



PACIFIC ISLANDS JUDICIAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

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PACIFIC JUDICIARIES STRENGTHENED THROUGH NEW JUDGES ASSOCIATION

Strong and independent Pacific judiciaries are the focus of the newly formed Pacific Islands Judicial Officers' Association (PIJOA). The organization aims to foster judicial excellence and regional collaboration, recognizing the vital role of judiciaries to uphold rule of law and administer justice across the region. PIJOA is from the region and for the region, bringing together judges from across the diverse cultures, traditions and languages of the Pacific.

The establishment of PIJOA is a significant milestone for regional judicial cooperation and support. In his remarks, Senior Justice Nelson of the Samoa Supreme Court stated:

"A regional association for Pacific Island judges has been discussed for many years. Our national judiciaries often work in silos and we meet our regional colleagues only infrequently. Faced with many similar challenges in our judicial work, we have much to learn from each other and much to offer each other. PIJOA was born in the Pacific way, agreed by judges on a boat in Port Moresby Harbour. This is the beginning of greater intraregional collaboration and work together.

I want to record on behalf of the regional judges our deep thanks to Deputy Chief Justice Ambeng Kandakasi, CBE of Papua New Guinea, Justice Ragajeeva Wimalasena, President of the Nauru Court of Appeal and Justices Derek Wood and Iova Geita of Papua New Guinea for all your hard work and vision to establish this Association."

Deputy Chief Justice Kandakasi, President of PIJOA, speaking to the organisation's objectives said:

“Independent Judiciaries are the cornerstone of any democratic society ensuring justice, protecting rights and upholding the rule of law. In recent decades, we have seen significant challenges to the independence of judiciaries and judges not only across the globe but also within the region.

PIJOA will be an important vehicle for greater advocacy and promotion of strong and independent judiciaries within our region, greater collaboration between our judges, knowledge sharing and the promotion of judicial well-being. I am very proud that the inaugural Executive Council of PIJOA is made up of judicial leaders who represent many of the jurisdictions in our region.”

The organization represents judiciaries from across the Pacific. Justice Kathleen Salii, Palau Supreme Court said:

“It is timely for Pacific judiciaries to formalize our own organization to support judicial excellence and well-being and to recognize the importance of judiciaries being representative of the people that they serve. The sharing of our diverse perspectives to common issues provides for better informed and more responsive judiciaries.”

The inaugural executive council of the PIJOA are:

- a) Deputy Chief Justice Ambeng Kandakasi CBE, National and Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea - President
- b) Justice Teresa Berrigan, National and Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea - Vice President
- c) Senior Justice Vui Clarence Nelson, Supreme Court of Samoa - Secretary
- d) Justice Derek Wood, National and Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea - Treasurer
- e) Justice Rangajeeva Wimalasena, President of the Court of Appeal, Nauru - Council Member
- f) Justice Petunia Tupou, Supreme Court of Tonga, Council Member
- g) Justice Kathleen Salii, Palau Supreme Court - Council Member
- h) Justice Witten Phillipo, High Court of the Republic of the Marshall Islands - Council Member
- i) Justice Iova Geita, National and Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea - Council Member
- j) Justice Leiataualesa Daryl Clarke, Supreme Court of Samoa - Council Member
- k) Justice Dane Tuiqereqere, High Court of Fiji - Council Member



I) Justice Leonard Maina, Solomon Islands – Council Member

PIJOA's activities will include judicial training, knowledge-sharing networking and support for accountable judicial administration and judicial well-being. The PIJOA website has been established: www.pijoa.org

This press release is issued under my signature as the President of the Pacific Islands Judicial Officers' Association.



Justice Ambeng Kandakasi
Deputy Chief Justice
Papua New Guinea

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