

Pacific Regionalism and Higher Education

**Presentation at the Australian National
University**

**Professor Rajesh Chandra, Vice-
Chancellor & President , USP**

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Introduction

1. Framework for Pacific Regionalism
2. Review of CROP Working Group Mechanism
3. The University of the South Pacific's role as
 - Regional Higher Education Provider;
 - Supporting PIFS and co-operating with CROP agencies in regional co-operation and integration;
 - Lead responsibilities for regional human resource development; and
 - Lead responsibility for ICT development

4. Engaging with Others to Support the Pacific Is.

- Regional exemplar for national tertiary institutions and support for them;
- Network with and support national tertiary institutions;
- Co-operating with Aust/NZ universities;
- Engaging with Development Partners & CROP agencies relevant to USP's area of work to support regional priorities.

Framework for Pacific Regionalism



- Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR) was endorsed by PIF Forum Leaders in July 2014.
- Replaced the Pacific Plan
- FPR supports a tighter, more focused forum agenda and promotes large-scale initiatives that bring together development partners, countries, regional agencies and non-state actors with plans of action, rather than just good ideas. It complements effective sub-regionalism.

Framework for Pacific Regionalism (Cont.)

- Supports “focussed political conversations and settlements that address key strategic issues, including shared sovereignty, pooling resources and delegating decision-making”.
- Options for pursuing regionalism:
 - Cooperation;
 - Coordination;
 - Collaboration (which includes service pooling);
 - Harmonisation;
 - Economic integration; and
 - Political/institutional integration.

Framework for Pacific Regionalism (Cont.)

- Ownership/commitment/support for regional cooperation and integration is the business and requirement of all **Pacific people**, including governments, CSOs, private sector, regional organisations, development partners, media organisations. Although central, CROPS share the regional work with others.
- ***No business as usual***: talk about “game changing/paradigm shift/transformational changes/big ticket items. Implications for all of the stakeholders but particularly for CROPS given our centrality.

Framework for Pacific Regionalism (Cont.)

- Call for greater openness, inclusion, transparency and accountability.
- Review of regional governance and financing to support the new approach to regionalism.
- Deal with the issue of donor funding and issues of undue influence/mixing roles.
- Focus on implementation/monitoring/impact and full and regular reporting on these by the SG (and by definition all CROP agencies need to focus on these and report to their stakeholders).

Framework for Pacific Regionalism (Cont.)



- The first call for proposals was last year whereby a total of 68 initiatives received and filtered by the Special Sub-Committee on Regionalism (SSCR) under the FPR.
- The next call for regional initiative under FPR for 2016 opened on 18 February 2016 and will close on 10 April 2016.
- The PIF Leaders at their meeting in Papua New Guinea in September, 2015 endorsed 5 initiatives.

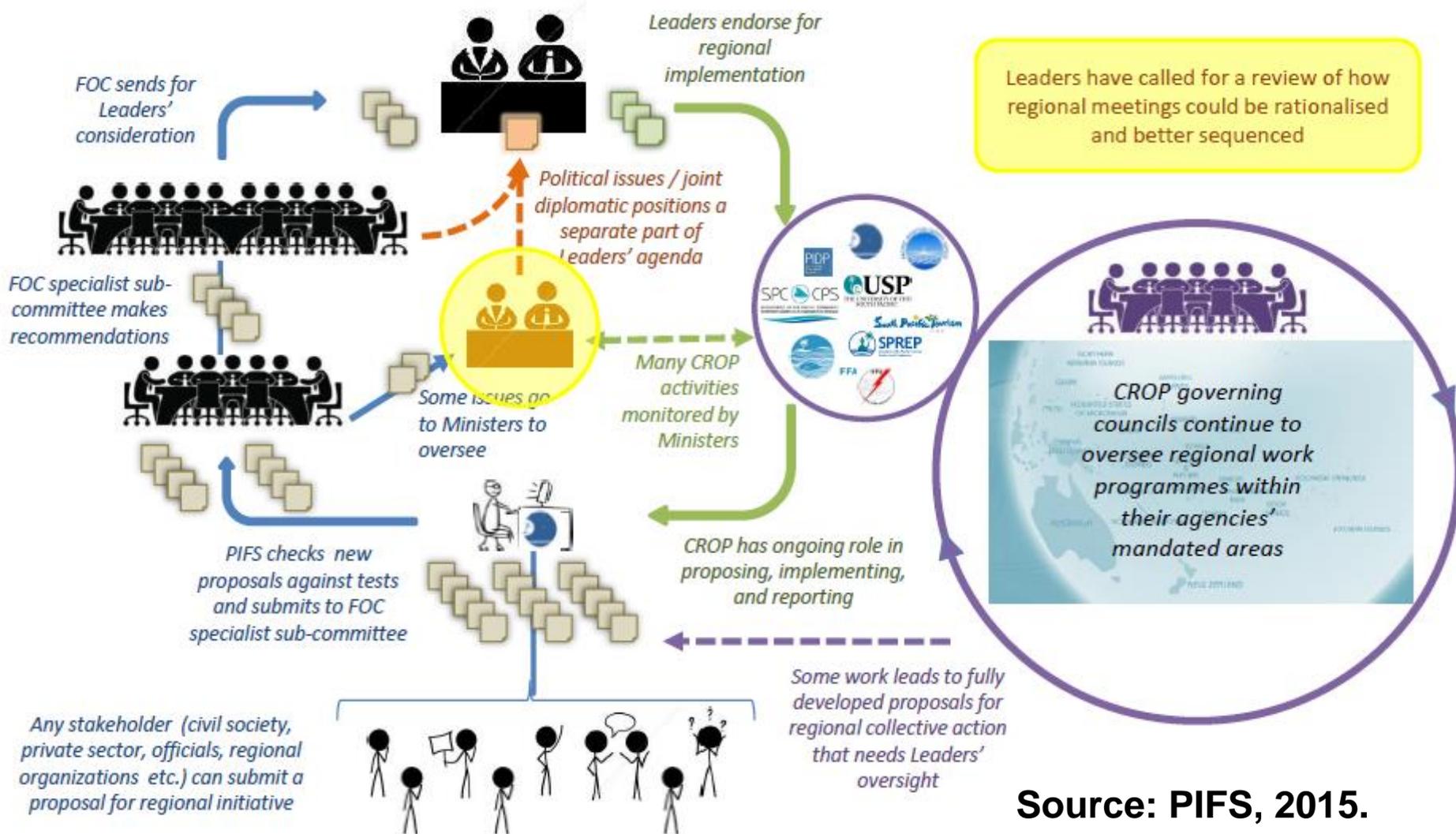
5 Regional Initiatives

1. Fisheries: Increasing economic returns; and evaluation of current monitoring, control and surveillance efforts.
2. Climate Change: High level political statement & joint Strategy on Climate Change and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific.
3. ICT: Regional ICT Advisory Council.
4. Cervical Cancer: Regional programme for screening and prevention.
5. West Papua: Addressing Human Rights Concerns.

Regional ICT Initiative

- Priority pertaining to ICT asks for assessment of the merit of establishing RIAC.
- Led by USP with support from the PIFS. Other stakeholders in this area including the ADB and the WB are contributing, and the strengthened CROP ICT WG will provide high level guidance to the assessment.
- An initial meeting between USP, PIFS, ADB and WB on 17 December 2015-- discussed that there was concern that given the many entities engaged in ICT development for the region, constructing yet another body in the form of RIAC may not be as effective as envisioned.

Priority Setting Process for Regional Initiative

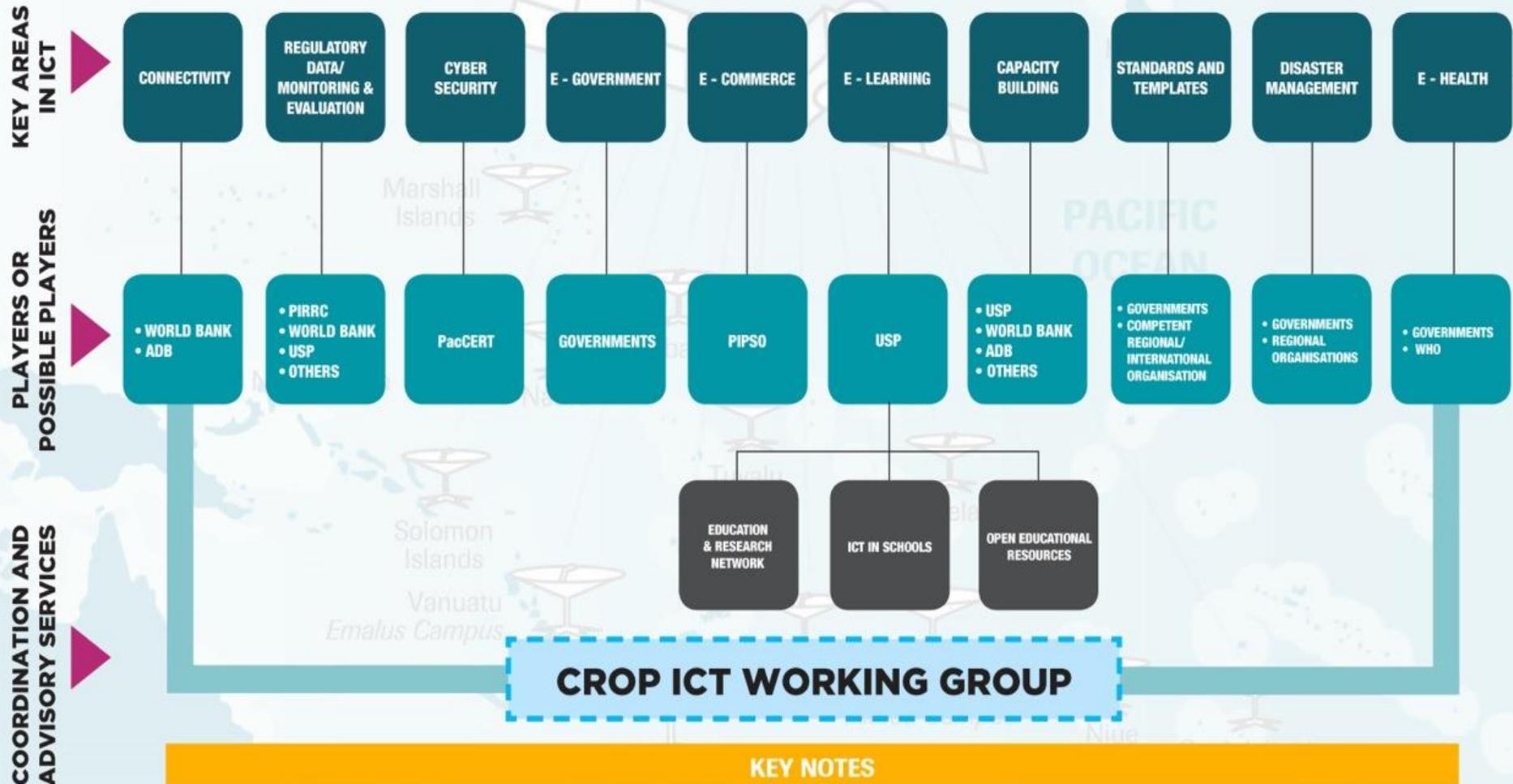


Source: PIFS, 2015.

Regional ICT Initiative (Cont.)

- Things that were required to be delivered for this initiative could be done through a strengthened CROP ICT WG.
- A larger group under the strengthened CROP ICT WG will convene a meeting soon to discuss and suggest the best way to achieve the desired collaboration mechanisms.

REGIONAL ICT INITIATIVE - KEY PILLARS



KEY NOTES

The diagram simply demonstrates three things: (1) Key areas in ICT; (2) Players or possible players in ICT; and (3) Coordination and Advisory Services.

Key areas in ICT

The areas identified are those that have been generally agreed to and this can be revised based on any other priorities that may be considered relevant.

Players or Possible Players in ICT

This highlights players and possible players that are active or can be involved in the key areas identified. Others players can be included as appropriate.

Coordination and Advisory Services

- This is important as we feel a strengthened CROP ICT Working Group can do this work instead of RIAC.
- A strengthened CROP ICT Working Group can have a permanent Secretariat that can be responsible for coordinating the different work/tasks done by the various players in the key areas in ICT. This will ensure that everyone is aware what each one is doing and communicate on a regular basis to ensure that there is maximum benefit to the region in all the key areas. (For example, if a country is connected by cable then other players can see how they can utilise the additional bandwidth for application purposes. This can be planned even before establishing connectivity).
- The structure of the Secretariat can be worked out once this is accepted.

Review of the CROP Working Group (WG) Mechanism

- The fundamental message stemming from the review is... “The Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) Working Group Mechanism (WGM) is a very important, useful and effective coordinating mechanism for CROP agencies”.
- It needs to be strengthened as the principal modality through which CROP **as a collective** can engage more strategically and effectively.
- Need for the review of the CROP Charter to reflect the recasting of the *Pacific Plan* as the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*.

Review of the CROP Working Group (WG) Mechanism (Cont.)

- Recommendations from review of the CROP WGM for ICT and HRD, and the joint response to the recommendations made by the CROP Executives at the 38th CROP meeting in November 2015:

ICT Working Group

- It was recommended that ICT Working Group should be retained and strengthened.

Review of the CROP Working Group (WG) Mechanism (Cont.)

- USP will work towards strengthening ICT Working Group and revisit the TOR and membership in light of the general agreement that regional ICT initiative should be part of CROP ICT Working Group rather than establishing another structure.

Review of the CROP Working Group (WG) Mechanism (Cont.)

Human Resource Development Working Group

- The review recommended that the HRD Working Group should be retained and strengthened.
- The joint CROP response was that HRD is important for the region and that HRD Working Group to consider ways of strengthening this.

USP's role in Fostering Pacific Regionalism



- USP is an early expression of regionalism in the Pacific from the mid-60s when the issue of tertiary education was being planned and USP established in 1968.
- Regional university as opposed to national. Owned by 12 Forum countries that determine its policies and work programmes giving the University a regional character as the premier provider of higher education.
- USP has activities that require it to provide advice to member countries (HRD and ICT) and it supports/complements CROP agencies in implementing regional programmes that assist with the sustainable development of member countries e.g. PACE-SD and other sections of USP in climate change, disaster risk management, renewable energy, marine and others.

USP's role in Fostering Pacific Regionalism (Cont.)



- 2013 Pacific Plan Review: Reference to USP as a successful example of a regional organization

“The University of the South Pacific (USP) is a successful example of a regional body realizing economies of scale, enabling residents of smaller Pacific Island states to access a tertiary education of a quality that their national government could not afford to provide”
- Senator Brett Mason’s Speech at the Launch of USP-Australia new partnership, making reference to USP as a great example of a regional engagement and success

“USP is a great example of regional engagement and success, serving 12 countries and with the highest standards USP has done so much for Fiji and the region”

USP's role in Fostering Pacific Regionalism (Cont.)



- USP is directly accountable to its member countries, and so its research priorities are determined by the member country's themselves in order to provide them with maximum benefit.
- 7 SRTs launched on 1 July 2015:
 1. Economic Growth, Regional Cooperation & Integration for Sustainable Pacific Economies;
 2. Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change;
 3. Government, Public Policy and Social Cohesion;
 4. Human Capacity Building & Leadership;
 5. ICT & Knowledge Economy;
 6. Pacific Cultures and Societies; and
 7. Pacific Ocean & Natural Resources.

USP's Regional Engagement and Integration Role



- Active participation and contribution in regional meetings: FEMM, FTMM, CROP Executive Meetings; SIS Officials; PACP Officials; FOC; and PIF Leaders meetings.
- Participation in CROP WGs and Sub WGs—USP's role as the Chair for ICT and HRD WG.
- Active contribution in the Pacific Plan review (2013) and draft FPR (2014).
- Hosting of High level consultations (MSG EPG-2013) and CROP Heads meeting.
- Significant input into key regional meetings—USP is a resource point and source of policy advice.
- Also participate in PIDF and related meetings.

USP's Presence in the Region



- 14 regional campuses and 9 centres across its 12 member countries.
- Enrolment of about 30,000 and about 4500 undergraduate completions
- New campus in Kiribati; renovate/upgrade property acquired for new RMI campus; and progressive work on the new campus in Solomon Islands with support from ADB.
- Negotiation on-going on increasing USP membership to include PNG, FSM and Palau.

USP as a Higher Education Provider: Focus on Quality and Accreditation



- **Major focus on quality**
- Strive towards accrediting most of USP's Programme and Courses. Twelve (12) accredited Programmes with international agencies currently. Eight (8) Programmes under accreditation process.
- Granted Eligibility status by WSCUC. The University is eligible to apply for Candidacy and Initial Accreditation.

USP as a Higher Education Provider: Major Focus on ICT – Enabled Pedagogies



- Started distance learning in early 1970s. Leader in the use of satellites for student access.
- Flexible Learning programmes in place for all Faculties.
- More than half of the enrolment is in flexible courses
- **Pacific TAFE** provides vocational & professional programmes and short courses at USP. The vocational programmes are suitable for post-secondary and mature students to build their careers in a discipline.
- Major focus on employability, and engagement with industry and professional bodies

Cooperation with National Universities in the Region



- USP is cooperating with National Universities in the Pacific region to identify effective solution facing the PICs.
- Essence of ***Cooperation*** rather than ***Competition***.
- Imperative to cultivate partnership with national and other Universities in Australia and New Zealand to find better and cost-effective sustainable solutions.
- Empowering the people in the region to think and provide Pacific solutions supported with Pacific resources.
- MOUs with other Universities including ANU to foster research based sustainable solutions to issues facing the region.

Working with Australian Universities



	Name / Expiry	Areas of Collaboration
1	Australian National University (ANU) August 2020	General framework for cooperation and development of specific programmes for collaboration.
2	University of Canberra (UC) August 2018	Scholar and student exchange, research activities and other general collaboration
3	James Cook University (JCU) February 2018	JCU will provide a non-exclusive licence to USP for an office in the Building A1- Smithfield Campus which will be labelled accordingly, with a licence fee of AUD \$1 including GST if demanded, with an initial term of three (3) years.
4	University of Western Sydney College (UWSC) Pty Limited - December 2017	Explore possible collaborative activities with a view to developing a robust institutional partnership of reciprocal benefit.
5	Victoria University (VU) August 2019	Exchanges of information, including in-house publications; Joint research; Staff exchanges; Organizing joint conferences; Student exchanges; Fee-for-service activities; Pathway arrangements; and Identifying and exploring further activities of mutual interest
6	Macquarie University (MU) November 2017	Student Exchange Agreement to broaden the scope of the academic curriculum, create educational relations and cooperation between the Institutions and to promote academic and cultural linkages, enrichment and understanding.
7	University of Adelaide - November 2018	Exchange of students and academic staff; Joint research activities, including seminars, conferences and public lectures; Exchange of publications, academic materials and other information; Joint quality assurance and benchmarking; and Such other projects for mutual benefit that are agreed upon by both parties.
8	University of Melbourne September 2018	Research collaboration and/or joint research projects - cultural management programme and academic and research
9	University of Western Sydney (UWS) August 2018	Mutual cooperation in teaching and research
10	Griffith University	Staff exchange; Research, exchange of academic publication materials; Training in specialized projects; and

Co-operating with New Zealand Universities



	Name / Expiry	Areas of Collaboration
1	Lincoln University December 2018	Support teaching and learning programmes, along with land-based community developmental projects in the Pacific, as well as for Pacific communities within New Zealand; Supporting student and / or staff exchanges; Developing joint research projects; Developing and implementing marketing campaigns related to agriculture and land use; and Leveraging relationships with stakeholders, or developing opportunities and benefits that would support the relationship.
2	Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) October 2018	Exchange of information and materials; Exchange academic and administrative staff, research staff, visiting scholars, students; and Provision of briefing services by each institution for visitors from the other institution.
3	University of Auckland (UOA) October 2020	The MOU proposes to foster academic exchange and cooperation between the two institutions.

MOUs in Process of Finalisation

1	University of Otago	
2	Massey University	

Concluding Remarks

- The FPR represents a fresh perspective on regional co-operation and integration with heightened expectations for progress for the development and welfare of Pacific people.
- This implies focused and results-oriented effort by all concerned with regional development. Despite setbacks, such as natural disasters and impending problems of sea level rise and increasing incidents of extreme events, the prospects for Pacific development remain positive.
- Pacific governments and people need to take more ownership and accountability for their development

Concluding Remarks

- USP has been a powerful facilitator of regional co-operation and integration through its education and training of the Pacific leaders and business and civic leaders.
- Developing Pacific consciousness is embedded in the graduate attributes and values of the University.
- USP wishes to work with universities, such as the ANU, to ensure that there is full academic and policy support for the Pacific Islands.
- Invite broader co-operation with ANU under our MOU.

Vinaka Vakalevu
Thank you very much

Questions