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**2009 SOUTH PACIFIC 19th COUNCIL OF TOURISM MINISTERS
THURSDAY OCTOBER 15, HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS**

COMMUNIQUE

1. **THE 19TH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF TOURISM MEETING WAS HELD ON THURSDAY 15TH OCTOBER 2009 IN HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS.**
2. The Prime Minister of Solomon Islands in his welcoming remarks expressed his deepest sympathies to the people of Samoa and Tonga for the devastation caused by the recent earthquake and tsunami.
3. The Council of Ministers requested south-pacific.travel to assist Samoa with its tourism recovery efforts.
4. The Council of Ministers acknowledged with appreciation the hospitality given to Council members and their respective delegation by the Government and the friendly people of Solomon Islands.
5. The Council of Ministers noted that the member countries must develop synergies and work together to promote regional tourism and obtain the maximum benefits from this industry.
6. The Council of Ministers noted that the member countries must work together to protect the unique and pristine environment of the South Pacific Island Countries.
7. The Council of Ministers deliberated on the draft Business Plan for the organisation and in considering the draft Business Plan, the Ministers acknowledged that the Plan is a rolling one that covers a wide range of priority activities to be undertaken by south-pacific.travel. The Council of Ministers reiterated the importance of re-prioritising of activities within the plan in line with the need of member countries. The key goals identified are:
 - a. Improved Air and Sea Access to Islands
 - b. Enhanced Brand South Pacific
 - c. Improved Capacity of Government and Private Sector for Sustainable Tourism
8. The Council of Ministers noted that the 2010 Shanghai Expo Pacific Pavilion has received and work has commenced on the interior displays. The Pacific Pavillion is the 3rd largest in the whole Expo. The Chinese Pavillion, of course, is the largest. A staggering 70 million visitors are expected to the Expo, presenting an excellent promotional opportunity for the Pacific tourism, trade, and investment. All 14 Pacific Island countries have confirmed their participation in the Pavillion.
9. The Council of Ministers acknowledged with appreciation the financial and technical support given by the Chinese Government to the Pacific region and in particular the support given to the establishment of the Pacific Pavillion and technical assistance to south-pacific.travel.
10. The Council of Ministers resolved and directed Management to analyse and report on options to improve Private Sector engagement and representation on the Board of Directors.
11. The Council of Ministers strongly endorsed that south-pacific.travel should take a more pro-active approach in working with other Regional Organisations and individual countries to foster the development of tourism in the region. More so, member countries in the region plan to assist south-pacific.travel in facilitating donor co-ordination and support. Specifically, a closer Tourism working

relationship with our two largest visitor markets, Australia and New Zealand, should be sought.

12. The Council of Ministers recognised that the Tourism Industry is a very important contributor to most of the economies within the Pacific, particularly in terms of foreign exchange earnings and employment. Therefore it is important that a consolidated effort among the stakeholders must be undertaken to ensure the long term sustainability of the Tourism sector.
13. The Council of Ministers noted that to enhance the development of the Tourism sector in the Pacific, a number of strategic issues must be addressed with urgency. These include the right level of investment, the necessary infrastructure, air and sea access, and the development of specific tourism products.
14. The Council of Ministers endorsed the Government of Samoa's offer to host the 2010 Council of Tourism Ministers and Board of Directors meetings and hope that this will help contribute to Samoa tourism's recovery effort.
15. The Council of Ministers also noted the expression of interest from the Government of Vanuatu to host the meetings in 2011.