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United States and Pacific Islands Strengthen Fisheries Cooperation



Caption: U.S. Ambassador Walter North and representatives from the Pacific Islands Parties pose after signing the interim arrangements to continue the Multilateral Fisheries Treaty also known as the South Pacific Tuna Treaty.

Representatives from the United States and the Pacific Islands Parties agreed to sign interim arrangement documents to extend the Multilateral Fisheries Treaty for 18 months. U.S. Ambassador Walter North signed the agreements on behalf of the U.S. government on May 9 in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

The signed arrangements strengthen the relationship between the United States and the Pacific Island states by continuing to afford fishing access for the U.S. purse seine fleet, while also reinforcing the United States' commitment to supporting our Pacific partners through an economic assistance package that contributes to their development.

The Multilateral Fisheries Treaty, also known as the South Pacific Tuna Treaty first entered into force in 1987 and has become a vital component of the political and economic relationship between the United States and the Pacific Island Parties.

Under an Economic Assistance Agreement related to the Treaty, the U.S. Government provides economic assistance to the Pacific Island Parties to support public education and health care programs, responsible utilization of natural resources, and general economic and social welfare in the Pacific Islands.

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Tel: +675 321-1455

pdportmoresby@state.gov

<http://portmoresby.usembassy.gov>

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Fisheries resources in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean comprise of some of the most valuable tuna in the world. The South Pacific Tuna Treaty is not only a cornerstone for cooperation between the Pacific Islands and the United States, but has also helped establish fisheries observer and data reporting requirements as well as monitoring, control and surveillance standards for the region's fisheries, all of which are vital to deterring illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

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