for Forum-related events, implements decisions by the Leaders, facilitates the delivery of development assistance to member states, and undertakes the political and legal mandates of Forum meetings.
Mr President,

Turning to the draft resolution on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, this is a biennial resolution.

In essence, this resolution is a procedural and technical update, which provides key recent developments in the relations between the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations over the past two years.

It takes into account the recent major inter-governmental processes and internationally agreed outcomes and their relevance to the respective work of the UN and the Pacific Islands Forum as well as the importance of enhancing cooperation in these and other relevant areas between the UN and the Pacific Islands Forum.

These include the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States outcome the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway, which addresses sustainable development issues concerning SIDS, of which many are Pacific Islands Forum countries. The Third UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction; the third International Conference on Financing for Development outcome the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which will be considered for adoption by world leaders during the Post-2015 Summit in two weeks time.

Another new element that has been included in the resolution is the recognition of the importance of the work being undertaken by the Joint Inspection Unit on the comprehensive review of the UN system support for Small Island Developing States, particularly in the context of the SIDS sustainable development challenges and the relevance of ensuring effective UN system support for SIDS sustainable development efforts.

Mr President,

The resolution also takes into account the new development architecture of the Pacific Islands Forum, known as the Framework for Pacific Regionalism adopted by the Forum Leaders in July 2014.

In brief, following a comprehensive review of the operations of the Pacific Islands Forum, the Forum Leaders decided to recast its principal objectives, which are now captured in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. The key objectives of the Pacific islands Forum now includes:

- Sustainable development that combines economic, social, and cultural development in ways that improve livelihoods and well-being and sustainable use of the environment;
- Economic growth that is inclusive and equitable;
- Strengthened governance, accountable institutions and systems; and
- Peace and security for all.
Finally, the resolution reaffirms the importance of ensuring that the sub-item on United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum cooperation remains on the General Assembly agenda in future years.

Mr President,

My delegation is of the firm view that the draft resolution is essentially a technical and procedural update on strengthening constructive cooperative relations between the Pacific Islands Forum and the United Nations. It is balanced, fair, forward-looking and representative of the evolving main developments at the Pacific regional level and also at the international level.

In closing, Mr President, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum members as well as the other co-sponsors of this draft resolution, Papua New Guinea therefore urges the General Assembly to adopt it by consensus.

Thank you.
ANNEX

*Albania, Angola, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Monaco, Nauru, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Romania, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkey, Tuvalu, and the United States of America.

*¹ Iceland, Serbia and Denmark pending confirmation as co-sponsors.