

## OVERVIEW OF ASEAN-PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM RELATIONS

### **Background**<sup>1</sup>

- The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is the Pacific region's premier political and economic policy organisation, which comprises 18 member countries i.e.: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.
- PIF was founded in 1971, and envisions a region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives. The Forum works to achieve its objectives by fostering cooperation between Governments, collaboration with international agencies, and by representing the interests of its members, guided by the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.
- The Forum currently has 18 dialogue partners: Canada, China, Cuba, European Union, France, Germany, India, **Indonesia**, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, **Malaysia, the Philippines**, Spain, **Thailand**, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.
- In 2019, the PIF Leaders endorsed the development of the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*, reinforcing the PIF's commitment to work together to advance Pacific regionalism and addressing challenges, i.e. climate change and geostrategic competition, including through partnerships at the regional, multilateral and global level.

### **ASEAN-PIF engagement**

- The first formal engagement between ASEAN and PIF took place on 9 December 2022 when the Secretary-General of PIF, H.E. Henry Puna, paid a courtesy call on the then Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta.
- Following this, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat on 4 February 2023 in Jakarta, as well as the 42<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Summit in Labuan Bajo on 10-11 May 2023 expressed

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<sup>1</sup> [The Pacific Islands Forum – Pacific Islands Forum \(forumsec.org\)](https://forumsec.org/)

interest in developing cooperation and establishing Secretariat-to-Secretariat cooperation between ASEAN and PIF.

- Subsequently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ASEAN and PIF was concluded. Secretary-General of ASEAN, H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, and the Deputy Secretary General of PIF, H.E. Esala Nayasi, signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organisation on 4 September 2023 at the sidelines of the 43<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit in Jakarta. The signing ceremony was witnessed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, H.E. Retno L. P. Marsudi, and the Prime Minister of Cook Islands, the Hon Mark Brown.
- The Hon Mark Brown, in his capacity as the Chair of the PIF, was invited as Guest of Chair of the 18<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit held on 7 September 2023 in Jakarta.

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