MEDIA RELEASE

Pacific Ministers for Energy and Transport endorse Communique

2 May 2017

Nuku’alofa, Tonga – Ministers and officials from 20 countries, and development partners met in Tonga, endorsing the Communique and implementation priorities for transport and energy sectors in the Pacific for the next three years.

In the final ministerial component of the five-day regional meeting for Transport and Energy, participants addressed and committed to high priority reforms.

For the Energy sector, this included:

Acceleration of the adoption of energy sector laws such as an Energy Act and energy sub-sector laws related to energy efficiency. It was agreed that for the effective management and governance of the energy sector, the establishment of a regulator’s office and formation of the Pacific Regulators Alliance are required.

Commitments to the global efforts to reduce GHG emissions
Reaffirmed the need for urgent and ambitious global actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with the aim of 1.5 degrees, and endorsed a vision of 100 per cent in renewable energy generation for the region.

A new approach to capacity-building on sustainable energy
Acknowledged the need for capacity building reform to meet national, regional and global obligations. Supported that capacity-building must be based on formal industry-recognised competency-based accreditation.

Strengthening and consolidation of support to SPC’s existing efforts, including:

I. The Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE);
II. The Pacific Regional Data Repository (PRDR) Strategy 2018-2023;
III. The petroleum advisory is required to support on safety and find cost-effective supply and price verification information;
IV. The meeting endorsed the mandate of the Pacific Power Association (PPA) - “supporting the power utilities of the PICTs in the provision of high quality, secure, efficient and sustainable electricity services”; and
V. Acknowledged with appreciation the further NZD1 billion commitment by development partners at the Pacific Energy Conference in 2016.

For Transport, high priorities for the next three years included a continued focus on coordination and partnerships. Other areas:

**Gender equality in the maritime sector**
To support this, a regional Strategy for Pacific Women in Maritime will be developed.

**Improving safety at sea for all**
Safety and security in international and domestic shipping through strengthened coordination and collaboration is prioritised.

Adoption and implementation of harmonised maritime laws and a long-term approach to capacity development in the Pacific maritime sector is required to provide an enabling environment. In support, the Ministers:

I. Adopted the Memorandum of Understanding on Flag State Implementation for Domestic Ships in the Pacific Islands Region, a world first; and
II. Endorsed the Regional Strategy on Safety of Navigation in the Pacific.

**Reducing GHG emissions from Pacific maritime transport**
Countries were urged to progress low-carbon maritime transport contributing to the reduction of GHG emissions towards the Paris Agreement goal of well-below 2 degrees, and active participation in international negotiations.

**Eliminating dumping at sea**
The improvement of environmental stewardship by implementing all relevant international instruments and domestic laws related to marine pollution was emphasized. The meeting endorsed the Pacific Oceans Pollution Prevention Programme Strategy 2015-2020 (PACPOL Strategy) and the Pacific Regional Reception Facilities Plan (RRFP).

Commercial fishing vessels were recognized as a greater threat to the marine environment than other vessels, and it was agreed that relevant ministries in participating countries would take a holistic approach in the management of fishing vessels.

**Equitable and Fair Air Services Agreements, and Greater Control and Management of Upper Airspace**
Limitations in current arrangements with Pacific Aviation Safety Office and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat requires further discussion among relevant regional organisations.

At the close of the meeting, Papua New Guinea and Samoa offered to host the Fourth Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers Meeting.

Hosted by the Government of Tonga and the Pacific Community (SPC), the Third Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministerial Meeting ended in Nuku’alofa on Friday last week.
Media access: For enquiries 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: For requests, please contact Kelepi Koroi: kelepik@spc.int

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SPC is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, supporting sustainable development since 1947. It is an international development organisation owned and governed by its 26 country and territory members.

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