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Item 3(a) of the provisional agenda*

**Major issues in transport: Strengthening connectivity
of regional and interregional transport networks**

Outcome of the High-level Meeting on Strengthening Inter-island Shipping and Logistics in the Pacific Island Countries

Note by the Executive Secretary

Summary

Pursuant to Commission resolution 68/4, the secretariat convened the High-level Meeting on Strengthening Inter-island Shipping and Logistics in the Pacific Island Countries. The High-level Meeting was conducted in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and was attended by 33 delegates of 18 Pacific countries and territories, 42 representatives of 19 specialized agencies and related organizations, intergovernmental organizations and other entities.

The present document contains the outcome of the High-level Meeting, the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific, which was adopted by acclamation.

Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific

We, the Government representatives assembled at the High-level Meeting on Strengthening Inter-island Shipping and Logistics in the Pacific Island Countries, held in Suva from 23 to 25 July 2013,

Concerned that Pacific island countries and territories have high levels of economic, social and environmental vulnerability arising from a number of intrinsic characteristics, including small land area and population, long distances between islands, large exclusive economic zones, remoteness, exposure to external demand and supply shocks, high dependency on fossil fuels, narrow resource base and exposure to global environmental challenges,

Also concerned that these characteristics create a number of constraints and challenges in the provision of inter-island shipping services

* E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/L.1/Rev.1.

(domestic and international), maritime infrastructure, hydrographical services, maritime safety and security services and environmental protection from activities related to shipping,

Recalling the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States¹ and its follow-up conference² which among other things, noted that transport and communications remain important lifelines linking small island developing States with the outside world and remain important challenges in the promotion and implementation of sustainable development nationally and in their regions,

Also recalling the Forum Principles on Regional Transport Services,³ the Framework for Action on Transport Services (FATS),⁴ the Communiqué of the Second Regional Meeting of Ministers for Maritime Transport⁵ and the Communiqué of the Inaugural Joint Regional Meeting for Energy, Information and Communication Technology and Transport,⁶

Recognizing the adverse impacts of infrequent, costly and unreliable international and domestic shipping services, especially to outer islands, and the constraints they place on the social and economic development of peoples on the islands,

Also recognizing the importance of maritime transport in poverty alleviation as it provides opportunities for trade and access to health services, education, employment, markets and other social and economic opportunities,

Convinced that maritime transport will play an important role in supporting the development agenda beyond 2015,⁷

Recognizing the need to improve inter-island shipping services and to create an enabling environment for services to shipping, including port infrastructure and border control and maritime-related facilities, ship finance, shipbuilding, slipway and repair facilities,

Also recognizing that, in many places in the Pacific, aids to navigation are often limited or lack effective all-weather operations and that the

¹ *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States* Bridgetown, Barbados, 26 April-6 May 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap.I, resolution 1, annex II).

² *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum).

³ Forum Principles on Regional Transport Services was adopted by Heads of State and Governments attending the Thirty-Fifth Pacific Islands Forum, which was held in Apia from 5 to 7 August 2004. Available from [www.sids2014.org / index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=43&menu=1509](http://www.sids2014.org/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=43&menu=1509).

⁴ The Framework for Action on Transport Services (FATS), was endorsed by the inaugural Joint Regional Meeting for Energy, Information and Communication Technology and Transport, which was held in Noumea from 4 to 8 April 2011.

⁵ Available from www.spc.int/maritime/images/Reports/Comunique/maritime%20ministerial%20comunique%202009.pdf.

⁶ The inaugural Joint Regional Meeting for Energy, Information and Communication Technology and Transport was held in Noumea from 4 to 8 April 2011.

⁷ See the report of the Expert Group Meeting on Small Island Developing States and the Post-2015 Agenda, New York, 23-24 April 2013. Available from www.sids2014.org/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=43&menu=1509.

accuracy of navigational charts is poor, which increases risk to vessels, cargo, passengers and the environment, as well as reducing vessel efficiency,⁸

Further recognizing the need to improve maritime safety and security, prevent and minimize pollution from ships, and develop and implement search and rescue and marine spill response plans,

Recognizing the need to improve the sustainability of inter-island shipping in the Pacific and to reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels,

1. *Agree* that maritime transport and related services in the Pacific are public policy issues of major concern that require strong political commitment and effective interventions in order to significantly improve the lives of our peoples;

2. *Encourage* Pacific island countries and territories:

(a) To formulate or strengthen shipping programmes that:

(i) Develop and regularly update inventories of ships;⁹

(ii) Develop and regularly update inventories of maritime infrastructure and facilities (ports, wharves, jetties, dredged channels and navigational aids);

(iii) Review the adequacy of inter-island shipping services;

(iv) Enable the provision of ship repair facilities;

(v) Explore options for ship finance;

(vi) Strengthen the capacity of maritime administrations to address the whole scope of maritime policies, encourage the use and adoption of safe ship management systems and enforce the implementation of safety and security regulations;

(vii) Strengthen the capacity of maritime training institutions in implementing the provisions of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers,¹⁰ as amended;

(viii) Explore possibilities of supporting shipping services of an adequate quality that, for commercial reasons, would not otherwise be provided;¹¹

(ix) Develop and regularly update plans for funding, developing, rehabilitating and maintaining maritime infrastructure which take into account risk management strategies;

⁸ Due to diversions to avoid hazards and only daytime operations in favourable weather.

⁹ FATS, Theme 3- Transport safety and security: “In order to address the problems currently facing the Pacific domestic shipping sector, more detailed information is required on individual vessels such as type of vessel, year built, previous and current owners, engine power, length, tonnage, etc. This information will be useful in providing technical advice based on realistic analyses”.

¹⁰ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1361, No. 23001.

¹¹ TSIP Theme 4 - Improved Access: Activities include “Maintenance fund for promotion of sustainable subsidies” and “Examine franchise or subsidy schemes for uneconomical routes”.

- (x) Explore various funding models, such as blended finance and public-private partnerships, for infrastructure projects, in particular to support and improve the ability of the private sector to develop, evaluate, execute and monitor projects;
- (xi) Strengthen data and information collection, including the monitoring of the adequacy of port and shipping services, as a basis for effective planning, decision-making and benchmarking;
- (xii) To develop regional reception facilities as a solution to enable Pacific island countries and territories to meet the obligations under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and encourage Pacific island countries, which have not done so, to consider becoming a party to the Convention;
- (xiii) Explore opportunities to increase the sustainability of shipping and reduce reliance on fossil fuel use in the shipping sector;
- (xiv) Monitor the adequacy of shipping services in the Pacific, particularly regional shipping arrangements;
- (xv) Explore policy options that ensure adequate shipping services, especially to smaller island States;¹²
- (xvi) Promote border control agreements and cooperation among Pacific island countries and territories;
- (xvii) Enable the provision of border control facilities and infrastructure;
- (xviii) Develop benchmarks on port and shipping performance, and monitor and improve port performance;
- (xix) Benchmark, monitor and improve the efficiency of trade and transport, including border control;
- (xx) Seek to implement transport sector commitments under the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement Trade in Services Protocol and encourage trade under the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement by Parties to the Agreement;
- (xxi) Encourage the effective implementation of measures to reduce biosecurity risks, including the risk of invasive marine pests, and encourage Pacific island countries that have not yet done so to consider becoming a party to the International Convention for the

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