

## **Second Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC)**

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16th September 2015

### **Introduction**

The Second Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) was held in India on August 21, 2015. The Forum for India Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC), which comprises India and 14 Pacific Island countries, was formed during PM Modi's bilateral visit to Fiji in November 2014. The fourteen member Pacific Island countries include Tonga, Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Nauru, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Niue, Palau, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Fiji, and Papa New Guinea.[1]

The first FIPIC summit was held in Suva, Fiji in November 2014, while this second summit of the Forum was held in the Indian state of Jaipur.[2] At the summit India highlighted the growing importance of Pacific Island nations to India by proposing higher cooperation in varied spheres such as energy, trade, blue economy, disaster management, renewable energy and climate change.[3]

### **Development cooperation initiatives undertaken by India during the first summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC)**

The second FIPIC summit builds on initiatives launched during the first summit in 2014. During his first address to the Pacific Island nations in November 2014, Indian PM Modi announced the formation of a Special Adaptation Fund of US\$1 million for providing training and technical assistance for building capacities of the Pacific Island nations. This was further supplemented by the announcement of a hike in the annual Grant in Aid extended towards these island nations from US\$125,000 to US\$200,000 for community projects.[4] The Indian government also extended funding for small business projects in these island nations during the summit.[5]

In addition to these initiatives, PM Modi also announced EXIM bank Line of Credits worth US\$75 million along with a US\$5 million grant for Fiji's sugar industry, and for modernizing its villages, small and medium industries.[6]

## **Development cooperation initiatives undertaken by India during the second summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC)**

During the second summit, the Indian government undertook slew of important development cooperation measures especially in the field of human resource development. These included cooperation-building efforts such as the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program under which the Indian government announced 110 slots for the island nation of Fiji, along with doubling of total slots (119 to 238) reserved for the rest of the thirteen island nations of FIPIC. Two scholarships for college education in India for each of the thirteen island nations were also added to the already existing 33 scholarship slots offered to Fiji. PM Modi also announced establishment of at least one information technology laboratory in each of the Pacific Island nations and an expansion of the range of training courses currently offered to Pacific Island diplomats along with training for women solar engineers from the island nations.[7]

In addition, India also displayed a favorable attitude towards PNG's request of obtaining a credit line of US\$100 million from the EXIM Bank of India[8] and also proposed a credit line for setting up of pharmaceutical manufacturing plant and distribution centers in these island nations.[9] Other initiatives, including support for the development of micro, small and medium enterprises, setting up of a network of marine biology research stations on these islands and a space technology application center in one of the island nations, were also announced during the meeting.[10] Importantly, PM Modi gave assurances on building further capacity in the Pacific Island nations for better disaster management (through human resource development and application of space technology), including mitigating the impact of climate change.[11]

These active initiatives by the Indian government are essential for India to develop closer relationship with the Pacific Island nations and promote its interests in the region, particularly given the increased attention to this region by other major global economies.

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## END NOTES

- [1] See “India-Pacific Island nations summit in Jaipur on Aug 21”, August 11, 2015, Business Standard, available at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-pacific-island-nations-summit-in-jaipur-on-aug-21-115081101259\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-pacific-island-nations-summit-in-jaipur-on-aug-21-115081101259_1.html), last accessed on August 18, 2015.
- [2] See “India-Pacific Island nations summit in Jaipur on Aug 21”, August 11, 2015, Business Standard, available at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-pacific-island-nations-summit-in-jaipur-on-aug-21-115081101259\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-pacific-island-nations-summit-in-jaipur-on-aug-21-115081101259_1.html), last accessed on August 18, 2015.
- [3] See “Narendra Modi pitches for stronger ties with Pacific island nations”, August 22, 2015, Live Mint <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/L4odMOxhPEe5f4QX2fCrTI/Narendra-Modi-pitches-for-stronger-ties-with-Pacific-island.html>, last accessed on August 27, 2015.
- [4] See “India-Pacific Island nations summit in Jaipur on Aug 21”, August 11, 2015, Business Standard, available at [http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-pacific-island-nations-summit-in-jaipur-on-aug-21-115081101259\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/india-pacific-island-nations-summit-in-jaipur-on-aug-21-115081101259_1.html), last accessed on August 18, 2015.
- [5] See “India to host meeting of 14 Pacific island nations”, August 03, 2015, The Hindu, available at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-to-host-meeting-of-14-pacific-island-nations/article7492688.ece>, last accessed on August 18, 2015.
- [6] See “India to host Pacific Islands Summit in Jaipur on August 21”, August 05, 2015, The Economic Times, available at [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-08-05/news/65243530\\_1\\_fiji-modi-government-narendra-modi](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-08-05/news/65243530_1_fiji-modi-government-narendra-modi), last accessed on August 18, 2015.
- [7] See “PM for space station in a Pacific Islands country”, August 21, 2015, The Times of India, available at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/PM-for-space-station-in-a-Pacific-Islands-country/articleshow/48593776.cms>, last accessed on August 27, 2015.
- [8] See “PM’s bilateral meetings on the sidelines of Second FIPIC Summit, August 21, 2015, Government of India, available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126256>, last accessed on August 27, 2015.
- [9] See “Narendra Modi pitches for stronger ties with Pacific island nations”, August 22, 2015, Live Mint <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/L4odMOxhPEe5f4QX2fCrTI/Narendra-Modi-pitches-for-stronger-ties-with-Pacific-island.html>, last accessed on August 27, 2015.
- [10] See “Narendra Modi pitches for stronger ties with Pacific island nations”, August 22, 2015, Live Mint <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/L4odMOxhPEe5f4QX2fCrTI/Narendra-Modi-pitches-for-stronger-ties-with-Pacific-island.html>, last accessed on August 27, 2015.
- [11] See “PM’s bilateral meetings on the sidelines of Second FIPIC Summit, August 21, 2015, Government of India, available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=126256>, last accessed on August 27, 2015.