

OPENING STATEMENT TO MULTIPARTITE REVIEW MEETING for the PACC
(Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change) PROJECT

DAVID SHEPPARD, DIRECTOR, SPREP

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CEO of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Government of Samoa

Representative of the Resident Representative of UNDP

Delegates to this important meeting

Ladies and gentlemen

Welcome to this important meeting which is reviewing the PACC – the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project.

I know a number of you were here last week for the Climate Change and Biodiversity workshop and that many have just joined us for the meeting which began yesterday.

Welcome to you all and we look forward to a productive week ahead.

Climate Change is the biggest challenge facing Pacific island Countries – this is recognized and has been clearly stated by Pacific leaders at forums such as the Copenhagen Climate meeting.

The reviews of Copenhagen and the resulting Copenhagen Accord are mixed - both in this region and globally. However, one key outcome from Copenhagen will be a quantum leap in funding for climate change adaptation over the next 5 years and beyond.

This underlines the importance of PACC as a model and as a pioneering project in this region and globally.

Pacific Leaders have identified SPREP as the lead regional agency in relation to climate change. We do not see this role as meaning that SPREP is going to do everything in relation to climate change. Other regional agencies such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Commission, the University of the South Pacific and the Forum Fisheries Agency will play an important role in climate change. The CEOs of Regional Agencies will, in fact, be meeting in Apia next month and we will be discussing, amongst other things, how we can better coordinate and cooperate on climate change.

We see SPREP's role as an enabling and facilitating one in support of Pacific Countries to address climate change. The fundamental challenge is to develop practical tools and approaches to adapt to climate change within your Pacific countries.

The PACC project is a major response to this. It is the biggest GEF – Global Environment Facility - funded adaptation project in the region and it is already receiving a lot of scrutiny from the GEF, multilateral and bilateral donors to see how we have progressed with our implementation. It is also amongst the first adaptation projects globally to have on-the-ground implementation as its outcomes.

We acknowledge with gratitude the support and involvement of donors and partners. PACC is funded by GEF and delivered through a partnership of UNDP and SPREP. At SPREP we really value and appreciate this partnership with UNDP. We also acknowledge with appreciation the many other partner organisations involved with PACC – SPREP's aim is to increase the level of effective partnership as we progress with implementation of the PACC Project.

It is now one year since the project started and all 13 participating countries have signed a MoU with SPREP outlining how we will work together to pursue our

common goals. We now have 12 PACC Coordinators on board and a Project Executive committee has been formed. The PACC train is rolling.

We are breaking new ground with PACC project – it is an innovative project which is being looked at carefully as a model for application elsewhere.

The meeting is an opportunity for all key stakeholders of the PACC project to review progress in the first year of implementation. As with any large project of this nature there will be a number of positive and negative stories – we need to be open and honest in raising and addressing these issues through the course of this week.

The PACC project cannot fail and we should not. There are ample resources and technical support present at the national and regional level through SPREP and other regional organizations to ensure that we do not fail. Your regional partners and expertise are available for your support, so please make use of this support whenever you need it. At SPREP we are strengthening support for Taito through the recruitment of additional positions – so we can better respond to and support your needs.

SPREP through the PACC Project Manager will be providing an overview this morning of all OUR PROGRESS in the first year of implementation.

I am stressing the point OUR PROGRESS because we are all in this together and we need to be working together to ensure success of the PACC project. It is not a matter of us and you but “we all”.

We are different parts of the whole and the parts need to function together to ensure that the whole is a success. If one falters then the going will be tough and the rest of the parts will be affected.

This is why openness and honesty is very important this week. If you have a problem please let us all know.

I say this because I know that it is not easy to implement a project like PACC. It is large, it is challenging, and it is ambitious. There are donor requirements that we have to follow in the preparation of reports such as annual work plans, quarterly financial reports and quarterly narratives, audits, monitoring and evaluation. Given that we are breaking new ground with this project there are many eyes looking at this project – from within this region and globally.

When I worked in the Pacific in the 1990's I was involved with SPREP in a 3 million dollar project supporting the development of National Environmental Management Strategies in 5 countries. This seemed a big and complex project at the time – particularly to me as Project Manager - but the complexity fades into insignificance when compared with the PACC project.

A key lesson I drew from my earlier experience at SPREP is the importance of clear and open communication. Also to identify and address problems earlier, rather than later.

Clear and focused targeting is essential. We need to maintain a tight focus on our target audience throughout this project – we must be able to deliver the goods where it matters most – to the people in your Pacific countries who are the most affected by climate change.

At SPREP, we are placing a lot of emphasis on capacity development. Over the years, we have been focusing our capacity support to environment ministries and departments. Today, they are generally the ones spearheading negotiations at the UNFCCC level. The involvement of environment ministries is also important in the context of nature based adaptation to climate change – a topic addressed in detail at the workshop last week on biodiversity and climate change

With the PACC project, we are consciously spreading climate change capacity support to other ministries and departments such as agriculture, coastal and the water sectors. Engaging the expertise of these line ministries will be crucial to the success of PACC and other adaptation projects, as we move to implementation.

It is particularly important to mainstream adaptation into all key sectors of Pacific economies and to build resilience to climate change at the community level. This effort will require all stakeholders to work together to combat the impacts of climate change.

At the regional level there must be better cooperation between Regional CROP Agencies - rather than competition - in relation to climate change, as for other matters. Pacific Leaders have given a clear direction to Regional Agencies to cooperate.

At the national level there must be greater cooperation between different natural resource sectoral agencies – environment, water, agriculture and health. Also greater cooperation with Ministries of Finance who will be directly involved in the additional donor funding anticipated for climate change in the future.

We need to strengthen capacity at national levels to ensure that the benefits of PACC will continue beyond well beyond the life of the project. This will require support for the development of more effective and sustainable line agencies within your countries.

We also see capacity development as a key element of this meeting. During the week SPREP and UNDP staff will provide further capacity development support to you all in the area of project management and administration, mainstreaming and socioeconomics and in particular the science of climate change and strategic planning, courtesy of the AusAID Climate Adaptation programme.

We also want to learn from your practical, in country experiences, and to apply this to improve and enhance the future delivery of the PACC Programme.

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome again and I wish you all the best for a productive and enjoyable meeting.

Thank you, Fa'afetai lava