

NUKU'ALOFA MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

For

SUSTAINABLE WEATHER AND CLIMATE SERVICES FOR A RESILIENT PACIFIC

24th July 2015, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

The First Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology was held on 24th July 2015 in Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga with representation from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America and Vanuatu.

WE, the attending Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) Member Countries' Cabinet Ministers responsible for Meteorology, and their representatives, are calling for support from our governments, development partners and donors to ensure that National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) have the necessary capacity to support sustainable development;

1. PRESENT this Declaration as a statement of our political will to support the development of weather, climate, water, and related environmental services in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) fully taking into account national development priorities, regional and global meteorological strategies and other relevant frameworks;
2. RECOGNISE the vital importance of the mission of NMHSs, as stated in the Convention of the World Meteorological organization (WMO), in providing meteorological, hydrological and related services in support of relevant national needs, including protection of life and property, sustainable development and safeguarding the environment. NOTE that weather and climate services are not an option but are a responsibility and a basic human right;
3. RECOGNISE the importance of timely and accurate weather and climate information to aviation to ensure the highest standards for flight safety, reduction of the environmental impacts of aviation and increasing efficiency of air traffic operations;
4. COMMIT to maintain the PICTs' NMHSs role in the development of effective methods for the provision of services to aviation to meet International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and WMO requirements including Quality Management System (QMS) implementation in line with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9000 series of quality assurance standards, and competency standards. WE URGE PICTs' NMHSs that are not yet compliant to take necessary steps to achieve and sustain compliance with QMS and staff competency requirements;
5. RECOGNISE the need to improve the capacities and services of PICTs' NMHSs to address weather, climate, water, drought and related environmental impacts and hazards and to improve the safety and security of our region;
6. ENCOURAGE our governments, regional organizations and development partners to establish and support the implementation of impact-based multi-hazard early warning systems (MHEWS) and Multi-Hazard Information Systems (MHIS);
7. RECOGNISE that this region is also highly prone to tsunami with several countries having recently experienced locally generated tsunamis, requiring rapid detection and prompt dissemination of tsunami warnings to coastal communities and therefore the need to strengthen Early Warning Systems for this hazard;
8. ACKNOWLEDGE the vital contributions of environmental satellites from United States of America, Japan, China, Korea and Europe necessary for the provision of remotely sensed data and derived products to the PICTs' NMHSs to improve weather, climate, water and related environmental services;

9. EXPRESS CONCERN about inadequate infrastructure and limited human resources of PICTs' NMHSs as factors that limit the effective uptake of scientific and technological advances to improve services of NMHSs;

10. AGREE that telecommunication networks and Information Technology (IT) infrastructure used by NMHSs are critical for exchange and delivery of weather, climate, water and related environmental observations and data, and products vital for the timely delivery of alerts, impact-based forecasting, and successful operation of the Multi-Hazard Early Warning System and the Multi-Hazard Information System. WE FURTHER AGREE to prioritize improvements in the capabilities of PICTs' NMHSs with our national telecommunication authorities and mobile phone carriers to provide greater reach for warning services to remote

11. CALL ON our governments, regional organizations, development partners, PMC and its Panels on Education, Training and Research; Marine and Ocean Services, Climate Services and Aviation Services, and donors to support the implementation of the Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy (PIMS) 2012-2021 and other related regional frameworks, and PMC outcomes;

12. REQUEST SPREP, University of the South Pacific (USP), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and other regional organizations, WMO and development partners to expedite the implementation of the Pacific Roadmap on Strengthening Climate Services in the Pacific region, and to explore possibilities for the establishment and operation of a Regional Climate Centre (RCC), and future annual Pacific Island Climate Outlook Forum (PICOF);

13. REQUEST the Education, Training and Research Panel of the PMC to work with PICTs' NMHSs, USP, SPREP, SPC and other regional organizations, and WMO to address the education and training needs of NMHSs in PICTs with a possibility to establish a WMO Regional Training Center (RTC) and the development of regional research capacity;

14. REQUEST support from SPREP, SPC, USP and other regional organisations and WMO to improve the capacity of National Hydrological Services in the region to ensure adequate level of service delivery in PICTs for flood and flash flood forecasting and early warnings; and CALL for further collaboration between WMO, SPREP and SPC to increase operational hydrology as part of the Pacific Meteorological Desk Partnership;

15. ENCOURAGE PICTs NMHSs to participate in climate change forums at national, regional and international levels including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC);

16. COMMEND the establishment and support from development partners to the PMC as a subsidiary body of the SPREP Meeting and the Pacific Meteorological Desk Partnership hosted and managed by SPREP. WE URGE development partners and SPREP member countries and territories to continue their support to PMC and PMDP;

17. COMMEND the continuous support from WMO to PICTs' NMHSs through initiatives such as the Voluntary Cooperation Programme (VCP), Canada/WMO Programme for Implementing Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) at Regional and National Levels, training fellowships, the Severe Weather Forecast and Disaster Risk Reduction Demonstration Project (SWFDDP), the Coastal Inundation Forecast Demonstration Project (CIFDP) and other initiatives;

18. COMMEND the establishment by the 17th World Meteorological Congress of the Programme for WMO Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Member Island Territories, and request strong support and partnerships of the international community for implementing concrete, focused, forward looking initiatives that contribute to the SIDS Accelerated Modality of Activities (S.A.M.O.A.) Pathway priority areas, the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the outcomes of the 21st Conference of the Parties of UNFCCC and sustainable development;

19. COMMEND the draft Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP) to guide resilient development through the mainstreaming of integrated climate change and disaster risks into political, social, ecological and economic development of PICTs. Further, WE WELCOME the intended support from the European Union (EU), World Bank, Australia and other donors for the implementation of the SRDP and the proposed Pacific Resilience Partnership and encourage all efforts to ensure the early adoption and implementation of the SRDP in the Pacific;

20. ACKNOWLEDGE the support of the Government of Fiji to its Meteorological Service to perform its functions as the WMO designated Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre for Tropical Cyclones (RSMC Nadi-TCC); as the ICAO designated Tropical Cyclone Advisory Center (TCAC) for aviation, and Meteorological Watch Office (MWO) for Nadi Flight Information Region (FIR).

NOTED that the aviation and other weather services provided by Fiji Meteorological Services to Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu with no formal arrangements with these countries;

21. ACKNOWLEDGE the continuous support from development partners and donors for critical programmes, projects and other initiatives which have supported WMO, SPREP, SPC and other regional organisations, PMC, PMDP, the Pacific Island Climate Services (PICS) Panel and RSMC Nadi/ICAO TCAC/MWO for Fiji FIR in the various roles they play in the PICTs' region;

22. ACKNOWLEDGE the Statement of the WMO and Partner's Conference on the Gender Dimensions of Weather and Climate Services, calling upon all partners at all levels to take the necessary steps to improve the understanding of gender-specific impacts of weather and climate through the systematic collection and use of gender-disaggregated data and to pursue strategies and structures to increase the involvement of women in the development and communication of gender-sensitive weather, hydrological and climate services, among others.

WE ARE COMMITTED to promote gender in developing and implementing weather and climate programmes, projects and activities;

23. EXPRESS APPRECIATION to the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Tonga for the excellent facilities and hosting of the First Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology;

24. EXPRESS APPRECIATION to the Government of Finland through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and WMO for co-sponsoring the First Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology, and WE ENCOURAGE them and other development partners to continue providing financial support for future Meetings;

25. DECIDE to establish the Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology and to hold its sessions at least once every two years and REQUEST SPREP, with the support of WMO and development partners to convene the Meetings;

26. COMMIT to implementing this Declaration and INVITE SPREP Director-General and WMO Secretary-General to bring this declaration to the attention of the 2015 Pacific Leaders Meeting, the SPREP Meeting and the Council of Regional Organization in the Pacific (CROP) agencies and to the WMO Executive Council, respectively;

Adopted in Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga, on 24th July 2015