



**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

Report of the Seventh

**MEETING OF FAO SOUTH WEST PACIFIC MINISTERS
FOR AGRICULTURE**

Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands, 29 - 31 May 2007

FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands, Apia, Samoa

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**SEVENTH MEETING
OF THE FAO SOUTH WEST PACIFIC MINISTERS FOR AGRICULTURE**

Majuro, Marshall Islands
29 – 31 May 2007

REPORT

1. The Seventh Meeting of the FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture was convened at the Marshall Islands in Majuro, Marshall Islands from 29 to 31 May 2007. The meeting was attended by Ministers from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Niue, Solomon Islands, Palau, and delegations from Australia, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the FAO Sub-Regional Representative for the Pacific Islands also attended. Representatives from the Government of Italy, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) attended as observers. The full list of participants is attached as Annex A.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OFFICIAL OPENING

2. A formal ceremony was held at 6.30pm, Tuesday 29 May at the Marshall Islands Resort to mark the official opening of the Seventh Meeting of the FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture. Following the opening prayer, the Minister for Resources and Development of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Honourable John M Silk formally welcomed all Delegates and observers. He extended a special welcome to the Director-General of FAO and to all Ministers and country Representatives. He stated that the Government and the people of the Marshall Islands were very pleased to host the Seventh Meeting, the first to be held in the Marshall Islands and in Micronesia.

3. The Director-General of FAO, Dr Jacques Diouf addressed the audience with an FAO Statement. He stated that he was greatly honoured to address the meeting on the occasion of the Seventh Meeting of South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture. He particularly thanked His Excellency Kessai H. Note for his presence at the opening and support to the meeting which clearly indicates the high priority the host government places on the fight against poverty and hunger. Mr Diouf highlighted the issue of climate change and provided examples on how it has affected Pacific island countries over the past months. Climate change, together with globalisation and related food trade, are key issues the Pacific island countries need to address urgently and he expressed expectations that his meeting will help in identifying regional priorities in agriculture, rural development and food security.

4. While reflecting on the theme of the meeting “*FAO actions in support of the diverse food security needs and challenges in the Pacific Island Countries*”, Dr Diouf listed examples on how FAO has provided assistance to these diverse needs over the past biennium. Especially highlighted was the Pacific Regional Programme for Food Security, with its three key programme areas, i.e. support to national food security programmes; development of intraregional and international trade through implementation of food safety regulations, and the adoption and implementation of structural reforms and measures to harmonize agricultural policy. He further noted the need for close collaboration with development partners in the region for joint collective action and named the WTO Round Table Meetings as an example. Regarding FAOs TCP programme the Director-General stressed that special focus was placed

on assisting vulnerable groups. In conclusion, Dr Diouf referred to the on-going UN and FAO reform and stated that together with the support of the governments and people of the Pacific the challenges to fight hunger and poverty would be met. A copy of the Director-General's address is attached as Annex B.

5. The President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, His Excellency Kessai H. Note delivered the opening address. He extended a warm welcome to Ministers and Delegates from overseas and acknowledged the presence of local dignitaries. He also extended a special welcome to the Director-General, the Sub-Regional Representative and staff of the FAO, the Representatives of the Government of Italy and Regional and International Organisations. The President highlighted the positive impact of FAO interventions in his country and also in the Pacific island region. He, however, emphasized the challenges faced by small islands countries, particularly natural disasters, climate change and sea level rise, water scarcity, trans-boundary animal diseases, pests and disease, energy crises and distortions in the international trade regime.

6. The President reminded the meeting of the collective ownership and responsibility for peace, the shared vision for all people of the Pacific living in peace and harmony, protecting and safeguarding their natural habitat, cultural history, identity, and on the Pacific common goal to provide a secure and sustainable future for the children. Important issues to address, the President said, include socio-economic disparities, develop a joint vision for development in the Pacific to suit people's needs and reassert the right to self-determination, and sovereignty and control over resources in order to resist the negative effects of globalization. The President called for enhanced cooperation along the lines articulated in the Pacific Plan in order to provide a stronger voice and safeguard against outside detrimental influences.

7. The President urged the agricultural ministers of the South West Pacific to concentrate on reforming the agricultural sector as a crucial contribution to the joint struggle against global climate change and its detrimental effects. He stated that international assistance is needed in order to succeed. His Government continues to seek considerable investments and comprehensive assistance, including much needed policy re-orientation to address the interlinked issues of food and agriculture security and climate change. In addressing the Director-General, the President highlighted the crucial roles of FAO's Regional Programme for Food Security in the Pacific – both at the policy level as well as in mobilizing human and financial resources – to steer countries joint efforts and further stimulate regional as well as national action to address climate change and improve the productivity of the agricultural and food systems. The President then declared the meeting officially open. A copy of the President's speech is attached as Annex C.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Item 2.1: Election of the Chair

8. The out-going Chair, the Minister from Cook Islands, called the meeting to order, and invited the Secretary of Agriculture for the Cook Islands to preside over the opening prayer. The out-going Chair then acknowledged and thanked the Government of the Marshall Islands for hosting the meeting and its hospitality. She stated that the theme of this years meeting reflects the situation faced by Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and highlighted the diverse needs of PICs due to different topography, location and population pressure. She compared her own country, the Cook Islands, with the situation in the Marshall Islands. The Minister

further commended FAO's Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) for appreciating this diversity and responding in appropriate ways to individual countries needs. The Minister reiterated the need to improve food security in the region, and emphasized that the biennial meeting of the FAO South West Pacific Ministers is an opportunity for countries to share experiences and find solutions for challenges facing the sub-region. The Minister then invited the FAO Sub-Regional Representative for the Pacific (SRR), Dr Vili A. Fuavao to lead the deliberation on the adoption of the meeting agenda and the election of the Meeting Chair.

9. The SRR thanked the out-going Chair and the Government of Cook Islands for the role played in assisting SAPA during tenure ship as Chair of the Ministers Meeting. The SRR elaborated on the standing practices of SWPM Meetings in selecting a new Chair, traditionally from the host country. The Minister for Resources and Development of the Marshall Islands was therefore elected unanimously as the Chair for the Seventh Meeting of the FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture.

10. The Chair thanked the meeting for the confidence expressed in electing him to facilitate the deliberations of the meeting. He welcomed the ministers, country representatives, delegates, participants and FAO staff. He further expressed appreciation for the efforts made by all to travel to the north Pacific for attendance at the meeting in Majuro.

Item 2.2: Adoption of the Theme

11. The Chair invited FAO to introduce this year's theme for the meeting. The Sub-Regional Representative clarified that for each SWPM a theme is identified to ensure focused presentations and deliberations. The theme is proposed based on its relevancy to the region, taking into account FAO's broad mandate. Customarily a theme is proposed by FAO for consideration and endorsement by the host country. This meeting's theme highlights the diversity in the region and recognizes the diverse needs of SAPA member countries. It also emphasizes and encompasses FAO technical assistance to assist its members in the sub-region with attention being paid particularly on issues affecting the atoll island countries.

12. The meeting, after deliberations, endorsed the theme for the Seventh Meeting of the FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture, "*FAO Actions in Support of the Diverse Food Security Needs and Challenges in the Pacific Island Countries*".

Item 2.3: Approval of the Agenda

13. The Chair referred ministers to the provisional agenda for the meeting as outlined in paper SWPM/MAS/2.3 and invited FAO to introduce the theme. In response, the Sub-Regional Representative provided a brief overview of the provisional agenda and requested that the agenda item 5 be followed by agenda item 4.8, since both presentations were on the fisheries sector. He elaborated on the importance of the agenda item on the Expansion Phase of the Regional Programme for Food Security. On the agenda item 5, the SRR explained that it is common practice for this biennial meeting to invite a guest speaker to address the meeting on a current issue of great interest to the sub-region. Dr David Douman, Senior Fishery Officer, has been invited to address the impacts of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing (IUU) to the region. Agenda Item 6 provided opportunities for the meeting to raise other matters. The outcome of the meeting would be reflected in the agenda item 7 (Communiqué) and would provide guidance on the directions and emphasis of the work of FAO in the region for the next biennium.

Item 2.4: Adoption of Meeting Programme and Working Procedures

14. Following an invitation from the Chair, the Sub-Regional Representative outlined the proposed timetable and working procedures for the meeting and explained that the working procedures had been proposed to facilitate the smooth and orderly conduct of the meeting. In regards to agenda item 6, and in line with usual practice, the Secretariat will prepare a draft Communiqué highlighting the main outcomes and decisions of the meeting and this would be circulated at the earliest opportunity to allow time for Ministers to peruse the draft and provide comment and input before it was finalized for signing before the closure of the meeting. He added that a full report of the meeting will also be prepared and circulated for comments before it was finalized for printing.

15. The meeting adopted the meeting programme and proposed working procedures.

AGENDA ITEM 3: OVERVIEW OF FAO ACTIVITIES IN THE PACIFIC 2005 – 2007

16. At the invitation of the Chair, the Sub-Regional Representative referred Ministers to paper SWPM/MAS/3.0, which provided an overview of the activities of FAO in the Pacific as well as achievements and challenges experienced over the past years. He then highlighted some of the key activities and issues discussed in the paper through a brief PowerPoint presentation.

17. He alluded to the establishment of the Sub-regional Office for the Pacific Islands (SAPA) and its role in ensuring that the FAO assistance is readily available and relevant to the needs of the PICs. SAPA is headed by the SRR supported by a multi-disciplinary team comprising of a Agriculture Policy Officer, Farming Systems Development & Marketing Officer, Fisheries Officer, Food & Nutrition Officer, Forest Management Officer, Plant Protection Officer and an Associate Professional Officer (Agriculture & Trade Policy). SAPA's technical work is supported by Administrative/Finance Unit and a Country Project Officer (CPO) out-posted from the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok.

18. The biennial meeting of the FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture plays a critical role in ensuring that FAO technical assistance to the Pacific remains focused and in line with the priorities of the SAPA members. The timing of the meeting is also important thus ensuring that the outcomes of the meeting are fed into the proposed work programme of SAPA for the next biennium and for consideration by the FAO Conference.

19. The SRR reflected on the trend of increased FAO assistance to the sub-region since the establishment of the SAPA office in 1996. This was reflected in the number of Telefood and TCP projects implemented in the sub-region. In addition to the assistance provided with resources from the regular programme, the sub-region has been fortunate to be a recipient of trust fund projects from the Japanese Government in the fisheries sector and, most recently, from a generous donation from the Government of Italy towards the Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS).

20. At the 129th FAO Council Session, a decision was made to delegate full authority to the FAO Representatives to approve commitments under the FAOR TCP Facility to the value

of US\$200,000 per member country per biennium. The “Facility”, the SRR explained, aims particularly at responding to urgent government requests to support local programmes and to strengthen capacities and institutions. Recently, through the “Facility”, technical assistance was provided to the Marshall Islands for improving agricultural statistics, to Vanuatu for the formulation of the national agriculture policy, to Fiji for the preparation of the 2008 agricultural census, and to the Cook Islands for the revision of the national agricultural policy.

21. The SRR explained the South South Cooperation (SSC) partnership programme and how it is applied in support of the RPFs. Through a partnership agreement between FAO, PIC’s and the Governments of the People’s Republic of China and the Philippines eight experts and 56 field technicians were provided by the two large Asian countries and stationed in 14 island countries. In total, FAO has provided US\$ 2.8 million from TCP resources to the implementation of the RPFs.

22. FAO has been able to continue to convene the annual Round Table meetings for PIC’s on WTO Agreement Provisions since 1998. This was possible thanks to the generous contribution by a number of partners, embracing governments, international and regional agencies, such as the Government of New Zealand, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Auckland-based Pacific Islands Trade and Investment Commission (PITIC), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA).

23. On emergency assistance, the SRR noted that FAO has responded to countries’ requests for assistance to rejuvenate the agriculture sector in the aftermath of natural disasters. More recently, Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Samoa and Tonga have received such assistance following the devastating impacts of natural disasters caused by cyclones, floods and droughts. An FAO mission had been fielded to Solomon Islands in the aftermath of the recent earthquake and tsunami to develop project outlines for technical assistance towards reviving the agriculture sector in affected areas in the Western and Choiseul Provinces of the country.

24. Finally, the SRR noted that FAO’s technical assistance for the Pacific over the last decade has increased in scope and that particular efforts have been directed at further improving the quality of the technical assistance as well as providing additional resources for the development of the agriculture sector in the sub-region.

25. The Minister from Cook Islands, Honourable Ngamau Munoko, acknowledged the assistance of FAO in offering emergency assistance to the Cook Islands after the cyclones. The provision of seeds and planting material was especially useful to farmers.

26. The Minister from Niue, Honourable Bill Vakaafi Motufoou, acknowledged FAO assistance in the development of irrigation systems and the national interventions to improve agriculture provided under the RPFs. He acknowledged with appreciation the assistance of the Peoples Republic of China through the provision of field technicians under the SSC partnership programme of FAO. The Minister highlighted lack of capacities, both in terms of personnel and expertise as the key constraints for the implementation of projects in the agriculture sector in Niue and requested FAO assistance to address these issues. The Minister noted the on-going FAO Reform and registered his country’s concern on possible adverse impacts on the region and on SAPA’s ability to provide technical assistance to the PIC’s. He welcomed the efforts of FAO to coordinate its activities with development partners in the region, thus maximizing the benefits for the region.

27. The Minister from Fiji, Honourable Jainendra Kumar, acknowledged FAO assistance and support through the SAPA office and requested that more emphasis should be placed on policy assistance. In this context he requested that the policy officer post at SAPA be filled soonest. Furthermore, the Minister highlighted the critical importance of and the need for sustainable management of natural resources.

28. The Representative from PNG, Mr Francis Daink, expressed appreciation of FAO's assistance to PNG and Pacific Island countries, and particularly support to improve food security at all levels. FAO's assistance to the formulation of the PNG National Agriculture Development Plan (NADP) was highly commended and acknowledged. Mr Daink paid tribute to the late SAPA Policy Officer, Mr Manase Felemi who coordinated the formulation work for the NADP. He reiterated his Government's commitment for the implementation of the NADP. This was reflected in his Government's recent approval of Kina 100 million (approximately US\$37 million) per year for a period of ten years for NADP implementation. He requested FAO assistance for monitoring the implementation of the NADP and offered to share its experiences with other countries.

29. The Minister from the Solomon Island, Honourable Severino Nuaiasi, thanked FAO for the assistance and support extended to his country. He welcomed FAO assistance in assessing the impacts on the agriculture sector and the livelihoods of people in the aftermath of the recent earthquake and tsunami in the Western and Choiseul Provinces. He called for enhanced coordination with other agencies to ensure scheduled meetings are properly coordinated.

30. The Representative from Vanuatu, Mr Jeffery Wilfred, acknowledged the assistance and support of FAO to the region. He thanked FAO for the assistance provide for the development of the curriculum for the Vanuatu Agriculture College (VAC). He invited FAO and countries to use the facilities of the VAC for regional workshops and meetings and supported calls for better coordination of scheduled meetings with other agencies.

31. The Australian Representative, Ms Judy Barfield, acknowledged the comprehensive presentation on the activities of FAO in the region. Australia especially valued the works on the IPPC and bio-security, CODEX and the code on responsible fisheries. She noted the contribution of the TCP's to the region. She inquired on how SAPA would ensure that the recommendations of this meeting will be incorporated into FAO's work programme and planning and as a member of the Programme Committee offered her support for this purpose.

32. The New Zealand Representative, Mr Neil Fraser, extended greetings from his Government and presented the apologies of the NZ Minister, who was attending a fisheries meeting in Wellington. He thanked the SRR and SAPA staff for their work in the region and mentioned with regret the transfer of the Farming Systems Development and Marketing Officer to Rome and thanked him for his dedicated work. Mr Fraser emphasized that for a small team like SAPA collaboration would be a sensible approach. He noted coherence amongst different programmes and organizations and encouraged SAPA to build up on it. The Representative reiterated the importance to have evaluation procedures in place for regular and periodical evaluations of projects, perhaps three years after the closure of the project in order to ensure quality of assistance, relevance and sustainability. He reported on his country's activities in the area of climate change and impact on agriculture, and acknowledged the usefulness of the proposed assessment being planned by SAPA. Furthermore, he requested information on the mechanism and framework being developed for

the determination of national priorities. The Representative also gave tribute the works of late SAPA Policy Officer, Mr Manase Felemi.

33. The Samoa Representative, Mr Seumanutafa Malaki Iakopo, thanked FAO for the support and assistance provided to Samoa over the past two years. He requested more information and assistance on the use of the FAOR TCP Facility. He expressed the view that FAO's response to emergencies should be even more faster and sooner after natural disasters, and noted the importance of including local counterpart(s) in the assessment of the impacts of the disaster as they would be familiar with local circumstances.

34. The Minister from Niue supported the need to better coordinate the scheduling of meetings with other agencies. He also requested more information on the status of the ongoing Independent External Evaluation (IEE) of FAO.

35. The Minister from Palau, Honourable Fritz Koshiba, acknowledged FAOs assistance and support to his country. It was the first time for his country to attend the FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture Meeting. He noted that national priorities on agriculture vary from country to country and supported FAO efforts to assist Palau in defining its national agriculture development priorities.

36. The Representative from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Mr Ishmael Lebehn, acknowledged with appreciation the FAO assistance and support.

37. The Representative from Tonga, Mr Penisimani Ve'a, acknowledged FAO assistance and support to his country. He requested FAO support in the identifications of resources for and in the implementation of national activities under the up-coming expansion phase of the RPFS.

38. The Representative from Tuvalu, Mr Itai'a Lausaveve, acknowledged FAO assistance and support to his country. The Representative reiterated the need for capacity building especially in the implementation of FAO technical assistance.

39. The Sub-Regional Representative, in response to some of the issues raised by countries, noted that this meeting was the first time that all 16 member countries were able to be present in the meeting. The SRR acknowledged that national capacities for the implementations and management of projects are limited and noted that FAO will continue to assist and tailor its assistance to the needs of each respective country. SAPA places high priority on filling the Policy Officer post.

40. The SRR reiterated SAPA's ongoing efforts and commitments to strengthening good working partnership with regional organizations, development partners, private sectors and civil societies in the region. The needs for regular and periodic evaluations of the sustainability and quality of the technical assistance were well received. He noted that SAPA had taken initiatives on this by commissioning independent evaluations of FAO assisted projects for 2004/2005 implemented in Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa and acknowledged that this type of independent evaluations need to become more regular. The SRR acknowledged the concerns of the meeting for better coordination and scheduling of high level meetings in the region. The SRR invited the meeting to provide guidance and inputs to the implementation of the study on the impacts of climate change on agriculture in the region. He elaborated on the criteria and applications of the FAOR TCP Facility. SAPA has started a scheme in which young officers from countries are attached to the office for up to six weeks. The scheme is

aimed at capacity building in areas such as project management, formulation and the understanding of FAO rules and procedures that relate directly to the implementation of its technical assistance. On the issue of ensuring that decisions of the meeting are included in the work programme of FAO, the SRR noted that the work programmes of SAPA are usually very broad, allowing for tailoring implementation to the priorities and focus decided by this biennial meeting. In view of the organization's policy for further decentralization and delegation of authorities, SAPA is now in a position to make direct submissions to PBE on its work programme for the biennium 2008/09. This highlights even more the significant role of the SWPM biennial meeting.

41. The Meeting overall commended and congratulated the FAO SRR for the paper and the presentation which they considered comprehensive and informative. They concurred that the paper discussed and presented valuable information on the level of technical assistance, approaches used, SAPA operations, challenges faced by SAPA and its ongoing commitments to the development of the region as well as its efforts to strengthen the partnership of FAO with regional agencies and the Pacific countries.

42. In summary, Ministers emphasized the huge diversity in terms of size, population and resource base – from large high volcanic to low atoll islands – prevailing in the South West Pacific region, made up of fourteen FAO Pacific island member countries. FAO was commended for its attempts to respond to individual country needs through both regular as well as extra-budgetary funded programmes, including the Regional Programme for Food Security. The performance of the multi-disciplinary team at SAPA was positively recognized. Concern was raised, however that the on-going FAO reforms should not affect negatively on the present capacity at SAPA. In this regard the meeting requested FAO to:

- i. fill the vacant policy officer post as a matter of high priority;
- ii. ensure that the Farming Systems Development and Marketing Officer post is retained to ensure support to member countries in this high priority area;
- iii. continue to liaise closely with regional organizations in the implementation of activities and in the coordination of meetings and workshops;
- iv. pursue a study to assess the impact of climate change on agriculture and food security in the Pacific Islands region; and
- v. explore opportunities to ensure participation of both the agriculture and fisheries sectors at FAO SWP ministerial level meetings.

AGENDA ITEM 4: FAO ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE DIVERSE FOOD SECURITY NEEDS AND CHALLENGES IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES

Item 4.1: Policy and Capacity Building Challenges for Food Security

43. In response to an invitation from the Chair, the Sub-Regional Representative drew the attention of the meeting to document SWPM/MAS/4.1 and explained that it had been prepared with the objective of highlighting some of the major policy assistance activities undertaken in the past two years. The focus of the paper was on experiences made with activities in support of improved capacities for policy analysis, formulation and implementation of identified policies and activities in support of improved food security. The

paper described challenges and constraints faced as well as highlighted priority areas for the future.

44. The SRR paid tribute to the late Mr Manase Felemi and recalled the sad passing away of the SAPA Policy Officer in September 2006. The SRR highlighted the achievements and stressed that the findings of the paper were a reflection of the results of the work completed by the late Mr Felemi.

45. The SRR defined capacity in terms of human, institutional, technical and financial skills and resources. Challenges faced by PICs include: the lack of experienced staff at national level; the absence of national plans for capacity building; the overworked existing capacities; the recurrent problem of maintaining skilled human resources in the countries; the need for more coordination among different ministries; the need for more investment in the policy area; the lack of robust and appropriate agriculture policy and strategic plans; the need for more financial resources, and the need for high performance tools to assess the impacts on food security and training material.

46. The SRR provided a brief overview of policy assistance provided by FAO through its regular programme and field projects, including the RPFs. In addition, SAPA implemented an attachment scheme for young officers from SAPA member countries Ministries of Agriculture for both, capacity building purposes and to provide them with a better understanding of FAO's work procedures and rules and regulations. During the country consultations undertaken for the formulation of the expansion phase of the RPFs, the need for support for building in agricultural policy and planning were evidenced. FAO will continue to develop a policy framework to support the countries and would continue to undertake more diagnostic and analytical studies in support of policy development in the region. The role of the SAPA Policy Officer – including coordination of field programmes in the sub region – is crucial and it is hoped that the position will be filled soonest.

47. The Representative from Tonga stated that the lack of capacity in the area of policy and project management is a major concern in his country. He suggested that FAO might coordinate a training programme on agricultural policy analysis and project management in collaboration with relevant regional institutions.

48. The Delegate from FSM referred to the free association treaty between FSM and the USA and under this agreement many FSM students attend universities in the USA. Only a few of these students later come back to serve the country. In contrast, students returning from studies at USP return and serve the country. He strongly endorsed SAPA efforts to increase the exchange of experts within the region. He requested an agri-business expert to support the development of the agricultural sector in FSM.

49. The Representative from Kiribati stated that capacity building in the area of policy and project management is a major priority for Kiribati. She thanked FAO for the assistance provided over the years and wished that the collaboration would be strengthened in future years.

50. The Minister from Fiji supported the recommendations for enhanced FAO policy assistance to PICs and suggested that they be included in the horizontal component of the expansion phase of the RPFs, with the purpose of contributing to build capacities in the Pacific region.

51. The Delegate from Papua New Guinea expressed full support for the recommendations of the paper and again thanked FAO for assisting in the formulation of the National Agricultural Development Plan (NADP). He noted that the policy unit at the Department of Agriculture and Livestock remains weak and he requested FAO to support strengthening of policy analysis, implementation and monitoring of NADP.

52. The Minister from Niue thanked FAO for the assistance in the policy area and supported the recommendations of the paper. He drew attention to the fact that his country is continuing to lose young professionals who migrate to New Zealand. He emphasized that the loss of skilled and trained staff is a major concern for Niue and requested FAO assistance to support policy development and capacity building programmes. He noted with appreciation that Niue has benefited from the SAPA attachment scheme.

53. The Representative from New Zealand acknowledged the importance of policy in agriculture development, stressing particularly the importance of policy analysis. He also recognised that donor programmes and projects may in some cases be very demanding on local capacities and divert attention from national programmes and projects. He encouraged FAO to explore new and alternative ways to avoid such diversion. For example, he suggested to establish strategic partnerships with local NGOs with specific expertise and a proven positive track record; or to provide budget support. On the issue of skilled and trained professionals going to work in more developed countries, he stressed that New Zealand is similarly concerned with skilled staff transferring to Australia, USA or the United Kingdom. He suggested that means need to be identified to reduce this problem. The establishment of a bonding system to retain trained professionals, who would be expected to service in their national countries for a minimum period of time after being educated, overseas or in-country, on Government or with donor grants assistance was discussed as an option. Alternatively, more emphasis may be placed on highlighting the moral obligations of graduates to first serve the country before seeking overseas careers.

54. The Minister from the Cook Islands indicated that her country is concerned to maintain skilled and sufficient staff. Particularly in a situation where many senior agriculture staff are getting close to the retirement age. She fully endorsed the recommendations made in the policy paper.

55. The Minister from the Solomon Islands endorsed the recommendations made in the paper. He noted that his country is made up of many islands scattered over a wide ocean area which proved to be a challenge for the design and implementation of a national agricultural policy. The country has re-established an agriculture planning unit and requested assistance to improve its capacity. He informed the meeting that under the new Government policy a “bottom-up” approach is followed, that improved food production is considered as a very important policy issue and that the Ministry of Agriculture lacks capacity to fully implement the national agriculture policy.

56. The Representative from Australia supported the approach to improve capacities in policy as suggested in the paper. Major constraints have been highlighted and the approaches suggested were in line with the AusAID approach, i.e. to build up national policy capacities. She strongly supported the recommendation to encourage the countries to prepare with assistance from FAO and development partners an appropriate, robust and practical policy and implementation strategy for the development of the agriculture sector. The emphasis should be to keep it simple and realistic. Australia encouraged FAO to continue to cooperate with other development partners. She informed the meeting on the on-going work in the

Solomon Islands jointly funded by the EU, World Bank and AusAID, to support the formulation of an agricultural and rural development strategy and rural development programme. AusAID works in PNG included the promotion of rural livelihoods with a focus on rural small holders and fisher folk. The formulation of appropriate policies to support these strategic areas are considered as critically important.

57. In his response the Sub-Regional Representative recognised that some PICs are so small that it is difficult for them to have in place planning units. In this respect, he advocated a mix of approaches with national policy work to be carried out by both national and regional institutions, such as FAO and SPC. He agreed with the need for FAO to continue to coordinate its capacity building and training programme on policy and project management with regional institutions. He noted that SAPA is making a strong effort to develop a pool of Pacific islanders as regional experts on agriculture policy and planning under the TCDC partnership programme of FAO. The suggestions to incorporate capacity building programmes on policy assistance in the horizontal component of the expansion phase of the RPFS were consistent with the draft project framework. The SRR also welcomed suggestions to develop strategic partnerships with local NGOs and the private sector, emphasising that local and national organisations and associations have proven to provide alternative means of implementation of some of the activities for the development of the agricultural sector. He thanked the meeting for the appreciation expressed for the work done by the late policy officer.

58. Ministers expressed support and appreciation for FAO work in the area of policy assistance and endorsed the need for continued support to strengthen national capacities in the areas of policy analysis and planning as well as project cycle management. FAO was encouraged to closely collaborate with regional and bilateral partners – including civil society – in supporting member countries in the analysis and design of agricultural policies, and the design of training programmes and related material. More specifically the meeting:

- i. encouraged countries to prepare – with assistance from FAO and development partners – appropriate, robust and practical policies, plans and strategies for the development of the agricultural sector;
- ii. requested FAO to continue providing more diagnostic and policy analysis for the development of agriculture in the region;
- iii. encouraged countries to prepare – with assistance from FAO – a simple, pragmatic and user friendly capacity building plan for strengthening policy and planning units of ministries and departments of agriculture in the region; and
- iv. requested FAO to prepare appropriate training materials for policy analysis and formulation in order to further strengthen capacities for policy and planning units of the agriculture departments in the countries.

Item 4.2: Outcomes and Results of the Implementation of the Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) Project

59. At the invitation of the Chair, the Sub-Regional Representative introduced the agenda item by stating that the Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) consists of two main projects, namely the GTFS/RAS/198/ITA “Support to the Regional Programme for Food Security in the Pacific Island Countries” funded from the contribution of the Italian Government to the FAO Trust Fund, with a total value of US\$4.5 million and the SSC with resources of US\$2.7 million provided by FAO, which complement and support each other. He

further explained that the current phase of the RPFS is coming to a close with an extension phase commencing in May 2007 for which the Government of Italy has generously approved an additional US\$2.5 million. Selected activities of the Regional Programme for Food Security are therefore extended to the end of 2008. The draft proposal for an expansion phase of the RPFS was a separate agenda item.

60. The SRR then drew the attention to two papers - SWPM/MAS/4.2a and SWPM/MAS/4.2b – for this agenda item, with the first paper providing a report on the outcomes and results of the Italian funded component of the RPFS, including proposed activities for the extension phase, and the other paper discussing the SSC component. He invited the Regional Project Coordinator of the RPFS to make a brief presentation on the first paper.

61. The Regional Project Coordinator, Mr Bismarck Crawley reiterated that project GTFS/RAS/198/ITA comprised of two components designed to contribute to the stabilization of food security in the Forum Island Countries (FICs) at national and household levels. Component 1 focussed on national level interventions aimed at improving production and food security and enhancing the income generating activities and the nutrition status of the people while the emphasis of component 2 was on strengthening and building regional and national capacity on trade facilitation and on agricultural policies.

62. The Coordinator reported that as per the end of March 2007, twenty (20) of the twenty-six national level interventions and activities under component 1 were completed, equivalent to a delivery of 92 percent. On component 2, he noted that all planned activities were completed, which included a “Training on Food Safety and International Trade” held in Samoa, November 2005 and the Commodity Chain Studies which concluded with a regional workshop in Fiji, February 2007.

63. Examples of activities under component 1, included home garden nurseries for about 24 islands/communities in Kiribati, Nauru, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu; 5 fruit tree and 5 agro-forestry nurseries to bulk introduce local fruit trees and timber species for distribution in Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu; 3 permanent rice seed centres and 3 Farmer Field Schools (FFS) demonstration plots to support rice production activities in Fiji and Papua New Guinea; value-adding and food processing and development activities in Palau, Samoa Solomon islands, and Vanuatu; dairy cut and carry systems in Fiji; piggeries in the Marshall Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tuvalu; poultry in Samoa and Fiji; the introduction of new sheep breeds together with relevant training in Samoa and Tonga; post entry quarantine facility in the Solomon Islands; and rural butcheries in Vanuatu.

64. Mr Crawley reported that a total of about 160 formal training and capacity building activities for about 3, 000 farmers across the 14 countries in the areas of fruit tree development, rice production and rehabilitation, value adding and product development, livestock husbandry and management, home gardening and nursery maintenance were realised under component 1. In addition, informal training and awareness raising through field days and demonstrations through the works of the SSC experts and technicians attracted many farmers, with a significant proportion of them being women and youth.

65. The project mobilized the services of up to 46 national and international consultants to support the implementation of its activities given limited capacity in some countries. International consultants were mainly to provide training and assessment services, while

national consultants were engaged to provide additional operational support and management of the project.

66. Mr Crawley made reference to the challenges in the implementation of project activities of this nature, where activities are based on individual priorities which let to large numbers of national intervention projects that varied from country to country. He made reference to the valuable assistance made available and provided through the SAPA Multi-Disciplinary Team and through close working relationship with regional organizations like the SPC, the University of the South Pacific and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat particularly on the implementation of component 2, the regional horizontal component.

67. On the extension phase, Mr Crawley noted that this was in recognition of the positive progress in the implementation of the activities as reported to the project Mid Term Tri-partite Review Meeting in Tonga, 2006. The extension phase is meant to strengthen selected project activities to ensure long term sustainability.

68. At the invitation of the Sub-Regional Representative, the Country Project Officer, Mr Daniele Salvini provided a brief presentation on paper SWPM/MAS/4.2(b) which outlines the experiences with the recruitment of and in-country support to RPFS project activities by SSC experts and technicians. The main purpose was to post technicians and experts in countries to provide required technical support to national-based projects funded through the RPFS. A second priority area of the SSC programme is to support capacity building activities in agriculture and aquaculture in the SAPA member countries.

69. Mr Salvini reported that all of the SSC experts had been fielded, while posting of only 51 out of the planned 56 technicians was realised. Responses from member countries on the SSC component had been positive with most of the technicians hailed for providing good support to the implementation of national projects. There were difficulties experienced during the recruitment process and with regards to the supervision of the SSC staff as it was not possible to recruit all SSC experts and technicians at the same time. Limited knowledge of the English language by some of the technicians had also created some difficulties at the initial stages. Despite the difficulties it was concluded that overall the SSC modality had been very valuable and it is recommended to consider it also for the expansion phase of the RPFS.

70. The Chair acknowledged the presence of the Representative from the Government of Italy, and invited him to address the meeting. Mr Massimo Carnelos, Charge d’Affaires from the Italian Embassy in Wellington, briefed the meeting on the rationales behind Italy’s involvement in the RPFS and development in the Pacific Island region. He stated that, due to its political and geographic location, the Pacific region has not been in the core of Italy’s development cooperation for many years. Support was mainly channelled through the European Commission and established through the European Development Fund (EDF) for which Italy is one of the main contributing countries. Italy supports the approach to directly respond to identified national priority needs and believes that the RPFS is an appropriate tool to do this effectively. In response to the positive feed back from countries at the RPFS mid-term meeting in Tonga, the Government of Italy decided to provide an additional US\$ 2.5 million to extend RPFS activities up to the end of the year 2008.

71. For the future, Italy sees a continuous need for technical cooperation, training and knowledge provision for sustainable rural development and to break the chain of dependency of food imports. In addition, he believed that the potential impact of climate change on Small Island Development States needs to be dealt with at global level. Carbon emissions need to be

reduced and renewable energies identified in order to reduce global warming and its impact on the SIDS. He stressed that his Government will continue and increase its engagement in the Pacific region. Italy would like to partner in the post-forum dialogue and plans to participate at the next Pacific Island Forum meeting in Tonga.

72. Ministers expressed their appreciation to FAO for the implementation of the RPFS and to the Government of Italy for the financial support to the RPFS.

73. The Minister from Fiji highlighted the importance of national coordination in the implementation of the project. Rural communities have benefited from the project activities, namely the reviving of dairy farming, poultry and the duck project activities. He expressed his government commitments to sustain these activities and highlighted the importance of conducting an ex-post evaluation of the project by FAO in order to learn from the lessons gained to date. Further, Fiji thanked FAO for coordinating and implementing the SSC component, and requested FAO to explore possibilities to continue the SSC component. He thanked the People's Republic of China for providing SSC field technicians for Fiji

74. The Minister from Niue thanked FAO for the implementation of SSC component. Initial communication problems with the Chinese technicians were experienced but the country has benefited from the technical expertise provided and a continuation of the SSC programme would be appreciated. The Minister raised the issue of initiating a partnership programme for the region which should be based on exchanges of experts among PICs.

75. The Delegate from Papua New Guinea expressed the importance of the RPFS and supported the continuation of the SSC component.

76. The Minister from the Solomon Islands stated that the country, particularly rural communities and farmers, had benefited from the implementation of RPFS. He supported the continuation of the SSC component.

77. The Delegate from Samoa indicated that his Ministry experienced initial problems and constraints in the implementation of SSC component, which were mainly related to communication problems with Chinese technicians. Samoa appreciated the hard work and expertise provided by the Chinese experts and technicians based in Samoa. He noted that the Samoa's Farmer Association contributed to the costs of the extension of the SSC horticulture technician and raised funds to cover his air travel expenses for a return trip to China. He supported the inclusion of the SSC in the expansion phase of the RPFS.

78. The Minister from Palau also expressed support for the continuation of RFPS as well as SSC component. Palau's human resources are extremely limited and SSC expertises are needed in the area of (agro-)forestry, food processing, fisheries and aquaculture. He expressed his concern on the impact of El Nino on natural resources and on over-fishing by foreign fishing vessels. The Minister highlighted the importance of aquaculture development for sustainable economic development and future food security in the country.

79. The Delegate from Kiribati requested FAO to continue to assist the development of food processing in her country. Kiribati expressed concern with the slow process of project funds' transfer to enable technicians to implement activities. Kiribati requested FAO to consider an extension of the contract of one SSC technician in order to enable him to complete the planned activities.

80. The Minister from the Cook Islands also stated communication problems with Chinese SSC technicians at the initial stage of the project. She went on to commend the field technicians on their high technical skills and professional work attitude.

81. The Delegate from Tuvalu highlighted the high importance of the RPFS for the country and for the improvement of food security in rural communities. The piggery and nursery activities were mentioned as particularly valid. Tuvalu expressed its appreciation to the highly qualified SSC technicians and their works. Tuvalu supported the continuation of SSC component.

82. The Delegate from the Federated States of Micronesia stated the importance his country places on ensuring food security. It is ranked at the same level as global climate change and its related impacts such as sea level rise. The country is working on a change in behaviour of farmers towards more sustainable farming systems, and in consumers towards more balanced and healthy food consumption. He congratulated Samoa on the recently issued ban on the imports of turkey tails. He confirmed his country's commitment to the continuation of the SSC component and informed that his government has started dialogue with China and has already indicated support to the programme

83. The Delegate from Vanuatu stated that there is a great need to understand markets and identify demand areas before promoting production and processing of certain agricultural products. His country would like to see assistance in both policy and market analysis in order to better meet market demands in the future. Food security, he stated, could be achieved by two ways: through growing of own food or by earning income from marketing agriculture products for later food purchases.

84. The Delegate from New Zealand expressed support to the objectives of the RPFS and its activities. He noted the positive feed back expressed by the countries and highlighted the importance of an ex-post evaluation of the current phase. This may become especially relevant for formulation of the possible expansion phase of the RPFS.

85. The FAO Sub-regional Representative, thanked the meeting for their comments of support on the RPFS and noted the generally positive feed back on the contribution of the SSC component to the RPFS and that these would be taken on board. In response to Kiribati's query on advancing project funds, he stated clearly that FAO rules and regulations on financial management procedures are not negotiable and SAPA must adhere to ensure accountability. In particular, he explained that SAPA had not received reconciliations of funds earlier advanced to Kiribati. Until the reconciliation is completed satisfactory there would not be any further funds forthcoming. On the project assessment/post-evaluation of the RPFS, the SRR indicated that a mid-term monitoring was initiated to provide guidance for the implementation of the programme and that there would be an ex-post evaluation to evaluate the outcomes and results of the programme.

86. The Country Project Operations Officer, Mr Salvini, informed that a final evaluation of RPFS would be undertaken in August 2008. On the difficulties experienced by some countries with local procurement, he further explained the procedures, particularly for equipment urgently needed and locally available. In response to Palau and the desired technical background of SSC technicians, he explained that it would be the government's choice for SSC technician's expertise, such as in forestry, food processing, fisheries/aquaculture. On Kiribati's request for extension of a field technician he said this would be considered based on available resources.

87. The Ministers noted the outcome and results achieved in the implementation of the Government of Italy funded support to the Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) in the Pacific. Ministers also appreciated the additional generous support provided by the Government of Italy to food security in PICs through the extension phase of the RPFS. Ministers also appreciated the support provided by the Government of the Peoples' Republic of China and the Republic of the Philippines to the South South Cooperation (SSC) programme. The meeting reaffirmed its commitment to achieving food security in the region and:

- i. encouraged relevant ministries and agencies responsible for agriculture, trade, health and nutrition to ensure that the inter-sectoral and multi-disciplinary natures of food security issues are effectively addressed in future goals of the project;
- ii. appreciated the potential and contribution of South-South Cooperation (SSC) for the effective and timely implementation of the programme;
- iii. recommended that FAO and the PICs collaborate to further the SSC component during the remaining implementation of the project, whilst incorporating lessons learned from the experiences to date.

Item 4.3: Expansion Phase of the Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS)

88. The Sub-Regional Representative introduced Mr 'Aleki Sisifa, Team Leader of the Mission that consulted widely with Pacific island countries and formulated the Expansion Phase of the Regional Programme for Food Security in the Pacific island countries. The wide consultative process was in response to the request by the Sixth Meeting of the FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture in 2005. He indicated that the proposal is still in a draft form and that suggestions from the meeting are invited. He noted that the expansion phase of the RPFS would be operated and implemented from SAPA. The SRR expressed his gratitude to the Secretary General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Mr Jimmy Rogers for the release of Mr Sisifa for the purpose of leading the formulation exercise. This was seen as an indication of mutual collaboration between SPC and FAO. He noted that the budget allocations of the draft proposal are tentative and would be revised taking into account the decisions of this meeting.

89. Mr 'Aleki Sisifa recalled that the RPFS has been discussed in the past three meetings of the SWP Ministers of Agriculture. The sixth meeting in 2005 approved the strategy document titled "Investing in Agriculture for Sustainable Growth and Development" submitted by FAO for a US\$ 72 million up-scaling of the RPFS. The meeting emphasised that wide consultations are needed in the formulation of the RPFS expansion phase. The Formulation Mission, comprising three international consultants and three officers of SAPA, undertook the consultation visits to countries between 6 February and 24 March 2007. The Team Leader, returned to SAPA for a period from 17 March to 29 April 2007 to develop the draft project document.

90. He informed the meeting that the regional approach was anchored on the fact that PICs face many similar constraints such as lack of capacity, evolving policy frameworks, weak market systems, poor infrastructure, weak financing capacity, and vulnerability to changing international trading environment and to natural disasters and climate change. From the consultations and information gathered, the differences between major threats and issues facing PICs particularly the physical and social cross-cutting issues were so profound, that

more focus on country (vertical) and regional (horizontal) rather than regional horizontal interventions would result in greater positive impact. Mr Sisifa concluded that the design of the Expansion Phase of RPFs including the allocation of resources to the three components, reflected this strategy.

91. Mr Sisifa summarised the logical framework matrix for the project. The goal was to improve food security in PICs; and the purpose was increased availability and access to adequate quantities of safe and quality-assured food. The project proposal focusses on six result areas viz. increased productivity of farmers, fishers and resource owners; increased quality of food produced for consumption and trade; increased competitiveness of local products for domestic and export markets; strengthened capacity in policy formulation; strengthened capacity to adapt to, mitigate and prepare for climate change and natural disasters; and improved infrastructure.

92. The proposed three components of the RPFs Expansion Phase and resource allocations were as follows: Component I – Country Production Activities (US\$ 14 million); Component II – Regional Horizontal Activities (US\$ 11 million); and Component III – Rural Infrastructure Development (US\$ 35 million). The allocation formula that was used for allocation of resources in the current RPFs is being used again as the basis of resource allocations for Components I and III. National interventions (vertical component) to strengthen the supply side were proposed in the following areas: crop production; livestock production; capacity development; aquaculture development; value adding; fisheries production; and forestry and agro-forestry. Likewise, for the country vertical rural development component, the following were proposed: market facilities; water supply & irrigation; slaughter houses; quarantine plants; research facilities; agricultural and fisheries roads; food-testing laboratories; agricultural mechanisation; and wharfs and cranes. There were five major intervention areas proposed for the regional horizontal component. They would support national food security initiatives and include: harmonisation of food quality and food safety standards and building capacity in these areas; facilitation of regional and international trade; facilitation of natural disaster and climate change adaptation and mitigation; strengthening of policy and planning; and provision of support to programme planning.

93. Based on lessons learnt from the implementation of the pilot project (current RPFs), it was proposed that the Regional Project Management Unit be comprised of a Chief Technical Adviser, two technical officers, an accountant/administrator and a secretary. The National Project Management Units would be similarly strengthened through the services of SSC experts and technicians. The Expansion Phase of the RPFs will be implemented and operated under the auspices of SAPA. The Project Regional Steering Committee would be similar to that used for the pilot project.

94. The Minister from Fiji acknowledged the role played by Mr Sisifa in the formulation of the proposal. He noted with appreciation that national and regional priorities had been considered and indicated Fiji's endorsement of the recommendations and the project proposal. He supported the emphasis given to rural infrastructure. The Minister endorsed component 2 priorities in particular on climate change and mitigation of its impacts. Fiji has recently been affected by natural disasters like flash flooding. He also endorsed the trade facilitation component as he considered intra regional trade as the way forward.

95. The Minister from Niue, commended the presenter on the preparation of a sound project document. He was interested to know whether some in-country work may be

contracted out to service provider and whether Niue would also be benefiting from component 2. He noted the need to start identifying possible donors.

96. The Minister from the Cook Islands supported the project proposal and confirmed that the activities identified for the Cook Islands were of high priority for the country.

97. The Delegate from Papua New Guinea stressed that land use resource planning is one of the major issues for PNG, and would like to suggest that this be included in component 1.

98. The Representative from Australia stated that she could not comment on financial commitments at this stage. She pointed out that the evaluation of the current pilot phase would be of interest to both donor and recipient countries and suggested that a monitoring and evaluation component should be built into the budget. She informed the meeting that the Programme Committee has just approved guidelines for M&E for FAO implemented trust fund projects.

99. The Representative from New Zealand expressed support of this expanded programme proposal, but indicated concerns about the comprehensive nature of the proposal. It was raised that in some areas – such as rural infrastructure – there were already a number of donor programmes. He found it difficult to get an appreciation of how this proposal will fit in with existing programmes in this area and what consisted FAO's comparative advantage in the implementation of infrastructure improvement component of the project. In addition, he identified a challenge in the implementation process of this diverse programme.

100. New Zealand appreciated the nature of close consultation and the coordination of the formulation process. With regards to delivery mechanisms, reference was made to a recently OECD survey which concluded that projects are not always the first best option to assist countries and also bear the danger of diverting government capacities from other relevant work. He encouraged the audience and FAO to work and think collectively about possible alternative delivery mechanisms.

101. The Representative from Vanuatu fully supported the expansion phase proposal as presented. He added that he would like to see more emphasis placed on value chain development studies. He indicated the preparation of the UN Country Framework for Vanuatu and saw this project as fitting in well.

102. The project proposal was also endorsed by Tuvalu and Samoa. Samoa proposed some national projects and noted that assistance needed for legislation and policy could be covered under the horizontal component of the project.

103. In his response, Mr 'Aleki Sisifa confirmed that climate change mitigation and adaptation have been considered and included in the proposal. He noted that Fiji is the only PIC with a cabinet-level approved land use policy, which could possibly serve as a model for other countries. He emphasised that regional trade is very important and pointed out that there is a project on this under the PIFS.

104. Mr Sisifa acknowledged the lack of human resources in Niue. Detailed formulation of national projects would be done by regional/national experts and if labour is identified as a critical issue, this will then be addressed. He emphasized that there is no one solution to fit all. He clarified that the horizontal component will involve all countries.

105. He further pointed out that the comment by Australia is appreciated. He clarified that M&E is built into the project management unit. The TOR of one of the two officers will focus on M&E. Another area is gender balance and mainstreaming. The project will bring in consultants to cover technical areas where needed.

106. He also expressed appreciation for comments made by the Representative from New Zealand. He identified management of the project as a key issue, adding that newly emerging development can quickly make or break a project. One alternative could be, for example, to cluster 12 smaller projects per country into 3-4 larger projects. Delivery mechanisms will take into account lessons learned from the current project and designed to build on what worked in current phase to overcome those problems. On the issue raised by Samoa, Mr Sisifa responded that component 3 addresses policy and legislative issues. He added that there is also programme development support. He emphasized that the regional component needs to be linked closely to components 1 and 3 during project implementation.

107. The Sub-Regional Representative added that M&E would be an integral part of the RPFS expansion phase. The current pilot project would be recruiting an international expert to prepare an appropriate M&E system which would be adopted in the expansion phase. In response to Vanuatu, the SRR advised that FAO has participated actively in the preparation of the regionally adopted United Nations Development Action Framework (UNDAF), as the UN response to the Pacific Plan. The SRR confirmed that he has just signed an UNDAF document with local UN heads of agencies.

108. The SRR further noted that the issue of limited capacity has been identified as a crucial constraint in many Pacific countries and that it needs to be addressed adequately in the future. He thus welcomed very much suggestions for improvement. He pointed to the SSC as assisting in this matter, while stressing that technical backstopping from FAO is still needed. He added that limited human resources in Government agencies have been factored into the project design and that it is envisaged that activities may also be implemented through NGOs and the private sector, e.g. women and church groups, under contractual arrangements. The SRR welcomed and encouraged innovative thinking and thanked Delegates for being supportive of the Expansion Phase RPFS proposal. The first tasks of the RPMU would be to assist countries to prepare detailed breakdown on activities through project logframe exercises.

109. The Chair asked the meeting to consider the recommendations before them. Following a discussion and clarifications provided by the SRR that no significant changes in country priorities were envisaged, Ministers endorsed the outcome of the formulation missions for the expanded programme for food security, which visited and held stakeholder consultations in all of the 14 FAO Pacific Island member countries. The 14 FAO Pacific Island member countries approved in principle the project proposal for the expansion of RPFS as presented, with the understanding that minor revisions which may need to be incorporated will not affect project priorities and implementation procedures as agreed by individual countries. Ministers also recognized the importance of the SSC component. The meeting:

- i. called on countries to implement the expansion phase of RPFS with assistance of FAO and other development partners;
- ii. appreciated that the RPFS will be formulated, implemented and operated by and from the FAO sub-regional office in Samoa;
- iii. recommended that SSC support is secured for the expansion phase of the RPFS;

- iv. called on donors and development partners to support the expansion phase of the RPFS;
- v. recommended that preparation for implementation of the RPFS expansion phase will take into account issues arising and lessons learned from the end of project evaluation of phase one of the RPFS.

Item 4.4: Plant Protection and Bio-Security Issues and Challenges Affecting Food Security – Focusing on Atoll Island States

110. At the invitation of the Chair, the Sub-Regional Representative drew attention of the meeting to document SWPM/MAS/4.4, which presents issues and challenges to plant protection and biosecurity facing the region. He invited the Plant Protection Officer to provide a brief presentation on the key issues raised in the paper.

111. The Plant Protection Officer noted the importance of bio-security and plant protection to the economy of each country, public health and the environment. He pointed to current bio-security issues such as increased marine pest species at sea ports in the region, increased population of bird pest species in some island countries and touched briefly on the list of pest incursions in some of the PICs over the past years. He pointed to bio-security limitations in the region such as lack of trained officers, outdated equipment and facilities, limited budgets and lack of public awareness.

112. On plant protection issues, he mentioned some of the current pest movements in the region such as fire ants, crazy ants, giant african snails, etc. Limited capacity was also named as one of the primary weaknesses in the region.

113. He concluded by giving brief accounts of three of the more important and relevant International Conventions and Treaties, including the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the Rotterdam Convention (RC) and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). He encouraged island countries that have yet to ratify and accede to these conventions to do so.

114. The Representative from PNG stated that plant protection constitutes a major concern for his country. He mentioned the Cocoa pod borer which hit East New Britain in 2006 and the Newcastle disease now found in some locations. He added that in 2003, potato late blight fungus whipped out almost the entire Irish potato harvest in the Highlands of PNG. While the early response was rather slow, the pest is under control because of better seed control and the application of fungicides. He concluded that pest breaches are serious threats to national food security and that farmers have to spend increasing amounts of money on pesticides. He requested assistance of FAO to build an efficient and effective plant protection system.

115. The Minister from Palau reported that with an increase in tourist arrivals from different destinations, an increasing number of pest outbreaks have been observed in his country. He mentioned a lack of expertise in trained quarantine officials. He requested FAO assistance to provide experts to train national staff. He drew attention that Palau ratified all plant protection and biosecurity conventions but two, as more technical expertise and assistance is needed to fulfil the requirements of the agreements.

116. The Representative from the Marshall Islands raised two issues related to experiences in the atoll island country. On one hand, the need for long term capacity building programmes

to train plant protection staff. On the other hand, the increasing working load of biosecurity officers, who are required to deal with invasive species and not only diseases. He requested FAO to assist Governments in protecting countries from pests and disease breaches, including marine pests.

117. The Minister from the Cook Islands raised the issue of sand flies and sought assistance from FAO to eradicate them.

118. The Minister from Niue expressed support for the recommendations made. He mentioned that Niue tabled a new biosecurity act in parliament. He also mentioned that his country is committed to sign the remaining two plant protection and biosecurity conventions. He added that invasive species constitute a major concern in Niue: they become particularly difficult to control after a cyclone as little shade cover prevents germination of i.e. introduced ornamental plant species. He further suggested a more vigilant approach against pest and disease breaches in view of the danger of increased spread due the growing inter-island trade following the implementation of PICTA. He mentioned the example the possible threats caused by the taro leaf blight spreading from Samoa to Niue. He inquired on the status of a study looking at taro exports to New Zealand and how infestation with the “taro mite” might affect these. In his opinion fumigation should better be done in Auckland, the arrival port of taro exports to New Zealand.

119. The Delegate from the Federated States of Micronesia recognised that biosecurity constitutes an important matter in his country. The country is fortunate to host SPC sub-regional office. He also indicated that his country is reluctant to sign plant protection and biosecurity conventions due to all the requirements that a country should comply with. He requested FAO to assist in assessing the implications in FSM to accede to those instruments and provide technical capacity. Assistance in preparing a “pest list” would be the first step. The Delegate raised concern about the various pests existing in neighbouring states and countries of FSM, such as Guam, Hawaii, Majuro and Palau. It would be important to harmonize quarantine legislations and identify common ways on how to deal with the issue. He expressed concern about the risk of an outbreak of avian flu, which would most likely generate a negative impact on food security. He added that capacities for managing a potential avian flu outbreak would need to be developed.

120. The Minister from Fiji thanked FAO for the paper, which provided a sound analysis of all challenges posed by biosecurity, and endorsed the recommendations made. He stated that Fiji has suffered plant pest breaches in the past and expressed concern that as a result of climate change diseases may become more aggressive. He mentioned that farmers are increasingly using chemicals detrimental for the environment to combat pests and diseases. In recognising the need for best management practices, he mentioned that Fiji is looking at SPC biosecurity template and alternative control measures. He added that Fiji is reorganizing its quarantine authority to become an independent body like in New Zealand and Australia. He requested FAO assistance in assessing the implications of ratifying biosecurity and plant protection conventions and raise national capacities to comply with the requirements.

121. The Minister from Solomon Islands commented that farming in his country needs to upgrade plant protection and biosecurity knowledge, in order to reduce the danger of pests and diseases outbreaks. This was seen as particularly important to enhance productivity of cash and marketable food crops. As an example of the dangers posed by pest outbreaks, the introduction of the African snail by a logging company was mentioned. Through New Zealand assistance this pest was brought under control. He mentioned that Solomon Islands

has limited capacity to eradicate pests and diseases once they have been introduced into the country and requested FAO assistance for training and capacity building programmes in this area. He fully supported the recommendations made and announced that his government will likely prepare a bill to regulate biosecurity issues.

122. The Representative from Tuvalu thanked the Plant Protection Officer for his presentation and stressed the importance for FAO to strengthen collaboration with SPC on biosecurity matters. After acknowledging that many staff have been trained, he requested FAO to continue to assist in the development of national biosecurity programmes. He elaborated that in the long term FAO should develop curricula to teach biosecurity to young students and professionals.

123. The Representative from Kiribati recognised that biosecurity and plant protection are extremely important for her country given the limited crops available. She also mentioned a serious lack of human resources to properly defend her country from pest and disease outbreaks. She added that her country was in need to update biosecurity and plant protection regulations and has requested assistance to SPC to this end by selecting SPC biosecurity template as a model. She requested FAO to assist in assessing the development of a new legislation.

124. The Representative from Samoa endorsed the recommendations made in the reference paper. He elaborated that many pest and disease breaches are caused by a lack of coordination between border quarantine, customs and security units. He suggested for small countries to consider forming one 'biosecurity unit', which would combine customs, health, immigration and quarantine tasks. He informed that in 2007 Samoa approved a new biosecurity legislation. He however expressed concern over the capacity of neighbouring countries to enforce biosecurity regulations. Often these countries are associated with different groups of nations than Samoa, the example of American Samoa's close ties to Guam was given.

125. The Representative from the Cook Islands requested FAO to provide information on which countries are members of international biosecurity and plant protection conventions. The issue was raised in respect to the last SWPM in the Cook Islands. Two years earlier the majority of SAPA member countries had agreed to ratify such instruments. He reported that Cook Islands is a signatory to main international conventions, indicating that the process was rather simple. He encouraged countries to accede to these conventions.

126. The Minister from Palau added the concern that aquacultural fries from Asia are imported without technology to check on pests and/or diseases. The Minister requested FAO assistance in this area.

127. The Delegate from FSM added that his country lacks the means to run and manage a biosecurity laboratory and mentioned that such a facility could be established for the North Pacific subregion. The laboratory would be relevant for agriculture as well as marine products.

128. The Representative from Australia encouraged PICs to join the Cook Islands into signing up to international biosecurity and plant protection conventions, adding that FAO can provide technical and financial assistance in this area. She then elaborated on the capacity building activities funded by AUSAID in the region and recalled that Australia is a member of the IPPC committee and can be consulted in the Pacific for information and awareness sharing.

129. The Plant Protection Officer emphasised that FAO and SPC work closely in biosecurity activities and share other activities so as to avoid duplication of efforts. He mentioned that countries that still need to ratify the IPPC are: FSM, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru and Vanuatu.

130. The Representative from New Zealand clarified that a contradiction in customs and biosecurity regulations is affecting the “taro mite” issue, however he expressed confidence that a solution shall be reached soon.

131. In his responses, the Sub-Regional Representative clarified that the FAOR TCP Facility could be used in assessing and providing evidence of the potential benefits for PICs to accede to international biosecurity and plant protection conventions. He also elaborated on a number of activities in which FAO and SPC have worked and still work together in biosecurity, such as in the Solomon Islands under the RPFS. He added that to establish a biosecurity laboratory with international recognition requires substantial financial and technical resources. He indicated that FAO could carry out a feasibility study for FSM, Palau and Marshall Islands to explore the opportunity to create a common laboratory – an issue which was already considered at the last meeting of the Heads of Governments of the three countries. He added that he had discussed this matter with the three countries and FAO would be looking into options to best do this.

132. Asking for further comments, the Chair recalled the recommendations and asked for consensus. Ministers noted constraining effects of plant pest and disease outbreaks affecting farmer’s basic food crops production in PICs. The following recommendations were therefore approved and the meeting:

- i. requested countries to address the issue of and pay more emphasis to prevent plant bio-security breaches in PICs;
- ii. called on countries to review and strengthen national biosecurity legislation and to ensure that legislation is appropriate and enforceable;
- iii. asked countries to consider the feasibility of restructuring national current border security services in order to maximize the effectiveness of plant biosecurity measures;
- iv. requested FAO to continue to collaborate with SPC in strengthening national capacities for the identification of invasive species and plant diseases and to avoid their spread across the region;
- v. urged countries to consider the benefits and obligations for ratifying conventions and treaties that are considered important for biosecurity and plant protection needs of the PICs;
- vi. requested FAO to follow-up with New Zealand regarding the status of “taro mite” and implications of taro exports from Pacific Island countries into New Zealand;
- vii. requested FAO to continue to collaborate with SPC on biosecurity needs of those countries which require assistance in the area of facilities and equipment at international ports of entry;
- viii. requested FAO to provide further guidance and assistance to countries considering acceding to relevant international conventions on biosecurity.

Item 4.5: Participatory Value Chain Analysis for Improved Farmers Income, Employment Opportunities and Food Security

133. The Sub-Regional Representative drew the attention of the meeting to document SWPM/MAS/4.5 and explained that farming systems development and marketing was one of the priority areas since the opening of the SAPA office for which assistance was requested by member countries. FAO activities undertaken so far were aimed at improving farming efficiency and profitability thus contributing to improving incomes and consequently the livelihoods of the rural population. He informed that the current incumbent Mr Heiko Bamman was awarded the B.R. Sen Award at the last FAO Conference in Rome in October 2005. He further announced that as part of the current FAO Reform this post was proposed for transfer from SAPA to the newly established Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa. The incumbent of the post, Mr Bammann, will be moving to FAO Headquarters before the end of the year. He then invited the SAPA Farming Systems Development and Marketing Officer to give a brief presentation to introduce this paper.

134. Mr Bammann informed the meeting that this is the fifth paper prepared by the Farming Systems Development (FSD) Marketing Officer for Agriculture Ministerial Meetings in the Pacific. In contrast to previous presentations focussing on small farmers, their families and how improved farming systems and agricultural marketing may contribute to improved rural livelihoods and food security, the present paper was looking at issues beyond the nuclear farm household system.

135. Mr Bammann explained that work in support of sustainable livelihoods of small farmers remains a high priority for SAPA member countries. However, the increasing importance of marketing and trade related issues affecting small farmers requested new working approaches. One of these recently introduced approaches is the value chain concept. The concept has been developed by USAID and FAO is one of the leading agencies in further development of the value chain approach and making it more applicable to the small farmer agriculture context. It has been proven particularly useful, Mr Bammann noted, for the identification and formulation of projects as well as in the development of strategies for improved agricultural and rural development. A value chain is defined as the full range of activities which are required to bring a product or service from conception, through the different phases of production, transformations and delivery, to final consumers and final disposal after use. The chain is made up of a series of actors (or stakeholders) from inputs suppliers to producers and processors to exporters and buyers – engaged in the activities required to bring a product from its conception to its end use. Mr Bammann explained that the analysis is based on participatory methods and goes beyond the farm and the farm family. It also looks into common business relationships and interactions between and among farm enterprises and agri-businesses along the pathway from planning for the production to the consumption of the final product by the consumer. The aim is to improve the performance of the value chain by reducing losses, reducing marketing and/or other transaction costs, improve the quality and delivery of the product (or range of products) and place all of the chain actors into a better position as opposed to the situation prevailing before the intervention.

136. Following a description on the situation currently prevailing in the Pacific Island region, he provided examples on where it has been applied and how the approach can help formulate agriculture development strategies and programmes, and implement related activities in support of employment and income generation. Examples of applications from PNG and from Thailand were provided to the meeting. He concluded with a list of lessons

learnt to date and encouraged the countries to request assistance to apply the value chain methodology in their country's own situation.

137. The Meeting overall commended the Farming Systems Development and Marketing Officer for the paper and the presentation which were considered comprehensive and informative. They concurred that the paper has discussed and presented a valuable approach and concept that reconfirms the priority of ensuring benefits and support to farmers.

138. The Ministers from Fiji, Solomon Islands, Palau and the Delegate from PNG reconfirmed the importance of building the capacity on value chain for farmers, extension officers and the private sector through relevant training, making available training materials and general information for information and awareness building.

139. The Minister from Niue requested further clarification from FAO related to its reform and the relocation of a SAPA post and its incumbent officer. He reemphasized the high priority of this particular work programme for his country but also for the region and stressed the importance to continue the service to the countries. He requested FAO to consider measures of ensuring that the service is continually available from the SAPA. He also requested a national workshop on value chain studies so as to help farmers generate more revenue.

140. The Minister from Fiji expressed his satisfaction with the paper and presentation and said that the approach shows the way forward for the Pacific and is highly relevant. He highlighted the importance of good legislation to guide and monitor participation of all stakeholders. He added that appropriate laws provide an enabling environment and hence promote and enhance participation of relevant stakeholder especially the farmers, private sector and community at large.

141. The importance of fostering partnership and linkages to relevant institutions was raised and considered by the meeting in general. Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu discussed the importance of incorporating research as means of assessing and revalidating its applicability from time to time.

142. The Representative from Tonga highlighted advantages of a systematic approach, particularly useful to agricultural extension staff who would need to receive more training in this application. Tonga would thus promote the concept and fully supported the recommendations.

143. With reference to the case studies provided in the presentation, the Representative from Samoa asked for clarification on the applicability of the studies to smaller countries with less land resources.

144. The Representative from Australia made reference to the intention of the FAO reform which is to strengthen decentralized offices and supported the importance of the points raised by other countries. She supported the paper and said it is an approach particularly useful to countries to reach food security goals. She further stated that the FAO reform has a key focus on strengthening field offices and the loss of a farming system officer post at SAPA is not going towards this direction.

145. In his response the Sub-Regional Representative confirmed that effort are and will be made to ensure that the service is maintained while minimizing negative impact of the reform

on the SAPA office. Mr Bammann thanked the meeting for the positive feed back and explained that the value chain concept can be applied in various situations, also in small countries. Enhanced capacity building in support of the application of the value chain concept is considered essential as well as working closely with local service providers from the private sector and civil society, and expose also these stakeholders to training.

146. After further discussion, Ministers commended FAO on its work in support of improved small farmers' livelihood in the region and confirmed the validity including enterprise and agri-business development as an additional priority area. More specifically, the meeting:

- i. encouraged FAO to continue capacity building and project activities in the participatory value chain concept at national and regional levels;
- ii. acknowledged the potential of the value chain approach to support agribusiness development in the traditional staple food sub-sector as well as for improved market access of livestock, forestry and fishery products;
- iii. appreciated the need to closely link agri-business and enterprise development to the development of national food safety and quality standards;
- iv. acknowledged the importance of improved communication technology for farmers and traders to develop agribusinesses and improve value chains;
- v. acknowledged the importance of collaboration of all stakeholders in the implementation of the value chain approach.

Item 4.6: Nutrition and Food Safety – Essential Elements for Food Security in the Pacific

147. In introducing this agenda item, the Sub-Regional Representative drew the attention of the meeting to document SWPM/MAS/4.6Rev1 which provides a brief outline of the activities undertaken in the past two years as well as some of the issues affecting the region in relation to food trade and nutrition security. He then invited the SAPA Food and Nutrition Officer to give a brief presentation elaborating the main issues discussed in the paper.

148. The Food and Nutrition Officer, Mr Dirk Schulz explained that access to an adequate supply of nutritious food is the most basic of human needs, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He pointed out that since the arrival of the first European explorers, food supply and diets have changed significantly. The meeting was informed that long term trends over the past 40 years showed average increases in dietary energy (+14%) and fat (+23%), which, combined with less physical activity as a result of mechanization and urbanization, have had a major impact on the health and nutrition status of Pacific Island populations, who are now among the most overweight in the world. He emphasized that overweight and obesity are key risk factors in the development of chronic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and certain cancers, which have become the principal cause of death, illness and disability in the region. In this regard, Mr Schulz highlighted the FAO/WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

149. He added that a steady decline (-37%) in the availability of root crops for consumption in PICs is noted, with imported rice and flour now having replaced root crops as single most important source of starch and energy, creating a high level of food import dependence and contributing to nutritional anaemia. He informed the meeting that Pacific Ministers for Health

at their meeting in Vanuatu (March 2007) declared nutritional anaemia a public health problem for the Pacific Region and endorsed a regional initiative to establish “food fortification” standards that will promote the supply of wheat flour and other foods, which have been “fortified” with essential vitamins and minerals.

150. Mr Schulz then proceeded to inform the meeting that increasingly strict food safety and quality requirements have become impediments to fully exploiting potential export markets, pointing out that compliance with international food safety and quality standards is crucial for the development of the agriculture and fishery sectors. Providing recent examples of food safety and quality issues, he stressed inadequate capacity to ensuring food safety and quality along the food chain and weak national food control systems. He added that food safety is also important for food processing, pointing out that tremendous advances have been made in modern food processing technologies, presenting both opportunities and challenges to local food processors

151. The Food and Nutrition Officer concluded by recommending close monitoring of food and nutrition insecurity and stepped up efforts to improve the situation in a sustainable manner, including the provision of knowledge and skills which empower people to consume a balanced, safe and nutritious diet, as well as strengthen the link between nutritional and agricultural interventions by integrating nutrition and food safety considerations into agricultural research, policies and development programmes. Furthermore, he recommended to build capacity in food safety in order to strengthen national food control systems and enhancing the capability to pro-actively contribute to and benefit from food standard setting work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. FAO also recommended to strengthen capacity in food processing and food product development, including the associated quality/safety issues and marketing skills and provide technical support to member countries in implementing regionally and nationally recognized initiatives such as food fortification and the strategy on diet, physical activity and health.

152. The Minister from Palau, supported the paper and endorsed all recommendations. He voiced the need for continuing capacity building of Palau nationals in food and nutrition related issues.

153. The Minister from Niue queried the practice by some large countries of exporting fatty food, such as mutton flaps and turkey tails to Pacific island countries.

154. The Minister from the Solomon Islands requested FAO to assist national staff in planning and conducting capacity building courses for food and nutrition training.

155. The Minister from the Cook Islands noted that Cook Islands was ranked 3rd on the list of fat people in the Pacific. The Minister reported from her experience that big people in the Cook Islands are not dying (e.g. due to hypertension, etc) but rather the young people (small size) are dying due to sickness like cancer, etc. She added that this report seems to show the opposite to what she knows. She agreed that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Department of Health should work together more closely in promoting better food and nutrition and in capacity building.

156. The Representative from FSM thanked FAO for the presentation and informed on a programme for Food and Safety with the assistance of UNICEF. He suggested for FAO to look into the UNICEF country programme for FSM. He further reminded the meeting that a balance diet can be achieved in two ways: by growing a good mix of healthy and good food or

by growing and marketing agriculture products and using the income to purchase food for a healthy and balanced family diet. The FSM Representative requested to include a new recommendation on the issue of expired food dates e.g. for processed canned foods.

157. The Minister from Fiji thanked FAO for the paper and commended the presentation. The Minister reported that Fiji is to embark on a food nutritional value programme and is getting external technical assistance from ACIAR in capacity building in food safety. He emphasized the need for the Ministry of Agriculture to work closely with the Department of Health in food nutrition, and in this respect agreed with views expressed by the Cook Islands. He noted that there was a need to finger print nutritional values of local food – such as vegetables – as reference and to use in promotional campaigns in the tourism sector. On the issue of expired food labels, the Minister supported the suggestion by FSM on this issue.

158. The Representative from Tonga endorsed the paper and all the recommendations. He raised the issue on pesticide/chemical residues in food such as vegetables, fruits, etc. He requested FAO assistance to assess pesticide residue issues (pesticide use, rates used, method of application, time of application, etc), especially in vegetables.

159. The Representative from Samoa supported the recommendations of the paper. He expressed concern over declining root crops production in Samoa. He reported that the Prime Minister from Samoa has instructed the Ministry of Agriculture to set up a programme “Talo Mua” to revive root crop production in the country.

160. The Representative from New Zealand commented on the complex issues (“twin problem”) related to under- and over-nutrition and food safety, and concurred with the recommendations made in the paper. He pointed out changing lifestyle since the 1930s, a time when physical activities among the population was more common as compared to today. He noted that New Zealand supports a number of bilateral projects in the area of food and nutrition in some of the PICs. On the issue of food fortification, he cautioned that care should be taken when dealing with this issue, and New Zealand would rather recommend further research on this subject. On food safety, New Zealand endorsed the paper and encouraged PICs to comply with food standards and control systems and become a member of Codex Alimentarius. He congratulated Samoa for hosting a Codex Alimentarius regional meeting in 2006 and highlighted the continuing need for capacity building in food and nutrition. He informed the meeting that in September 2007 New Zealand will be holding a training workshop on food control systems for all nine Pacific Codex Alimentarius member countries, back-to-back with the next FAO Roundtable Meeting on WTO.

161. The Representative from Tuvalu reported that his Government has identified the year 2007 as the “nutrition year for all Tuvaluans”, with major focus on food safety. He also noted that the government had established a local food safety group to deal with food nutrition and safety issues.

162. The Representative from Australia supported the recommendations in the paper and the work done by FAO on food safety in the Pacific. She emphasised that the integration of health, agriculture, research and nutrition is important and contributes to better health for all. She added that policy support and capacity building in support of national food control systems is a very important area of work.

163. In response to some of the comments, the Food and Nutrition Officer agreed that changing lifestyles – including diet habits, lack of exercise, etc. – have contributed to obesity

and other health problems. On the issue of food fortification, regional and national consultations will take place before moving to recommend standards. FAO would also consider a study to assess the impacts of pesticides and chemicals on root crops and vegetables as requested by Tonga.

164. Following an invitation by the Chair, Ministers endorsed the paper and commended FAO on the continuing efforts in promoting food safety and nutrition security in the region. Ministers noted the changes in food supply and their impact on the health and nutrition status of Pacific populations, as well as challenges faced in the area of food safety and quality. The meeting expressed support for FAO to continue its assistance to member countries to:

- i. identify issues of food and nutrition insecurity and improve the situation in a sustainable manner, including the provision of knowledge and skills, which empower people to consume a balanced, safe and nutritious diet;
- ii. strengthen the link between the agriculture and health sectors, in particular by integrating food safety and nutrition considerations into agricultural research, policies and programmes. In particular, FAO should further investigate the nutritional value of indigenous fruits and vegetables to promote them for domestic consumption and increased use in the tourism industry;
- iii. build capacity in food safety in order to strengthen national food control systems with a focus on consumer protection and fair practices in food trade. Specifically, FAO should continue to strengthen food safety legislation and regulations and build capacity to monitor and enforce these standards. In addition, FAO was requested to commission a study on the issue of pesticide residues in vegetables and fruits sold in local markets, providing a basis for information to local farmers on appropriate pesticide application in order to safeguard the health of consumers;
- iv. enhance the capability to pro-actively contribute to and benefit from the food standard setting work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- v. build capacity in food processing and food product development, including associated quality and safety issues and marketing skills;
- vi. provide technical support towards the appropriate implementation of recognized regional and national initiatives such as food fortification, the strategy on diet, physical activity and health.

Item 4.7: Institutionalizing Best Forest and Tree Resource Management Practices in the Pacific Island Countries

165. The Chair referred the meeting to document SWPM/MAS/4.7 (Rev 1) and invited FAO to introduce the paper. The Sub-Regional Representative explained that forestry was one of the focal areas of the work programme of SAPA and the paper had been prepared to brief the meeting on best forest practices and tree resource management. He then invited the SAPA Forestry Officer to further elaborate on the paper.

166. The Forestry Officer, Mr Aru Mathias emphasized the importance of trees and forests for climate stability, source for foreign exchange and their wide ranging contribution in support of sustainable livelihoods of peoples in the region. FAO recognized that forestry development is continually experiencing changes in management and policy shifts should duly acknowledged. The Forestry Officer pointed to strong interest in tree planting, awareness of land owners to manage their own resources and the need for building up technical

capacities of countries. He emphasised that countries should adopt sound policies and best management practices to promote and achieve sustainable forest management (SFM). The achievement of SFM requires adequate financing and partnership with the private sector.

167. The Representative from Tuvalu informed that besides coconut trees and mangrove bushes there is no forests in Tuvalu. Tuvalu farmers practice what he termed coconut-based farming systems with some root crops and fruit trees below and the use of some small livestock, such as chicken and pigs. He supported the recommendations in the paper.

168. The Representative from FSM supported the recommendations in the paper and requested FAO assistance for the preparation of a forest inventory for his country. He stated that the forest resources in FSM are found mainly in the states of Phonpei and Kosrae. He furthermore requested FAO assistance in conducting a GAP analysis and to support the “Micronesian Challenge” initiative.

169. The Representative for Kiribati noted that the paper covered coconuts and mangroves which are of great importance to her country. She raised concerns about the senile status of most of the coconut trees, the only cash crop in Kiribati. She requested FAO assistance for coconut replanting schemes, as well as processing of coconut trees for building materials.

170. The Minister from Fiji endorsed the recommendations made in the paper. He requested assistance for the preparation of a forest audit and/or forest inventory and in the preparation of forestry management guidelines. He noted that Fiji experiences land degradation problems caused by logging and made worse by recent heavy rain falls and flooding. He thanked FAO and IFAD for the assistance provided to improve logging practices. However, he explained that more dialogue between resource owners is required and that Fiji needed soil management guidelines and capacity building for national forestry programmes. He also raised watershed management as an important issue in forestry management.

171. The Minister from the Cook Islands informed the meeting on current forestry activities in the country. She reported on the plantation of pine trees on the hills of Rarotonga which was initially government owned and now given back to land owners to manage. Coconuts are planted mainly on the islands in the Northern Group and requested FAO assistance for coconut replanting on other island groups in the Cook Islands. She informed that some of the outer islands have mango plantations but plantation owners lack technical and management skills. She requested FAO assistance to provide training in tree management especially in pruning of mango trees.

172. The Representative from the Marshall Islands informed the meeting that the government has forestry development plans of coconut for copra and building materials and requested FAO assistance in this area. He also supported FSM request for FAO to support the “Micronesian Challenge”.

173. The Delegate from PNG reported that the country has 4.3 million hectares of forestry land. He mentioned that sustainable forestry management is important for PNG and that a new bill in support of the sustainable use of forests is forthcoming. He raised concerns about increasing problems with logging companies not practicing good management. He reported that promotion programmes for good management approaches are in place. PNG supported the recommendations of the paper.

174. The Minister from Palau endorsed the paper and the recommendations. He informed the meeting that Palau has considerable forestry resources on its largest island (Babeldaob), much of it still untouched. Of concern however was increased land degradation observed in locations near the recently completed Babeldaob compact road.

175. The Minister from the Solomon Islands supported the recommendations of the paper. He informed that the country has a separate Ministry for Forests. He emphasised that agro-forestry systems, especially based on indigenous nut species are seen as potential income earner for rural people and should be supported. Assistance in the development of a fruit tree programme was requested from FAO.

176. The Representative from Samoa supported the recommendations of the paper. He noted that the paper discussed technical and complex issues which make management of forestry resources difficult. He informed that the Samoan government provides advice and training to farmers on best forest management practices.

177. The Representative from Vanuatu supported the recommendations in the paper. He commented on violation of sandalwood forest resources on some islands in Vanuatu. These violations were driven by current high prices offered for sandalwood oil. Over-logging requires stronger legislation, he stated, and a better education of resource owners.

178. The Representative from Tonga endorsed the paper and its recommendations. He thanked FAO for the assistance to prepare a forest policy and legislation for Tonga. He requested further FAO support for the formulation and consequent implementation of a programme for the rehabilitation of the copra and coconut industries in the country. Tonga would use the programme to negotiate funding and implementation options with donors and development partners.

179. The Minister from Niue thanked FAO for the paper and endorsed the recommendations. He informed the meeting that Niue undertook a review of its forestry legislations in 2006. He again raised the issue that Niue is losing its young people, many of which migrate to New Zealand. He noted that Niue has considerable forest resources and attempts are made to utilise the resources in a sustainable manner. The challenge remains, he stated, to find a good balance between conservation and sustainable exploitation of forest resources. The Minister reported that Niue has been under pressure from external forces on the issue of logging of trees. He added that his country will try to make best use for these resources for the development of the country and to offer its young generation a better perspective. He indicated different options to realise this, like carbon trade in the future and the importance of trees and forest as habitat for birds. He requested FAO assistance in developing a vision and strategy for a sustainable use of Niue's forest resources.

180. The Representative from New Zealand supported the general thrust of the paper. He appreciated the exchange with Pacific island countries in fora such as the UNFF and the APFC. Additional areas he would have liked to see covered in the paper are issues related to land use planning and land tenure and suggested to consider these as viable topics for future papers. He further raised the issue of funding of sustainable forest activities and how these funds have been used in the countries. On the issue of illegal logging, he informed that this has recently been a prominent issue in global thinking and international fora such as CSD and CBD. Illegal logging has close connotations to sustainable forest management, trade, biodiversity and climate change. He informed that New Zealand is prepared to support sub-regional practical activities which address illegal logging. He encouraged FAO to prepare

project proposals and initiatives and to undertake a study related to illegal logging and enforcement of legislations. He indicated that New Zealand would be prepared to co-finance practical training and workshops for Pacific island countries.

181. In his response, the Sub-Regional Representative agreed for FAO to look into legislation and management issues. He added that some countries have already received assistance in this area including Niue, Tonga and Vanuatu. Regarding illegal logging, the SRR recalled a Pacific Island Forum initiative on agreeing to guidelines for responsible logging and harvesting of forests resources and confirmed FAO interest to work closely with New Zealand and other Pacific countries on this matter.

182. The Forestry Officer confirmed that FAO is prepared to assist Kiribati and the Marshall Islands in improving the use of coconut resources. He noted that FAO had worked on codes on logging practices in Fiji, in collaboration with GTZ. He added that FAO had also assisted in the preparation of the regional code of logging practice which is now implemented at national levels. The violation of sandalwood logging in Vanuatu was noted and he explained that this is considered illegal logging practices.

183. The meeting approved the following recommendations:

- i. urged countries to work closely with the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission in identifying and developing incentives and financial mechanisms for sustainable forest management;
- ii. encouraged countries to work closely with the private sector to review policies and regulations so as to create a level playing field and an enabling environment for partnerships in financing sustainable forest management;
- iii. urged countries to enhance the environment for communities to contribute to sustainable forest management by increasing access to resources, strengthening local capacities and equitable sharing of benefits;
- iv. encouraged multi-sector discussions and active stakeholder participation in forestry processes noting that issues affecting forests and trees are complex and cross-sectoral in nature;
- v. supported the need for countries to develop guidelines – such as for watershed management – and develop frameworks and methods for monitoring, assessment and reporting of sustainable forest management;
- vi. urged countries to focus on what can be achieved with funds currently available, and on how to improve cost-effectiveness through the establishment of strategic partnerships amongst stakeholders for a more integrated and participatory forest and land use planning process;
- vii. noted issues related to malpractices and illegal logging and urged FAO to undertake activities in collaboration with countries and development partners to prevent and address such issues;
- viii. urged FAO to continue support and assistance in the area of coconut rehabilitation, replanting and coconut wood utilization;
- ix. encouraged FAO to continue assistance in the area of policy, legislation and development of management plans.

Item 4.8: Strengthening National Capacity towards Sustainable Fisheries Management and for Food Security

184. Following an invitation from the Sub-Regional Representative, the SAPA Fishery Officer, Mr Masanami Izumi drew the attention of the meeting to document SWPM/MAS/4.8. The paper reported on four key areas, namely fisheries management and policy, fisheries legislation and regulations, fisheries information, and national capacity development in fisheries.

185. Mr Izumi stated that the fisheries sector plays a fundamental social and economic role in the Pacific Island countries. In recent years, impact on fisheries has increased both within the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone as well as in coastal areas in the region.

186. Recent studies and activities carried out by FAO in selected countries in the region identified constraints in fisheries management and policy. While FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries continues to be a main reference framework for national efforts in the management of fisheries in Pacific Island countries, it was found that limited infrastructure, human and financial resources available to relevant government agencies (fisheries departments) continue to hamper the development of appropriate national fisheries management plans.

187. Emphasizing that fisheries work programmes must be adequately and realistically prepared and planned, he urged countries to further strengthen their fisheries management and policy, improve national fisheries legislation and regulations in line with international agreements and instruments, as well as support coastal fisheries and aquaculture. Mr Izumi highlighted the need for countries to continue their efforts to further improve fisheries information systems at national level. Taking into account the various impediments at national level, he concluded that continued efforts are needed to further strengthen national capacities as a priority in order to ensure sustainable development and sound management of fisheries and aquaculture resources.

188. The Minister from Palau supported the recommendations and requested to extend an ongoing TCP aquaculture project for another year. He noted the negative impact of costal overfishing and the rapid decline in fish stocks in costal area. He added that aquaculture development is a high priority for Palau.

189. The Representative from PNG emphasized that fisheries is one of the country's major economic assets and thus supports strengthening regulations in order to maintain and conserve fisheries resources. He endorsed the recommendations of the paper.

190. The Minister from the Solomon Islands supported the recommendations of the paper and requested FAO to extend technical assistance to include fresh water fish farming and inland aquaculture development.

191. The Minister from the Cook Islands requested FAO to provide support to strengthen national fishery legislation and regulations, particularly in coastal fisheries.

192. The Minister from Niue supported the recommendations and acknowledged the assistance provided by FAO, especially for supporting Niue's participation at fisheries meetings. He requested FAO assistance to develop a national plan of action for illegal, unreported and unregulated fisheries (IUU).

193. The Minister from Fiji commented the presenter on his presentation. He explained that tuna exports (mainly loins) to the US and EU markets are valued at US\$28 million. He requested FAO assistance to develop Fiji's own code of conduct for responsible fisheries. Furthermore the Minister asked for support from FAO for the preparation of a national plan of action to combat IUU fishing.

194. The Delegate from FSM stated that fishery is the most important sector in the FSM economy. He expressed appreciation to FAO for assistance provided and endorsed the recommendations of the paper. In the FSM, he explained, the four States control the EEZ and the national government is required to consult the States on the management of the fishery resources. He requested FAO to continue supporting the development of the sector as well as the "Micronesian Challenge".

195. The Representative from Kiribati requested FAO to assist in the formulation of a national plan of action on IUU, as well as upgrading capacities of local staff on food safety and continue assistance in the development of coastal fishery legislation.

196. The Representative from New Zealand stated that the Ministry of Fisheries has requested that the paper be circulated to the ministers of fisheries and expressed hope that FAO and FFA would coordinate future meetings. He noted that an important meeting at Ministerial level was held in Wellington parallel to the FAO SWPM meeting in Majuro.

197. The SAPA Fisheries Officer emphasized that FAO is working with closely with countries and regional agencies. He informed that the Palau aquaculture project will terminate at the end of 2008. He added that FAO would continue to provide assistance to the countries on the preparation of NPOA-IUU. On requests for assistance for the development of coastal fishery legislations, FAO would respond positively.

198. The discussions highlighted the need to strengthen individual countries capacities for more sustainable fisheries management for improved food security. The meeting:

- i. requested FAO to further support countries to improve national fisheries legislation and regulations in order to meet standards set by international fisheries agreements and instruments as well as to support coastal fisheries and aquaculture development;
- ii. requested FAO to support national fisheries information systems as a basis for effective policy-making and sound management of fisheries and aquaculture resources;
- iii. encouraged countries to further strengthen national capacities as a priority in order to ensure sustainable development and sound management of fisheries and aquaculture resources in harmony with the environment;
- iv. requested FAO to continue to support sustainable aquaculture development in cooperation with other regional organizations;
- v. requested FAO to continue to provide technical assistance to the countries to meet the challenges faced with policy and legislation, putting in place management structures, fisheries information, aquaculture and small-scale fisheries.

Item 4.9: Roundtable Meetings on WTO Agreement Provisions: Multilateral and Regional Trade Aspects in the Agriculture and Fisheries Sectors for the Pacific Island Countries

199. The Sub-Regional Representative in introducing this agenda item advised the meeting that following the decision made at the Second Meeting of the FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture in Apia, Samoa in 1997, FAO with the assistance of collaborating partners had organized annual roundtable meetings on WTO since 1998. The roundtable meetings focussed on the implications of the WTO multilateral trading system on agriculture and food trade in the region. The item had been included in the agenda of the SWPM so that the meeting could be briefed on the outcomes, and to seek guidance on its future. He then invited the Associate Professional Officer (APO) for Agricultural Trade Policy, Mr Massimo Diomedi, to make a brief presentation and introduce the paper SWPM/MAS/4.9.

200. Mr Diomedi emphasised that FAO has organised the Roundtable Meetings in collaboration with a number of partners both from within and outside the region. A key partner remains the New Zealand Government, which contributed since the beginning of the activity by providing both financial and technical support. From 2006, the Italian Government became a partner by channelling substantial financial support through its contribution to the Pacific Regional Programme for Food Security. IFAD supported the Roundtable Meetings in the last three years, while a number of CROP agencies, including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, the Auckland based Pacific Islands Trade and Investment Commission, SPC and FFA provided technical staff. Over the past nine years, 13 PICs have attended roundtable Meetings, of which six attended all meetings. A total of 185 heads of ministries/departments and senior officials have participated. Forty-four percent were from agricultural ministries, 34 percent from trade and foreign affairs, and 22 percent from fisheries.

201. Mr Diomedi reported that the agenda of Roundtable Meetings has evolved throughout the years to include emerging and more complex trade realities and an increasing number of multilateral and regional agreements and negotiations put in place in recent years. The on-going negotiations of the WTO Doha Development Round, and particularly on the Agreement on Agriculture, remain the primary focus of the RTM series. He added that in recent RTM, dedicated sessions on regional trade agreements and negotiations, such as on PACER, PICTA and ACP Pacific-EU EPA have been added. Parallel sessions on fisheries trade issues, like fisheries subsidies, have also been added.

202. Mr Diomedi noted that sufficient funding was secured by FAO to organize the 10th Roundtable Meeting in 2007. He indicated activities that were relevant and came out of RTMs such as the 2006 FAO commissioned study on the costs and benefits for PICs to accede the WTO, and, most recently, the commodity chain studies in three countries with the specific aim to develop recommendations to improve production and marketing of typical Pacific island products. For 2007, special products identification studies in the framework of the WTO provisions are in progress.

203. Mr Diomedi concluded his presentation by informing the meeting that the 10th Roundtable Meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 2007. The Governments of New Zealand and Italy, as well as IFAD, have already made financial commitments to support the meeting.

204. The Representative from New Zealand thanked FAO for its work in this particular area and for the report on the outcomes of the RTM. He reaffirmed the commitment of the

Government of New Zealand to the Roundtable and added that New Zealand welcomed the opportunity to continue to host the meeting in Wellington and make available its pool of resource persons. In this respect, the Representative clarified that New Zealand's contribution to the Roundtable goes beyond financial support. Since the meetings are held in Wellington, the Government is in the position to make available experts from different departments, such as MAF policy, trade negotiations, bio-security and NZAID as well as enabling the participation of private sector partners. Wellington is therefore seen as a very suitable venue and the meetings are considered useful and successful. He encouraged SAPA member countries to suggest additions or amendments to the programme.

205. The Minister from Fiji expressed Fiji's support for the Roundtable Meetings and stated that Fiji would like to see the initiative continued. He reported that a number of participants from Fiji had attended past sessions and were now better informed on the WTO Agreements. For the next round, he suggested the inclusion of an agenda item on the EPA and the likely loss of preferential trade agreements with the European Union. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of labelling and packaging for successful exporting and requested this to be included in the agenda of the next WTO RT meeting.

206. The Minister from Niue thanked FAO for the paper and the Government of New Zealand for hosting the Roundtable Meeting. He recalled that he attended the 2004 meeting and stated that Niue had benefited from attendance at the RTM, considered a valuable meeting. The Minister requested to include discussions on latest changes and adjustments in the area of trade in order to enable Pacific island countries to be better prepared. He further informed that he had recently attended two WTO meetings and was astonished by the level of controversy between the different parties and tensions prevailing at these meetings. He then expressed support for the continuation of the RTM on an annual basis and encouraged fellow countries to participate.

207. The Representative from Tuvalu supported the continuation of the RTM. He found the Roundtable Meeting especially useful for senior staff from agriculture departments since they usually do not get sufficient exposure and updates on trade related issues.

208. The Minister from the Cook Islands thanked FAO and the Government of New Zealand and other partners for making the Roundtable Meeting possible and have it institutionalized as an annual event. The Cook Islands has participated in all Roundtable Meetings held so far and found all them useful. He informed that the Cook Islands is increasingly involved in trade related activities whether they are linked to WTO, PICTA or PACER. With regards to WTO accession, he would like to learn more of the experiences Vanuatu and Tonga have made during this very slow process. He further stated that most small island countries face difficulties to exports to larger countries while these larger countries often 'dump' produce into islands. National quarantine services frequently find produce contaminated with soil or rotten articles. This is an on-going issue of concern and not only requires strengthening border controls but an issue requiring further clarification amongst trading partners.

209. The Minister from the Solomon Islands supported the continuation of the Round Table Meetings on WTO.

210. The Sub-Regional Representative expressed appreciation for the positive comments and suggestions made by the countries. He reiterated the gratitude of FAO to its collaborative partners, and to New Zealand in particular, for the assistance and support provided. He

clarified that the Roundtable Meetings started nine years ago with a rather strict focus on WTO issues. Now it has evolved and presentations and discussions also cover areas related to PACER, PICTA, SPS/TBT and AoA as standing agenda items. He added that thanks to an initiative from the Commonwealth Secretariat, there had been an exchange of experience between SIDS in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean. He encouraged countries to suggest agenda items for the RTM. On the lack of capacity on trade and WTO related issues in small countries, he stated that the core purpose of the Roundtable Meetings is information sharing and building up of national and regional capacities. He concluded by confirming that FAO will report back to this biennial meeting on the status and outcomes of RTMs.

211. Ministers noted with appreciation the outcome of the WTO Round Table Series in terms of the objectives, the topics discussed, and its contribution to enhance countries capacities to deal with agricultural and food trade policies and encouraged all Forum Island countries to participate. More specifically, the meeting noted:

- i. the ever-increasing impact of global trade on agriculture and food security and the growing participation in international trade by all countries;
- ii. FAOs continuing efforts to secure appropriate financial assistance from collaborating partners to convene a Roundtable meeting in 2007;
- iii. the development of the annual Roundtable Meetings over the past years and the progress with the preparation for the Tenth Roundtable meeting for PICs on WTO Agreements and Provisions scheduled for September, 2007.

AGENDA ITEM 5: ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE PACIFIC

211. At the invitation of the Chair, the Sub-Regional Representative explained that this particular item had been included for the purpose to provide countries with a review of global and regional issues associated with the incidence and impact of IUU fishing and to highlight the need for effective regional responses and decisive national action to contain and reduce IUU in the South West Pacific Ocean. He acknowledged the presence of and introduced the Senior Fisheries Liaison Officer from the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, Rome. He then invited him to make a presentation on the topic.

212. The Senior Fisheries Liaison Officer, Dr David J Doulman, made a presentation entitled “Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing: regional responses to global challenges”. The presentation commenced with a brief review of the state of world fisheries, highlighting FAO’s 2006 findings that many of the world’s important marine stocks were already over exploited or depleted. The analysis further showed that tuna stocks in the South West Pacific Ocean were generally moderately to fully exploited. It was noted that this was a fortunate situation but vigilance and precaution was needed to prevent stocks from becoming fully or over exploited. The state of world fisheries made it all the more urgent to combat IUU fishing because of its negative effects on efforts to sustainably manage stocks.

213. The next section addressed global issues relating to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. It was pointed out that while not being a new phenomenon, the visibility and impacts of IUU fishing had increased since the 1990s. It also deprived developing countries of food, employment and income while undermining fisheries governance. FAO has responded to the international concern about IUU fishing in a number of different ways, including the development of the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU). Reasons for the continuation of IUU fishing were mentioned together with initiatives to further address the problem, including the possible conclusion of a binding instrument of port State measures to combat IUU fishing.

214. The presentation then focused on the need for regional cooperation and action to eradicate IUU fishing in the South West Pacific Ocean. Based on an informal ranking of issues by fisheries officials at a 2005 FAO IUU fishing workshop, the types of IUU fishing prevalent in the region were highlighted.

215. At the national level the presentation referred to the development of national strategies to address IUU fishing in a comprehensive, consistent and coordinated manner. The elaboration of national plans of action was considered fundamental to the implementation of the IPOA-IUU. All countries that had not developed them were urged to do so without delay. The challenges associated with the implementation of the national plans were underscored. It was pointed out that efforts to contain and reduce IUU fishing in the region would require strong and continuing political commitment in combination with well conceived and targeted measures.

216. The issue of capacity building was discussed, noting that sound fisheries governance required competent and well-trained officials and robust institutions. It was pointed out that since 2004 three regional workshops had been mounted by FAO to address the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, IUU fishing and the implementation of the Model Scheme on Port State Measures, respectively. In these capacity building exercises FAO sought to work cooperatively with partner regional organizations.

217. In conclusion it was noted that IUU fishing is not diminishing and that States operating “flag of convenience” and “ports of convenience” contributed to the illicit activities of IUU fishers. Moreover, developing countries were especially vulnerable to IUU fishing because of their limited capacities to protect their fisheries wealth. On a more optimistic note, it was pointed out that IUU fishing had mustered strong international opposition like no other fisheries issue in recent times. Perhaps for the first time resource owners, fishers, processors, importers and supermarket chains were acting together to try to block IUU-caught fish from entering world markets.

218. Ministers expressed appreciation for the presentation on IUU fishing, noting the threats it posed to sound fisheries governance and to the lives of the people of the Pacific. Ministers underscored the need to adopt and implement well-conceived and tightly-focused policies and measures to combat IUU fishing.

219. In line with the many international calls to combat IUU fishing, and as a means of implementing the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and giving effect to the 2005 FAO Rome Declaration on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, the meeting urged countries that have not already done so to develop national plans of action to combat IUU fishing as a matter of priority. FAO advised that within its available resources, it stood ready to technically assist countries in this task.

220. The meeting recognized the challenges posed in implementing national plans of action but stressed the fundamental importance of blocking the entry of IUU-caught fish to national

and international markets so as to deprive IUU fishers of revenue and the incentive to engage in IUU fishing.

221. The Minister from the Cook Islands acknowledged the support received from the Governments of Australia and New Zealand with the provision of the patrol boat and assisting the country with surveillance flights. A number of illegal fishing vessels have been confiscated through these measures. He added that countries in the Pacific are well aware who are the “flag of convenience countries”. She joined the Minister from Niue and Fiji in a plea to place more pressure on the countries which practice “flag of convenience” to stop this ill practice.

222. The Minister from Palau informed the meeting that the IUU topic was also on the agenda of a fisheries meeting recently held in Japan and that meeting developed a plan to try and address the IUU. He requested FAO assistance to allow Palau to deal appropriately with the issues of IUU.

AGENDA ITEM 6: OTHER BUSINESS

223. On the invitation of the Chair, a special lunch time presentation by Mr Jerry Kramer, the CEO of Tobolar Copra Processing Authority on the Marshall Islands’ experiences with the use of copra and coconut oil as biofuel was agreed. The presentation entitled “Value Addition Through BioFuel as a Strategy for Import Substitution and Global Competitiveness” was well received by the meeting.

224. The Sub-Regional Representative drew the attention of the meeting to the presence of Representatives from IFAD and SPC, and suggested that they be invited to make a brief statement. Further, he invited the Representative from Australia to provide an update on the on-going Independent External Evaluation of FAO.

International Fund for Agricultural Development

225. The Representative from IFAD, Ms Ariko Toda, reported on the activities of IFAD in the region further reconfirming commonality with the priority programmes of FAO, particularly activities at the community level promoting gender in agriculture management and development. She expressed her appreciation on behalf of IFAD for being invited to attend this important meeting and confirmed the interest of IFAD to take note of the recommendations and to collaborate on the implementation of activities where possible.

226. The main IFAD activity in the region is related to the promotion of organic agriculture as a means to reduce rural poverty. Ms Toda informed that the potential of organic agriculture in the Pacific emerged during the preparation of the Sub-Regional Strategic Opportunities Paper (SRESOP), approved by the IFAD Executive Board in December 2004. The SRESOP acknowledged that the potential of organic agriculture was undermined in the Pacific by a number of constraints such as the high cost of certification, and limited processing capacity and marketing linkages. Consequently, in 2005 IFAD prepared a regional programme to promote the adoption of organic agriculture in the Pacific. The programme is being implemented by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) in partnership with a number of local, national and regional stakeholders, namely the Governments of Pacific Island Countries; Pacific Organic Producers Associations; IRETA; relevant NGOs, SPC, FAO and the PIFS. The Samoan NGO Women in Business

Development Inc. (WIBDI) has a counterpart function. The overall goal of the project was announced as promote the adoption of organic agriculture in the Pacific Region and contribute to the reduction of rural poverty. The projects objectives were named as enable producers of organic agriculture to obtain the certification of their products at a reduced and affordable cost; institutionalize certification capacity either private or governmental; develop a set of regional standards for organic agriculture products; and analyze the existing situation of organic agriculture and fair trade productions in the Pacific Island Countries.

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

227. The Representative from SPC, Mr ‘Aleki Sisifa, expressed his appreciation on behalf of SPC for the invitation to participate in the meeting. He reconfirmed the continuing interest of SPC to work closely with FAO on areas of common interest that are relevant for and priorities of the 14 member countries of FAO. He noted efforts by SPC for the next three years to develop national agriculture strategies and urge countries to actively participate in this opportunity in order to ensure that strategies and policies accurately address those key areas and activities that needed assistance.

Independent External Evaluation (IEE)

228. Following up on the commitment made at the 6th SWPM in the Cook Islands, the Representative from Australia provided an update on the status of the ongoing IEE of FAO. She informed that Australia is currently representing the South West Pacific Region at the FAO council and that the IEE will be a key topic at the next Council meeting in June 2007. She informed that the IEE is purely member driven and funds for its implementation have been raised by member countries. The total costs of the IEE were about US\$ 4.3million. It is the largest evaluation ever done within the UN system and members take the exercise extremely serious.

229. A key driver for the IEE was the direction taken by the Organisation over a number of years. There were new challenges facing agriculture and the Organization, and in the view of some key contributors and member countries FAO hasn't responded appropriately. Consequently funding has been reduced and/or shifted from regular programme funding to extra-budgetary funds. All members had a vital interest in ensuring that the Organisation was carefully examined with a view to what FAO is doing well and what it should not do. The report should enlighten us on what could be done better. It was acknowledged that FAO is currently undergoing a reform process, initiated by the Director General.

230. Ms Barfield informed that at the last FAO Conference in November 2005, the terms of reference for the IEE were adopted. The four key areas the IEE was examining included governance, administration, technical work of the Organisation and FAO in the multilateral system. An evaluation team was appointed and started working in March 2006. A mix of different methodologies was applied. During the course of one year the team had spoken to FAO staff, permanent representatives from FAO member countries, collaborating agencies and visited selected member countries. Due to the IEE team's methodology for selection of countries to be visited and cost constraints the team did not visit the SWP region. A detailed questionnaire was developed and sent out to all member countries to respond.

231. In April 2007, an emerging issues paper was finalised and posted on the internet. Progress would be discussed at the Council meeting in June and the process for taking the IEE forward would be decided. The content of the emerging issues paper would not be discussed.

A draft report of the IEE was expected to be available for member countries comments in July 2007 and a final report in October 2007. It is expected that significant changes will be proposed, especially changes related to governance and administration of the Organisation, which is currently seen as negatively affecting the technical work of the Organisation. On the governance issue, she informed that the emerging issues paper flagged that an issue likely to impact on the SWP region was the current regional imbalance and its impact on governance structures.

232. The time frame allows member countries with sufficient time to go through the report and provide comments before discussing the results at the upcoming FAO Conference in November 2007.

233. Ministers appreciated the information provided. Some countries were aware of the on-going reform and had also completed and returned the questionnaires on the IEE, others heard about it for the first time. The Representative from New Zealand indicated that if changes to regions are proposed, there might be a need for island member countries to come together and discuss their positions.

234. The Representative from Samoa informed the meeting about the newly established Research and Development Institute of Samoa (RIDS) with its core function on research on agro-processing and post harvest handling and treatment for export opportunities. He invited other countries to make use of this institute if need arises.

AGENDA ITEM 7: ADOPTION OF THE COMMUNIQUÉ

235. The meeting, after making appropriate changes to the draft prepared by the Secretariat, adopted and signed the Communiqué, which is attached as Annex E.

AGENDA ITEM 8: VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING

236. The Minister from Niue reiterated the earlier offer of his government to host the next meeting. Ministers accepted the offer by the Government of Niue to host the next meeting in 2009. The Government of Palau offered to be the alternate host.

AGENDA ITEM 10: CLOSING OF THE MEETING

237. The Sub-Regional Representative expressed sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for being an excellent host and for providing outstanding support in the preparation for and during the meeting, as well as for the invitation and hospitality extended to the Director-General of FAO. He thanked the Ministers and Representatives from countries for their active participation and concluded by thanking the Chair for his able leadership and for steering the meeting to a successful conclusion.

238. The Minister from Niue, on behalf of the Ministers and Representatives from countries, expressed appreciation to the Government and the people of the Marshall Islands for the warm hospitality shown during the whole time they have been on the island. He also thanked the Sub-Regional Representative and the staff of FAO for the contributions and inputs to the meeting. With Niue as the agreed venue for the next meeting, he welcomed the

participation of all member countries at the meeting and confirmed that he will be looking forward to continue the success of its organization and proceedings as in past venues.

239. The Minister for Agriculture of the Marshall Islands and the Chair of the meeting conveyed the appreciation of the Government and the people of the Marshall Islands to all Ministers and Delegates for having accepted the invitation to attend the meeting and for the opportunity to be host to all. He further conveyed appreciation and gratitude to the Director-General accepting the invitation of his Government to visit Majuro and to participate at the meeting. He thanked the Sub-Regional Representative and staff of FAO for the help and the excellent support provided in preparation for and during the meeting. He concluded by presenting a gift to all heads of delegation and observers, which he said was a small token of the appreciation of his Government and the people of the Marshall Islands and wished all a pleasant and safe journey home.

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Annex B

Seventh Meeting of the South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture

Address by the Director-General of FAO, Dr Jacques Diouf

Majuro, Marshall Islands

29 May 2007

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege and an honour to address you here in Majuro on the occasion of the Seventh Meeting of South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture.

I should like to thank in particular His Excellency Mr Kessai H. Note for his presence here today which testifies to the importance that your Government, Mr President, attaches to the fight against poverty. I should also like to express my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands for its hospitality.

This important meeting will help identify regional priorities in agriculture, rural development and food security. It will also consolidate the excellent cooperation that exists between the countries of the South West Pacific and FAO.

At the Earth Summit in 1992, the countries of your region were identified as a "special group" on account of the characteristics of their agriculture, fisheries and forests and their particular climatic conditions.

These last months have impacted heavily on economic activity in your countries, with 12 tropical cyclones and depressions affecting the South Pacific and 15 typhoons developing in the North West Pacific. These meteorological events have provoked untold damage. And this year, while the Marshall Islands were ravaged by drought, Fiji was devastated by torrential rains and floods.

In addition, volcanic eruptions threatened thousands of villagers in Vanuatu. In the Solomon Islands, a magnitude-8 earthquake created a tsunami that killed 50 people and caused a further 7 000 people to lose their homes and livelihoods.

On the world level, globalization is spawning economic and social change that needs to be addressed.

For a long time your region was self-reliant in food. In recent decades it has been heavily dependent on food imports. Fortunately, agricultural and fishery exports earn considerable foreign revenue and are precious sources of employment and income for the rural populations.

However, producers have to meet increasingly stringent requirements from the sanitary and phytosanitary measures that govern world trade.

In 2002, at the *World Food Summit: five years later* in Rome, the Representatives of the Pacific Island Countries asked the International Community for help in tackling threats from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. This issue was also raised at the Annual Summit of the Pacific Islands Forum, which was last held in Fiji in 2006. But much still remains to be done if appropriate solutions to this problem are to be found.

New animal and plant diseases are emerging while trade takes other familiar diseases to the different parts of the world. Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), foot-and-mouth disease and bird flu are serious risks against which the region needs to be prepared.

The scientific community recognizes that global warming will probably have major consequences on the living conditions of tens of thousands of inhabitants of Pacific atolls because of the risk of rising sea levels.

Such an occurrence will impact on the forest resources of the region and on the conditions of sustainable forest management in the Pacific. The long distances to the markets of wood-based products should encourage more local processing of such products. Improved forest management would also have a direct impact on the conservation of water resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since 1994 FAO has engaged in major reforms aimed primarily at streamlining delivery of its technical and operational expertise to its Member Nations.

The establishment in 1996 of the Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands, in Samoa, was an important step in strengthening our collaboration and making multidisciplinary technical teams available to the countries of the region.

Under the Mauritius Strategy of 2005 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), FAO is assisting Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in their efforts to integrate food security policies and programmes.

The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Codex Alimentarius, the International Plant Protection Convention, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources and other international agreements negotiated under the aegis of FAO provide an appropriate legal framework for the sustainable and more equitable management of natural resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your meeting will review the current state of food and agriculture in the Pacific region and the implementation of the decisions reached at the Sixth Meeting in the Cook Islands in 2005. FAO has pledged its full support to those initiatives.

Thus, with regard to *FAO actions in support of the diverse food security needs and challenges in the Pacific Island Countries*, the Pacific Regional Programme for Food Security for the 14 Pacific countries has received USD 4.5 million in funding from Italy and USD 2.8 million from FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). In addition, China and the Philippines are providing 34 and 26 field technicians respectively, under South-South Cooperation, to work directly with their host country counterparts in rural communities.

The programme focuses on three key areas:

- Support to national food security programmes;
- Development of intraregional and international trade through implementation of food safety regulations;
- Adoption and implementation of structural reforms and measures to harmonize agricultural policy.

Along the same lines, international partnerships have been fostered to help countries meet the challenges of globalization through effective collective action. Conducted in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Regional Programme for Food Security promotes international partnerships.

The relevance of this programme led you, at your meeting of 2005 in the Cook Islands, to ask for FAO assistance in preparing an expansion phase. The corresponding document is now before you for approval.

You are also concerned about agricultural trade, understandably seeing that 40 percent of the agricultural exports of eight countries of the region come from a single commodity. With the resumption of the Doha Development Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, there is unquestionably a need to put specific instruments in place for the Small Island States of the region.

In this connection, in recent years the FAO Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific has organized round tables on the WTO Agreement provisions that relate to agriculture and fisheries. As a result, over 200 officials from 13 countries are able to participate effectively in trade negotiations. Also, following the ninth round table on trade in Wellington in July 2006, FAO launched four studies, which are currently in progress, on the identification of special products and other important topics relating to trade and development.

As part of its action to help the most vulnerable groups, FAO has approved TCP projects for young entrepreneurs in agriculture and rural development, providing them with high-level agricultural training in collaboration with the US Peace Corps and local NGO's. FAO is also providing support to the activities of women whose role as the movers of agricultural and rural development is now widely recognized.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenge of eliminating poverty and hunger remains here and elsewhere in the world. Three-quarters of the poor and the hungry are rural people who depend on agriculture, fisheries and forests.

At this time of sweeping reform of FAO and of the United Nations system as a whole so that they can better perform their role in furthering development and peace in the world, I am convinced that with the support of the governments and peoples of the Pacific we can rise to the challenge of overcoming hunger and poverty.

Thank you for your kind attention.

**OPENING ADDRESS
BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS,
HIS EXCELLENCY KESSAI H. NOTE**

Yokwe kom aolep im Anij en Kejerramon kijwoj.

- Mr. Speaker
- Traditional Leaders
- Cabinet Ministers, Senators, Mayors
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
- Members of the Public Service Commission,
- Ministerial Secretaries and Agency Heads,
- Representatives from the Civil Society and the Private Sector,
- Media Representatives
- Invited Guests,

A very special welcome to our friends from overseas:

- His Excellency Dr. Jacques Diouf, Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,
- Ministers of Agriculture and Senior Officials of FAO Pacific member countries,
- FAO Representative in the Pacific Dr. Vili Fuavao and your capable staff,
- Charge d' Affairs Dr. Massimo Carnelos of the Italian Embassy in New Zealand,
- Representatives from Regional Organizations and Observers,
- The Organizing Committee and support staff of this conference
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Marshall Islands, I welcome you all to Majuro on the occasion of the 7th South-West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture Meeting.

I am confident that we have made all possible arrangements to facilitate and make your stay as comfortable as possible. We hope that at the end of this important meeting that you take home with you fond memories of your visit to our humble islands.

The Marshall Islands is honoured to host this vital Regional Conference on Food and Agriculture. It is one way of showing our commitment to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization on its global mandate in the fight against poverty and hunger.

Needless to say, the FAO has greatly impacted positive development in the Region for many years.

Through the FAO programs, like the Technical Cooperation Program and the Regional Program for Food Security, projects have been implemented in fisheries, forestry, livestock, food processing, horticulture, plant protection, policy and planning, atoll cultivation, coconut utilization, replanting and rehabilitation, and many more.

Like the other Pacific nations, the Marshall Islands has benefited tremendously from these programs and we are indebted to this forum and the FAO for the valuable assistance provided thus far.

We are also very grateful to the Government of Italy as the main donor of the current Regional Programme for Food Security. I wish to acknowledge the presence of Dr. Massimo Carnelos, Charge d' Affairs, who is representing the Government of Italy. Please convey our sincere appreciation to your Government for its much-needed assistance.

FAO's assistance in the Pacific has and will continue to complement the many ongoing efforts that exist in the Pacific Region to curb the many challenges of food security and sustainable development, which are all interlinked.

Such challenges, to name a few, are natural disasters, climate change and sea level rise, water scarcity, trans-boundary animal diseases, pests and disease, energy crises and distortions in the international trade regime.

With respect to the distortion in the international trade regime and its related challenges, increased globalization is placing on our region an ever present need for stronger and enhanced regional cooperation among countries.

Let us be mindful of our collective ownership and responsibility for regional and international peace; be aware of our vulnerability to global tensions and conflicts, the increasing socio-economic disparities and violence in the world.

We share a vision of all people of the Pacific living in peace and harmony, protecting and safeguarding our natural habitat, cultural history, identity, and our common goal to provide a secure and sustainable future for our children.

In doing so, we need to address the important issue of socio-economic disparities, develop a joint vision for development in the Pacific to suit our needs and reassert our right to self-determination, our sovereignty and control over our resources in order to resist the negative effects of globalization. In doing this, stronger cooperation along the lines articulated in the Pacific Plan, will provide a stronger voice and safeguard against outside detrimental influences.

Although we play a very minor role in the global industry, small island developing countries face the greatest impacts from mounting climate change and sea level rise due to harmful levels of carbon dioxide in the world's atmosphere. Over the last 10 years, at numerous international meetings, Pacific leaders have expressed strong concerns about the effects of climate change and sea level rise. Effects include increased storm events, recurring drought, severe flooding, coastal erosion, inundation of our taro patches, damage to our vegetation, degradation of coral reefs, and decreasing fish stocks, among others.

Food security and sea level rise are interconnected. Currently, the relative rate of sea-level rise in the RMI is 4.5mm a year, which equates to 45cm over the next 100 years. With the average height of land in the RMI being approximately 2m, and many more near shore areas being less than 1m, this means it won't be long before our country is completely inundated. Climate change poses the greatest threat to the long-term survival of human life in the RMI, and neighbouring island countries. We are the primary victims of global climate change. There is no doubt in my mind about the urgent need and moral obligation to act urgently.

Having said that, I urge the agricultural ministers of the South West Pacific to concentrate on reforming the agricultural sector as a crucial contribution to our joint struggle against global climate change and its detrimental effects.

Promoting the production of local and indigenous food products is one way to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Concentrating on growing healthy local staple food and raising small livestock, processing a larger amount of local food crops as well as fish, has the potential to improve employment, income, and to supply a good share of the local food to the growing domestic market.

At the same time, this approach contributes to improved livelihoods for outer island farmers, and traders, as well as the urban population. We need to identify innovative ways to make this work better.

Over the last 10 years, Pacific countries have increasingly turned to regional and international bodies such as the United Nations, to help find solutions to problems caused largely by external factors such as globalization and climate change. In this connection, I refer to the 1999 decision of the Republic of the Marshall Islands – as well as other South West Pacific countries present here today – to apply for membership in the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.

Mr. Director-General, this is a reflection of the trust we have placed on FAO and its programs. FAO's pioneering role in promoting good agricultural practices, sustained fisheries and forestry management, and improved nutrition for healthier lifestyles have increasingly become important milestones to guide the Pacific in key decision-making processes.

Similarly, FAO's program on climate change – in particular the attention to mitigation of climate change impact, and adaptation of agricultural systems to climate change, are fully supported and encouraged.

Agricultural ministers attending this meeting in Majuro will thus be looking at further developing practices aimed at increasing the resilience of agricultural production systems to the vagaries of weather and climate change, including national and regional climate change monitoring systems, as well as data and information collection and dissemination.

However, international assistance is needed – now more than ever before. My own country of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, like others, continues to seek considerable investments and comprehensive assistance, including much needed policy re-orientation to address the interlinked issues of food and agriculture security and climate change.

Mr. Director-General, FAO's special program for food security in the Pacific is a crucial vehicle – both at the policy level as well as in mobilizing human and financial resources – to steer our joint efforts and further stimulate both regional as well as national action to address both climate change and improving the productivity of our agricultural and food systems.

With these goals and appeals in mind, I am honoured and very pleased to declare the 7th South-West Pacific Ministers of Agriculture Meeting officially open.

Good luck in your deliberations.
Komol tata, and God speed.

Annex D**AGENDA**

- 1. OFFICIAL OPENING**
 - Welcome
 - Welcome Remarks by the Minister for Resource and Development of the Marshall Islands
 - Address by the Director-General of FAO
 - Opening Address by the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands
- 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**
 - 2.1 Election of the Chair
 - 2.2 Adoption of the Theme
 - 2.3 Approval of the Agenda
 - 2.4 Adoption of Meeting Programme and Working Procedures
- 3. OVERVIEW OF FAO ACTIVITIES IN THE PACIFIC 2005-2007** SWPM/MAS/3.0
- 4. FAO ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE DIVERSE FOOD SECURITY NEEDS AND CHALLENGES IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES**
 - 4.1 Policy and Capacity Building Challenges for Food Security SWPM/MAS/4.1
 - 4.2 Outcomes and Results of the Implementation of the Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) Project SWPM/MAS/4.2a and
SWPM/MAS/4.2b
 - 4.3. Expansion Phase of the Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS)
 - 4.4. Plant Protection and Bio-security Issues and Challenges affecting Food Security – Focusing on Atoll Island States SWPM/MAS/4.4
 - 4.5. Participatory Value Chain Analysis for Improved Farmers Income, Employment Opportunities and Food Security SWPM/MAS/4.5
 - 4.6. Nutrition and Food Safety – Essential Elements for Food Security in the Pacific SWPM/MAS/4.6 Rev1
 - 4.7. Institutionalizing Best Forest and Tree Resource Management Practices in the Pacific Island Countries SWPM/MAS/4.7 Rev1
 - 4.8. Strengthening National Capacity towards Sustainable Fisheries Management and for Food Security SWPM/MAS/4.8
 - 4.9. Roundtable Meetings on WTO Agreement Provisions: Multilateral and Regional Trade Aspects in the Agriculture and Fisheries Sectors for the Pacific Island Countries SWPM/MAS/4.9
- 5. ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE PACIFIC**
- 6. OTHER BUSINESS**
- 7. ADOPTION OF THE COMMUNIQUÉ**
- 8. VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING**
- 9. CLOSING OF THE MEETING**

Annex E

**SEVENTH MEETING
OF THE FAO SOUTH WEST PACIFIC MINISTERS FOR AGRICULTURE**

Majuro, Marshall Islands
29 to 31 May 2007

COMMUNIQUÉ

1. The Seventh Meeting of the FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture was convened at the Marshall Islands Resort in Majuro, Marshall Islands from 29 to 31 May 2007. The meeting was attended by Ministers from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Niue, Palau and Solomon Islands. Australia, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu sent delegations to represent the countries. The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the FAO Sub-Regional Representative for the Pacific Islands also attended. Representatives from the Government of Italy, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) attended as observers.

2. The FAO Director-General, Dr Jacques Diouf, delivered the FAO Statement. The key note address was delivered by H.E. Kessai H. Note, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, who also officially opened the meeting. Hon. John H. Silk, Minister for Resources and Development of the Marshall Islands, was unanimously elected as Chairperson.

THE THEME

3. The meeting adopted *FAO Actions in Support of the Diverse Food Security Needs and Challenges in the Pacific Island Countries* as the theme for the Seventh Meeting. The theme reflects on and encompasses action undertaken by FAO including challenges confronted by countries, particularly in the atoll island countries.

4. Ministers recognized that given FAO's broad mandate and the many issues and challenges faced by the countries, FAO needed to stay focused.

FAO ACTIVITIES IN THE PACIFIC, 2005 – 2007: AN OVERVIEW

5. Ministers acknowledged FAO assistance and support to the region and welcomed information provided on activities. The meeting requested FAO to continue assistance, help set priorities and assist in implementation at national and regional levels.

6. Ministers recognized lack of national capacities and project management, and acclaimed FAO assistance in improving the situation. The ongoing reform of the Organization was noted by Ministers, urging that measures be taken to ensure smooth continuation of present and future programmes and activities in the region.

7. The meeting endorsed the broad areas of focus of FAO in the region, notably in the area of emergency assistance and food security, and expressed the need for continued support and assistance in strengthening national capacities for project implementation. It also recognized the importance of FAO's normative activities in the Region, including standards

setting (e.g. IPPC, CODEX), international treaties and the code of conduct for responsible fisheries.

8. Recognizing the important values and functions of the natural resources in the region, and especially their vulnerable status, the meeting expressed the need for increased assistance and involvement of FAO in sustainable development of the agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors.

9. Ministers noted the importance of regional collaboration and partnerships and encouraged FAO to work, coordinate and collaborate with other agencies and donors in defining and implementing work programmes.

10. Ministers emphasized the huge diversity in terms of size, population and resource base – from large high volcanic to low atoll islands – prevailing in the South West Pacific region, made up of fourteen FAO member countries. FAO was commended for its attempts to respond to individual country needs through both regular as well as extra-budgetary funded programmes, including the Regional Programme for Food Security.

11. The performance of the multi-disciplinary team in the Sub-regional Office for the Pacific Islands (SAPA) was positively recognized. Concern was raised however that the on-going FAO reforms should not affect negatively on the present capacity at SAPA. In this regard the meeting requested FAO to:

- fill the vacant policy officer post as a matter of high priority;
- ensure that the Farming Systems Development and Marketing Officer post is retained to ensure support to member countries in this high priority area;
- continue to liaise closely with regional organizations in the implementation of activities and in the coordination of meetings and workshops;
- pursue a study to assess the impact of climate change on agriculture and food security in the Pacific Islands region;
- explore opportunities to ensure participation of both the agriculture and fisheries sectors at FAO SWP ministerial level meetings.

SUPPORT TO THE DIVERSE FOOD SECURITY NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

Policy assistance

12. Ministers expressed support for and appreciation of FAO's work in the area of policy assistance and endorsed the need for continued support to strengthen national capacities in the areas of policy analysis and planning as well as project cycle management. FAO was encouraged to closely collaborate with regional and bilateral partners – including civil society – in supporting member countries in the analysis and design of agricultural policies, and the design of training programmes and related material. More specifically the meeting:

- a. encouraged countries to prepare – with assistance from FAO and development partners – appropriate, robust and practical policies, plans and strategies for the development of the agricultural sector;
- b. requested FAO to continue providing more diagnostic and policy analysis for the development of agriculture in the region;
- c. encouraged countries to prepare – with assistance from FAO – a simple, pragmatic and user friendly capacity building plan for strengthening policy and planning units of ministries and departments of agriculture in the region;

- d. requested FAO to prepare appropriate training materials for policy analysis and formulation in order to further strengthen capacities for policy and planning units of the agriculture departments in the countries.

Regional Programme for Food Security

13. Ministers noted the outcome and results achieved in the implementation of the Government of Italy funded support to the Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS) in the Pacific. Ministers also appreciated the additional generous support provided by the Government of Italy to food security in PICs through the extension phase of the RPFS. Ministers also appreciated the support provided by the Government of the Peoples' Republic of China and the Republic of the Philippines to the South South Cooperation (SSC) programme. The meeting reaffirmed its commitment to achieving food security in the region and:

- (i) encouraged relevant ministries and agencies responsible for agriculture, trade, health and nutrition to ensure that the inter-sectoral and multi-disciplinary natures of food security issues are effectively addressed in future goals of the project;
- (ii) appreciated the potential and contribution of South-South Cooperation (SSC) for the effective and timely implementation of the programme;
- (iii) recommended that FAO and the PICs collaborate to further the South-South Cooperation (SSC) component during the remaining implementation of the project, whilst incorporating lessons learned from the experiences to date.

Expansion phase of the regional programme for food security

14. Ministers endorsed the outcome of formulation missions for the expanded programme for food security, which visited and held stakeholder consultations in all of the 14 FAO Pacific Island member countries. The 14 FAO Pacific Island member countries approved in principle the project proposal for the expansion of RPFS as presented, with the understanding that minor revisions which may need to be incorporated will not affect project priorities and implementation procedures as agreed by individual countries. Ministers also recognized the importance of the SSC component. The meeting:

- (i) called on countries to implement the expansion phase of RPFS with assistance of FAO and other development partners;
- (ii) appreciated that the RPFS will be formulated, implemented and operated by and from the FAO sub-regional office in Samoa;
- (iii) recommends that SSC support is secured for the expansion phase of the RPFS;
- (iv) called on donors and development partners to support the expansion phase of the RPFS;
- (v) recommends that preparation for implementation of the RPFS expansion phase will take into account issues arising and lessons learned from the end of project evaluation of phase one of the RPFS.

Biosecurity and plant protection

15. Ministers noted constraining effects of plant pest and disease outbreaks affecting farmer's basic food crops production in PICs. The meeting:

- (i) requested countries to address the issue of and pay more emphasis to prevent plant biosecurity breaches in PICs;
- (ii) called on countries to review and strengthen national bio-security legislation and ensure that legislation is appropriate and enforceable;
- (iii) asked countries to consider the feasibility of restructuring national current border security services in order to maximize the effectiveness of plant biosecurity measures;

- (iv) requested FAO to continue to collaborate with SPC in strengthening national capacities for the identification of invasive species and plant diseases and to avoid their spread across the region;
- (v) urged countries to consider the benefits and obligations for ratifying conventions and treaties that are considered important for biosecurity and plant protection needs of the PICs;
- (vi) requested FAO to follow-up with New Zealand regarding the status of “taro mite” and implications of taro exports from Pacific Island countries into New Zealand;
- (vii) requested FAO to continue to collaborate with SPC on biosecurity needs of those countries which require assistance in the area of facilities and equipment at international ports of entry;
- (viii) requested FAO to provide further guidance and assistance to countries considering acceding to relevant international conventions on biosecurity.

Marketing and farming systems development

16. Ministers commended FAO on its work in support of improved small farmers’ livelihood in the region and confirmed the validity including enterprise and agri-business development as an additional priority area. More specifically, the meeting:

- (i) encouraged FAO to continue capacity building and project activities in the participatory value chain concept at national and regional levels;
- (ii) acknowledged the potential of the value chain approach to support agribusiness development in the traditional staple food sub-sector as well as for improved market access of livestock, forestry and fishery products;
- (iii) appreciated the need to closely link agri-business and enterprise development to the development of national food safety and quality standards;
- (iv) acknowledged the importance of improved communication technology for farmers and traders to develop agribusinesses and improve value chains;
- (v) acknowledged the importance of collaboration of all stakeholders in the implementation of the value chain approach.

Nutrition and food safety

17. Ministers endorsed the continuing efforts of FAO in promoting food safety and nutrition security in the region. Ministers noted the changes in food supply and their impact on the health and nutrition status of Pacific populations, as well as challenges faced in the area of food safety and quality. The meeting expressed support for FAO to continue its assistance to member countries to:

- (i) identify issues of food and nutrition insecurity and improve the situation in a sustainable manner, including the provision of knowledge and skills, which empower people to consume a balanced, safe and nutritious diet;
- (ii) strengthen the link between the agriculture and health sectors, in particular by integrating food safety and nutrition considerations into agricultural research, policies and programmes. In particular, FAO should further investigate the nutritional value of indigenous fruits and vegetables to promote them for domestic consumption and increased use in the tourism industry;
- (iii) build capacity in food safety in order to strengthen national food control systems with a focus on consumer protection and fair practices in food trade. Specifically, FAO should continue to strengthen food safety legislation and regulations and build capacity to monitor and enforce these standards. In addition, FAO was requested to commission a study on the issue of pesticide residues in vegetables and fruits sold in local markets, providing the basis for information to local farmers on appropriate pesticide application in order to safeguard the health of consumers;

- (iv) enhance the capability to pro-actively contribute to and benefit from the food standard setting work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- (v) build capacity in food processing and food product development, including associated quality and safety issues and marketing skills;
- (vi) provide technical support towards the appropriate implementation of recognized regional and national initiatives such as food fortification and the strategy on diet, physical activity and health.

Forest and tree resource management practices

18. Ministers expressed the importance of diagnosis and situation analysis of forest and tree resources status to guarantee future sustainable benefits to resource owners and countries including sound forest management. The meeting:

- (i) urged countries to work closely with the Asia Pacific Forestry Commission in identifying and developing incentives and financial mechanisms for sustainable forest management;
- (ii) encouraged countries to work closely with the private sector to review policies and regulations so as to create a level playing field and an enabling environment for partnerships in financing sustainable forest management;
- (iii) urged countries to enhance the environment for communities to contribute to sustainable forest management by increasing access to resources, strengthening local capacities and equitable sharing of benefits;
- (iv) encouraged multi-sector discussions and active stakeholder participations in forestry processes noting that issues affecting forests and trees are complex and cross-sectoral in nature;
- (v) supported the need for countries to develop guidelines such as for watershed management and develop framework and methods for monitoring, assessment and reporting of sustainable forest management;
- (vi) urged countries to focus on what can be achieved with funds currently available on how to improve cost-effectiveness through establishment of strategic partnerships amongst stakeholders for a more integrated and participatory forest and land use planning process;
- (vii) noted the issues related to malpractices and illegal logging and urged FAO to undertake activities in collaboration with countries and development partners to prevent and address such issues;
- (viii) urged FAO to continue support and assistance in the area of coconut rehabilitation, replanting and coconut wood utilization;
- (ix) encouraged FAO to continue assistance in the area of policy, legislation and development of management plans.

Sustainable fisheries management

19. Ministers expressed the need to strengthen individual countries capacities for more sustainable fisheries management for improved food security. The meeting:

- (i) requested FAO to further support countries to improve national fisheries legislation and regulations in order to meet standards set by international fisheries agreements and instruments as well as to support coastal fisheries and aquaculture development;
- (ii) requested FAO to support national fisheries information systems as a firm basis for effective policy-making and sound management of fisheries and aquaculture resources;
- (iii) encouraged countries to further strengthen national capacities as a priority in order to ensure sustainable development and sound management of fisheries and aquaculture resources in harmony with the environment;

- (iv) requested FAO to continue to support sustainable aquaculture development in cooperation with other regional organizations;
- (v) requested FAO to continue to provide technical assistance to the countries to meet the challenges faced with policy, legislation, putting in place management structures, fisheries information, aquaculture and small-scale fisheries.

Roundtable meeting on WTO agreement provisions and trade

20. Ministers noted with appreciation the outcome of the WTO Round Table Series in terms of the objectives, the topics discussed, and its contribution to enhance countries capacities to deal with agricultural and food trade policies and encouraged all Forum Island countries to participate. More specifically, the meeting noted:

- (i) the ever-increasing impact of global trade on agriculture and food security and the growing participation in international trade by all countries;
- (ii) FAOs continuing efforts to secure appropriate financial assistance from the collaborating partners to convene a Roundtable meeting in 2007;
- (iii) the development of the annual Roundtable Meeting series over the past years and the progress with the preparation for the Tenth Roundtable meeting for PICs on WTO Agreements and Provisions scheduled for September, 2007.

ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING IN THE PACIFIC

21. Ministers expressed appreciation for the presentation on IUU fishing, noting the threats it posed to sound fisheries governance and to the lives of the people of the Pacific. Ministers underscored the need to adopt and implement well-conceived and tightly-focused policies and measures to combat IUU fishing.

22. In line with the many international calls to combat IUU fishing, and as a means of implementing the 2001 FAO International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and giving effect to the 2005 FAO Rome Declaration on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, the meeting urged countries that have not already done so to develop national plans of action to combat IUU fishing as a matter of priority. FAO advised that within its available resources, it stood ready to technically assist countries in this task.

23. The meeting recognized the challenges posed in implementing national plans of action but stressed the fundamental importance of blocking the entry of IUU-caught fish to national and international markets so as to deprive IUU fishers of revenue and the incentive to engage in IUU fishing.

OTHER BUSINESS

24. Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Director-General of FAO for being able to attend the meeting and for the valuable information provided on the future work of FAO.

25. Ministers welcomed the presentation and statements provided by Tobolar Copra Processing Authority/PII, IFAD, SPC and the Government of Italy.

26. The meeting noted with appreciation the verbal report on the progress of the Independent External Evaluation (IEE) provided by the Representative from Australia.

27. Ministers and FAO expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the government and the people of the Marshall Islands for hosting the meeting and for the hospitality extended to their delegations during their time in Majuro.

28. Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Chair for his able leadership leading to the successful conclusion of the meeting. They commended the Sub-Regional Representative (SRR) for the Pacific Islands and staff of FAO for the work and achievements over the past two years and for the efficient servicing of the meeting.

VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

29. Ministers accepted the offer by the Government of Niue to host the next biennial meeting in 2009. The Government of Palau offered to be the alternate host.

Signed in Majuro, Marshall Islands on 31 May 2007

Honourable Ngamau Munokoa (Cook Islands)

Honourable Jainendra Kumar (Fiji)

Honourable John M. Silk (Marshall Islands)

Honourable Bill Vakaafi Motufoou (Niue)

Honourable Fritz Koshiba (Palau)

Honourable Severino Nuaiasi (Solomon Islands)

Ms Judy Barfield (Australia)

Mr Ishmael Lebehn (Federated States of Micronesia)

Ms Kinaai Kairo (Kiribati)

Mr Roxen Agadio (Nauru)

Mr Neil Fraser (New Zealand)

Mr Francis Daink (Papua New Guinea)

Mr Seumanutafa Malaki Iakopo (Samoa)

Mr Penisimani Ve'a (Tonga)

Mr Itaia Lausaveve (Tuvalu)

Mr Jeffery Wilfred (Vanuatu)

(Signed in Majuro, Marshall Islands on 31 May 2007)

**HEADS OF DELEGATION AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF FAO AT THE SEVENTH MEETING OF FAO SOUTH WEST PACIFIC
MINISTERS FOR AGRICULTURE, MAJURO, REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS
29 - 31 MAY 2007**



Front Row (L – R): Hon Ngamau Munokoa (Cook Islands), Hon Jainend Kumar (Fiji), Hon Bill V Motufo’ou (Niue), Dr Jacques Diouf (FAO Director General), HE Kessai Note (President, Marshall Islands), Hon John M Silk (Marshall Islands), Hon Fritz Koshiba (Palau), Hon Severino Nuaiasi (Solomon Islands), Mr Jeffery Wilfred (Vanuatu)

Back Row (L - R): Ms Judy Barfield (Australia), Mr Ismael Lebehn (Micronesia) , Mr Roxen Agadio (Nauru), Ms Kinaai Kairo (Kiribati), Mr Neil Fraser (New Zealand), Mr Francis Daink (Papua New Guinea), Mr Seumanutafa M Iakopo (Samoa), Mr Penisimani Ve’a (Tonga), Mr Itaia Lausaveve (Tuvalu), Mr Massimo Carnelos (Italy)