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**PM O'Neill to Chair Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders in Hawaii  
Climate Change and Security Among Key Issues Ahead of US Election**

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The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Hon. Peter O'Neill CMG MP, said he expects Pacific Island nations to come out of regional discussions with the United States this week holding a stronger collective perspective on key regional issues including climate change and security.

PM O'Neill arrived in Hawaii, in the United States, this morning where he will Chair the 10<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders (PICL) from 30 August (31 August in PNG).

The meeting will be attended by Leaders and officials from Pacific Island nations and the United States and cover a number of regional integration and cooperation issues.

The Prime Minister said the timing of this conference is also important with a new President of the United States to be elected in the coming months.

"Soon, a new President of the United States will be elected and sworn in," the Prime Minister said.

"Pacific Island nations have a very positive relationship with President Obama, and we look to working with the next United States Government.

"We have the opportunity at this conference to work with US officials to prepare for the change of Government so that we can hit the ground running when the new President is inaugurated next January."

The Prime Minister said one of the important features of the PICL is the access it provides to some of the best research scholars and policy officials in the region.

"In the past this has covered research in areas that include the drawdown of RAMSI, maritime issues, the future of seabed mining and other significant regional matters.

"This week, we have a number of important topics before us including regional safety and security and these are issues affect all Pacific Island nations.

"The international community has a number of concerns at the moment including maritime disputes, the spread of terrorist attacks, global economic instability and the constant threat of extreme weather caused by climate change.

"We must manage current political tensions through dialogue, and we must manage economic challenges by sticking with sensible financial management.

"Pacific Islands nations cannot take on these issues alone, we must partner with other like-minded nations and stand for our interests in the global community."

The Prime Minister was last in Hawaii for the 2011 APEC Leaders' Summit, which he said was well organised and provides examples for Papua New Guinea in 2018.

"Hawaiians are Pacific Islanders and we share many cultural similarities.

"APEC in Hawaii was well run and we will draw from their experience as we deliver a very Pacific-style APEC in 2018."

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