

# COMMUNIQUE ON THE PACIFIC REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON WATER IN SMALL ISLAND COUNTRIES

*Adopted by Ministers and Island Country Delegations and representatives of civil society groups meeting in the final High-Level Session of the Pacific Regional Consultation on Water in Small Island Countries, Sigatoka, Fiji Islands, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2002, as part of the preparatory process for the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum.*

Recognizing, the unique geographic and physical characteristics, as well as the fragile nature of water resources in small and vulnerable island countries which impact on the health and well-being of our peoples, environment, and the development of our island economies;

We, Ministers and Island Country Delegations and representatives of civil society groups, with responsibilities for water affairs from 18 small island developing states from the Pacific, as well as East Timor and the Maldives, met in Sigatoka, Fiji Islands 29 July – 3 August 2002 to share knowledge particularly within and across the small island country regions, and agree to an action plan for sustainable water management in our islands.

We acknowledge the work of national governments, supported by regional and international intergovernmental organizations, and civil society groups to achieve sustainable resource management of water.

We recommit ourselves to sustainable water management components of Agenda 21 agreed to ten years ago in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the Global Action Plan for Small Island Developing States agreed to in Barbados 1994 and the outcomes of the 5-year reviews undertaken in 1997 and 1999.

We associate and reaffirm, as appropriate, ourselves with the outcomes of the meeting on freshwater held in Bonn, Germany, in December 2001, which identified financing, capacity building, and governance as key constraints. This Consultation recognizes these as important in small island countries and adds political will as another important constraint which makes a set of four key constraints that need to be overcome for sustainable management of the region's water resources.

We urge the international community to pursue the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals that target the vital role of sustainable water management contributing to reducing poverty, improving health, and livelihoods for all people.

Recognizing that the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) is to take place in Johannesburg, South Africa, later this month, 26 August - 5 September 2002, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan in March 2003, decide that the following messages are key:

## THEME 1: WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

**Key Message 1: Strengthen the capacity of small island countries to conduct water resources assessment and monitoring as a key component of sustainable water resources management.**

**Key Message 2: Implement strategies to utilize appropriate methods and technologies for water supply and sanitation systems and approaches for rural and peri-urban communities in small islands.**

**Key Message 3: Implement strategies to improve the management of water resources, and surface and groundwater catchments (watersheds) for the benefit of all sectors including local communities, development interests, and the environment.**

## THEME 2: ISLAND VULNERABILITY

**Key Message 1: There is a need for capacity development to enhance the application of climate information to cope with climate variability and change.**

**Key Message 2: Change the paradigm for dealing with Island Vulnerability from disaster response to hazard assessment and risk management, particularly in Integrated Water Resources Management.**

## THEME 3: AWARENESS

**Key Message 1: A high quality participatory framework should be adopted at the national level to allow for open participation of communities in sustainable water and wastewater management.**

**Key Message 2: Access to, and availability of information on sustainable water and wastewater management should be provided to all levels of society.**

**Key Message 3: Water and sanitation education should be mainstreamed into the formal education system.**

**Key Message 4: Improve communication and coordination of all stakeholders in sustainable water and wastewater management including government, civil society, and the private sector.**

## THEME 4: TECHNOLOGY

**Key Message 1: Appropriate institutions, infrastructure, and information will support sustainable water and wastewater management.**

**Key Message 2: Utility collaboration and regional partnership to reduce unaccounted-for water will significantly improve the sustainability of utilities and reduce the need for developing new water resources.**

**Key Message 3: Island specific regional training programmes should be developed, resulting in sustainable levels of skilled and knowledgeable people and communities within the water and wastewater sector.**

## THEME 5: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

**Key Message 1: Work together through a comprehensive consultative process, encompassing good governance, to develop a shared national vision for managing water resources in a sustainable manner.**

**Key Message 2: Develop national instruments including national visions, policies, plans, and legislation appropriate to each island country taking into account the particular social, economic, environmental, and cultural needs of the citizens of each country.**

**Key Message 3: Promote and establish appropriate institutional arrangements resourced sufficiently to enable effective management of water resources and the provision of appropriate water services.**

**Key Message 4: Recognize and share the water resources management knowledge and skills of all stakeholders at a national and regional level in the process of developing and implementing the national vision.**

**Key Message 5: National and regional leadership in water resources management should be recognized and encouraged.**

## THEME 6: FINANCE

**Key Message 1: Create a better and sustainable environment for investment by both the public and private sector, by developing and implementing national, sector, and strategic plans that identify the economic, environmental, and social costs of different services and develop pricing policies, which ensure the proper allocation of resources for the water sector.**

**Key Message 2: Establish financially-viable enterprises for water and sanitation that result in improved performance by developing appropriate financial and cost-recovery policies, tariffs, billing and collection systems, and financial and operating systems.**

**Key Message 3: Reduce costs through improved operational efficiency, using benchmarking, development of water-loss reduction programmes, and improved work practices.**

**Key Message 4: Ensure access for the poor to water and sanitation services by developing pro-poor policies that include tariffs with lifeline blocks and transparent and targeted subsidies.**

**Key Message 5: Achieve sustainable rural water and sanitation services at the community level through developing strategies that incorporate mechanisms for appropriate financing and capacity building.**

We urge each country representative to actively promote the priorities outlined in this Communiqué with their country delegations attending (i) the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting in Suva, later this month, and (ii) attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

We agree that the Type II Partnership/Initiative on water being submitted by the Pacific delegations at the WSSD must provide an opportunity to secure support to implement the Regional Action Plan and urge donors and partners to do likewise.

Acknowledging the valuable contribution of the International Secretariat of the Dialogue on Water and Climate and the Caribbean delegates to the importance given to island vulnerability, we commend this Plan to the Caribbean Consultative Meeting to be held in October 2002 as part of the preparations for the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum, and support partnerships between the small island regions.

We request the organisers of this Consultation, SOPAC and the ADB, to transmit this Communiqué and the Regional Action Plan to the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Water Forum, in order that the priority actions needed to support sustainable water resources management in our small island countries are endorsed.

Finally, we acknowledge that the above meetings and fora are important steps on the road to addressing the vital water issues confronting our small island countries, and reaffirm our commitment to strive towards the realization of sustainable water resources management for the benefit of the peoples of the small island countries.

Sigatoka, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2002


## MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Recognizing, the unique geographic and physical characteristics, as well as fragile nature of water resources in our small and vulnerable island countries which impact on the health and well-being of our peoples, environment, and the development of our island economies;

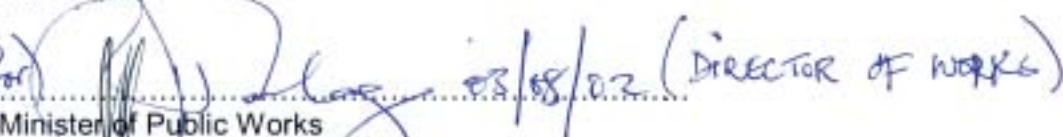
We declare that on behalf of our governments, we endorse the Communiqué and Regional Action Plan developed during the Pacific Regional Consultation attached to this Declaration.

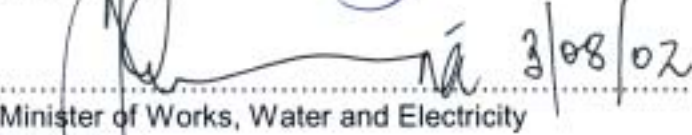
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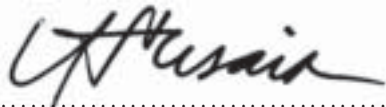
  
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Executive Director, American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA)  
**American Samoa**

  
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FOR Minister of Works  
**Cook Islands**

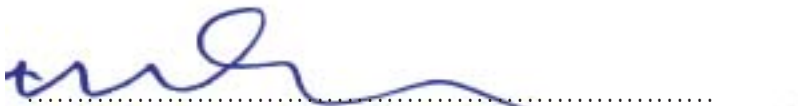
ON  (Sec of State)  
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Ministry of Transportation, Communication and Public Works  
**East Timor**

(for)  03/08/02 (DIRECTOR OF WORKS)  
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Minister of Public Works  
**Niue**

 3/08/02  
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Minister of Works, Water and Electricity  
**Samoa**



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**Minister, Department of Transportation, Communication & Infrastructure**  
Federated States of Micronesia



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**Minister of Works, Telecommunications, Energy, Road Transport & Shipping**  
Fiji Islands

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**Minister of Works and Energy**  
Kiribati



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**Minister of Public Works**  
Marshall Islands

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**Minister of Health**  
Republic of the Maldives



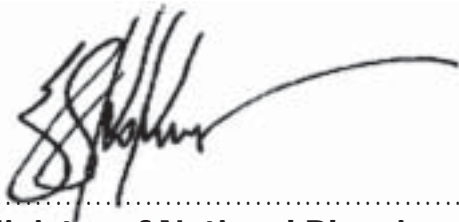
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**Minister of Works and Community Services**  
Nauru

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**Minister of Rural Affairs**

New Caledonia

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**Minister of Resources and Development**

Palau



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**Minister of National Planning and Rural Development**

Papua New Guinea



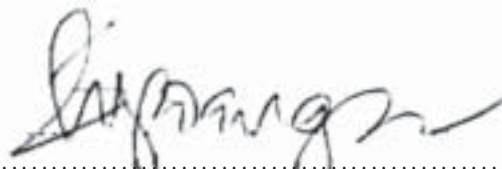
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**Minister of Mines, Energy and Water Resources**

Solomon Islands



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**Minister of Lands and Natural Resources**

Tonga



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**Prime Minister**

Tuvalu



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**Minister of Lands and Natural Resources**

Vanuatu