MEDIA RELEASE

First regional agreement for safety of domestic shipping

Nuku’alofa, Tonga - Pacific Island countries and territories have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Flag State Implementation for Domestic Ships, a global first.

Nine Pacific Ministers signed the MOU on behalf of their maritime administration late yesterday as part of the Third Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers’ Meeting currently ongoing in Tonga.

The Pacific MoU on Flag State Implementation (FSI) was signed by Ministers from Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu in a regional response to some persistent issues in relation to the safety of domestic ships.

Factors that contribute to maritime casualties include inadequate resources, the technical complexity of safety standards, the need for high-level training for surveyors tasked with the implementation of these instruments, the inability to effectively collect and analyse data and political or commercial pressures.

Flag State Implementation is the exercise of the jurisdiction and control in administrative, technical and social matters over ships flying the flag of a country. These include inspection, survey and certification of ships to make sure that they only sail if they are certified as seaworthy.

Pacific Community Director-General, Dr Colin Tukuitonga said: “The main objective of the Pacific MoU is to provide Pacific Island countries and territories with a framework to harmonise their standards and cooperate in or coordinate their activities concerning Flag State Implementation.”

“The Pacific MoU supports improved regional coordination in the delivery of safe domestic shipping services with reduced impact to the environment through regional standards, training of ship safety inspectors or surveyors and exchange of information,” he concluded.

The Third Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers’ Meeting in Tonga ends today.

Media access: Media representatives are welcome to attend. Media interested in covering the Third Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers’ Meeting are invited to contact Inga Mangisi-Mafileo, Acting Director – SPC Communications and Public Information, fonongam@spc.int or +676 883 4954.

Follow the event via #PRETMM.

Footage and still images: SPC will provide packaged interviews and raw footage for free use, along with still images. For more information and to lodge specific requests, please contact Kelepi Koroi: kelepik@spc.int

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