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# FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

## Thirty-third Session

Putrajaya, Malaysia, 7–11 March 2016

## Agenda item 13

### Report on the meeting of the South West Pacific Agriculture Ministers in Papua New Guinea in May 2015, including the Ministerial Communiqué

#### ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE FAO SOUTHWEST PACIFIC MINISTERS FOR AGRICULTURE Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

11–14 May 2015

#### COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The Eleventh Meeting of the FAO Southwest Pacific Ministers for Agriculture was convened in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea from 11–14 May 2015. The meeting was held at the Gateway Hotel, Port Moresby. The meeting was attended by Ministers from Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, and Heads of Delegation from Australia, and New Zealand. Representatives from Kokonut Industri Koperasin, Kokosiga, the Morobe Provincial Administration, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Pacific Island Farmer Organisation Network, Pacific Islands Trade and Invest (PT&I), the Asian Pacific Coconut Community, the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the University of the South Pacific, the World Bank (WB), and the Codex Alimentarius Commission, attended as observers.

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2. On behalf of the outgoing Chair, Honourable Le Mamea Ropati Mualia, Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries of Samoa, Honourable Lenatai Victor Tamapua, the Associate Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries of Samoa made a short statement following which the Honourable Assik Tommy Tomscoll, Minister for Agriculture and Livestock of Papua New Guinea, was unanimously elected as Chair of the Eleventh Meeting of the FAO Southwest Pacific Ministers for Agriculture.
3. The Director-General of FAO, José Graziano da Silva, delivered the keynote address. The Meeting was opened by the Honourable Grand Chief Leo Dion, Deputy Prime Minister of PNG.
4. The Meeting adopted the theme “Climate Smart Agriculture”.

### **FAO PACIFIC COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK 2013-2017 MID-TERM REVIEW**

5. The Meeting noted the report on the mid-term review of the FAO Pacific Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2013-2017 and acknowledged the value and relevance of FAO technical assistance.
6. The Meeting supported the recommendations on the proposed refinements to the Pacific CPF 2013-17
7. The Meeting emphasized the benefit of further decentralization within the Pacific and that this process would help improve communication with Southwest Pacific (SWP) members and implementation of projects.
8. The Meeting also noted the importance of partnering with regional and international organisations in order to improve the impact of FAO’s work, and build on the comparative advantages of potential partners.
9. The Meeting agreed that enhancing the capacity of the Sub-regional Office for the Pacific Island (SAP) would help improve the accountability of the CPF programme.

### **PRIORITIES FOR FAO IN THE PACIFIC IN 2016-2017**

10. The Meeting noted and acknowledged the support accorded by FAO to advancing agriculture in Pacific Island Countries. The Meeting endorsed the priorities identified in the paper; however, further prioritization was required, focusing on areas where FAO has a comparative advantage.
11. The Meeting stressed the importance of FAO strengthening its partnerships with regional organizations in order to effectively address the growing complexity of problems associated with the region’s agriculture, fisheries and forests.
12. Furthermore, the Meeting noted the serious challenges associated with managing coastal and inshore fisheries and further acknowledged the links between Noncommunicable Diseases, food quality and agriculture.

### **THEME: CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE**

13. The Meeting acknowledged the comprehensive study by SPC in the recent publication of the book on the “Vulnerability of Pacific Island Agriculture and Forestry to Climate Change” specifically

on the traditional food staples, export commodities, horticultural crops and spices, livestock, native and plantation forests.

14. The Meeting noted that the impacts from climate change on agriculture and food security will continue to increase over time and strengthening production and processing of food crops will be an important element of adaptation efforts. A “climate and economically smart” agriculture approach is crucial to enhance the production and consumption of traditional staple foods. Furthermore, addressing issues such as soil health, biodiversity, agroforestry, and promoting integration of sound traditional practices into commercial production are required.

#### **NORMS AND STANDARDS RELATED TO FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IN THE PACIFIC**

15. The Meeting noted the importance of Codex and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) standards and related texts for the food and agriculture sectors in the Pacific and highlighted the need to continue efforts towards the harmonisation of national standards based on the standards of the Codex and IPPC.

16. The Meeting agreed on the value of a strategic approach through which common interests in Codex and IPPC can be addressed by the region in a coordinated manner. The use and enhancement of existing regional coordination mechanisms, in particular the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and the Southwest Pacific (CCNASWP) and Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) was seen as critical in this endeavour.

17. The Meeting requested FAO, in partnership with other stakeholders, to seek the necessary resources to facilitate the implementation of relevant activities identified in the Strategic Plan for CCNASWP 2014-2019, and priority needs under PPPO Business Plan to further the regional approach.

18. The Meeting also supported the need to identify long-term funding for the operation of the PPPO.

#### **SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS FROM THE INFORMATION PAPERS AND THE TECHNICAL PAPER “IMPROVING DOMESTIC MARKET LINKAGES: POLICIES TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURE SECTOR COMPETITIVENESS IN THE PACIFIC”**

19. The Meeting recognized the importance of domestic markets, including tourism, and noted the need to improve the delivery of low-interest loan products to the rural sector. FAO was encouraged to work with international financial institutions and other technical partners, to increase the delivery of loan capital in support of these activities.

20. The Meeting identified the need to improve the competitiveness of SWP members to supply niche markets; but noted that there had not been substantial progress towards the negotiation of additional market access opportunities.

21. The Meeting sought clarification on the funding of the Pacific Regional Initiative. FAO advised that this Initiative was currently delivered through the Pacific Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and Regular Programme allocation, and that no additional funds had been allocated.

#### **SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION AMONGST PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES**

22. The Meeting agreed on the importance of South-South Cooperation (SSC) for the region; and identified a preference for facilitating further exchanges specifically between SWP members. The meeting further agreed that an assessment of needs and capacity to provide technical assistance would be beneficial.

23. The Meeting noted that there were other regional processes in place that should be taken into account with facilitating SSC.

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### **CONCEPT NOTE FOR A PACIFIC WEEK of AGRICULTURE**

25. The Meeting noted and endorsed the concept of a biennial Pacific Week of Agriculture (PWA) and for FAO and SPC to work with CTA and other stakeholders to develop a detailed approach to the organization of the event and to provide an update at the Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (MoAF) and Heads of Agriculture and Forestry meetings in September 2015.

26. The Meeting accepted the offer from Vanuatu to host the first PWA in 2017, subject to the MoAF meeting endorsing the proposed PWA. The meeting agreed for Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu to be part of the PWA planning committee that is to be established to organize the first PWA.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

27. The Meeting raised a concern that part of the funding provided to the Pacific Organic and Ethical Trade Community will finish at the end of this year. The meeting noted the benefits to small farmers in marketing organically certified produce and products.

### **VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

28. The Meeting accepted the offer from the Government of Vanuatu to host the Twelfth Meeting of FAO Southwest Pacific Ministers for Agriculture in conjunction the Pacific Week of Agriculture.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

29. Delegates expressed their deep gratitude to the Government and people of Papua New Guinea for the excellent arrangements made in hosting the Eleventh Meeting of the FAO Southwest Pacific Minister for Agriculture, and for the kind hospitality extended to them during their stay in Port Moresby.

