MEDIA RELEASE

Pacific Energy and Transport Ministerial Meeting opens with strong call to action

26 April, 2017

Nuku’alofa, Tonga – Over 100 high-level delegates and experts have convened in Tonga for the Third Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministerial Meeting with a strong call for Affordable, Reliable and Sustainable Energy and Transport Services for All.

The high-level meeting, hosted by the Government of Tonga and the Pacific Community was preceded by a two-day officials meeting where they discussed energy and transport challenges and priorities for the region. The two-day deliberations had concluded with a set of resolutions put forward for their Pacific Ministers to consider and adopt.

Guest of Honour, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Tupouto’a said: “The challenge for your meeting is to deliberate on measures that we can collectively carry out as a region, together with the support of our regional agencies, like SPC, and development partners in order to maximize the benefits from these development paradigms.”

“These are measures that would not only strategically position our region to play a bigger role and be recognized for our contribution at the world scale but it would also signal and support for ambitious and urgent global actions to save our planet,” he continued.

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Siaosi Sovaleni said: “The meeting is timely. Individually as sovereign nations, we have obligations to these global and regional instruments, but more importantly, to our own respective nationally determined contributions and government’s energy and transport targets and aspirations.”

“The meeting will therefore look at adopting regional positions, which we can task our regional agencies and partners to support us on, where we can go out to global forums and negotiations and promote with a united Pacific voice,” he concluded.
In his opening address, Pacific Community Director-General, Dr Colin Tukuitonga highlighted SPC’s contribution to Pacific Island energy and transport sectors, including the adoption of uniform standards and governance tools for maritime safety and energy security.

Other important contributions he noted were supporting private sector and governments to improve safety at sea and access to electricity and training hundreds of professionals each year from governments, administrations and private sector.

And more recently, providing technical assistance for members to reduce greenhouse gas from the energy and maritime transport sectors.

He encouraged delegates that SPC will remain fully engaged, by your side, in both sectors, and is actively reforming its structure towards a more integrated approach in its areas of excellence.

The energy and transport ministers will consider resolutions from the two-day officials meeting, where they discussed, among other things, the Green and Blue Economy and challenges of accessing multilateral environment funding to support addressing the region’s energy and transport challenges.

As part of the week’s events, SPC together with its members and partners will celebrate its 70th Anniversary in Tonga with the inauguration of the Tonga-based Pacific Centre of Excellence on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE) also taking place.

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 8834954.

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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