

FORUM EYES ONLY



**PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT**

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Session 1

**FORUM REGIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Fiji Mocambo Hotel, Nadi, Fiji

16-17 June, 2004

**AGENDA ITEM 5: IDENTITY FRAUD REGISTER**

**Purpose of Paper and Presentation**

To propose the establishment of a Pacific Region Identity Protection Project (PRIPP). Under the project the following six registers would be created as part of one intelligence database:

- Fraudulent identities;
- Stolen identities;
- Lost/stolen documents of identity;
- Documents of identity issued by authorities including security features;
- Known identity fraud offenders; and
- A Pacific Fraud Centre (PFC).

**Background**

2. At its meeting in Nadi, Fiji in June 2003, the Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC):

- **agreed** that the Identity Fraud Register project may be a viable option for the Forum Island Countries and to **consider** it as a response to identity crime and related security issues; and
- **requested** that the representatives of Australia and New Zealand together with representatives of the South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference, the Oceania Customs Organisation, the Pacific Immigration Directors Conference and the Forum Secretariat form a working group to explore the viability, including indicative costs, for Forum Island Countries to join and participate in the Identity Fraud Register project, subject to outcome of the present expansion of the register between Australia and New Zealand; **agreed** that this working group report back to the FRSC in 2004.

3. At their meeting in Auckland, New Zealand in August 2003:
  - *Leaders **recognised** that transnational organised crime such as the illegal trade in wildlife, manufacture of and trafficking in illicit drugs, and identity fraud posed an increasing threat to members and that the region was vulnerable to exploitation by criminal syndicates undertaking these activities.*
  - *Leaders also **agreed** that the extension of the Identity Fraud Register project to Forum Island Countries could be valuable. Leaders directed the Forum Secretariat to coordinate the formation of a working group to explore the viability, including indicative costs, for Forum Island Countries to join and participate in the Identity Fraud Register project.*
4. The full impact of identity related crime in the Pacific Region is largely unknown. Currently there is no estimated cost of identity fraud in the Pacific region. However, financial institutions and government agencies worldwide have indicated that they are collectively losing millions of dollars every year. A number of conferences and working parties have been formed to progress industry, law enforcement and government responses to the emerging problem in both Australia and New Zealand. Fraudulent and stolen identities can facilitate organised crime such as multi jurisdictional fraud, people trafficking, terrorism and money laundering.
5. Law enforcement agencies in the Pacific have neither a national or regional approach to the problem to date. In fact, agencies are unable to quantify the extent of the problem as many identity fraud offences are, and continue to be, unreported. Traditionally, it has only been when major crimes have been committed that law enforcement has been notified of identity fraud related offences.
6. The Australian Crime Commission (ACC) has been successfully operating the Australian Identity Protection Registers (previously known as the Identity Fraud Register) since February 2002. The Australian Identity Protection Register records approximately 3800 fraudulent identities that have been used in Australia for the purposes of opening bank accounts, committing fraud, transferring money overseas, international and domestic airline travel, and to obtain legitimately issued proof of identity documents, such as passports, in false names. The ACC has also been successfully operating a National Fraud Desk since 1999.
7. New Zealand Police are launching an Identity Protection Register in September 2004 which is largely based on the Australian Identity Protection Registers.

### **Concept Paper**

8. The presentation will provide an overview of the PRIPP as outlined in the attached concept paper.
9. It is proposed that an initial twelve-month pilot of the Pacific Region Identity Protection Project, based on the established Australian Crime Commission (ACC) Australian Identity Protection Registers, be established in the Pacific region.

10. The PRIPP will facilitate the exchange of intelligence relating to the use of fraudulent and stolen identities, lost and stolen documents, documents of identity issued by authorities including security features and known identity fraud offenders. The PFC will facilitate the exchange of general fraud intelligence, and fraud trend information as part of regional efforts to combat transnational organised crime.

### **Regional Impacts**

11. Transnational organised crime groups will exploit the Region's proof of identity processes to disguise and facilitate their criminal activities. The PRIPP will provide the capability to collect, analyse and exchange intelligence relating to fraudulent identities, stolen identities and lost and stolen documents. The PFC will facilitate the exchange of fraud trend information and intelligence that will assist in preventing fraud crimes being committed in other member countries.

### **Future Directions**

12. The optimum objective would be for all jurisdictions to collaborate in assisting the Forum Secretariat in the implementation of the PRIPP. This includes establishing a Memorandum of Understanding, identifying liaison persons, implementing marketing and information collection plans and contributing intelligence to this project.

13. The PRIPP is intended to operate as a 12 month pilot in 2005.

### **Cost Implications**

14. Funding for the pilot has yet to be confirmed however, indicative costs follow:

Staffing:	
Project Manager and PRIPP Co-ordinator	\$40,000.00
Collator/Analyst	\$20,000.00
IT and Equipment	\$8,000.00
Marketing and Awareness (including travel)	\$20,000.00
Operating Costs	\$10,000.00
	<b>\$98,000.00</b>

### **Recommendations**

15. The Committee is requested to:

- (i) **note** the progress and work undertaken by the working group in scoping the viability of Forum Island Countries participating in the Identity Fraud Register Project as directed by the Leaders at their meeting in 2003.
- (ii) **note** the draft supporting documentation that will provide the framework for the development and establishment of the Pacific Region Identity Protection Project.

- (iii) **endorse** the outcomes of the working group, and agree that they be progressed, with a view to implementation (subject to funding availability) during 2005, and that this work be coordinated by the Forum Secretariat in conjunction with the 2004 Pre- FRSC Law Enforcement Group.
- (iv) **agree** that a progress report be made to the 2005 FRSC.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Suva  
28 April 2004