



SPC/CRGA 45 (15)

Paper 4.1
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

**FORTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(Alofi, Niue, 31 October–2 November 2015)

AGENDA ITEM 4: MEMBERSHIP POLICY

AGENDA ITEM 4.1: UPDATE ON TIMOR-LESTE MEMBERSHIP

(Paper presented by the secretariat)

Summary

1. There have been ongoing discussions with Timor-Leste on its potential membership of the Pacific Community since 2012.
 2. This paper updates CRGA on progress made towards welcoming Timor-Leste as a new Participating Government in the Pacific Community.
 3. CRGA is invited to:
 - i. note the progress of discussions with Timor-Leste on its potential membership of the Pacific Community.
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Update on Timor-Leste membership

Background

4. CRGA 43 and the 8th Conference of the Pacific Community approved a resolution extending the territorial scope of the Community to include Timor-Leste. This resolution entered into force on 19 November 2014.
5. On that basis, CRGA 44 mandated the Secretariat to extend a formal invitation to Timor-Leste to join the Pacific Community and to assist Timor-Leste with any procedural requirements necessary under the Canberra Agreement that established the South Pacific Commission¹.

Update

6. By diplomatic note, dated 9 February 2015, the Government of Timor-Leste was formally invited to join the Pacific Community. The note was accompanied by a letter detailing the procedure that must be followed to accede to the Canberra Agreement and thereby become a Participating Government.
7. SPC's Deputy Director-General and Chief of Staff made an official visit to Timor-Leste from 23 to 26 June 2015 to further advance discussions.
8. The meetings with the Minister and Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs indicated that there is political support for Timor-Leste to pursue membership of the Pacific Community. The obligations that membership would entail, including payment of an assessed contribution, were clarified for Timor-Leste, as was the necessity of acceding to the Canberra Agreement. Full information and a briefing paper on the Pacific Community and its work were also provided to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to facilitate internal discussions and processes.
9. The Deputy Director-General and Chief of Staff were informed that accession to the Canberra Agreement would require the approval of the Council of Ministers and Timor-Leste's Parliament. At the date of writing this paper the secretariat has not received information regarding the status of the completion of these internal processes.

Recommendations

10. CRGA is invited to:
 - i. note the progress of discussions with Timor-Leste on its potential membership of the Pacific Community.

¹ The Pacific Community was originally established as the South Pacific Commission. The name of the organisation was changed in 1997 to reflect its Pacific-wide membership.