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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Thirty-seventh Session

**Colombo, Sri Lanka,
31 January – 2 February 2024 and 19-22 February 2024**

Statement of the Third Joint FAO and Pacific Community (SPC) Ministers for Agriculture and Forestry Meeting

Your Excellency, Dr Qu Dongyu,

H.E. Mr Mahinda Amaraweera,

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates,

Representatives from Civil Society and the Private Sector,

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is an honour for me to present a brief statement, on behalf of my fellow Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry.
2. As alluded to in previous meetings, the Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting (PMAF) is an important forum for our region. It is the principal decision-making body for Agriculture and Forestry sectors in the Pacific, with the aim to provide strong governance, leadership, and strategic direction regarding national, regional and global commitments on agriculture and forestry matters, particularly those which impact on the Pacific region.
3. The Pacific Ministers met in Fiji on 10 March 2023, for the Third Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting, and Fiji had the honour to host and chair the event.
4. The meeting was attended by 21 countries and territories and various Civil Society Organisations, Private Sector and Development Partners were present as observers.
5. The Ministers meeting was the culmination of the 3rd Pacific Week of Agriculture on the theme 'Growing Together – Transforming Pacific Agriculture and Forestry', which included three days of Side Events, an exhibition of Pacific trade products and services, and the '8th Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (PHOAFS) meeting'.
6. From this meeting a number of priority areas were discussed and outcomes were agreed upon.

This and other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

7. The Pacific Ministers endorsed the progression of work for the development of a climate adaptation tool to support agriculture and forestry decision-making, planning and investment in Pacific countries, under future climate scenarios.

8. During the discussion of this tool, Ministers emphasised the importance of the development of the tool, recognising nations' data sovereignty, and conveyed their expectation that this would be a key consideration in establishing the tool.

9. Ministers asked for the inclusion of country level data, and support for data compilation in countries where data is not available, and for co-developers to engage a participatory development approach with member countries to build the evidence base for impacts of climate change and the potential climate change adaptation options.

10. It was further agreed that the tool will be co-developed by The Pacific Community (SPC), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and, housed in the Pacific Data Hub and managed by SPC.

Excellencies,

11. For the Pacific region, agrifood systems transformation continues to be at the fore of our discussions, and as such the Pacific Ministers endorsed the creation of a regional technical coordination committee, or hub to inform and catalyse the food systems transformation agendas in Pacific Islands and Territories (PICTs).

12. We the ministers called for greater coordination of the work programmes of FAO and SPC, and of key decision making meetings for Agriculture and Forestry in the region, namely the 'Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services meeting' and the 'Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry meeting'.

13. A revised architecture to provide pathways for feeding agriculture and forestry priorities through to the governing bodies of the region and the various partners was endorsed by the Ministers, and it was agreed that effectiveness of the meeting arrangements is reviewed and reported to the next PMAF meeting.

14. A report from the Regional Meeting of the Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting was noted and supported by the Ministers for the Pacific.

15. I wish to make a specific reference to a decision which was endorsed in the report from the 'Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services meeting', which was to develop the 'Regional Agriculture and Forestry Strategy' for the Pacific utilising a strategic foresight methodology.

16. This will be a critical piece of regional strategy to support our work as a region in the Agriculture and Forestry sectors.

17. Country delegations were given an opportunity to present 'Country Statements', which informed the meeting of the countries' priorities and specific requests for support.

18. The meeting was concluded with the confirmation of the next host and chair for the Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting, which I am pleased to inform the you, will be our friends from Tonga.

Excellencies,

19. A full outcome statement for the Third Pacific Ministers and Agriculture and Forestry Meeting held in Fiji, in March 2023 can be found online, or may be requested from the FAO Subregional Office of the Pacific Islands.

20. Thank you for the opportunity to speak of our Pacific priorities in relation to our regional Ministerial Forum.

21. We hope that as we share the priorities from the Pacific, we can learn from each other and share our knowledge on specific issues.

22. Thank you.