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For Immediate Release

Open Forum encourages people to get involved in Climate Action

There is a need to maintain the momentum of worldwide efforts to tackle climate change especially now as we are between the crucial climate talks in Copenhagen and Cancun. With its vast oceans, the peoples of the Pacific stand to face the direct effects of Climate Change, and it is therefore important that we continue to build partnerships so that we are better positioned to combat the challenges that we face.

It is with that rationale and motivation that the European Union (EU) and the University of the South Pacific (USP) together with the British High Commission, the Embassy of France, and the Embassy of the United States of America will be jointly hosting an Open Forum on Climate Change. The event is kindly supported by the Pacific Regional Non-Governmental Organisations (PRINGOs) and the Econesian Society.

The Forum, with 7 panellists representing developed countries, developing economies, small island states and non-government organisations will be held at **6pm on Wednesday, 28 April 2010** at the **University of the South Pacific's AusAid Lecture Theatre**. It is open to the public and free of charge.

The Forum aims to provide a dialogue platform for as many stakeholders as possible, so as to encourage the continuation of discussion on Climate Change as one of the most important policy issues in the region and worldwide.

EU Head of Delegation for the Pacific, Ambassador Wiepke van der Goot said: "We believe that now, between the crucial climate talks in Copenhagen and Cancun, we need to maintain the momentum of global efforts to tackle climate change by reinvigorating international negotiations and engaging as many people as possible in this path. Even if the Copenhagen Accord fell short of Europe's ambitions, we now have the opportunity to build on the political agreement reached in Copenhagen and channel it into action," he added.

USP's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Rajesh Chandra added: "For the Pacific Islands region, climate change has the undoubted capacity to dislodge nations from their declared development trajectories and to cause massive disruption to both environmental productivity and economic growth. While the root causes of climate change must continue to be addressed through international agreements to mitigate the emissions of greenhouse gases, in the Pacific Islands we have no option in the next few decades but to adapt to the effects of irreversible climate change. The University of the South Pacific is proud to be at the forefront of efforts to mainstream effective and sustainable adaptation to climate change among the communities of the Pacific region."



The event will be held in the form of **Questions and Answers Forum**, allowing for an open exchange of views and information between the audience and the panel. It will be moderated by Prof. Patrick Nunn, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific.

Confirmed panellists include:

- Ms Emma Christopher Airu, from the Econesian Society;
- Dr. Norman Barth, Regional Environmental Officer of the Embassy of the United States of America in Fiji;
- Mr Bruno Julien, Former EU Ambassador to Australia [To be confirmed];
- Mr Fei Mingxing, Counsellor of the Embassy of the Peoples Republic of China in Fiji;
- H.E Reteta Nikuata Rimon, High Commissioner of the High Commission of Kiribati in Fiji;
- Mr Espen Ronneberg, Climate Change Adviser at the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP);
- Mr Fei Tevi, General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches.

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