

REPORT OF MEETING

**THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS MARITIME
ASSOCIATION (PacMA)**

Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 11-12 May 2009



SPC
Secretariat
of the Pacific
Community



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SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**13TH MEETING OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS MARITIME ASSOCIATION
(PacMA)**

(Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 11 & 12 May 2009)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

MONDAY, 11 MAY 2009		
0800 – 0830		Registration Secretariat
0830 – 0845		All delegates are requested to be seated Arrival of Tongan Minister for Transport
0845 – 0855	Agenda Item 1	Hymn 575 – verses 1, 3, 4 Maopa Choir
		Opening Prayer – President of the Constitutional Church of Tonga, followed by the Lord's prayer (Maopa Choir) President Reverend Luke Sikalu
0855 – 0900		An item by Maopa Choir Maopa Choir
0900 – 0920	Agenda Item 2	Opening Remarks Tongan Minister for Transport Hon. Paul Karalus
0920 – 0925		Benediction President Reverend Luke Sikalu
0925 – 0930		Tonga National Anthem (All please stand)
0930 – 1000		Photograph / Morning Tea
1000 – 1005	Agenda Item 3	Adoption of Agenda for 13 th Meeting Members
1005 – 1010	Agenda Item 4	Adoption of Minutes of 12 th Meeting Members
1010 – 1020	Agenda Item 5	Treasurer's Report Secretariat
1020 – 1045	Agenda Item 6	Secretariat Report Secretariat
1045 – 1100	Agenda Item 7	Audit Subcommittee Report Hayes Moses
1100 – 1115	Agenda Item 8	Maritime Education & Training (MET) Subcommittee Report Richard Coleman
1115 – 1130	Agenda Item 9	Maritime Safety Subcommittee Report Matthias Mangmog
1130 – 1145	Agenda Item 10	Association annual report Chair
1145 – 1150	Agenda Item 11	Dates for next PacMA 14 in 2010 Associate members
1150 – 1200	Agenda Item 12	Tabling of Statements from Associate and Honorary members and Observers SPC

1200 – 1300

Lunch followed by CLOSED SESSION

CLOSED SESSION AGENDA

1300 – 1330	Agenda Item 13	Tabling & discussion of Ministerial 2 issue papers	SPC RMP / Chair
1330 – 1400	Agenda Item 14	Single maritime association – merger with PacWIMA	Chair / SPC-RMP
1400 – 1430	Agenda Item 15	PacMA Membership (Fee increase and vote for new memberships)	Members
1430 – 1500	Agenda Item 16	Tabling of Country Papers / Information Papers & Information Requests	Chair
1500 – 1530			
Afternoon Tea			
1530 – 1600	Agenda Item 17	Secretariat response to 2008 closed session outcomes	Chair
1600 – 1630	Agenda Item 18	Review of RMP through completed questionnaires	Chair

TUESDAY, 12 MAY 2009

0800 – 1000	Continuation of CLOSED SESSION	Chair
1000 – 1030		
Photograph / Morning Tea		
1030 – 1230	Continuation of CLOSED SESSION	Chair

END OF PacMA 13

1830 – 1915	Maritime Achiever Awards at cocktail hosted by Secretariat of the Pacific Community (Evening Function on Tuesday 12 May with Ministerial Delegates)
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SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

Thirteenth Meeting of the Pacific Islands Maritime Association (PacMA)

(Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 11-12 May 2009)

MEETING MINUTES

1. REGISTRATION

- 1.1 The 13th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of PacMA was held on 11-12 May 2009 at the Fa'onelua Convention Centre in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.
- 1.2 The meeting was organised by the SPC's Regional Maritime Programme (RMP) in conjunction with the Tonga Ministry of Transport.
- 1.3 Under Regular membership of PacMA, 31 individuals were in attendance representing Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Wallis & Futuna.
- 1.4 The Honorary member in attendance was the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.
- 1.5 Associate Members in attendance were the Australian Maritime College, New Zealand Maritime School, Australian Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Local Government, Samoa Shipping Corporation Ltd and Samoa Shipping Services.
- 1.6 Six observers participated in the AGM representing, the Embassy of the United States in Fiji, United States Coast Guard, Pacific Forum Line, South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission (SWPHC) and SPC's Oceanic and Coastal Fisheries Programme.
- 1.7 A list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

2. AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING PRAYER

- 2.1 The Tonga Ministry of Transport organised local group, Moapa Choir, to perform at the opening meeting.
- 2.2 The opening prayer was led by the President of the Constitutional Church of Tonga.
- 2.3 The session rounded off with the Choir singing the Tongan National Anthem.

3. AGENDA ITEM 2: OPENING REMARKS

- 3.1 The Minister for Transport from Tonga, Hon. Paul Karalus, delivered an opening speech, welcoming everyone to Tonga and reinforcing the importance of ensuring continual progress and compliance in the maritime sector. The opening speech is attached as Annex 2.

- 3.2 Captain Hogan also informed the meeting of Taulapapa Captain Maselino Tominiko's resignation from his position as the Chair of PacMA, to allow him take up his new appointment as the Audit and Training Adviser at SPC RMP.
- 3.3 Captain Hogan introduced the interim Chair of PacMA, Capt John Rounds from Fiji who would be chairing the 13th meeting of PacMA.
- 3.4 Capt John Rounds thanked the PacMA members for the support to improve the maritime sector in the region and acknowledged the achievements PacMA had enjoyed under the leadership of the outgoing chair. Captain Rounds' speech is attached as Annex 3.

4. AGENDA ITEM 3: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

- 4.1 The Chair asked the plenary for comments on the Agenda.
- 4.2 No objections were raised by the plenary.
- 4.3 The agenda was adopted with Samoa moving the item, and Kiribati seconding it.

5. AGENDA ITEM 4: ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF 12TH MEETING

- 5.1 The Chair asked the plenary for comments on the minutes of the last AGM.
- 5.2 Kiribati (Miteti) referred to Section 13 (page 6) on 'Statement from associate members, honorary members and observers', and asked for clarification on what "fighting facility" was referred to, under paragraph 13.2. Chair clarified that it should have read 'fire fighting facility'.
- 5.3 The minutes of 12th PacMA meeting was adopted with Kiribati moving, and the Cook Islands seconding.

6. AGENDA ITEM 5: TREASURER'S REPORT

- 6.1 The Treasurer's report, prepared by the Secretariat, was presented by Captain Hogan and opened for comments.
- 6.2 Some members had paid their dues after the treasurer's report had been compiled and therefore this was not reflected in the report. But the Secretariat assured members that they would update their subscriber list. Missing payments were highlighted, which was to be brought to the respective members notice at the end of the meeting. The Secretariat sent out invoices for the 2009 fee payments in early March and hoped payments would come in soon.
- 6.3 Mr. Richard Coleman, one of the EC members of PacMA and the Principal of PNG Maritime College, was acknowledged for undertaking a consultancy on behalf of PacMA and depositing the full sum within the PacMA account.
- 6.4 Agenda Item 3 was moved by Cook Islands and seconded by FSM.

7. AGENDA ITEM 6: SECRETARIAT REPORT

- 7.1 Capt John Hogan of SPC RMP briefed the plenary on the work of RMP during 2008.
- 7.2 The Chair invited comments from the plenary on the report and pointed out the set of recommendations at the end of the report which could also be discussed further at the closed session if necessary.
- 7.3 Fiji suggested that the issues relating to the Secretariat report be discussed in the closed session.
- 7.4 PNG moved the agenda item which was seconded by the Solomon Islands.

8. AGENDA ITEM 7: AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

- 8.1 Mr William Hayes Moses of Palau briefed the plenary on the work of the PacMA Audit Subcommittee in 2008.
- 8.2 He called for support of new nominees to the subcommittee, which included Ms Makerita Atonio of Samoa and Mr Michael Pidi of Papua New Guinea.
- 8.3 PNG and Samoa expressed appreciation and acceptance of Makerita's and Michael's appointment to the subcommittee.
- 8.4 The report was moved by Vanuatu and seconded by Fiji.

9. AGENDA ITEM 8: MARITIME EDUCATION & TRAINING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

- 9.1 Mr. Richard Coleman of PNG briefed the plenary on the work of PacMA's MET Subcommittee in 2008.
- 9.2 He informed the meeting that some new members were being appointed to the MET subcommittee, the names of whom would be disclosed in the closed session.
- 9.3 Kiribati (Miteti) noted that MET had engaged Mr Harkesh Grover of Maritime New Zealand to do some work with MET on modulating examination papers. Kiribati wished to know what Mr Grover's views were on Deck modules as compared to what New Zealand had. Mr Coleman clarified that Mr Grover's task was specifically to review the examination standards so that MET could get a third party view on the appropriateness of examination papers. No discussion had taken place on comparison of certificates involving New Zealand and Pacific or on the appropriateness of training modules. Accordingly Mr Coleman reporting that Mr Grover was happy that the examination papers MET had accumulated from maritime training institutes in the region for the regional examination databank met the required international standards for seafarers.
- 9.4 Samoa moved the acceptance of the report and it was seconded by Kiribati.
- 9.5 The Chair invited Captain Tim Wilson, Director of New Zealand Maritime School, to give an update on the work of the Standards of Training and Watchkeeping (STW) Subcommittee relating to the comprehensive review of the STCW Code.

- 9.5.1 Captain Wilson used to be the adviser of the New Zealand delegation to the STW subcommittee but was now the chair of the subcommittee.
- 9.5.2 An STW intercessional working group meeting was held in mid 2008 to progress the revision of STCW Code and the annual STW Subcommittee meeting was held in February 2009. A draft was expected to be presented at the next STW meeting in February 2010, with possible adoption of the revised Code to happen in the Diplomatic Conference possibly in June 2010. If adopted in 2010, the revised Code will be effective from June 2012.
- 9.5.3 The revision would also see an introduction of certificate of competency requirements for seafarer deck and engine – which is now required in ILO conventions, which is inclusive of Able Seafarer Rating.
- 9.5.4 Accordingly Captain Wilson informed PacMA that all IMO members in the region would have received draft papers on the revision by now and therefore can look at what alignment is required to give it effect at national level. Captain Wilson also suggested that PacMA could start looking at the changes that may be required to PIMLaws as well as the training modules for a new addition of Able Seafarer Rating.
- 9.5.5 The revision also placed much more emphasis on bridge resource management (BRM) and pilotage. BRM wording needed to be very accurate. On the engineering side, similar modernisation was to be expected. Removal of the 30 month period of training was one of the most controversial issues and about 30 million had been spent by industry on debating this issue – the general feeling was that this should be removed.
- 9.5.6 Revisions also extended to simulators. MTIs in the region which used the RMP portable navigation simulator for training did not have to worry about complying with new requirements for simulator capability.
- 9.5.7 The revision will also see a complete restructure of all tanker courses (oil, chemical and gas) which will require a complete new set of competency requirements.
- 9.5.8 For security training: from 1 April certification of SSOs will become mandatory under STCW. This could be another issue for PacMA to look at. In New Zealand, some companies required SSO certification with endorsement for the convention. Administrations are required to have a process on how to do that. Some re-issue of certificates could be required. Security awareness will be a part of all basic sea training while intermediate level training was required for personnel assigned security tasks.
- 9.5.9 Other controversial issues were the revision of safe crewing system (could be hybrid system) and compulsory rest periods. The issue for rest periods was that it would lead to the end of the two watch system in 24 hours, i.e. 12 on shift and 12 of rest (ILO) which could be very controversial if adopted as this could end the 24 hour watchkeeping schedule.
- 9.5.10 Some major issues included the debate on mandatory five year refresher courses. The Review identified that there was no such mandatory requirement for this. However, some requirements on radiocommunications,

survival and firefighting were expected to be seen, but the nature of it was still not clear.

9.5.11 According to Captain Wilson, while the changes to the Code were not immense, this was not the review that the industry was looking for and employers could end up losing confidence in it. It was necessary to reach a standard that worked best for the countries.

9.6 The Chair thanked Mr Wilson and requested some form of written statement on the briefing for the benefit of PacMA members.

10. AGENDA ITEM 9: SURVEY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

10.1 Captain Matthias Mangmog, the Chair of PacMA Survey Subcommittee, briefed the plenary on the work of the Subcommittee in 2007.

10.2 William Hayes of Palau asked the Subcommittee whether they had started work in the search and rescue area. Captain Mangmog clarified that they had not proceeded with SAR yet because the terms of reference for the activity had yet to be finalised. This area may be looked at in the next phase of their workplan.

10.3 Palau moved the acceptance of the report, seconded by PNG.

11. AGENDA ITEM 10: ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT

11.1 Taulapapa Captain Maselino Tominiko, the former Chair of PacMA, presented the association Annual Report 2008 to the plenary and thanked the members for their support during his term in office. He promised to assist members in whatever way possible to ensure that they received attention to training and audit needs.

11.2 Solomon Islands moved the acceptance of the report, seconded by Fiji.

12. AGENDA ITEM 11: DATES FOR NEXT PACMA 14 MEETING IN 2010

12.1 Captain John Hogan proposed that PacMA hold their next AGM in Fiji at the new SPC conference facility in Suva, Fiji, preferably sometime in March or April 2010.

12.2 The plenary agreed in principle to the tentative venue and dates for the next meeting.

12.3 PNG moved the proposal and Cook Islands seconded it.

13. AGENDA ITEM 12: STATEMENTS FROM ASSOCIATE MEMBERS, HONORARY MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS

13.1 The Chair provided the associate and honorary PacMA members as well as the observers an opportunity to make brief statements, if they wished to do so.

13.2 Adam James Greenland of SWPHC thanked PacMA for inviting SWPHC to the meeting and allowing them to table a paper. The key points of discussion were:

- 13.2.1 The International Hydrographic Organisation's (IHO) primary focus was on the standardisation of navigation charts and surveying for safety of navigation.
- 13.2.2 The mandatory carriage requirements for Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) would be effective in 2012 and the consequential effect would be on national hydrographic offices to have worldwide Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) coverage.
- 13.2.3 Currently, there were eight IHO full members: United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, France, United States, Fiji, PNG, and Tonga. Present at the 2009 SWPHC meeting in PNG were Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, Kiribati and representatives from industry as well. An outcome of the PNG meeting was the proposal to the IHO capacity building committee for undertaking technical visits to Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, and Kiribati. Training was being planned for delivery of maritime safety information and in nautical cartography.
- 13.2.4 New Zealand LINZ Hydrographic Services had recently done some surveys in Tonga and Samoa. Charts and data were available to these members on request.
- 13.2.5 SWPHC looked forward to working closely with PacMA in the future as they shared common goals, objectives and challenges.
- 13.2.6 Mr William Johnson of Tonga asked Mr Greenland when the charts would be made available to Tonga given the completion of a recent survey in the country. According to Mr Greenland, the charts should be made available over the next couple of years.
- 13.2.7 Mr Miteti Abete of Kiribati queried whether there was any consideration for conducting hydrographic surveys in Kiribati. SWPHC responded that a technical visit had been planned, part of which involved assessment and future charting for Kiribati.
- 13.2.8 Mr Fatu Lafoai of Samoa asked whether there was a possibility of SWPHC providing software of ENCs to MTIs for training purposes. Mr Greenland saw no problem in providing the software.
- 13.3 Mr Steve Burnett of Australia's Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (Office of Transport Security) focused attention on SPC RMP's Security Notice 25 on requirements for domestic vessels taking international voyages for slipping purposes.
 - 13.3.1 Mr Burnett said that it was good timing for dissemination of such information as Australia received a lot of these cases. Australia welcomed repairs to domestic vessels but would hate to decline this service due to international requirements. They had to take on international goodwill in a few cases and wait for the required paperwork. SOLAS could make exceptions but Australia did not make any exemption to ISSCs because of their national laws.

- 13.4 Papali'i Willie Nansen, the CEO of Samoa Shipping Corporation Ltd, asked that given the high cost associated with Class society services, could SPC consider setting up a Pacific Class society.
- 13.4.1 In Mr Nansen's view, it would be beneficial for PICTs to have a Pacific-based agency looking into this.
- 13.4.2 Captain Hogan informed plenary that the issue of having a regional system for issuing ship certification had been raised several times in the past. While the idea to regulate domestic shipping in the Pacific was a good one in some ways, it was better for the Pacific Class society initiative to come under the PacMA Safety Subcommittee. SPC would be keen to work with PacMA towards establishing a system of certification for domestic ships. But there were a lot of issues to overcome before this system could become fully operational, insurance being one of the major issues. SPC RMP would explore the idea further with PacMA.
- 13.4.3 Mr William Johnson of Tonga informed members that he would be finishing his contract with the Tonga Department of Marine and Ports in a month's time, to join the Pacific Register of Ships (PRS) in Papua New Guinea. Mr Johnson said that the name was misleading as it provided class society services which were on par with other international class societies and charged lower fees. Mr Johnson further informed the plenary that the Pacific Register of Ships has the support and guidance of Sir Michael Somare, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea. Mr Chris Rupen of PNG responded that a lot of issues needed to be taken into consideration regarding certification of ships in the Pacific, adhering to IMO guidelines being one of the important ones. Mr Ruben cautioned that participants in the meeting should not be misled into things relating to individual country matters.
- 13.5 Mr Sala Theodore Toalepai, General Manager of Samoa Shipping Services, asked PacMA whether a regional system of standardising seafarer wages, similar to the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) scales, could be developed.
- 13.5.1 Mr Toalepai also informed the meeting that Samoa Shipping Services was a new Associate member of PacMA and they were pleased to be attending the meeting this year.
- 13.5.2 Captain Hogan of SPC advised that SPC had been recently approached by ITF to explore the possibility of employing Pacific island seafarers in Australia and New Zealand. SPC provided them with relevant information on maritime training and seafarer numbers in PICs. ITF was also interested in the future potential of MTIs. When ITF finished their study, SPC would get their comments out to the countries. Captain Hogan also commented that SPC was often hamstrung in some of these issues because they did not get relevant information from schools. MTIs could miss out on such opportunities this way. Mr Fatu Lafoai of Samoa asked SPC to identify which MTIs had not responded to RMP's request for information. Taulapapa Captain Maselino S Tominiko of SPC responded that it would be best to discuss these issues in the closed session.

14. AGENDA ITEM 17: CLOSED SESSION FOR THE PACMA PLENARY

- 14.1 PacMA regular members convened for a closed session meeting while associate members, honorary members, observers and SPC RMP staff broke off for the day.
- 14.2 The outcomes of the closed session were minuted by the PacMA Executive Committee members and were scheduled to be given to SPC RMP at a later time.

Annex 1

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

PacMA 13th Meeting

Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 11 May 2009

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANTS BY COUNTRY

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Annex 2

Opening Speech for the 13th Meeting of the Pacific Islands Maritime Association (PacMA)

Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga 11th & 12th of May 2009

By Minister for Transport of the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga,
Hon. Paul Karalus

Hon. Ministers of Maritime Transport of Pacific Island Countries and your Delegations.

Reverend Luke Sikalu and the Maopa Choir

Staff of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

Members of all Regional Organisations and Donor Partners

Members of the Pacific Regional Maritime Associations

Members of the Diplomatic Corp

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Malo e lelei and a very warm welcome to this 13th meeting of the Pacific Islands Maritime Association

As the key regional body for the maritime sector within the Pacific region you are all aware of the challenges facing the shipping industry. The global economic crisis has had an immediate effect on the worldwide shipping industry with over 10% of the world fleet of container ships now laid up. The volatility within the shipping industry is having the effect of reduced shipping services to some countries.

The Pacific region's dependence on sea transport to supply consumer goods, fuel and other necessities of the modern world is a big challenge. We have long distances between our island nations. There are small volumes of cargo. And we face an increasingly regulated environment. But our Pacific maritime sector, by working together through our regional mechanisms, such as your Association, and by having agreements in place, we have been facing up to and meeting these challenges head-on.

Of vital importance to the economic survival of Smaller Island States are regional collaboration and trade, the implementation of the international conventions and reviews of trade patterns. The SIS Shipping Ministers' meeting that will be held on Wednesday will highlight the need to progress assistance to our smaller neighbours with solutions to their most pressing problems – problems of regular shipping services, subregional shipping agreements, a coordinated approach to donor partners, and the use of regional expertise. Happily though, some of these services have started to link the smallest of our Pacific neighbours.

Understanding and awareness of the relevance and the role of international maritime law and how it links into domestic laws can develop uncertainty and lead to slow ratification of relevant conventions. Coherent shipping policies on maritime issues of priority such as security and border management can lead to delays in drafting robust responsive laws. The Pacific International Maritime Law Association has been increasing the awareness of these issues and is a fine example of utilising regional expertise.

In the area of Maritime Training, the Regional Certificate Structure, Regional Maritime Examination Databank and the Neptune Seafarers' Database are all examples of regional solutions to international requirements. They all ensure that Maritime Training Institutes have the right resources and qualified lecturers. They ensure that our Pacific Island seafarers have the assistance they need to compete for employment in the international market-place – which leads to ensuring a steady flow of remittances back to their families at home on the islands.

The Maritime Administrations in the region are instrumental in maintaining compliance with international regulatory requirements to ensure that seafarer training standards, ship and port security requirements and ship and seafarer safety have more efficient and effective operating systems in place. These all contribute to a safe, efficient, cost-effective maritime sector.

Within the port sector where ports are the gateways to a country's trade, environmental impacts, emissions and ballast water control are all issues that will provide challenges for the next little while. Pacific island ports need to ensure compliance with the new international requirements. The use of hub ports to improve shipping services to smaller nations are providing the larger ports in the Pacific with new opportunities to assist their smaller neighbours to ultimately improve efficiency within the sector.

Given the need to promote gender mainstreaming, the development of Pacific women working in the maritime sector needs to be encouraged and the proposed merger of the Pacific Women in Maritime Association with your Association is a first step towards strengthening the single maritime voice in the region.

The work of your subcommittees is impressive indeed, the Audit Subcommittee with its regional auditing standards, the Maritime Education and Training Subcommittee with its regional certificate system and new examination databank and the Safety Subcommittee with its regional instructions for surveyors and the recent accident investigation manual all showcase the work that your Association has achieved.

The Monitoring and Compliance systems you have developed for ship and port security are world class and the envy of other regions in the world, the respect for your systems shown by the Pacific Rim countries bears witness to this. The new security challenges and your initiatives in introducing supply chain security show the regions continued commitment to improve maritime security within the region.

Having made mention of the increased regional solutions and agreements to strengthen the maritime sector in the region we must now acknowledge the work undertaken by the Secretariat of Pacific Community's Regional Maritime Programme. Their continuous work in training, mentoring, collecting then analysing data and seeking regional solutions to national challenges enables the region's maritime sector to have the capacity it now has to meet new challenges. There are now systems in place in the Pacific maritime sector that are unique and the region can hold its head up high at the innovative solutions we have adopted to resolve challenges we all face.

Finally I wish you well in your deliberations today and tomorrow as I know you are as aware as I am of the importance that the lifeblood of shipping has in our Pacific.

I now declare this 13th meeting of the Pacific Islands Maritime Association open.

Thank you.

Opening Speech for PacMA13 by Interim Chair
Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga, 11th May 2009

Fellow PacMA Members
Members of all Regional Organisations and Donors
Staff of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Ladies and Gentlemen

Malo-e-lelei and welcome to the 13th Meeting of PacMA.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of PacMA, I thank you all for your presence here today and your support of PacMA in its effort in raising the standard of the maritime transport sector in the Pacific Region.

As Countries in the Pacific vary from relatively large volcanic islands to coral atolls, so does the size of our respective maritime transport sectors.

In recognition of this fact and in true Pacific spirit, members realised the need to unite and assist each other in meeting the ever-increasing requirements of the global maritime community.

PacMA with the assistance of the SPC and in particular the Regional Maritime Programme and Donor agencies, have achieved a great deal for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

In spite of the many challenges, PacMA continues to respond to the regional needs in promoting a safe, secure, clean and sustainable maritime sector. Our meeting here today is to review what has been done, identify the challenges facing the sector and what must be undertaken to address them.

I acknowledge with appreciation the Kingdom of Tonga and especially the Ministry of Transport and its staff for hosting PacMA. Thank you for the warm hospitality, generous support and the splendid facilities provided for this Meeting.

Thank Member Countries and Donors for your support over the years allowing PacMA to progress and achieve most of our objectives.

Of special mention is the SPC/RMP and in particular Capt John Hogan and staff in guiding PacMA over the years and providing quality secretariat service as well.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the outgoing Chair of PacMA Taulapapa Maselino Tomoniko for guiding PacMA since its inception to where it is today. We wish him well for the future.

Acknowledgement is also made of the Executive Committee members for providing balance and wise guidance to PacMA.

Last but certainly not the least, the Interpretation and Support Team for the important services they provide.

The challenges placed on the maritime sector by the ever-increasing requirements are amplified by the current global economic downturn.

PacMA is fully aware of the situation and is reviewing its operations in light of these factors to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

I call upon Member States to continue your support and active participation. We need to work together as a united team with a common goal in raising the standard in our maritime sector.

I take this opportunity to especially thank our Donor Agencies for their continued support over the years. With your assistance, much has been achieved and still more is required of us. We therefore request and look forward to your continued support. We also seek new donors to compensate where some have ceased.

During the course of this meeting, you will realise the scope of the work achieved and that which is still before us as we try to address the needs of the maritime sector in the Pacific.

In conclusion, I hope you will benefit from these meetings and look forward to your active contribution.

Thank you.
