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**Informal meeting of the plenary with the Secretary-General-designate, His Excellency
António Guterres**

**Statement by H.E. Jane Chigiyal
Permanent Representative
On behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum**

New York, 19 October 2016

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Mr. President, Excellencies and Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honor to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

First, we would like to congratulate Mr. Guterres and the Government and the people of Portugal for his election by acclamation in both the Security Council and the General Assembly as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations. We welcome his appointment and also commend the unprecedented transparency, openness and inclusivity in the selection process which gave us an opportunity to interact with all the candidates. We need to build on and strengthen this positive momentum.

We also pay tribute to our outgoing S-G, Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his strong leadership and steadfast commitment to serve with distinction this United Nations and the people of the world. His many achievements during his ten years in office, including notably the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement will serve as important legacies for the international community. We are confident that the Secretary-General designate will live up to the same high standards.

Mr. Secretary-General designate,

I would like to briefly mention two points of interest for the group. Firstly, the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum annually meet with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the margins of the General Debate and for which we are grateful. This has enabled enhanced mainstreaming of our regional issues on the UN agenda, which has been mutually beneficial. We hope that you would continue to build on this important dialogue.

Secondly, your distinguished predecessor has been the first and only sitting Secretary-General to ever visit my region and to see island life in the Pacific for himself. We humbly request you to do the same. To fully understand the Pacific, one has to experience it. From the challenges we face on a daily basis, to our vulnerability to climate change to the resilience and ingenuity of our peoples. Seeing is believing.

Mr. Secretary-General designate,

The Pacific Island Forum looks forwards to working with you and we pledge our support to you.

I thank you.