



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique

EIGHTH REGIONAL MEETING OF PACIFIC HEADS OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY SERVICES (PHOAFS)

OUTCOME STATEMENT

9 MARCH 2023, NADI, FIJI

EIGHTH REGIONAL MEETING OF
PACIFIC HEADS OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY SERVICES (PHOAFS)
(Nadi, Fiji 09 March 2023)

Summary Record



1. The 8th Regional Meeting of Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS) met on 9 March 2023 in Nadi, Fiji with a focus on progress on actions since PHOAFS 2021. The Outcomes Statement of the meeting is attached as Annex 1.
2. The meeting was attended by Heads of Agriculture and Forestry from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States, and Wallis and Futuna. Representatives and Observers from international, regional, national, government, non-government, private sector and other stakeholders also attended. A List of Participants is attached as Annex 2.

**SESSION ONE
OFFICIAL OPENING**

3. The meeting was chaired by Dr Vinesh Kumar, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Fiji. Brief remarks were delivered by Ms Xiangjun Yao, Subregional Coordinator for the Pacific Islands, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and Ms Karen Mapusua, Director, Land Resources Division, Pacific Community (SPC). The full statements are available from FAO and SPC.
4. FAO values the contribution of regional entities and by combining strengths and resources this creates new opportunities, expanded reach, and contributes to the growth and development of member countries. The Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry, with its two core meetings – the Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS) and the Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (PMAF) - is a special platform, as it provides an opportunity to discuss key issues which are important to the region.
5. They include public goods, such as the extensive research supported by FAO to establish a regular 'Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in the Pacific'. This information will guide FAO programmes as well as regional efforts to mobilise resources to address areas of concern. In addition, FAO's new Multiple-Country Programming Framework (CPF) for 2023-2027 is ready for implementation.
6. SPC is providing robust science to the Pacific to address climate effects on agriculture and forestry, and build capacity for more effective responses. Science includes traditional knowledge and proven

practices of Pacific people. Resilient food systems address climate and sustainability challenges, and provide good nutrition for healthy communities. This diverse system is centered on both blue and green economies that are sustainable from genetics to soil, to biodiversity of crops, fish and livestock, to harvesting, packaging, transporting, selling and consuming food: an holistic system with good nutrition for all, and a better environment.

7. Pacific Food Systems is a SPC flagship initiative to advance national food systems in six areas: science for nutritious and resilient food production, healthy and equitable food environments, critical public goods, innovation in coastal and atoll food systems, future food capacities and harnessing digital technologies.

8. The Chair welcomed participants to the 8th PHOAFS and, on their behalf, offered best wishes to the government and people of Vanuatu who recently endured back to back cyclones, which caused extensive damage and also prevented the Vanuatu delegation from attending the meeting. The Chair said while the region was diverse, members shared common problems including climate change impacts, food and nutrition security, urban drift, shift of skilled, capacity gaps, pests and diseases, threats to biodiversity, and others. The meeting is an opportunity to discuss ways of working together to address challenges at a national and regional level.

9. The meeting adopted the agenda. A Drafting Committee was established comprising Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu.

Item 2.1 Report on action items from PHOAFs 2021, Fiji (virtual).
Dr. Vinesh Kumar, Permanent Secretary - Ministry of Agriculture, Fiji

10. The meeting discussed a report on action items from PHOAFS 2021, held virtually. The meeting was updated on actions by SPC and FAO on key decisions of PHOAFS 2021 which had endorsed six decision papers. These related to (1) Elevating the Pacific week of Agriculture and Forestry (PWAF); (2) Pacific Regional Architecture; (3) Regional Agriculture and Forestry strategy; (4) Regional Research Agenda; (5) Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Animal Production Services Regional Priority Framework and the governance structure, and (6) Pacific Soils Portal.

11. The PHOAFS endorsed SPC and FAO's response to the PHOAFS 2021 recommendations.

SESSION TWO

REPORT FROM PREVIOUS PHOAFS

Chair - Mrs Atelaite Rokosuka, Acting Permanent Secretary for Forestry, Fiji

PAPERS FOR DECISION

Item 2.2 Proposal on the process to develop a Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Strategy
SPC and Acting Permanent Secretary of Forestry, Fiji

12. At the 7th PHOAFS in 2021, members endorsed the development of a Pacific Regional Agriculture and Forestry Strategy. The challenging context for agriculture and forestry development in the region including climate change mean that business as usual will not meet the challenges the region faces in the sector or make the most of opportunities. SPC and FAO were requested to design the process using strategic foresight methodology for the development of a Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Strategy for presentation and approval at the PMAF meeting and mobilise resources for a comprehensive and participatory process to develop the strategy once approved. Strategic foresight is being used increasingly in the region, and to support members in using this methodology, a webinar was held on October 26, 2022. This webinar raised awareness on some of the tools used and the methodology.

13. The meeting discussed the concept along with questions about the budget and timeline. SPC said plans and budget would follow an endorsement by the PHOAFS of the concept. SPC would start the process, once approved, while seeking support from development partners. Civil society representatives requested they be included in the concept design and planning. SPC said the concept had a timeline of about ten years, and would align with other strategies, such as the 2050 Blue Pacific strategy.

14. The PHOAFS agreed to (a) endorse the concept for developing the Pacific Strategy for Agriculture and Forestry, and (b) request SPC and FAO to mobilise development partner support to deliver the strategy.

Item 2.3 **Developing the concept of a Pacific Regional Research Agenda**

Mrs Temarama Anguna, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Cook Islands

15. A proposed model was outlined for the Regional Research Agenda (RRA). The aim is to provide members with the ability to identify common forestry and agriculture development challenges in the region, establish Pacific research partnerships, and define research strategies to overcome these challenges. The RRA brings decision making, leadership, and planning into an inclusive Pacific process. This framework was developed through regional consultations from March to August 2022 led by the SPC-LRD project team. The presentation proposed an alternative name for the RRA i.e. Pasifika Research Kibung (PaRK) – Kibung being a Papua New Guinea *tok pisin* term for discussion.

16. American Samoa and Tokelau raised the issue of a proposed new name for the Pacific research agenda, with the meeting agreeing to a review of the name led by SPC. Niue and Solomon Islands noted the need for agriculture research to be practical, and for the research to align with priorities such as addressing the high levels of non-communicable diseases in the region. Papua New Guinea welcomed the value of more research but noted much of it is site-specific, with results mainly applying to the environment where the research is based. This required a look at the structure, so that if the regional base was, for example, in Fiji, there may be a need for sub-stations in other countries to improve the quality of the research. Samoa said the Pacific research agenda should be based on national priorities, rather than a research entity being positioned to decide what the priorities should be. SPC clarified that priorities for review will come from members, and the PHOAFS will also be on the review committee. French Polynesia noted the reference to coconuts as a pilot for research, with SPC clarifying that this was an example, and the actual topics will be set by members. Tonga proposed a change in the Vision, to replace 'identify' with 'agree'. Australia welcomed the focus on practical action and looked forward to working together on both national and regional priorities. In response to a query from Guam, SPC confirmed that members would be able to nominate someone to be on the research teams, as a partnership. Civil society representatives welcomed the initiative as a means of improving collaboration to address challenges. SPC said the points raised by members will be taken on board.

17. The PHOAFS endorsed:

- a) the proposed framework and nominate SPC-LRD to work with member countries to operationalise it.
- b) a review of the name to be facilitated by SPC.
- c) a RRA Report as a Standing Agenda Item at the PHOAFS meetings.

Item 2.4 **Climate Information for Pacific Food Systems planning**

Dr Tekini Nakidakida, Ministry of Agriculture, Fiji

18. Safeguarding food security, ending hunger and the vulnerability of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change is recognised as a fundamental priority under the Paris Agreement¹.

With the adoption of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) at the 23rd Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), it is the only programme that focus on agriculture and food security. This mainstreams agriculture into the UNFCCC processes, which can drive transformation in agricultural and food systems.

19. Agriculture remains the backbone of Pacific economies as a source of livelihoods and as a major export earner. Short term and long-term adaptation measures can strengthen resilience of vulnerable Pacific SIDS. At the same time, it can provide solutions to climate change and environmental challenges facing Pacific SIDS, while also contributing to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. Pacific Small Island Developing States have been implementing some of the activities under the KJWA roadmap through support by FAO, SPC and regional partners and welcomes the Joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security decision adopted at COP27.

20. The meeting welcomed the opportunity to work closely on improving food security and building resilience in food systems pathways, and acknowledged assistance from development partners and technical agencies in preparing submissions for, and attending, climate change summits. Tuvalu welcomed the work, especially for atolls with sea intrusion in food pits for swamp taro, *pulaka* and *babai*. Australia acknowledged Tuvalu's work at climate change summits as one of many fora to tackle food security and climate change. Some debates on agricultural sustainability were a concern as people talked about harmful measures for food security that were unsuitable for some countries, for example, seeking to halve the number of cows on Earth to fight climate change, or seeking a ban on agricultural chemicals. Australia is concerned that these views are driven by people who are unaware of the challenges in the region. The answer to climate change and food security is innovation that suits national circumstances. Australia is looking at new animal feeds and climate-resilient crops. There is an opportunity to elevate the Pacific voice in global debates. FAO efforts to increase participation of the Pacific in climate change summits are very welcome, as is the joint approach to the work plan out of COP27. New Zealand noted half of emissions were from agriculture and the best response is to have healthy livestock and plants, and being climate-smart, more productive, and environmentally friendly. Civil society noted the value of working with farmer organisations and the private sector.

21. Acknowledging the KJWA established under Fiji's COP23 presidency, Heads of Agency agreed to partner on a joint submission to the UNFCCC agriculture workstream. The submission will highlight the commitment to shared action against common climate challenges, focused on climate-smart agricultural practices appropriate to varied country circumstances. The joint submission will propose workshop topics designed to build capacity to address common challenges and identify opportunities including soil health, context-appropriate innovation to enhance climate-smart agricultural practices and disaster risk preparedness. The joint submission will propose a workshop on showcasing good practice, lessons learned from Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Island Countries in climate-smart agriculture practices. By joining together, PHOAFS commit to engaging closely in the UNFCCC agriculture workstream over the next four years.

Recommendation:

22. The PHOAFS agreed to:

- a) welcome the updates on the progress in the implementation of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) in the Pacific, including activities endorsed by the 2nd Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting held in Apia, Samoa in 2019;
- b) note the adoption of the Sharm el-Sheik Joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security at COP27 in Sharma el-Sheikh, Egypt;
- c) endorse that a paper on the updates of the implementation of the KJWA and Joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security become a standing

- information paper for the PHOAFS, with decision papers as required;
- d) further endorse the development of regional submissions;
 - e) request FAO and SPC to support the Pacific SIDS with the implementation of the KJWA and the joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security where possible.

Item 2.5 Understanding climate impacts – 3D atoll presentation
Ratu Aminisitai Tagaga Loco, Senior Hydrogeologist, GEM Division, SPC
For information.

SESSION THREE

PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL SERVICES AND REGIONAL PUBLIC GOODS

Chair - Dr. Vinesh Kumar, Permanent Secretary - Ministry of Agriculture, Fiji

Item 3.1 Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT)
Mrs. Logotonu Waqainabete, Programme Leader, CePACT

23. The meeting was updated on the progress of CePaCT's Investment Plan implementation and the updates noted by the PHOAFS in its August 2021 virtual meeting.

24. The PHOAFS noted the current progress of implementation of the CePaCT Investment Plan.

25. The meeting discussed how CePaCT is a significant public good as Plant Genetic Resources (PGR) are essential for agriculture. Members outlined examples of how they had been assisted by the centre with PGR, as well as by providing more varieties for the centre's collections. A Pacific Agricultural Plant Genetic Resources Network (PAPGREN) meeting was scheduled for April 2023 for members to finalise a structure moving forward, followed by a meeting in June to look at priorities for the network in PGR especially for food and agriculture. A PGR centre in Papua New Guinea was engaged in similar work, though it was experiencing problems maintaining a collection of more than 2,000 sweet potato samples, as well as samples of other plants. There is an opportunity for the CePaCT centre in Fiji and in Papua New Guinea to collaborate further.

Item 3.2 Pacific Soils Partnership
Chair, Pacific Soils Partnership, CSIRO

26. This paper reviews the Pacific Soil Partnership (PSP) arrangements and recommends a need to reinvigorate regional activity through an effective, coordinated governance structure and implementation plan. The PSP was established under the auspices of Global Soil Partnership (GSP) to improve soil security in the Pacific and strengthen regional cooperation.

The PHOAFS note:

- a) Requirements to review PSP governance and implementation frameworks and priorities.
- b) Progress in integrating Pacific Soils Portal (PacSoP) and the revival and integration of South Pacific Agricultural Chemistry Laboratory Network (SPACNET) into PSP strategic priorities and Australasian Soil and Plant Analysis Council (ASPAC) and Global Soil Partnership's (GSP) operational arrangements.
- c) PSP could provide broader support and coordination across soil related topics and issues to support the soil related topics and issues of the KJWA, and other regional strategies.
- d) Progress a business development to be completed for the PICTs regional laboratory network within ASPAC to guide infrastructure investment, capacity and capability building and private sector growth.

The PHOAFS endorse:

- e) SPC to serve as the Secretariat for PSP to coordinate the resourcing and implementation of its activities across the Pacific region and consider options for resourcing a regional soil coordination role.
- f) PSP governance and strategic priorities to support soil research and capacity development needs in line with the GSP Action Agenda 2022-2023.

27. In discussions, Fiji requested the PSP work to extend to soil restoration, soil testing, soil guidelines etc., as soil health rehabilitation is crucial to address climate change impacts, biodiversity goals and livelihoods, and the importance of trees in agriculture. Tokelau noted the need to take into account the differences in soil types such as those in atolls and high islands.

Item 3.3 An Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in the Pacific 2022
Mr. Joseph Nyemah, Nutrition and Food Systems Officer, FAO

28. FAO presented the Overview of Food Security and Nutrition report, jointly produced by FAO, International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), SPC, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organisation (WHO) covering the Pacific SIDS. Diets in these SIDS are increasingly dependent on imported and processed foods, often of poor nutritional value. Unhealthy diets are a major contributor to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and NCDs are the single largest cause of premature death in Pacific SIDS. This paper presents the results of the report and suggests actions that PHOAFS can endorse for implementation.

29. The meeting discussed how COVID-19 had exposed gaps in areas such as food security, and how these problems were not solely due to the pandemic. For example, food insecurity and the rapid spread of non-communicable diseases have impacted Pacific social and economic measures for years, and will continue to do so. Agriculture and forestry have a key role in improving food systems pathways to generate much better health outcomes as well as add to economic and social measures in the region. Better outcomes will also help to build resilience to climate change impacts and other threats, such as future pandemics and natural disasters.

30. The PHOAFS endorsed:

- a) the future and continuous production of this report.
- b) a call for development partners in taking required actions to fill the identified critical data gaps.
- c) the FAO led partnership of IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and SPC who produced this report.
- d) the advocacy to countries for including food consumption, and nutrition relevant data into their national household surveys.

SESSION FOUR

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TECHNICAL BODIES

Chair - Mrs Atelaite Rokosuka, Acting Permanent Secretary for Forestry, Fiji

Item 4.1 Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO)
Mr Nacanieli Waqa, Special Advisor Pacific Imports, Ministry of Primary Industries, NZ

31. The PPPO presented an update on its work including strengthening phytosanitary standards and compliance to international guidelines; reviewing and developing legislation, standard operating procedures, treatment facilities and export processes; developing capacities including through EU-Pacific States Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs); strengthening biosecurity management systems; addressing border security through risk assessments, surveillance and monitoring, pest identification and authentication. Core services delivered by PPPO and SPC depend on project funding which has risks for

the regional biosecurity support system. SPC will develop a programmatic approach to delivery of services and build a business case for sustainable programme funding with key partners.

32. The meeting discussed the value of biosecurity measures as a safeguard for plants and animals, and urged development partners and regional agencies to support ongoing work in this area. The PPPO is helping to make the Pacific voice heard at the global level, including in various fora to help set global standards. Improving biosecurity measures is not only addressing specific problems, such as fruit fly and other threats, but also building resilience to the likely impacts of climate change.

33. The PHOAFS **noted** the work of the PPPO, and **supported** the development of a business case for sustainable programme funding for regional biosecurity support services.

Item 4.2 Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Animal Production Services (PHOVAPS)

Ms Fesilia'i Tulia Molimau-Iosefa, Chair PHOVAPS. Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Samoa

34. The growing demand for livestock products and imports demonstrates the potential for growth in the Pacific livestock sector. The Pacific Animal Health and Production Framework (PAHPF) notes threats from both endemic, emerging, and zoonotic diseases, as well as lack of capacity in animal health and production support systems. These result in poor surveillance systems, poor animal husbandry practices, nutrition, housing/facilities, waste management, limited genetic diversity and poor animal welfare.

35. SPC in collaboration with the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, formerly OIE), New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries (NZ-MPI), FAO, and Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (ACDP) in consultation with PHOVAPS/PICTs have developed a Pacific Animal Health and Capacity Development Plan (PAHCDP) to improve animal health and production services in the region.

36. The PHOAFS **noted** and **endorsed**:

- a) the progress on the implementation of the Pacific Animal Health Capacity Development Plan (PAHCDP).
- b) the support provided from the Australian Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) in supporting the implementation of the PAHPF.
- c) Partnership support from DFAT, NZ MPI, ACDP, EU, FAO and WOAH.

37. The meeting discussed the ongoing difficulty of attracting and retaining, veterinarians and the impact this has on animal health services, consumer food standards and related areas. While some members managed to access vet services, these tended to be short-term, ad hoc, and insufficient to cover lengthy gaps in animal health services and other vet-related services. Even when funding was available, it proved difficult to attract applicants for vet studies and, when someone qualified as a vet, another problem was retaining vets as they either did not return, or they served for a few years before leaving for better opportunities. Trying to offer vet courses in the region, such as in Fiji, has proved very expensive although some progress is being made. Vet training is also costly in terms of meeting certification and registration standards as animal health services often deal with the consumer food chain. The meeting agreed to continue to work with SPC and other partners to try to resolve this problem.

Item 4.3 Pacific Organics and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom)

Mr. Philippe Couraud, Ministry of Agriculture, French Polynesia

38. POETCom provided an update on the progress of organic agriculture in the region that builds on the

updates by PHOAFS in its August 2021 virtual meeting and the updates on the Governance and Pacific Organic Standard (POS) management review.

39. The meeting welcomed the work on organics and noted the need for resources to promote, and maintain, organic production in the region. Challenges included the need to raise awareness of organics as well as access to land for farming, improving soil health, and protecting biodiversity. Farmers needed support as there were examples of organic crops only lasting a few years until resources run out. Organic farming must have a cash crop to ensure economic survival. SPC noted that while POETCom is focused on certification, standards and production, other development partners are also involved in this area and may also be able to assist.

40. The PHOAFS **agreed** to:

- a) **note** the progress made by POETCom as the lead organisation for organic agriculture.
- b) **endorse** the POETCom Governance and POS Review Outcomes.
- c) **endorse** and engage in the creation of a working Group led by POETCom to:
 - i. set up the governance structures in accordance with the consultations: including public technical services, and regulatory structures within the governance model alongside POS users, and other actors in the organic movement with clearly defined roles; strengthening of Focal points at national level.
 - ii. develop, in consultation with the PHOAFS, a charter clarifying the relationship, roles and responsibilities of SPC and POETCom regarding the governance and management of the standard and brand (logo).
 - iii. finalise a proposal on POETCom's core services and refine the corresponding budget.
 - iv. Develop a strategy and proposals for funding POETCom.
- d) **note** that the Working Group is to conclude activities and formulate decisions for the next POETCom general assembly to be convened before the end of 2023. HOAFS nominations for the Working Group will be called within one month.

SESSION FIVE

Chair- Dr. Vinesh Kumar, Permanent Secretary - Ministry of Agriculture, Fiji

Item 5.1 Priorities for HOAFS agenda 2024

41. Nauru tabled an agenda item for HOAFS 2024 to control invasive species, such as fruit fly, yellow ants and white flies, and to improve agricultural services at the national level. Fruit fly and yellow ants, and white flies are affecting gardens. Fiji raised consideration of a forestry sector alignment. These, and any other proposed, agenda items will be included in the consultations with members in the preparations for the next meeting.

Item 5.2 Statements from Partners

42. Statements were delivered by development partners the Australian Center for International Agriculture Research (ACIAR), Australia DFAT, New Zealand, European Union, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), International Trade Centre (ITC), United States of America, Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Forum and South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIRO), World Organisation of Animal Health and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITGRFA). Summaries are attached as Annex 3, with full versions available from SPC.

Papers for Information

- Item 5.4.1 *PWAF Host Roles and Responsibilities*
- Item 5.4.2 *Update on the Pacific Community Food Systems Flagship*
- Item 5.4.3 *Forestry Outlook Report*
- Item 5.4.4 *LRD Annual Report 2021*
- Item 5.4.5 *FAO Pacific Annual Report 2022*
- Item 5.4.6 *PHOVAPS Update*
- Item 5.4.7 *FAO SAP 2022 Achievements*

43. Closing Remarks were delivered by the Chair.

Annex 1 PHOAFS Outcomes Statement

**Report to the
3rd Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (PMAF) Meeting**

**From the
8th Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS)
Nadi, Fiji
10 March 2023**

PHOAFS OUTCOMES

44. The 8th Regional Meeting of Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS) met on 9 March 2023 in Nadi, Fiji with a focus on progress on actions since PHOAFS 2021. The meeting was attended by Heads of Agriculture and Forestry from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States, and Wallis and Futuna. Representatives and Observers from international, regional and national organisations, private sector and civil society also attended.

Report on action items from PHOAFs 2021, Fiji (virtual).

45. The PHOAFS **endorsed** SPC and FAO's response to the PHOAFS 2021 recommendations.

Proposal on the process to develop a Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Strategy

46. The PHOAFS agreed to (a) **endorse** the concept for developing the Pacific Strategy for Agriculture and Forestry, and (b) **request** SPC and FAO to mobilise development partner support to deliver the strategy.

Developing the concept of a Pacific Regional Research Agenda

47. The PHOAFS agreed to **endorse**:

- a) the proposed framework and nominate SPC-LRD to work with member countries to operationalise it.
- b) a review of the name to be facilitated by SPC.
- c) an RRA Report as a Standing Agenda Item at the PHOAFS meetings.

Updates on the implementation of the Koronivia agriculture KJWA and of the COP27 Outcome on the joint implementation of climate action on agriculture

48. Acknowledging the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture KJWA under Fiji's COP23 presidency. The PHOAFS **agreed** to:

- c) **welcome** the updates on the progress in the implementation of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) in the Pacific, including activities endorsed by the 2nd Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting held in Apia, Samoa in 2019;

- d) note the adoption of the Sharm el-Sheik Joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt;
- f) endorse that a paper on the updates of the implementation of the KJWA and Joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security become a standing information paper for the PHOAFS, with decision papers as required;
- g) further endorse the development of regional submissions;
- h) request FAO and SPC to support the Pacific SIDS with the implementation of the KJWA and the Joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security where possible.
- i) partner on a joint submission to the UNFCCC agriculture workstream. The submission will highlight our commitment to shared action against common climate challenges, focused on climate-smart agricultural practices appropriate to our varied country circumstances. The Joint Submission will propose workshop topics designed to build capacity to address common challenges and identify opportunities including soil health, context-appropriate innovations and disaster risk preparedness. The Joint Submission will propose a workshop showcasing good practice and lessons learned from Australia, New Zealand and Pacific island countries climate-smart agriculture practices. By joining together, we commit to engage closely in the UNFCCC agricultural workstream over the next four years.

Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT)

49. The PHOAFS noted the current progress of implementation of the CePaCT Investment Plan.

Pacific Soils Partnership

50. The PHOAFS noted:

- g) Requirements to review PSP governance and implementation frameworks and priorities.
- h) Progress in developing the Pacific Soils Portal (PacSoP) and the revival of soil lab capacity through integration of SPACNET and ASPAC/GSP GLOSOLAN initiatives as key PSP strategic priorities.
- i) PSP could provide broader support and coordination across soil related topics and issues of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA), and other regional strategies.

The PHOAFS endorsed:

- j) SPC to serve as the Secretariat for PSP to coordinate the resourcing and implementation of priority soil activities across the Pacific region, and consider options for resourcing a regional soil coordination role.
- k) PSP governance and strategic priorities to support soil research and capacity development needs in line with the GSP Action Agenda 2022-2023.

An Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in the Pacific 2022

51. The PHOAFS endorsed:

- e) the future and ongoing production of this report.
- f) a call for development partners in taking required actions to fill the identified critical data gaps.
- g) the FAO led partnership of IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and SPC who produced this report.
- h) the advocacy to countries for including food consumption, and nutrition relevant data into their national household surveys.

Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO)

52. The PHOAFS noted the work of the PPPO, and supported the development of a business case for sustainable programme funding for regional biosecurity support services.

Pacific Heads of Veterinary and Animal Production Services (PHOVAPS)

53. The PHOAFS **noted** and **endorsed**:

- d) the progress on the implementation of the Pacific Animal Health Capacity Development Plan (PCDP)
- e) the support provided from the Australian Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) in supporting the implementation of the PAHPF.
- f) Partnership support from DFAT, NZ MPI, ACDP, EU and WOAAH.

Pacific Organics and Ethical Trade Community (POETCom)

54. The PHOAFS **agreed** to:

- a) **note** the progress made by POETCom as the lead organisation for organic agriculture.
- b) **endorse** the POETCom Governance and POS Review Outcomes.
- c) **endorse** and engage in the creation of a Working Group led by POETCom to:
 - i. set up the governance structures in accordance with the consultations: including public technical services, and regulatory structures within the governance model alongside POS users, and other actors in the organic movement with clearly defined roles; strengthening of Focal points at national level.
 - ii. develop, in consultation with the PHOAFS, a charter clarifying the relationship, roles and responsibilities of SPC and POETCom regarding the governance and management of the standard and brand (logo).
 - iii. finalise a proposal on POETCom's core services and refine the corresponding budget.
 - iv. Develop a strategy and proposals for funding POETCom.
- d) **note** that the Working Group is to conclude activities and formulate decisions for the next Poetcom general assembly to be convened before the end of 2023. HOAFS nominations for the Working Group will be called within one month.

Priorities for HOAFS agenda 2024

55. Fiji, Nauru and Samoa proposed agenda items for the next HOAFS in 2024 and SPC will include this in their consultations with members on the meeting.

Statements from Partners

56. Statements were delivered by partners ACIAR, Australia, New Zealand, EU, IFAD, GIZ, ITC, United States, CSO Forum, SPTO, SPREP, CSIRO, WOAAH and FAO-ITPGRFA. The full statements are available from SPC.

Side Events Outcomes

57. The meeting **agreed** to include the Outcomes of the Side Events, held during the Pacific Week of Agriculture, as an information paper to the Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting.

Nadi, Fiji

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS**Australia****Mr Chris Tinning**

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Australian Center for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)

59. ACIAR is investing AUD\$18.6 million in 52 agricultural research-for-development projects across eight countries in the Pacific in 2022-2023. The research ACIAR funds in the Pacific is diverse and ranges from strengthening regional biosecurity; making rural livelihoods more resistant to the impacts of climate change; improving gender equity through the empowerment of women and girls; enhancing human health by prioritising nutrition in agri-food systems; and exploring opportunities to develop agri-business and unlock economic opportunities for smallholder farmers.

Civil Society Organisations (CSO)

60. It is important to capture the views of civil society as governments set policy, to understand the full spectrum of private sector and community development vulnerabilities and needs, which include contributions to the broader economy. The civil society forum brings together expert counsels of business and community leaders to contribute to public discourse and governance. The CSO Partnership requests approval for a spot on the agenda of the next HOAFS and MOAFS meetings to report on the farmer organizations, private sector and civil society contribution to agroforestry in the region.

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIRO)

61. CSIRO has worked for decades with Pacific island countries to address common challenges including biosecurity threats, improving soil health and building resilience to climate change. The challenges ahead - associated with climate, more frequent and intense weather events, rising rates of non-communicable diseases and disruptions to food supply chains - means a systems approach to our food systems is paramount. Many Pacific countries have developed national Food Systems Pathways to support equitable and sustainable wellbeing. These pathways represent significant change agendas.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australia

62. DFAT is pleased to support the Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry to discuss shared opportunities and challenges. Agriculture and forestry are critical sectors for the livelihoods and incomes of many households, and need investment and research to meet future challenges. Australia looks forward to working with Pacific partners and with development partners to build stronger agriculture and forestry sectors, including through investments in key regional public goods such as biosecurity, plant genetic resources, soils, climate information and climate-resilient agriculture.

German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)

63. GIZ has supported Pacific agriculture and forestry programmes for nearly 50 years, including forestry programmes in nine Pacific countries. GIZ supports the Agriculture Sector – specifically in Vanuatu – via the Vanuatu Value Chain Programme. Regional support includes the NDC Hub on how to best include agriculture, and other sectors, into the Nationally Determined Contributions and how to implement its planned activities.

International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)

64. IFAD has invested US\$ 420 million of which US\$ 130 million is financed through the Fund's programme of loans and grants in the Pacific region. IFAD continues to expand investments to meet the demand of the region has become a high priority. IFADs projects empowers marginalized groups and address the challenges in the region such as climate change. The organisation engages the support of civil society organisations, including farmer organisations, indigenous peoples and other community-based organisations which aligns with IFADs people-centred approach to development.

International Trade Centre (ITC)

65. ITC helps producers and MSMEs build resilience to food crises, climate change, market shocks, pandemic induced disruptions, and unlock market opportunities. The Alliances for Action (A4A) approach brings together private and public actors to empower smallholder farmers, processors and manufacturers. ITC is currently implementing the ACP Business Friendly programme funded by the European Union (EU) and the Organisation of Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific Countries (OACPS).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) New Zealand

66. Pacific communities are relying increasingly on agriculture and forestry for their food security and livelihoods, given the ongoing impacts of climate change and COVID-19. This brings urgency to our work to transform our agriculture and forestry sectors to meet future needs. New Zealand has listened carefully this week to the priorities highlighted and the work underway. This will help identify further partnerships to achieve the Pacific region's agriculture and forestry goals.

South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO)

67. Training and capacity development, regional agritourism promotion particularly for Small Island States as part of food security, increased awareness of organic standards in the tourism sector and harnessing technology in connecting chefs, tourism businesses and farmers will remain solid points of convergence in moving forward. At the regional level, SPTO looks forward to continued collaboration with the SPC Land and Resources Division as CROP partners in advancing sustainable development for our region through tourism.

Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

67. Acknowledge the statement by the SPREP Director General which made reference to the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SPREP and FAO. The Director General also noted the close work between SPC and SPREP to support member countries at global negotiations at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and CBD and Oceans Conference/BBJN.

United States of America

68. The US provided funding and other support for the First Pacific Ecological Security Conference (PESC) in Palau last October for 15 Pacific Island Countries and Territories. The PESC discussed control of invasive species to enhance Pacific climate resilience, food security, livelihoods, cultural resources and biodiversity. The meeting also fine-tuned strategic action plans for coconut rhinoceros beetle and invasive ants, as well as enhancing biocontrol options targeting priority invasive species.

World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)

68. The adoption of standards on the quality of Veterinary Services lead to the PVS Pathway, which aims to assess vet services, and make them more robust. Related activities include workforce development through several capacity programmes; veterinary legislation support; an aquatic animal health strategy; a wildlife health framework, and guidelines on topics of interest including small-scale farmers, such as those on biosecurity at farm level.