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Statement of support for the Pacific from New Zealand and Australian civil society on PACER Plus trade negotiations

As civil society organisations in Australia and New Zealand, we support the statement '2009 Statement to Pacific Island Forum Trade Ministers regarding deliberations on potential PACER-Plus negotiations' issued on 16th June 2009 by our Pacific civil society partners and allies, relating to the forthcoming Trade Ministers meeting to be held in Apia, Samoa on 17-18th June 2009. We affirm that any trade negotiations should be for the benefit of the Pacific people and contribute to their communities and their development opportunities.

Accordingly, we call on our governments to refrain from pushing for a commencement of negotiations on PACER Plus until the following conditions have been met:

- Sufficient time for thorough national consultations in Pacific countries on when and if to negotiate, recognising that consultations may result in a decision not to negotiate
 - Time and support for nationally-driven research on the likely impacts and the Pacific's interests
 - A framework that provides for a staged approach to any negotiations
 - An adequate structure and staffing for regional negotiations established prior to the start of negotiations
 - The full participation of a representative government of Fiji, when and if they choose to participate
 - Easing of the financial crisis that is currently severely impacting the Pacific
 - A full investigation of potential alternative trade and economic agreements
 - De-linking of negotiations from temporary labour mobility schemes
 - Resources provided for nationally-defined training and capacity building for trade officials and key stakeholders in the Pacific
 - Involvement of Civil Society Organisations as previously agreed by Pacific Forum Trade Ministers in 2008
- Further details on these conditions are clearly articulated in the Pacific civil society statement.'

