

## **Parliamentary Secretary, Deepak Obhrai's Speech to the Pacific Islands Forum**

Thank you, Prime Minister Puna. We are grateful for the opportunity to be here at the Pacific Islands Forum Post Forum Dialogue in recognition of Canada's continued contribution as a strong development partner in the region.

This is my fourth Forum, and although I have had the opportunity to visit most Pacific Island countries, this is my first visit to the Cook Islands. Canada shares the concerns of the Forum Leaders and Dialogue partners with regard to the continued challenges facing the region, particularly the issued of climate change and energy.

In fiscal year 2010/11, Canada made a \$20 million contribution to the Least Developed Countries Fund which addresses the urgent needs of the 49 least developed countries that are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including Kiribati, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Pacific island countries continue to benefit from Canada's ongoing contributions to multilateral organizations. As the sixth largest contributor to the Global Environment Facility, Canada is supporting international and regional efforts to assist Pacific Islands Forum countries to establish strategies and programs to improve their energy security through increased energy efficiencies and the adoption of renewable energies.

I was pleased to note in the communiqué issued by Forum leaders that the next Pacific Islands Forum will be held in the Marshall Islands. Canada has contributed \$100,000 towards a renewable energy project in the Marshall Islands which will replace street lights run by diesel generators with solar panels. This project will ultimately result in an estimated annual reduction of 350 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, Canada remains committed to supporting development projects in the South Pacific. Countries such as Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga have benefited from Canada's contribution to the World Bank Pilot Program for Climate Resilience. Additionally, Canada continues to support projects aimed at adapting to and mitigating against the impacts of climate change on the Pacific Island countries through the Government of Canada's Fast Start Climate Change Initiative.

To conclude, I would like to assure Forum leaders that Canada remains a strong and supporting development partner for the Pacific Forum countries.

Thank you.