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12958: DECL: 10/02/2015 TAGS: PREL, ECON, ETRD, EFIS, SENV, .. C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 000765 SIPDIS STATE FOR EAP/ANP E.O

12958: DECL: 10/02/2015 TAGS: PREL, ECON, ETRD, EFIS, SENV, NZ SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND PRIORITIES AT PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM Classified By: Charge D'Affaires David R

Burnett, for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1

(C) New Zealand,s principal priority for the leaders' meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is finalizing the Pacific Plan, in which New Zealand is seeking support of a process of regional integration and cooperation and movement away from patron-client relationships between developed and developing members

The government,s other priorities include encouraging free trade and raising awareness of the threat of an avian flu pandemic

2

(C) Poloff met September 27 with Niels Holm, Regional Deputy Director, Pacific Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), to discuss New Zealand's priorities for the PIF,s October meeting

In addition to finalizing the Pacific Plan, Holm said his government hopes to promote regional trade

As part of that effort, GNZ has been monitoring negotiations between Forum Island Countries (FICs) and the European Union on Economic Partnership Agreements

While not opposing such agreements, GNZ seeks at least equally favorable trade treatment if agreements are reached

3

(SBU) New Zealand,s additional priorities include maintaining support for the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and raising awareness of avian influenza in the Pacific

FICs have no practical action plan to address the possibility of avian flu, Holm said, although there are general guidelines provided through the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

4

(C) Holm reported that Italy and Israel have expressed interest in attending

the Post Forum Dialogue

While the GNZ does not oppose their attendance, it will not advocate their participation

5

(C) Prime Minister Helen Clark and whoever is the Foreign Minister will likely attend the meeting, Holm indicated

With PM Clark now working on forming a new government in the wake of September 17 elections, cabinet assignments are up in the air

There is a strong possibility that current Foreign Minister Phil Goff will be replaced as he takes on an increasingly domestic portfolio

Burnett