

GFCS Workshop Opening Remarks - Dr Netatua Pelesikoti, Director Climate Change Division, SPREP

Hon Prime Minister and Minister for Transport - Henry Puna

Reverend ..

Mr Arona Nagri, Permanent Representative of Cook Islands with WMO and his staff

Directors of National Meteorological Services from PICTs

Director of the Offices of Global Framework for Climate Services, Office for Resources Mobilisation and Partnership, Office for Education and training and other members of the WMO Secretariat

UN DP Representative

Representative of the Finish Meteorological Institute

EU

Representative of National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research Ltd (NIWA)

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)

COSPPac

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies & Red Cross Climate Centre

Representatives of the University of the South Pacific and Secretarial of the Pacific Community

Representative of the various National Sectors who are here today

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my great pleasure on behalf of the Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme Mr David Sheppard to deliver this opening remarks and Kia Orana!

This regional consultation on Climate Services does not only signify the unprecedented climate change risks we are currently dealing with and into the future but also signifies the role of climate services in ensuring that development are resilient and sustainable at all national and community levels.

The IPCC AR5 WG2 Report on climate change vulnerability and impacts released yesterday sends us a strong message that small islands are extremely vulnerable.

2Many of us are following closely the daily weather news and forecasting as it determines how our day will roll out. The images bring vividly to our minds the weather station, the weather news linked to a few weather men/women that we know.

Yet most of us know very little of what goes on behind the information we received daily.

This is a 'general public' view. But gathered here this morning is the Group that understands not only the role of climate services providers but what it takes to ensure those roles and functions are efficiently carried out.

We have a role to ensure Meteorological services have the required capacity to carry out seasonal forecasting for example .

We have a role to influence decision makers to ensure enabling policies are developed to support climate services delivery. We have a role to move national meteorological services from just information providers to the center of development planning and implementation.

This is when and where our adaptations and risk reductions will be informed by climate trends and future projections.

This is where and when we move from talking about data and information to building resilience and build back better.

The understanding that we have this role, and are able, through teamwork, to achieve far more than we could do alone, should be the heart of our approach to advance climate services in our region and strengthen our region's linkage with other regional and global climate services.

For the Pacific Region this is now captured in the Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy (PIMS) closely aligned with the WMO RA V (Regional Association 5) which should guide our consultation this week.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) values strategic partnerships and is committed to work with you all to provide support to National Meteorological Services and the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC).

The PMC is mandated to address the overarching scientific and technical issues pertaining to climate and climate change and reports directly to SPREP member countries through its annual meeting thus transparency and accountability to member countries and donors are assured.

The Partnership Approach is evident in SPREP's providing support to the Regional Meteorological Service Director's meeting since 1993 and its eventual evolvement to the current Pacific Meteorological Council in 2011.

- the co-location of WMO office with SPREP since 2000,
- the close collaboration it has with developed countries NMSs (such as the US National Weather Service and NOAA, Australian Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO,

NIWA, Met Service New Zealand, Meteo-France, APCC, Finland Meteorological Institute) and SPREP is to sign a MOU with UK Met

- CROP agencies and other regional collaborations such as South - South Cooperation, with the Caribbean; 5Cs and the Indian Oceans Small islands
- SPREP is also keen to establish new partnership to support the capacity building for National meteorological services.

WMO has led the way forward by establishing the GFCS and its support mechanisms. The Pacific NMSs in various fora including the last PMC-2 held in July 2013 have requested for the GFCS to be brought to the region. We are grateful to WMO and the GFCS secretariat for answering this call.

There have been discussions on Climate Services in the region, however, they are held under climate change consequences and impacts posing unprecedented risks and challenges to achieving sustainable development in the region.

The impacts of climate change and climate variability on development sectors such as in health and fisheries.

Some of the latest discussion in the region on Climate Services include; the climate services workshop held during the PMC-1 in the Republic of Marshall Islands in 2011, the Climate Service forum held at USP in January 2013, and the GFCS discussion during the PMC-2 which endorsed the establishment of the Pacific Islands Climate Services Panel as a mechanism to deal with climate services issues in the region. Its ToR will be discussed on Friday and it is hoped that the discussions during the week will guide the role of the Panel as an advisory body to the PMC.

Some of the key questions we should consider during this week:

- How can development sectors work better with the NMS to ensure climate information is used for decision making at all levels?
- What else can we do as NMSs and partners to ensure we built effective partnerships with the national sectors and our communities ?
- How do we want success to look like in the Pacific under the framework of the WMO GFCS in terms of technologies or new tools for improved climate services forecasting and early warnings
- How could we influence decision making processes to use climate information to improve adaptation and risk reduction decision making in the sectors and rural communities (both vulnerable and remote communities) which usually for us in this region represents 60-80% of our population.

Thus I would encourage all the country representatives, both the NMSs and each of the sectors that have been invited to participate and contribute to the meeting discussions and look at ways on how they can improve partnership and with other sectors.

You should take this opportunity to learn from what your colleagues in other countries are doing and also take this opportunity to network with regional and international organisations, donors and partners.

An important outcome of the meeting will be the way forward and the implementation plan for climate services in the region.

The agenda for the week covers a wide range of areas from the GFCS discussion to the SIDS discussion, I would like to particularly highlight the FINPAC and PMC discussions at the end of the week.

Financial support from WMO, FINPAC (Government of Finland), PACCSAP and the Government of Cook Islands through the Cook Islands Meteorological Services are gratefully acknowledged.

I would like to thank the Government of Cook Islands and Arona and his team for all the support and the hospitality given to us since we arrive. This is not my first time here in the Cooks but every trip is like a first trip as the people of Cooks Islands are very welcoming and always have something new to show you which is befitting of this naturally beautiful country.

Kia manuia