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**Outcome of the 3rd Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers' Meeting and its impacts
on Affordable Electricity for All**

[Presentation by Pacific Community (SPC) – Rupeni Mario]

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to: (i) provide an update on the outcomes of the 3rd Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers meeting, held in Tonga in April 2017; and (ii) the implication of these outcomes on the 26th Pacific Power Association Conference theme of *Affordable Electricity for All*.

Background

The 3rd Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers' Meeting was organized by the Pacific Community (SPC) and hosted by the Government of Tonga at the Fa'onelua Convention Centre in Nuku'alofa, Tonga from 26–28 April, 2017. The meeting was officially opened by His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Siaosi Sovaleni – Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Honourable Semisi Sika, Minister for Infrastructure. It was attended by the Prime Ministers of Cook Islands and Tuvalu and Ministers/Secretary and Associate Ministers from the following Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs): Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Heads of delegations or senior officials also attended on behalf of American Samoa, Australia, Fiji, France, Guam, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, United States of America and Wallis and Futuna.

The meeting was also attended by the United Nations High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and Under Secretary General, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative and Chief Executive Officer for the SEforALL initiative (Sustainable Energy for All), and representatives from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and many other international and regional inter-governmental and non-governmental partner organizations, universities, civil societies and the private sector.



Outcomes of the 3rd Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers' meeting

Launching of the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

The Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (PCREEE) is jointly funded and supported by the SPC, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), Government of Austria and the Government of Tonga. PCREEE is hosted by the Government of Tonga's Ministry for Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) in Tongatapu and currently has five staff members.

Accelerate the adoption and enforcement of energy sector laws

Highlighted the need for the adoption and enforcement of appropriate legal frameworks required for the effective management and governance of the energy sector – such as an Energy Act, energy sub-sector laws related to energy efficiency and the establishment of a regulator's office.

Commitments to the global efforts to reduce GHG emissions

Endorsed the vision of 100% renewable energy generation for the region and confirmed the value and need for regional renewable energy (RE) and energy efficiency (EE) targets.

New approach to capacity building on sustainable energy

Acknowledged the need for reform in the capacity-building efforts of SPC Members to meet national, regional and global obligations. Supported the approach that the region's capacity building must be based on officially accredited /industry recognized qualifications constructed around a "competency" and "skill-set" approach, rather than non-formal ad-hoc, project-based training. This approach is currently being undertaken by the European Union Pacific Technical and Vocational Educational and Training in Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Adaptation project (EU PacTVET).

Strengthen and support:

- PCREEE – call for additional support from development partners
- PRDR – Pacific Regional Data Repository (endorsed the 2018-2023 PRDR Strategy)
- Petroleum Advisory to support safety and find cost-effective supply and price verification information
- Feasibility of phasing out fossil fuel subsidies and to use higher quality fuel that are less damaging to the environment

Mandate of the Pacific Power Association

Endorsed the mandate of PPA – supporting power utilities of PICTs in the provision of high quality, secure, efficient and sustainable electricity services.



Possible impacts of the these outcomes

- *PCREEE* – The PPA is a spoke of the PCREEE and will continue to play an important role in terms of electricity generation and supply and, the objectives of PCREEE.
- *Energy Sector Laws* – the transformation of the energy sector in the respective PICTs will strengthen the management and governance of the entire energy sector including electricity. There are reforms to promote public private partnerships, regulatory functions and general administration, to name a few. These may directly or indirectly have some impact on the electricity sub-sector including examples such as legislation for energy efficient appliances, tax incentives on renewable energy and energy efficient equipment /appliances, and the promotion of independent power producers.
- *Commitments to global efforts to reduce GHG emissions* – the electricity sub-sector (power utilities) play a significant role in efforts towards national targets, NDCs and SDG7. As far as electricity generation is concerned the effort towards reducing use of fossil fuels in generation by means of increased renewable energy technologies and higher quality fuels will contribute to respective PICTs meeting these targets.
- *Petroleum Advisory* – the task to support safety and find a more cost-effective supply and price verification information would be of interest to some power utilities, particularly those that contract their fuel supply through a competitive bidding process.
- *Fuel subsidies* – many PICTs have the fuels used for electricity generation subsidized by government. With the current transformation trend of the energy sector and global commitments towards meeting national renewable energy and energy efficiency targets including NDCs and SDG7, these subsidies may reduce over time with more incentives towards renewable energy technologies and energy efficient measures.
- *Endorsement of the PPA mandate* – this formally endorse the important role of PPA in the region and paves the way forward for the PPA to be recognised as a regional entity within the diplomatic regulations and policies of Fiji.

Conclusions

Affordable Electricity for ALL is possible through strengthened management and governance structures of the sub-sector, electricity, and is made possible through not only a collective mechanism such as an association of Pacific Power Utilities but also through strong governance structures of the respective national energy sector. These are enhanced through a Pacific regional high-level decision making body such as that of the Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers' directions and decisions. It is with such foresight that regional frameworks such as the Framework for Action on Energy Security of the Pacific (FAESP) and the Framework for Resilience Development in the Pacific (FRDP) can be successfully implemented.

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