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For Immediate Release

Enhanced High Level Political Dialogue between Tuvalu and the European Union

The first enhanced High Level Political Dialogue between Tuvalu and the European Union under the Cotonou Agreement was held in Funafuti on 31 of May. The meeting was chaired on Tuvalu side by the Prime Minister Honourable Enele Sosene Sopoaga, and H.E. Andrew Jacobs, Ambassador to Tuvalu and Head of Delegation of the European Union for the Pacific. Cabinet Ministers, a Member of Parliament and senior Government officials were present at the Dialogue. The Parties reviewed bilateral relations between Tuvalu and the European Union and discussed possibilities to intensify trade relations and strengthen co-operation in regional and international matters of common concern.

The Political Dialogue Meeting was organised in the framework of Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement which provide for regular exchange of views at the highest level, covering all subjects of mutual interest, including respect for human rights, good governance, democratic principles and the rule of law.

After the meeting, the Prime Minister Honourable Enele Sosene Sopoaga said: "The people and Government of Tuvalu wish to convey their appreciation and commendation to the European Union for the continuing development cooperation to Tuvalu which has impacted positively on the lives of Tuvaluan citizens. The effective partnership which is based on trust and respect has complemented Tuvalu's own efforts to progress in its political, economic, social and sustainable development aspirations. Tuvalu recognises the importance of the deliberations on furthering the partnership between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) Group beyond the Cotonou Agreement and is looking forward to actively participate in this process. Tuvalu appreciates the excellent work by H.E Andrew Jacobs, the outgoing European Union Ambassador to Tuvalu and wish him the very best in his return to Europe."

H.E. Ambassador Jacobs said: "Today we held discussions on all aspects of our relations. We took stock of successes such as visa free travel to European Union for Tuvaluans, our bilateral cooperation in waste management and progress in the area of human rights. Alongside the European Union Tuvalu played an important role in ensuring that the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change is ambitious and robust and we will work closely with Tuvalu and other vulnerable nations at COP23 to ensure that the Agreement is implemented by all parties. The EU will continue working together with Tuvalu to address the Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing issues."

This was the last trip of H.E. Ambassador Jacobs to Tuvalu before his assignment in the Pacific comes to an end later this year. During his short stay, he visited climate change, solid waste management and

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sanitation projects to witness how European Union improved environmental protection and life of ordinary Tuvaluans. Ambassador Jacobs also held farewell meetings with the Governor General H.E. Sir Iakoba Taea Italeli, Prime Minister Hon. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Maatia Toafa, Speaker of Parliament Hon. Otinielu Tauteleimalae Tausi and Minister Hon. Namoliki Sualiki Neemia. Ambassador Jacobs met representatives from Civil Society Organisations.

Background

The Cotonou Agreement offers a framework for the European Union's cooperation relations for the economic, social and cultural development of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP). Centred on the target of reducing, and in the longer-term, eradicating poverty, the cooperation must also contribute to peace and security and the democratic and political stability of the ACP states.

The objective of the political dialogue is to exchange information, to foster mutual understanding and to facilitate the establishment of agreed priorities and shared agendas, in particular by recognising links in the various areas of cooperation between the Parties as laid down in the Cotonou Agreement.

EU-Tuvalu development cooperation

Under the 9th and 10th European Development Fund (EDF), between 2000 and 2014, the EU provided assistance to Tuvalu totalling €9.6 million, mostly in the sectors of water, sanitation and waste management. Under the 11th EDF, the bilateral allocation (for the time period from 2014 - 2020) for Tuvalu totals €6.8 million.

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