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South Pacific Forum: Survival under External Pressure

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The South Pacific Forum (SPF), which is comprised of 14 Pacific Island Countries plus Australia and New Zealand, has developed active regional cooperation for last 28 years. Relatively high evaluation has been given to SPF as a subregional organization of developing countries. Norman Palmer mentions SPF as one of "the three most important comprehensive subregional organizations in Asia and the Pacific," along with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SARRC) (Palmer, 1991:34). Similarly, William Tow considers SPF as a "relatively more successful" subregional security organization, as well as ASEAN, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Organization of East Caribbean States (OECS) and the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (at present, the Southern African Development Community ESADC) (Tow, 1990:8). Both have evaluated that SPF has constantly functioned as a regional organization in the international society.

Unlike ASEAN, a renowned "success story" (Palmer, 1991: 64), it is not well analyzed how SPF has maintained and developed its regional cooperation up to the present. This paper tries to clarify how and why SPF regional cooperation could survive without halt or collapse from its inception to the late 1990s in the constantly changing international relations. Through this investigation, the paper aims to analyze the characteristics and significance of SPF regional cooperation.

THE CONCEPTS ON REGIONAL COOPERATION

First of all, I would like to define the concepts on regional cooperation. Regional cooperation has been generally considered in a broad term, regionalism. On regionalism, Andrew Hurrell has presented a clear definition. According to him, regionalism are divided into five categories: 1) regionalization; 2) regional awareness and identity; 3) regional interstate cooperation; 4) state-promoted regional integration; as a subcategory of 3), 5) regional cohesion, as a combination of above four categories (Hurrell, 1995:39-45). This can be illustrated as Figure 1.

Basing on Hurrell 's definition, Ryuhei Hatsuse further elaborates the concepts on regionalism as follows: I) regionalism at the level of consciousness, such as an ideology or slogan; II) regionalization at the level of fact; i) spontaneous regional formation or regional cooperation; ii) intended regional cooperation or regional integration (Hatsuse, 1996:4; 1997:74-76). Adapting his definition to the Hurrell's one, it is as shown in Figure 2.

Fundamentally adopting Hatsuse's definition, I would like to add one modification. Although it should be distinguished I) regionalism at the level of consciousness, such as an ideology or slogan, from II) regionalization at the level of fact, it can be considered that regionalism at the level of consciousness is implemented with regionalization at the level of fact in an actual scene. In that case, regionalization at the level of fact becomes ii) intended regional cooperation or regional integration. Therefore, intended regional cooperation or regional integration can be further divided into two subcategories: a)intended regional cooperation or regional integration which is conducted to implement regionalism at the level of consciousness, such as an ideology or slogan; b)intended regional cooperation which is conducted according to the situation, not for an ideology or slogan (regional integration is not an inappropriate term in this case since it is often considered as a goal in ideology or slogan). In sum, a) is regional cooperation or regional integration driven by regionalism, and b) is regional cooperation not driven by regionalism. Regional cooperation in a strict sense, in other words, regional cooperation not driven by regionalism, is b). Adopting this to Hurrell's definition, it can be illustrated as Figure 3. Since SPF, which this paper is dealing with, is

regarded as II) ii) b), regional cooperation in a strict sense, this paper will use regional cooperation to designate SPF's regional activities.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES

SPF consists of 16 member states, namely 14 Pacific Island Countries (Samoa, the Cook Islands, Nauru, Tonga, Fiji, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau), Australia and New Zealand. Among the Pacific Island Countries, Samoa, Nauru, Tonga, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Vanuatu are independent states. The rest are freely associated states, the Cook Islands and Niue with New Zealand, and Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau with the United States. The freely associated states normally hold self-governing status and diplomatic rights except defense and security, which are referred to the partner of the compact of free association. Although they can not be defined as independent states in a strict sense, it might be possible to consider them as political entities as far as the issues are concerned in regional matters (1).

Thus, the member states of SPF can be divided into two groups, that is, the Pacific Island Countries on the one hand, and Australia and New Zealand on the other. Here, let us focus on the Pacific Island Countries which took the initiative in forming SPF.

The Pacific Island Countries occupy the majority of SPF member states in terms of number. Except Papua New Guinea, all Pacific Island Countries have been generally considered as "microstates". Even though there presented a wide variety of definitions on what elements can constitute "microstates", there is a broad consensus in regarding the population size as a major element for "microstates" (Boyce, 1977:233; Boyce and Herr, 1974:24; Dommen, 1985:13) (2). Then, what size of population can be adapted to "microstates"? Unfortunately there is no clear consensus on the ceiling population of "microstates". However, it might be possible to set population under one million as one criterion for "microstates", which has been used in the United Nations and the British Commonwealth (Harden, 1985:9). Except Papua New Guinea which has the population of 4.4 million (based on the figure in 1996), all Pacific Island Countries fit this criterion and the smallest is Niue's 2300 (based on the figure in 1994) (3).

However, it is not sufficient to define "microstates" only by population size, since the concept of "microstates" normally implies the smallness of land area even though the population size has a primacy. Then, we face another problem of what size of land area can be adapted to "microstates". As a relative criterion for land area of "microstates", this paper mentions 143000 km², which was presented in the report of United Nations Institute for Training and Research (Dommen, 1985:10). Therefore, this paper defines "microstates" as the small states in terms of population size and land area. Again, Papua New Guinea, which has land area of 460000 km², is excluded from "microstates" in this sense.

The second characteristic of the Pacific Island Countries is insularity. Since they are scattered in a vast Pacific Ocean which occupies about one third of the globe area, they are isolated from other regions except Papua New Guinea which shares the border with Indonesia. In addition, most of the Pacific Island Countries consist of not so big islands. Furthermore, the majority of them are archipelago states which are composed of plural islands.

Third, the Pacific Island Countries are developing countries. Their average growth rate of GDP in 1995 is -4.3%. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Pacific Island Countries which are members of ADB are facing economic crisis in any form (South Pacific Forum Secretariat, 1996a:5-6) (4). Particularly, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Vanuatu are categorized as the Least-Developed Countries among the Pacific Island Countries.

Summarizing these, it seems quite natural to describe the Pacific Island Countries with smallness, remoteness and insularity (5). Therefore, the Pacific Island Countries, as small island developing countries, can be considered as very vulnerable in various aspects.

First, they are economically less advantageous (6), comparing with other developing countries which have bigger population size and land area, since their market size and export scale are small. Their main industry often relies on the primary industry whose products are vulnerable to natural disaster. When they get natural disaster, the damage might be critical since they are small island countries. Furthermore, the transport cost is high because they are scattered island countries in a vast ocean, which are far from the world major markets. While their land area is generally small, some of them have wide sea area since they are archipelago states as mentioned above. For example, Kiribati has only 690 km² of land area, but it holds 3,550,000 km² of sea area, the largest in the Pacific Island Countries. It is assumed that there are affluent marine resources in such wide sea area, like fish, minerals, oil and gas. However, the Pacific Island Countries lack sufficient physical and human resources to develop and utilize the marine resources for mitigating their economic vulnerability.

Second, the Pacific Island Countries have little political influence and their voice is often ignored in an international arena, since they are economically vulnerable small states which are located in a "remote" area. In addition, they lack resilience against political/military pressures and interference from big powers. Therefore, it might be possible to call the Pacific Island Countries, which are economically, politically and militarily vulnerable, as "weak states", that is, the underdeveloped countries which are "'consumers' of security and 'price-takers' in economics" and "share a common grievance against the Great Power systems" (Rothstein, 1977:42-43, 59).

It can be said that there is a remarkable gap between official status of the Pacific Island Countries as independent (and self-governing) states and their actual situation. For the Pacific Island Countries, making full use of the gap, in other words, appealing their rights and prestige as the independent (and self-governing) states at the maximum might be a vital way to improve the unfavorable situation. In this respect, regional cooperation is the most effective form to carry out such effort for the Pacific Island Countries. It is because their presence might be increased and their voice might be enhanced when several independent (and self-governing) states get together and form regional cooperation even though they are fundamentally vulnerable small island developing countries. This is reflected that SPF has allowed only independent (and self-governing) states as the official members from the beginning. Kamisese Mara, the prime minister of Fiji at that time who played an important role in forming SPF, exactly expressed SPF as an "organization of the leaders of the states, who take responsibility for their own matters" (New Zealand Foreign Affairs Review [hereafter, NZFAR], May 1974:27).

It seems a natural consequence that the Pacific Island Countries tend toward regional cooperation to survive in the international relations. Through regional cooperation, they can obtain collective bargaining power toward the external powers, which is not available to individual country.

Furthermore, it widens a room to repel interference and influence from the big powers and hinders the big powers from ignoring their presence. In addition, they can cut high cost which is imposed to individual country by sharing institutions and services through regional cooperation.

However, it is also true that the Pacific Island Countries, as the vulnerable small island developing countries, might find themselves in a very difficult situation for pursuing regional cooperation. It is easier, more beneficial and more effective for them to link with the big powers bilaterally, rather than carrying out multilateral cooperation with the countries in a similar situation. Even if they launch regional cooperation, they will face a high risk that regional cooperation collapses because of discord among the members since they do not have enough capacity for concession and compromise, not like bigger countries do.

Added to this, their geographical situation, as the island states which scatter in a vast Pacific Ocean, has created social and cultural diversities and, might prevent mutual understanding. The Pacific Island Countries can be broadly divided into three major cultural areas, namely, Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. In each cultural area, the islands hold their own distinctiveness and, in the case of a bigger island, it is not unusual to notice the differences. For such geographical situation, the Pacific Island Countries can be considered as the place where mutual transaction has been fundamentally infrequent. Even among the islands where mutual transaction has existed, it rather led to the conflicts and rivalries, not necessarily to cooperation (7).

In short, we can not think simply that the Pacific Island Countries are inevitably oriented to regional cooperation since they are vulnerable small island developing states in the international society. The characteristics of the Pacific Island Countries might be one background for the SPF regional cooperation, but they can not provide sufficient reasons how and why SPF regional cooperation could survive in the international relations. It is not unusual that regional cooperation stagnates as the years go by and, eventually ceases its operation, even though it got a colorful start. Especially for the regional cooperation of developing countries, it often ends up with such situation. When we consider how and why SPF regional cooperation has survived, there should be another answer, beyond the explanation stemmed from the characteristics of the Pacific Island Countries.

REGIONAL COOPERATION ON NUCLEAR ISSUES: FORMATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF SPF (8)

Then, how and why has the SPF regional cooperation survived in the ever changing international relations? Let us first investigate the process of the formation of the SPF.

In the 1960s, about a decade before the formation of the SPF in 1971, there emerged a big problem in the South Pacific region. The French government announced the construction of nuclear testing sites in French Polynesia in 1963 and started nuclear testing in 1966. Although Western Samoa (at present, Samoa) and the Cook Islands, two Pacific Island Countries which already gained independence or self-governance by that time, made strong protests to the French government respectively, their protests were completely ignored (Pacific Islands Monthly [hereafter, PIM], July 1963:7; PIM, November 1965:23; Stone 1967:156-157).

At the same time, the Pacific islands tried to make protests at the meetings of the regional organization. Prior to the formation of the SPF, the South Pacific Commission (SPC)(at present, Pacific Community) had been established in 1947 for the economic and social development of the

Pacific islanders by the countries which possessed island territories in the region, namely, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (9). Although the SPC had an auxiliary body composed of delegates of Pacific islands, the South Pacific Conference, there existed a tacit principle of excluding political discussion from the conference, based on the intention of the founding countries. In spite of the principle, a delegate of the Cook Islands called for the resolution to ask France to reconsider nuclear testing at the South Pacific Conference in 1965 (PIM, August 1965:30). The conference turned down his request as a political issue. Another attempts were made by the delegates of Fiji and Papua New Guinea at the conference in 1970 (Fiji Times, 24 September 1970; Fiji Times, 25 September 1970). Again, the conference did not pass the resolution condemning French nuclear testing.

These incidents increased the need of the Pacific Island Countries to create a separate forum outside the SPC, where the Pacific Island Countries were able to discuss the political issues. In 1971, five Pacific Island Countries, that is, Western Samoa, the Cook Islands, Nauru, Tonga and Fiji, held the first forum meeting in New Zealand's capital, Wellington. The reason why they held the meeting in New Zealand, not in an island, was that some island leaders suspected Fiji of attempting to take leadership in the South Pacific (NZFAR, May 1974:27). Fiji, the biggest country among the then five Pacific Island Countries, joined the United Nations in 1970 as the first Pacific Island Country and expressed her wish to be a spokesman for other Pacific Island Countries which were not members of the UN (Boyce and Herr, 1974:31-32). Although the Pacific Island Countries decided to set up a forum, it did not mean that they were united with mutual trust and understanding.

Not only the Pacific Island Countries but also Australia and New Zealand attended the forum meeting. They were invited by the Pacific Island Countries because the Pacific Island Countries expected both countries to provide fund for the forum, give greater diplomatic impact to the forum and prevent a wrong impression on the forum as anti-Europeans (Mara, 1977:105; NZFAR, May 1974:26). For Australia and New Zealand, joining the forum was not unbeneficial since they were "big powers" in the region, but not in the international arena. They could exercise greater diplomatic influence collectively with the Pacific Island Countries on the international scene.

Thus, the SPF was formed as a political forum. The first forum meeting spent time for discussion on French nuclear testing and adopted a final communique expressing deep regret over it (NZFAR, August 1971:7). This was the first joint protest of the SPF. Even though it is difficult to measure the weight of the SPF's protest, it certainly contributed to the pressure to the French government. After the forum meeting, France announced that it had called off the rest of the nuclear tests planned for 1971. French newspaper Le Monde stated that the decision marked the first time a nuclear power had given in to pressure from countries in the Pacific Ocean area (Johnson and Tupouniua, 1976:214). The SPF was formed in order to deal with external pressure, that is, French nuclear testing.

Since then, the SPF has developed regional cooperation against French nuclear testing. As well as adopting final communiqués protesting against French nuclear testing at the forum meetings, it endorsed the resolution to oppose all nuclear tests, which Australia, New Zealand and Fiji had jointly drafted for the session of the UN General Assembly in 1972 (Fiji Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1972:86-87) and supported three countries to present French nuclear testing issue to the International Court of Justice in 1973 (NZFAR, April 1973:16-17). These activities impressed the SPF as a regional organization on the international community. They also made an important

foundation for the SPF regional cooperation which started without the founding agreement nor permanent secretariat, even nor mutual trust among the members. After establishing regional cooperation against French nuclear testing, the SPF set up the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation (SPEC) as its official secretariat in 1975 (10) and started intraregional cooperation such as regional shipping services. The SPF member countries themselves also acknowledged the significance of SPF regional cooperation through the activities over French nuclear testing and it became natural for the newly independent island countries to join the SPF soon after the independence.

The SPF regional cooperation, which was formed because of French nuclear testing, faced a different kind of nuclear issue in the 1980s. In 1980, the Japanese government announced that it would dump low-level nuclear wastes, which were produced from the domestic nuclear reactors, in the high seas in the Pacific Ocean near the Japanese waters. This Japanese plan was met by strong opposition of the SPF countries. The SPF meeting in the same year adopted a resolution condemning nuclear waste dumping in the Pacific Ocean (Fiji Sun, 16 July 1980).

Although Japan was not named in the SPF's resolution, the Japanese government was concerned about the SPF's protest. It sent an official mission to several SPF countries to convince them of the safety of Japanese plan. However, the SPF countries requested the mission to cancel the plan and the mission failed to achieve the goal (PIM, September 1980:9; PIM, October 1980:5; PIM, November 1980:35-36). The SPF meeting in the next year adopted a resolution naming Japan and urging it to reconsider its plan of nuclear waste dumping (NZFAR, July-September 1981:61).

Eventually the Japanese government decided to abandon the plan. When Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone visited Fiji during the official tour in 1985, he assured that Japan had decided not to dump or store nuclear wastes in the Pacific Ocean (Fiji Times, 16 January 1985). The decision was made partly because Japan was to launch new policy toward the South Pacific, such as "Kuranari Doctrine" which aimed at more active Japanese commitment to the region, but it was apparent that the SPF's strong opposition put the considerable pressure to Japan to change its attitude.

Further propelled by the activities toward Japanese plan of nuclear waste dumping in the Pacific Ocean, the SPF regional cooperation went forward. At the SPF meeting in 1983, a proposal for South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone was tabled by Australia.

In the Australian proposal, nuclear testing was prohibited in the zone, but the passage and transit of nuclear-powered and -armed vessels and aircraft were not. Since Australia was a party to ANZUS Treaty, a security agreements among Australia, New Zealand and the US signed in 1951, it tried not to jeopardize the treaty, by referring the right whether to allow nuclear-powered and -armed vessels and aircraft into the port and airfields to each member country. Since the views of other SPF member countries on this point were split, the meeting decided to take more time to consider the Australian proposal (NZFAR, July- September 1983:39-40; Islands Business, October 1983:17).

It was at the SPF meeting in 1985 that the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, which allowed the member countries to decide whether to accept nuclear-powered and -armed vessels and aircraft into the port and airfields, was adopted. Among the SPF member countries, Vanuatu and Tonga did not sign the treaty since the former criticized it as incomprehensive and partial and, the latter was

concerned about the interference from the Soviet Union which was expected to sign the protocols of the treaty (Vanuatu Weekly, 17 August 1985; Matangi Tonga, May-June 1987:36) (11).

Although other member countries agreed not to include the issue of port calls of nuclear-powered and -armed vessels and aircraft into the treaty, it did not mean that they just swallowed the Australian proposal. In fact, it was difficult for the SPF member countries to include this issue into the treaty because their stance on this issue was diverse. For example, New Zealand banned nuclear ship visits to its ports while Tuvalu signed the Friendship Treaty with the US stating that the two governments would consult on American request to use its territory for military purposes in times of crisis. It should be also pointed out that the other member countries put a modification to the original Australian proposal. In the original proposal, the issue of nuclear waste dumping was briefly mentioned in the preamble because Australia was concerned that the potential dumpers, such as the US and France, would not sign the protocols if the issue was explicitly included in the treaty (Laka, 1985a:6). Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Nauru presented the amendments to include the ban of nuclear waste dumping into the treaty and the amendment was adopted with the support of other member countries (Laka, 1985a:6; Laka, 1985b:12-13; Laka 1985c:4). The South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty marked itself as the first nuclear free zone treaty which banned nuclear waste dumping into the ocean (12).

The SPF regional cooperation has been formed and consolidated to deal with external pressure, namely nuclear issues, through the 1970s and the 1980s. During this period, there emerged consensus among the SPF member countries that SPF regional cooperation was something to maintain in spite of the differences of views, as shown in the signing of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. This helped SPF regional cooperation to continue though its intraregional cooperation did not move smoothly in the most of this period. The international reputation of the SPF as a regional organization which played a role in the nuclear issues also hindered the member countries from being fragmented.

REGIONAL COOPERATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES: 'MULTI-CHANNELIZATION' OF SPF

It was in the early 1990s that the SPF regional cooperation was attacked by the second external pressure. That was the climate change issues generated from global warming. It has been said that global warming would cause the sea level rise, which would bring serious effects to the Pacific Island Countries which mostly consisted of low-lying small atolls. Since the climate change issues have included complicated interests of various countries, the SPF have used multiple channels concurrently to make its voice heard in the international arena.

Like regional cooperation on nuclear issues, the SPF has been a fundamental channel for the SPF member countries to convey their collective voice to the outside world. However, not like previous case, the SPF was not a sole channel. Besides adopting the resolutions at its meetings and representing at international conferences, the SPF played a significant role as a coordinating body to larger regional organization and an interregional organization.

The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is a regional agency specialized in environmental issues, which was set up in 1980. SPREP was composed of the SPF member countries, non-independent island territories and there extraregional countries which held island territories in the region, namely the United Kingdom, France and the US (See, Figure 4). In terms

of covering area, SPREP was a larger regional organization than SPF. However, it was short of effectiveness and autonomy because it was jointly run by SPC, SPEC, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

The SPF tried to transform SPREP into a genuinely effective body and utilize it as a vehicle to send the voice to the negotiating process of international regime on climate change. The SPF, which formed a core group in SPREP, succeeded in the attempt in 1991 and SPREP became an autonomous body which got independent budget and staff. After SPREP gained autonomy, the SPF has coordinated the voice of member countries on climate issues at the meetings, then tried to make it reflect within the SPREP and, used SPREP as a channel to the international regime on climate change.

Not only to a larger regional organization, but also to an interregional organization, SPF has acted as a coordinating body. The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), which was formed in 1990, is the one. AOSIS is composed of 36 small island states in the Pacific, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the South China Sea, which are concerned about the damage to their islands caused by climate change (See, Figure 4). Although the affiliation of AOSIS is on nation-basis, AOSIS has utilized the existing regional organizations as coordinating bodies. In that sense, AOSIS is an interregional organization which established a network of regional organizations of small island countries. The SPF sent a representative to the coordinating committee of AOSIS, along with SPREP, the Caribbean Community Secretariat and an institution in the Indian Ocean. The SPF has used AOSIS as another channel to convey the voice to the international regime on climate change.

The international regime on climate change was formed at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, as the adoption of the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) (13). What the SPF insisted through three channels, namely SPF, SPREP and AOSIS, were partly incorporated in the Convention. For example, the reductions of industrially generated greenhouse gas emission were mentioned in the Convention in spite of the opposition of the US, the biggest emitter of carbon dioxide. However, the signatories were not bound to the article since the Convention itself just aimed at setting up a framework for common principles on climate change. The SPF was not fully satisfied with the result and it adopted a final communique at the Forum meeting which was held soon after the UNCED, urging the early commencement of negotiations of the protocol to implement and elaborate the Convention (South Pacific Forum Secretariat, 1992).

On the other hand, SPF's request for funding and transfer of technology to the small island countries for tackling climate change was referred in the Convention and, based on this, Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States was held by the UN in Barbados in 1994. Again, the SPF used multiple channels in the conference to pursue its interests. The conference adopted the Programme of Action and the Barbados Declaration, stating that the international community should provide financial and technological resources to the small island developing countries which would receive serious effects from climate change (Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, 1994a; 1994b). This encouraged the SPF to propel regional cooperation on climate change.

The next target for the SPF was adoption of the protocol. The Conference of the Parties (COP) of FCCC has held four meetings by the end of 1998 and the protocol was adopted at the third meeting at Kyoto in 1997. Based on the initiative of the Pacific Island Countries, AOSIS presented its own proposal, called AOSIS Draft Protocol, requesting the developed countries to reduce 20% of the amount of carbon dioxide emission at the level in 1990 by 2005 (The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1995; Pacific Report, 24 April). However, the Kyoto Protocol stated 8% reduction of greenhouse gas emission for EU, 7% for the US, 6% for Japan, for five years from 2008 to 2012. As well as AOSIS, the SPF felt the target of reduction in the Kyoto Protocol was inappropriate (The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1997). In order to further enhance the international regime on climate change, it is expected that the SPF will continue the commitment to the regime through multiple channels like SPREP and AOSIS.

On the climate change issues which worked as external pressure, the SPF responded with a new style of regional cooperation which used multiple channels to send the voice to the international regime. Generally speaking, there is a sharp difference between the developed countries and the developing countries over the issues. While the latter insists that the former have to take a prime responsibility for climate change by reducing the greenhouse gas emission and providing funds and technology to them, the former thinks that the latter also has duty to reduce the greenhouse gas emission. Not only between the North and the South, but also even within the North and the South respectively, there emerged the remarkable difference. In the North, EU countries and the Scandinavian countries have supported the reduction of greenhouse gas emission while the US, Canada and Japan have been reluctant to the reduction. In the South, to the contrary of the SPF, the oil-producing countries have fundamentally taken negative attitude to the reduction of greenhouse gas emission since they were concerned about the damage to their economy stemmed from the decline of oil consumption. It was more effective for the SPF to use multiple channels on the climate change issues which contained such complicated interests of various countries, rather than uttering a lone voice in the international arena.

Regional cooperation through multiple channels also contributed the SPF to sustain regional cooperation in spite of the cleavage of interest among the members. Until the adoption of FCCC, Australia and New Zealand had kept pace with the Pacific Island Countries as the SPF member countries. However, they went along with the US, Canada and Japan, the countries which were reluctant to the reduction of greenhouse gas emission, as the negotiations of the protocol started. It was obviously difficult for them to support the reduction especially because Australia was a big exporter of coal. Instead of persisting in unanimity at the SPF, the Pacific island Countries used multiple channels, such as SPREP and AOSIS, to pursue their interests. Regional cooperation through multiple channels provided a bypass for the Pacific island Countries to send their voice to the international regime, even if two regional powers, Australia and New Zealand, would take a different way. This prevented both sides from crystallizing dissatisfaction at the SPF and kept the SPF itself intact.

REGIONAL COOPERATION ON ECONOMIC LIBERALIZATION: SUBREGIONALIZATION OF SPF

Almost at the same time as the SPF has conducted regional cooperation to deal with climate change issues, it has also faced another external pressure, namely economic liberalization at global scale.

The Pacific Island Countries in general used to rely for their economic survival on aid from extraregional donors and, special trade treatments like trade preferences and price stabilization schemes. In the Cold War era, they had a certain strategic value although they had been continuously under the 'ANZUS Umbrella', a security regime established by Australia, New Zealand and the US in 1951. For this reason, they could receive relatively good amounts of aid mainly from Western countries. But their strategic value remarkably declined with the end of the Cold War and accordingly, the amounts of aid, which they received from donors, also dropped. In addition, 'aid fatigue' of the donors propelled reduction of amounts of aid to the Pacific Island Countries. The Pacific Island Countries realized the uncertain future of aid from the donors.

Furthermore, economic liberalization at global scale threatens the existence of special trade treatments, which the Pacific Island Countries have relied on. The Pacific Island Countries, as members of ACP (Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific) countries, have enjoyed these special trade treatments offered by EC (at present, EU) under the Lome Convention. Under the convention, they have been allowed to export the commodities, like sugar, coffee, and tin fish, to EC market with preferences. The Lome Convention has also provided the Stabilization of Export Earnings System to compensate the ACP countries in fluctuation of market price of the commodities. It is expected that these special trade treatments will not be intact in the economic liberalization. The Pacific Island Countries had to be prepared for the new economic trend and find a way for their economic survival.

The commitment to Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was one of the solutions which the Pacific Island Countries adopted in order to face economic liberalization at global scale. The Pacific Island Countries thought that by making a commitment to APEC they could learn from the market-led policies of the Asian economies which had led to the dramatic economic growth, and diversify the international market by strengthening institutional and market linkages with Asia (South Pacific Forum Secretariat, 1995a:4). The SPF meeting in 1991 first time mentioned APEC and agreed that SPF member countries would enhance the relationship with APEC (South Pacific Forum Secretariat, 1991). However, in the SPF member countries, only Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea were official members of APEC (See, Figure 5). SPF had to make contacts with APEC only through the observer status which it had held in APEC since the inaugural meeting in 1989, and through those SPF member countries which held full membership of APEC. Therefore, the first step for the SPF to get recognition in APEC.

In 1995, SPF showed its position that it would adopt and implement APEC's principles of trade and investment liberalization. The SPF meeting of that year adopted a final communique and a Plan of Action for 'Securing Development Beyond 2000', stating that SPF would adopt and implement the investment principles agreed by APEC members, work towards implementation of trade reform measures required by GATT/WTO (South Pacific Forum Secretariat, 1995b). Furthermore, the SPF circulated at the APEC Ministerial Meeting in Osaka in the same year a statement called 'South Pacific Forum Countries & APEC: An Important Relationship' to appeal that it was attempting to liberalize the economies of the Pacific Island Countries through reductions in both tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and investment (South Pacific Forum Secretariat, 1995a:6). The SPF also started the economic ministers' meeting in 1996 and referred consideration on the next appropriate steps to maintain momentum in tariff reforms to it (South Pacific Forum Secretariat, 1996b).

The SPF economic ministers' meeting in 1997 adopted the Action Plan which required SPF member countries to provide a policy environment to encourage private sector development (South

Pacific Forum Secretariat, 1997a). Basing on the plan, the SPF meeting in the same year reaffirmed the commitment to free and open trade among the Pacific Island Countries through tariff reform and ensuring investment transparency (South Pacific Forum Secretariat, 1997b). The SPF eventually agreed to set up the South Pacific Free Trade Area at its meeting in 1999 (South Pacific Forum Secretariat, 1999). These SPF's efforts for trade and investment liberalization have aimed to gain recognition in APEC and establish a close relationship with it, hopefully as one of its subregions, in order to find a way for its survival in economic liberalization at global scale.

Nevertheless, it seems that trade and investment liberalization is not a ultimate goal for the SPF in the relationship with APEC. While the SPF has been trying to follow APEC's principles of trade and investment liberalization, it also expects economic and technical cooperation from APEC. The economic and technical cooperation is one of the three pillars of APEC, but it has occupied less interest in APEC than trade and investment liberalization. It was not until the APEC Ministerial Meeting in Osaka in 1995 that this area started substantial progress. The meeting adopted the Osaka Action Agenda and 'Partners for Progress' mechanism to promote economic and technical cooperation within APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, 1995a; 1995b). However, it is observed that the development of economic and technical cooperation in APEC has stagnated in recent years because of economic crisis which attacked the Asian countries in 1997. Hence, it is not so certain that SPF can definitely obtain expected economic and technical cooperation from APEC through a close relationship with it.

The other problem for the SPF in relationship with APEC is membership. The SPF has acted as a representative for the Pacific Island Countries, which are not members of APEC, in commitment to APEC. However, some countries, like Fiji and Solomon Islands, have shown the interest to obtain full membership of APEC in their own right (Fiji Times, 22 November 1993; Pacific Report, 22 May 1995). Since the APEC decided in 1997 to introduce a new ten-year moratorium on the admittance of further membership (Prime Minister's Office of Canada, 1997), the issue has been dormant in the SPF at the moment. Even if some Pacific Island Countries apply to APEC for the full membership after the moratorium on new membership ends, it might be difficult for them to obtain it because of the small size of their respective economy. The most possible alternative for the Pacific Island Countries will be joining APEC as a collective body which is represented by the SPF. In that case, the SPF will be officially incorporated into APEC as a subregion.

Although there are several problems for the SPF in relationship with APEC, it seems that the SPF continues to seek for a close relationship with APEC in order to survive in economic liberalization. If so, it can not be avoided that the SPF will define itself as a subregion in the Asia-Pacific region. The SPF has responded economic liberalization with subregionalization.

While subregionalization might introduce a danger to the SPF to be swallowed in the macro Asia-Pacific region, it is possible to think that it might also bring new possibility to the SPF. For example, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), a security forum in the Asia-Pacific region, which was established at the initiative of ASEAN in 1994, has supported the nuclear-weapon free zones as a means to strengthen international non-proliferation regimes (the ASEAN Regional Forum, 1995, 1996, 1997). The SPF might get a propelling strength for establishing cooperation with other nuclear-weapon free zones in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty which was signed at ASEAN meeting, in the relationship with the ARF (See, Figure 5). Likewise, the SPF might find benefits for their interest in the climate change issues in the regional frameworks of the Asia-Pacific, such as the APEC Environment Ministers' Meeting and

the Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific (Eco-Asia). Although Asia-Pacific region has not fully recovered from economic crisis, there is no other macro region for the SPF to be incorporated as a subregion in order to survive in economic liberalization.

CONCLUSION

Let us go back to the question presented at the beginning of this paper. How and why has the SPF regional cooperation survived up to the present in the changing international relations?

It should be stressed first that the SPF has responded external pressure with flexible stance. Instead of sticking to the ideal type of regional cooperation, which is usually presented as a form of ideology or slogan at the start of regional cooperation, the SPF has responded external pressure by setting and later, transforming its style of regional cooperation according to the issues. That is an important key element for survival and constant development of SPF regional cooperation, which could avoid the pitfall that regional cooperation of the developing countries often faced. The flexible response to external pressure has helped the SPF regional cooperation to adjust itself smoothly to the changing international relations.

Another important point is that the SPF has dealt with the global issues in regional context. In fact, the issues which have worked as external pressure to the SPF regional cooperation, namely nuclear issues, climate change issues and economic liberalization, were all global issues. However, the SPF has perceived them as regional problems which had acute influence to the region. This attitude prevented the SPF from handling the issues beyond its capacity, ending up with a bitter failure and, losing confidence and credibility as a regional organization. Although it might be observed that the SPF has tackled the global issues, it has no ambition to play a role as a global actor. This has also contributed to the survival of SPF regional cooperation in the international relations.

It is possible to argue that the SPF regional cooperation has responded external pressure in a narrow regional perspective with no perpetual vision of regional cooperation. Nevertheless, it surely liberates us from stereotype of regional cooperation and enables us to realize that there is a rich variety and diversity in regional cooperation which has been ongoing relatively successfully in the globe. The SPF regional cooperation clearly illustrates that each regional cooperation has its own style for survival.

FOOTNOTES

1) There is a definition which divides Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau as independent countries from the Cook Islands and Niue as non-independent countries, since the latter have not joined the UN (Kobayashi, 1994: 107, 125). However, this paper does not make any division among them, since the Cook Islands, as well as Niue, became party to the international treaties, such as the UN Law of the Sea.

2) On the microstates, see (Harden, 1985), (Dommen and Hein, 1985), (Connell, 1988) and (Duursma, 1996).

3) Both figures are drawn from (Eccleston, Dawson and McNamara, 1998).

4) Niue and Palau are not members of ADB.

5) For example, (Kobayashi, 1994:170).

6) Exceptionally as the small island developing country, Nauru has phosphate to sustain its economy. However, it is expected that the resource will be extinct near future.

- 7) See (Grattan, 1963) and (Barclay, 1978) for the details.
- 8) See (Ogashiwa, 1991) for the details on SPF regional cooperation on nuclear issues.
- 9) The Netherlands withdraw from SPC in 1962 and the UK withdraw in 1995.
- 10) SPEC was restructured in Forum Secretariat in 1988.
- 11) Vanuatu signed the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty in 1995 and Tonga signed in 1996. See (Ogashiwa, 1994) on the nuclear policy of Vanuatu at that time.
- 12) Prior to the signing of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, The Antarctica Treaty was signed in 1959, Latin America Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty was signed in 1967 and the Seabed Treaty was signed in 1971.
- 13) Vanuatu, which served as the chair of AOSIS, was appointed as the vice-chair of UNCED.

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