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SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme

"Sustainable Weather, Climate, Oceans and Hydrological Services for a Resilient Pacific"

Fourth Meeting of the Pacific Meteorological Council

14-18 August 2017
Honiara
Solomon Islands

Agenda Item 15.3: Re-engaging UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme in the Pacific Region

Purpose:

To provide a briefing on United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) work on water and report on UNESCO's new initiative to re-engage UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme and other UNESCO Water Institutes, programmes and initiatives with PICTs.

Background:

UNESCO promotes sustainable development, democracy and peace through work in the thematic areas of education, the sciences, culture, and communication and information.

Through its Natural Sciences Programme, UNESCO is seeking to increase its support on water to the Pacific Member States in the implementation of their national priorities, the SAMOA Pathway, the UNESCO SIDS Action Plan and Sustainable Development Goal 6 "to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all". UNESCO works to build the knowledge base to help countries manage their water resources in a sustainable way through the International Hydrological Programme (IHP), its international network of Water Centres and Chairs and through leading the UN-wide World Water Development Report.

UNESCO's Regional Science Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (Jakarta) has been coordinating activities on water resources in Southeast Asia and the Pacific over the last thirty years in close cooperation with 17 IHP National Committees or Focal Points (Australia, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, DPR Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Pacific Island Countries, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Vietnam), nominated and established by UNESCO Member States. The National Committees all help to ensure that IHP maintains its multidisciplinary approach and remains responsive to country needs, as their members are drawn from various sectors of society.

There are five UNESCO Water Centres, international research institutes that have expertise of relevance to the Pacific. These are:

- [Asia Pacific Centre for Ecohydrology, Indonesia \(APCE\).](#)
- [Humid Tropics Centre Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia \(HTC KL\).](#)
- [International Research and Training Centre on Erosion and Sedimentation, China \(IRTCES\).](#)
- [International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management, Japan \(ICHARM\).](#)
- [International Center for Water Security and Sustainable Management, Korea \(UNESCO i-WSSM\).](#)

There is also an extensive network of [Water-related UNESCO Chairs](#) and Centres around the world which serve as think tanks and centres of excellence on water research. The UNESCO Chair in Water Economics and Transboundary Water Governance is based at Australia National University.

The UNESCO International Hydrological Programme has had long involvement with water and sanitation in Small Islands Developing States, including the 1991 publication “Hydrology and water resources of small islands, a practical guide”¹ and pilot projects on groundwater in Tonga and Kiribati. More recently, UNESCO supported the SPC publication “Catalogue of Rivers in the Pacific Islands”.²

UNESCO has implemented water projects in countries around the world, including in SIDS in other regions. Some examples are shared in Annex 1.

These resources, together with a range of water-related projects, programmes and targeted capacity-building implemented by UNESCO, could bring considerable support to PICTs. Given the complex array of challenges facing PICTs and the active support received from a range of partners, an exchange of ideas, information and dialogue is being initiated to ensure that UNESCO’s activities in the region fill genuine gaps, meet country and regional needs in partnership with all stakeholders.

To determine the best way UNESCO’s expertise can help meet the water needs and priorities of PICTs, UNESCO has entered into a scoping and consultation phase, with an emphasis on information gathering, consultation with countries and partners to jointly develop project proposals and concept notes.

Update:

The scoping and consultation began in June 2017 and consists of three main elements: (a) A study, focusing on information gathering, consultation and identifying key areas where UNESCO’s technical expertise can add value; (b) awareness raising at relevant events with stakeholders; (c) a regional consultative meeting in Nadi, Fiji to be held in October 2017

The study is being carried out by Professor Ian White with UNESCO’s office for the Pacific States in Apia. It began in June 2017 and will be completed in September 2017. It will be shared for review and comment in October 2017.

This meeting is one part of the awareness-raising and consultations. PICT officials and technical experts are encouraged to contact UNESCO to share their needs, priorities and feedback (see Annex 2 for contact details).

The regional meeting in Nadi, Fiji will be held on 24 & 25 October 2017. It will be co-hosted by Fiji Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (TBC). Fourteen Pacific SIDS will be invited, plus UNESCO’s technical experts, water institutes, IHP focal points and key regional partners, such as SPREP, SPC, WMO and other UN partners. This will be an opportunity to present the scoping report and carry out consultations with countries on water quality, water security and hydrology.

The exercise will be completed in December 2017 and will include recommendations for pilot activities and priorities for resource mobilisation.

Recommendations:

The Meeting is invited to:

➤ **Note:**

¹ UNESCO (1991) Hydrology and water resources of small islands, a practical guide. Studies and reports on hydrology No 49. UNESCO, Paris, France

1. UNESCO's scoping and consultation initiative, as well as UNESCO's request for comments, inputs and feedback by PICTs, partners and experts.
2. "UNESCO Conference on Water Security in Pacific SIDS", co-hosted by the Fiji Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, to be held on 24 & 25 October 2017 in Nadi, Fiji.

➤ **Request:**

3. UNESCO, in coordination with WMO, SPC and SPREP, support PICTs to improve water security, governance and quality.
4. UNESCO share the outcomes of this process with the PMC

➤ **Invite:**

5. PMC members to respond to UNESCO's request for feedback.

Attachments

- Annex 1: Examples of UNESCO Water initiatives in Small Island Developing States.
Annex 2 Form and contact details for responding to UNESCO's request for feedback and comments.

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