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## Pacific Plant Protection Organisation 10<sup>th</sup> Regional Technical Board Meeting (PPPO Full Board)

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**THEME: CONNECTED, INFORMED & PREPARED (CIP)**

*PPPO family where no Member is left behind*

24 – 25 August 2023

MEETING REPORT



**CROWN BEACH RESORT, RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS**



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## Day 01 – Thursday, August 24

### 0.0 Opening Session

#### 0.1 Opening and Prayer

The honourable guests and delegates for the Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) 10<sup>th</sup> Regional Technical Board (Full Board) Meeting were welcomed by Mr. Ngatoko Ngatoko (Director of Biosecurity, Cook Islands). Reverend (Talatala) Tinivau Soatini delivered a word of prayer to bless the proceedings.

#### 0.2 End of Term Remarks and Introduction of new SWP Bureau member

Outgoing SWP CPM Bureau Member – Mr. Peter Thomson (New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries, NZMPI) (Virtual)

Mr. Thomson stated that he felt privileged to be invited to deliver outgoing remarks at the 2023 PPPO Regional Technical Board Meeting. He thanked all the leaders (Heads of NPPOs) from across the Pacific for joining the meeting in person. He recognized the presence of Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), Australia) as the new PPPO/SWP representative to the CPM Bureau and expressed his unwavering support to Dr. Vivian-Smith and the work that is required and expected of her by the region. He also acknowledged the presence of Ms. Lisa Winthrop at the meeting, the new Director of Plant Imports at NZMPI. As an important update for the region, Mr. Thomson stated that New Zealand now has an established population of Fall Armyworm (FAW) and recognized that other countries are facing their own challenges.

He reminded delegates of the responsibility bestowed upon everyone to lead their organizations and countries in the work that they do. He reminded delegates of the *mantra* that the PPPO has been living by that “we are the IPPC” and “we must ensure our voices are heard at the IPPC Secretariat”. He acknowledged the work of the PPPO Secretariat in support the NPPOs of the region. He was happy with how the region overcame challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic – the *Talanoa Sessions* helped the PPPO to stay connected and to help and support each other. He apologized for not being present at the meeting physically and reminded delegates to set the priorities and direction of the PPPO for the next three years and to focus on matters that will deliver the most value as well as ponder on how to lift our capacities to deliver our strong biosecurity programs. He recognized the importance of the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) work and the Regional ePhyto Project. He acknowledged that the Board will also discuss regional standard setting procedures and hoped that this will help harmonize biosecurity operations in the region. He closed his remarks by sharing a traditional Māori *fakatoki*. He wished everyone well for the meeting.

#### 0.3 Opening Remarks by the Pacific Community (SPC)

**Ms. Karen Mapusua (Director, SPC Land Resources Division)**

Ms. Mapusua welcomed all delegates to the PPPO Regional Technical Board Meeting. She recognized that it has been quite some time (5 years) since we last met for the *Full Board*. She stated that the last few



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years have been particularly trying for all of us with the COVID pandemic and its ongoing ramifications, on top of the ever-present threats of natural disasters and the climate and biodiversity crisis. She recognized that we increasingly call on our cultural strengths, like custodianship, collaboration and community, and our traditional knowledge and science while embracing new and appropriate technologies and approaches to assist us build the future we aspire as a region.

She mentioned that we, biosecurity leaders and officers, need to be extra vigilant at our borders as gatekeepers against the entry, establishment and spread of exotic pests and diseases in our countries. Ms. Mapusua stressed on the important work the delegates are tasked with for the next two days such as deliberation on a process for the development of regional standards and consideration of standards for the movement of sand and gravel, movement of handicrafts, disposal of international waste and safe provision of food and other humanitarian aid. She stated that these speak strongly to PPPO's commitment to actively address pathways that, in our context, present most direct threat of pest spread.

She stated that it is encouraging to see further discussions on a regional workplan and collaborative approach to sea container hygiene, work that the PPPO has also been leading at the global front through the IPPC Focus Group on Sea Containers. In leveraging the participation of Pacific experts in such forums, she was happy to see that the Board will also discuss regional representatives' nomination process to various IPPC fora and, internally within the PPPO, finalization of a process for mid-term nomination of office bearers as needed. She was particularly interested in the presentation of findings from gap analyses on early warning system priorities, incursion management and emergency response as a way to re-focus and identify better ways of supporting the PPPO Members when faced with pest surveillance challenges and outbreaks.

She reflected on form PPPO CPM Bureau representative, Mr. Peter Thomson's reminder to all of us at the March 2022 PPPO ExCo meeting – “knowing who we are – the PPPO Family, where we are, the direction we are heading into and being prepared to make course corrections as needed”, adding that SPC believes the PPPO has a critical role in protecting the region and that SPC is aware that secure financing and dedicated human resources in the Secretariat are needed. Further, there is also a need to ensure that SPC and other agencies are resourced to provide the complimentary actions needed to support the PPPO objectives and mandate, and the need to avoid duplication or gaps.

She ended by stating that the work of the PPPO is truly representative of SPC's four core values. Gida Gaituvwa (Unity) – we progress together leaving no one behind; Aroha (Care) – the wellbeing of our people and places are at the centre of our efforts; Enginkelap (Generosity) – we provide for each other and work towards a shared mission; Kaitiakitanga (Stewardship) – we are the stewards of our Blue Pacific, our history, knowledge and science hold the solutions for contemporary challenges. She went onto say that SPC is proud to support the work of the PPPO and that its role is critical for the region and SPC's objective is to assist the PPPO in delivering its mandate, effectively and consistently. She wished everyone the very best in their deliberations for the meeting.

#### **0.4 Opening Keynote Address – Host Country**

##### **Ms. Temarama Anguna Kamana (Permanent Secretary – Ministry of Agriculture)**

Ms. Kamana apologised on behalf of the Minister for Agriculture, Hon. Rose Brown as the Minister was not able to attend the opening and deliver her remarks today. On her behalf, as well as on behalf of the Government and People of Cook Islands, Ms. Kamana welcomed all delegates to the meeting. She



mentioned that this opportunity to meet face-to-face provides us the time to reflect on the past three years and cover a lot of issues based around the theme: *PPPO Review and Reset*. She congratulated the PPPO on achieving three milestones: the launch of the Pest List Database, Biosecurity Information Facility and the PPPO webpage.

On behalf of the PPPO Members and Executive Committee (ExCo), she expressed PPPO's gratitude to the outgoing Vice Chairperson, Mr. Nacanieli Waqa (NZMPI) for stepping into the role of the Chairperson when the PPPO family needed him the most. She encouraged Members to continue to support each other in preventing the spread of exotic invasive pests and diseases and ensure safe trade of agricultural commodities. She thanked the development partners for their ongoing support to the PPPO and looked forward to further collaboration and engagements.

On behalf of the Minister of Agriculture, she declared the meeting open.

### **0.5 Launching of the Pest List Database (PLD) and Biosecurity Information Facility (BIF) updated versions and the new PPPO webpage**

Ms. Kamana, Ms. Mapusua, Mr. Waqa and Dr. Vivian-Smith launched the revamped PLD, BIF and the newly established PPPO webpage by commemorating the occasion with cutting of a cake.

### **0.6 Thank You Note**

Mr. Nacanieli Waqa (Vice Chairperson of the PPPO, NZMPI)

Mr. Waqa thanked Ms. Kamana for sharing her sentiments on behalf of the Honourable Minister for Agriculture and wished her speedy recovery. He acknowledged Mr. Thomson, Ms. Mapusua and Dr. Vivian-Smith for their remarks and support to the PPPO family. He especially recognized that SPC will continue to support the PPPO Secretariat moving forward. He further thanked the Heads of NPPO for their presence and contributions to the meeting as well as the PPPO Secretariat for their efforts in putting this event together.

### **Group Photo and Morning Tea Break**

The PPPO acknowledged the efforts and comradeship of NPPO Officers who have passed on but had contributed immensely to biosecurity work in their countries as well as to the PPPO. These included Biosecurity Officers from Cook Islands, Republic of Marshall Islands and Tonga as well as SPC.

## **Session 1: PPPO Reports and Workplan Updates**

### **1.1 Apologies**

The Chairperson noted the absence of delegates and apologies from the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam, Palau, the Solomon Islands and Wallis and Futuna.

The Chairperson acknowledged the presence of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization – Subregional Office for the Pacific (FAO-SAP) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) observers to the PPPO Regional Technical (Full) Board Meeting.

### **1.2 Election of Rapporteurs**

PPPO Secretariat – Mr. Riten Gosai supported by Mr. Ilaisa Dakaica and Ms. Maria Ledua.

PPPO Members – Ms. Marjorie Kemoi (PNG) and Ms. Lauren Madden (Australia).





### 1.3 Adoption of the agenda

Australia – Dr. Vivian-Smith stated that for item 4.2, the presenter/facilitator Mr. Ngatoko (Cook Islands) be replaced by Dr. Sophie Peterson (Australia).

Cook Islands – Ms. Kamana proposed to cut down on lunch time for Day 01 (to be only for 30 minutes) so that all agenda items can be covered, and the meeting is completed by 5.30 pm on Day 02.

Vanuatu – Mr. Sam Armstrong mentioned that *Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Regional Trainings* be added to the agenda. This was supported by Niue (Mr. New Aue) who further requested regional training for junior/new officers who have received very little trainings internally.

Australia – Dr. Vivian-Smith requested that standing items from the IPPC/PPPO Draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) Regional Workshop (completed in the past 3 days) be added to the agenda. These included:

- Coordination of projects and Biosecurity SPS support to countries so that Members are not overloaded with project activities
- Ensuring PPPO representation to various IPPC forums including proxy/observer members (who are able to participate in case the main member is unable to attend meetings, conferences, etc.)

Cook Islands – Mr. Ngatoko requested that the election of new the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the PPPO be moved to tomorrow morning to allow the current Vice Chairperson (Mr. Waqa), in the absence of Chairperson (Dr. Glen Dulla of Guam), to continue chairing the meeting. Vanuatu (Mr. Armstrong) supported the proposal. Samoa (Ms. Nafanua Malele) requested information on the current members of the PPPO ExCo. The composition of the current PPPO ExCo and rules for election of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson were explained to the participants by the current acting Chairperson (Mr. Waqa). He also explained the process for the region's representation at the annual Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) meetings.

Kiribati – Ms. Tekatake Oromita requested that the process for election of new office bearers in the case of a member leaving mid-term be added to the agenda. She was informed by the Chairperson that this agenda item was already included.

The PPPO Executive Secretary (Dr. Visoni Timote), in the essence of time, requested that the election of office bearers for the new term be held today. Australia (Dr. Vivian-Smith) stated that the election can be moved to tomorrow morning and agenda items from Day 02 can be moved to Day 01 to make up time. Tuvalu (Mr. Matio Lonalona) asked if it was in the PPPO Constitution to conduct the election on the first day of a Regional Technical Board Meeting. The Chairperson clarified that this was not the case, hence Australia's proposal was agreed to.

The PPPO Secretariat made other inclusions to the agenda as follows:

- Coordination of biosecurity legislation review (PPPO legislation model)
- Options for sea container cleanliness tracking
- Discussing the gaps and needs of the PLD and other processes related to collection of data (Members agreed to move this item to the PPPO *Talanoa Session*)



With the above changes factored in, Niue (Mr. Aue) moved the motion to adopt the agenda which was seconded by Tuvalu (Mr. Lonalona). The 10<sup>th</sup> PPPO Regional Technical Board Meeting agenda was adopted. The PPPO Secretariat was requested to print and distribute the new agenda.

#### **1.4 Presentation and adoption of the report of the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of PPPO Regional Technical Board, 2018. Dr. Visoni Timote (SPC)**

The meeting report was earlier circulated to all Members via email. The PPPO Executive Secretary (Dr. Timote) discussed the report utilizing a PowerPoint presentation. The 2018 meeting coincided with the 17<sup>th</sup> Regional Technical Meeting of Plant Protection (RTMPP) and was held in Nadi, Fiji from 23 – 24 August comprising of 30 delegates from 14 countries including Australia and New Zealand. He then presented the action items from the meeting and progress made against each of those. These included:

- Access to diagnostics training conducted by Plant Health and Environment Laboratory (PHEL)
- Involvement of more PPPO Member Countries in the upcoming Green Climate Fund (GCF) project related to transboundary pest movement
- Compilation and distribution of CRB awareness materials to the region's NPPOs
- Member countries to effectively manage their national export systems (and request SPC support as required) so that the confidence of trading partners is maintained
- SPC to maintain a stockpile of resources to support surveillance and emergency response
- In addition to pest surveillance, Member Countries to seek support for pathology surveillance
- Assistance for emergency response (especially in relation to climatic related emergencies)
- Push for IPPC guidance document on post disaster humanitarian donations (Australia to lead)
- Generic information on biosecurity to be made available on the SPC website
- Regional standard on gravel and sand movement – initial draft to be provided by Cook Islands
- Update of the PPPO Workplan and template for Progressive Updates from PPPO
- PPPO Strategic Plan inclusive of Communications Plan and MEL component
- Mid-term report form Kalang Consultancy Services regarding the SPS Centre of Excellence
- Revival of PCE training and Members to initiate request for this training
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for out of normal term approval of key matters
- Regional generic Emergency Response Plan (ERP) assistance and communication with countries
- Template for capturing national biosecurity success stories
- Biosecurity legislation review for Cook Islands through FAO assistance
- Assistance to Biosecurity Vanuatu for Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) preparedness

Please refer to '*PPPO Full Board Meeting 2018 PPT*' for full details.

#### **Questions and comments**

FSM – Mr. John Wichap requested if the stockpiling of certain Biosecurity SPS resources (traditionally kept at the Narere Office) could partially be moved to the Micronesia Office so that these are easily accessed when needed. Dr. Timote asked FSM to allow this request to be discussed with SPC Director LRD. The PPPO Secretariat will inform FSM of the decision in due course [Action Item 1].

Niue – Mr. Aue congratulated PPPO Secretariat for launch of the PPPO webpage and asked if there is a page allocated for every country on the webpage to input specific biosecurity information. Dr. Timote responded this was possible through the BIF (on the *Country Biosecurity Information* page).



Cook Islands – Mr. Ngatoko explained that the FAO consultant that visited Cook Islands for the legislation review work in fact only looked at the Pesticides Act, then the COVID pandemic occurred, and no further work was carried out; the SPS and food safety legislation review was not conducted. Dr. Timote responded that he only presented information received from FAO (based on the FAO model which promotes three separate legislations for plant quarantine, animal quarantine and food safety) versus the PPPO promoted model (one overarching legislation that covers all three aspects under biosecurity). Mr. Ngatoko mentioned that there is still a need for Cook Islands to review its biosecurity legislation.

PNG – Mr. Pere Kokoa asked if the pest reports on the IPPC portal could be linked to the PPPO webpage. Dr. Timote responded that this was possible, and the Secretariat can link the PPPO webpage to this set of information on the IPP. Australia (Dr. Peterson) added that countries could always hyperlink to their own country pages on the IPP site.

RMI – Mr. Byrelson Jacklick asked if there was a way for the PLD to link to other regional databases such as SPREP portal on invasive species in order to avoid duplication of certain information. Dr. Timote requested to have further discussions with RMI on this matter and types of information captured in the various platforms, which was approved by the Chairperson [Action Item 2].

Samoa – Ms. Malele also commented on efforts to prevent the duplication of information and if the PPPO platforms (BIF and PLD) could link to country pages on the IPP including NPPO social media channels. Chairperson suggested that there is a need to document the scope and objectives of these platforms and the information that is needed from the countries [Action Item 3]. Dr. Timote requested that three sub-regional reps assist the PPPO Secretariat in this work. Papua New Guinea (Ms. Marjorie Kemoi), Marshall Islands Republic (Mr. Jacklick) and Samoa (Ms. Malele) were elected to provide support.

From the action items presented, those that were marked as not achieved (or not progressed), it was suggested that these be brought into the discussions of the 10<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting. Cook Islands moved the motion to adopt the report. Fiji, FSM and RMI seconded. The 9<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting report was adopted.

### **1.5 Presentation on progress of ePhyto implementation in the region and proposal on the way forward. Mr. Ilaisa Dakaica (Regional ePhyto Coordinator, SPC)**

Mr. Dakaica shared progress made against the 16 milestones in the 2023 list of activities and tasks for the ePhyto regional project (based on the 2<sup>nd</sup> ePhyto Regional Workshop held in October 2022). He requested that the information paper concerning establishment of the '*ePhyto Talanoa Session*' and '*GeNS Messenger Group*' be allowed to be presented. This was approved. However, the paper was not part of the printed package handed to delegates of the meeting and needed to be printed and distributed.

#### **Question and comments**

Australia – Dr. Vivian-Smith sought clarification on the dates for the upcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional ePhyto Workshop. Mr. Dakaica confirmed this to be November 06 – 10, 2023 (to be held in Nadi, Fiji), adding that the meeting announcement will be sent to relevant countries in the next 1 – 2 weeks.

Samoa – Ms. Malele requested that the 2<sup>nd</sup> ePhyto Regional Workshop report be circulated to the Members, if not done already. Mr. Dakaica responded that the report was earlier circulated for comments and finalized. Chairperson requested that this final report be shared with all participants of the Regional Technical Board Meeting [Action Item 4]. Ms. Malele further enquired about the process for SWP



representative's selection to the ePhyto Steering Group (ESP). Chairperson explained that Mr. Piriariki Maa (Cook Islands) was nominated after fulfilling due IPPC nomination processes.

Niue – Mr. Aue asked if Australia and New Zealand could proceed to full ePhyto exchange with Member Countries as they continue to run in pilot phase (simultaneous paper and electronic exchange). Mr. Dakaica explained the process currently utilized to trial and transition from paper certificates to going completely paperless which also involves signing a bilateral agreement with trading partners.

Fiji – Mr. Michael Bartlett extended support to Niue for GeNS testing and exchange. Additionally, he asked how far Australia and New Zealand had progressed in going fully paperless from their end. Australia (Dr. Vivian-Smith) explained about the earlier work done in Australia for electronic certification of plant products and the IT and related difficulties in swiftly transitioning to ePhyto. She welcomed PPPO Members to write letters to the Australian Government to request Australia to expedite the process of going paperless. New Zealand (Ms. Winthrop) stated that New Zealand has also (before the ePhyto solution) invested millions in electronic certification and there will need to be a big transition if MPI were to adopt GeNS. While New Zealand has initially invested in the GeNS and Hub platforms (including funding support), they are taking a cautious approach to not do away with heavy investments made in the recent past. They will continue to run the dual system until all testing is complete and their internal system is able to support paperless trade. She also offered support to Niue. Mr. Aue added that they have gone through all the trainings and are confident of fully using the GeNS for ePhyto exchange hence his request for taking small steps towards full paperless exchange.

Tuvalu – Mr. Lonolona requested support for reform in country biosecurity legislation and policies to include recognition of electronic certification of plant products. Mr. Dakaica mentioned that the project may be able to provide some support in this regard (while also reflecting on the fact that 'Country Readiness Assessment' asks for this and countries are onboarded if they answer yes).

Cook Islands – Ms. Kamana asked if all 16 milestones under the regional ePhyto project as presented by Mr. Dakaica were achieved. She further asked about the purpose of the 'ePhyto Talanoa Session' and 'GeNS Messenger Group'. Mr. Dakaica responded that he presented on the on-going 2023 activities and not all are fully achieved at this stage. He further discussed the objectives of the *ePhyto Talanoa Session* and *GeNS Messenger Group*, adding that the information paper will elaborate more on the two platforms.

Australia – Dr. Peterson updated that the September 22<sup>nd</sup> PPPO *Talanoa Session* will discuss the regions input to the ePhyto solution sustainability paper which will be tabled at the next IPPC Strategic Planning Group (SPG) meeting. She requested that Member Countries come prepared to the *Talanoa* to make contributions to the paper [Action Item 5].

## 1.6 PPPO Workplan Progress Report

### Dr. Visoni Timote (PPPO Executive Secretary, SPC)

Dr. Timote provided an update on the progress made against each of the outputs from 2019 to date. The 10 outputs cover the following areas:

- PICTs undertake monitoring and structured detection and delimitation surveys for pests of economic and environmental concern
- PICTs identify pests of significant economic and environmental concern within seven days and report them in the Pacific pest list database (PLD) and via the IPP





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- PICTs undertake phytosanitary inspections of regulated goods to verify phytosanitary status
- Model legislation is enacted and implemented by all PICTs
- Regional biosecurity awareness information and material are used by PICTs to improve and strengthen biosecurity behaviour and compliance
- A PPPO regional coordination framework that supports emergency response and longer-term management strategies to reduce the impact of new pest incursions
- A regional fruit fly management strategy is developed and implemented to deliver a viable, cost effective and sustainable regional approach to fruit fly Management
- Trade and market access opportunities are promoted by technical submissions incorporating scientifically based phytosanitary measures, international standards and contemporary approach to pest risk management
- The PPPO Secretariat, at the regional platform, provides support to member countries and builds capacity to implement the IPPC and international and regional standards on pre-border, border and post-border
- Implementation and operationalizing of the SPS Centre of Excellence

Please refer to '*Paper 1.8 PPPO Workplan Progress 2019 – 2023*' for full details.

### Questions and comments

PNG – Mr. Kokoa thanked DAFF for supporting capacity building and other initiatives for the National Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection Agency (NAQIA).

Niue – Mr. Aue asked if support is available to other countries, including Niue, through the EPMAP project. New Zealand (Ms. Winthrop) explained how the project is being rolled out by PHEL and country selection process. She added that the project requires a fair bit of investment to also be made by the recipient countries to sustain PHEL interventions in the long run.

Tuvalu – Mr. Lonalona acknowledged the support of SPC in addressing the fruit fly issue on Niulakita Atoll in Tuvalu. He supported the call from Niue for diagnostics and other training through EPMAP.

Tonga – Ms. Siutoni Tupou mentioned that Pacific Islands, through their High Commissions, can request for New Zealand and Australia support for Biosecurity SPS capacity building.

Samoa – Ms. Malele requested if Samoa could also be part of the upcoming EPMAP (induction) training. New Zealand (Mr. Waqa) suggested that as done by Tonga, Samoa (and other countries) could also write to New Zealand through their High Commission and request for Biosecurity SPS trainings [Action Item 6]. As Australia's response, Dr. Vivian-Smith mentioned that if requested, DAFF (and DFAT) could also explore the type of support they could provide to the region's NPPOs [Action Item 7].

Cook Islands – Mr. Ngatoko questioned Australia about any training facility offered to the Pacific Island NPPOs (capacity building for biosecurity officers in Australia). Dr. Vivian-Smith responded that the best approach would be to write to DAFF (Pacific Engagement Office) and be specific on the requests so that these can be quickly progressed further. New Zealand (Ms. Winthrop) highlighted that there are projects currently running in the Pacific Islands and while she invites the request for further assistance through



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High Commissions/Ministries, she is also concerned that there needs to be a coordinated approach across projects and programs to avoid overwhelming the biosecurity agencies in the Pacific region.

Kiribati – Ms. Oromita queried about the equipment assistance they'd requested through the SAFE Pacific Project and whether this was still on the table. Dr. Timote responded that procurement of a fumigation chamber for Kiribati has now been progressed.

RMI – Mr. Jacklick highlighted that Biosecurity SPS assistance is also available through the USDA, especially for the Northern Pacific countries. Chairperson again stressed on the importance of coordination and how this can be achieved. Australia (Dr. Vivian-Smith) mentioned that identifying a central person(s) (for example, through the SPC Investment Plan) to coordinate trainings and build a forward-oriented training calendar could help achieve alignment and consistency.

Cook Islands – Ms. Kamana supported the idea of a training calendar and also the importance of internal planning as well as distribution of training opportunities to respective officers for maximum benefits.

Lunch Break

**Continuation of Agenda Item 1.5 Presentation on progress of ePhyto implementation in the region and proposal on the way forward. Mr. Ilaisa Dakaica (Regional ePhyto Coordinator, SPC)**

Samoa – Ms. Malele asked if only the '*Messenger*' platform was discussed to be used as the chat platform. She further asked who the members of the chat group will be. Mr. Dakaica responded that after thorough consultation in last year's workshop, *Messenger* was selected as the platform of choice; also Tuvalu is unable to access WhatsApp which was the second most desired platform. Further, the *Messenger* group members will be those country officers registered in GeNS.

Tuvalu – Mr. Lonalona asked who the *ePhyto Talanoa Session* participants will be. Mr. Dakaica responded that country ePhyto Administrators, PACER Plus Consultant (Dr. Peter Neimanis) and Regional ePhyto Coordinator will be part of the *ePhyto Talanoa Session* and others will be allowed to join the discussions on invite only.

Fiji – Mr. Bartlett questioned who will be responsible for execution of the propositions in the paper and how this will be done. Mr. Dakaica responded that upon endorsement, this will be initiated in the next two weeks and be coordinated from SPC by the Regional ePhyto Project Coordinator.

Please refer to "*PPPO ePhyto Information Paper\_Talanoa and Social Media.V05*" for full details.

The PPPO Board:

1. Noted the summary of the information paper and its contents;
2. Endorsed the establishment of a '*PPPO Regional ePhyto Talanoa Session*' (to be held a week prior to the main *PPPO Talanoa Session*); and
3. Endorsed the establishment of the '*PPPO GeNS Pasifika* social media (Facebook Messenger) chat group.

**Endorsement 2:**



The paper on progress of ePhyto implementation in the region and proposal on the way forward (establishment of the *Regional ePhyto Talanoa Session* and *GeNS Pasifika Messenger Chat Group*) was endorsed. Motion was moved by Samoa to endorse the paper as presented. RMI seconded.

## Session 2: PPPO Business

### 2.1 The ‘Review & Reset’ to further strengthen the PPPO

**Mr. Peter Thomson (Virtual)/ Ms. Lisa Winthrop (NZMPI)**

Mr. Thomson stated that he wanted to revisit the notion earlier shared by Director of SPC Land Resources Division Ms. Karen Mapusua and the same thought he had spoken to the PPPO ExCo about in March 2022 – “*know who we are, where we are, where we are heading to and making course corrections as needed*”. He reminded the Board that the PPPO is now 39 years old, and Members should make a list of achievements as well as account for the difference they’ve made in the last 39 years. This should be part of PPPO’s 40 year celebrations! He also discussed Article IX of the IPPC which provides for RPPOs to be established.

Due to issues with internet connection, Mr. Thomson (joining the meeting virtually) kept dropping off. Hence, in his place, Ms. Lisa Winthrop delivered the presentation, who was present at the meeting in-person. Taking cue from Mr. Thomson’s slides, she stated that we (the PPPO) can be very influential if we plan ahead, are well organized and sophisticated in our approach. In knowing where we are, we need to reflect on the performance of the PPPO and its Secretariat. Mr. Thomson had rated the PPPO/PPPO Secretariat in 6 areas (Coordinating activities to achieve the objectives of the IPPC; Regional standard setting; Gathering and dissemination of IPPC information; Ensure Pacific voice is heard in IPPC Activities; Influencing international standard setting; Prioritizing and coordinating regional capacity building and biosecurity strengthening actions) and gave an overall score of 16/30. In stating what’s been done well, he mentioned the following:

- We are here because of our efforts thus far!
- Secretariat is committed to disseminate information to members
- There has been huge improvements in providing feedback on ISPMs
- Talanoa sessions have helped us to be more connected
- Significant progress on ePhyto
- Roll out of PCE programme in selected countries
- Some progress has been made in regional standard setting

In highlighting what’s not going well, he stated the following:

- Our Pacific voice in the IPPC is still too quiet
- PPPO Secretariat is too stretched and on the back foot
- Regional standard setting is struggling
- PPPO work programme is ambitious, not well resourced and poorly delivered
- We are missing opportunities for coordinated regional capacity building

Ms. Winthrop (in the words of Mr. Thomson) further talked about the importance of strategy – knowing our function and purpose, where should we focus PPPO efforts that add the most value or have the greatest impact; having a strategy requires choices to be made; a simple strategy with a few clear objectives and work programme deliverables will have impact. However, delivering strategy requires relentless focus,



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commitment to collective effort, participation from all Members, strong Secretariat support and securing sufficient resources.

Mr. Thomson (as stated by Ms. Winthrop) asked PPPO Members what else it will take for PPPO to be more impactful. Having asked that, he also made a few suggestions which included: resolving Secretariat focus and resourcing, forming a work programme delivery steering group and establishing focus groups for priority work areas. The presentation ended by reminding participants that we, the PPPO, should be ready to make course corrections as needed.

### **Questions and comments:**

Tonga – Ms. Tupou acknowledged the presentation from Mr. Thomson and Ms. Winthrop.

New Zealand – Ms. Winthrop asked if the PPPO Board thinks we have that relentless focus as a RPPO that Mr. Thomson stressed on or is there opportunity to do things slightly differently or make changes that are going to help us be more successful as an RPPO? Fiji (Mr. Bartlett) responded that the last 3 days has been about changes, which has been the core of our discussions, adding that we can always do things better. This however needs to be constant and not a one off task. Australia (Dr. Vivian-Smith) mentioned that we should reflect on the positives and learn from the things that didn't go well with a focus on making progress. She added that there were key messages in Mr. Thomson's presentation that resonate with her thoughts and asked Members how can we be clear on navigating a path forward and having transparent conversations including the difficult ones.

Vanuatu – Mr. Sam Armstrong also acknowledged the presentation from NZMPI and reflected on the challenges that we've all been faced with in the last few years. He urged Members to focus on the theme for this week's meet – *a PPPO Review and Reset*. He thanked the PPPO for support to Vanuatu's CRB response and hoped that the organization will continue to exist well into the future. Chairperson agreed to the sentiments shared by Vanuatu but also reminded the Board that we (participants) are not the PPPO Secretariat, we are Members and will go back to our busy schedules upon return from Cook Islands. He stated that a small group is needed after the meeting today to put together a framework to guide the work of the PPPO for the next three years. This was agreed to. [Action Item 8]. The group, at this stage, was not established and will be a subject of later discussion.

## **2.2 Resource mobilization & future support for PPPO by SPC**

**Ms. Karen Mapusua (Director SPC Land Resources Division)**

Ms. Mapusua thanked Mr. Thomson and Ms. Winthrop for their presentation. She highlighted that there isn't a need to revisit the presentation she delivered on Day 03 of the IPPC/PPPO Draft ISPMs Regional Workshop on resource mobilization and future support for PPPO by SPC. Instead she suggested we have a short presentation from Mr. Stephen Ogden (Consultant – Market Access Solutions, New Zealand) to hear what the consultancy entails. Chairperson requested continued consultation with Members and requested that the Board have a discussion first before hearing from Mr. Ogden.

Tonga – Ms. Tupou stated that she would have liked for Mr. Ogden to be introduced to the Members on the first day. Although she knows Mr. Ogden from previous engagements, she was unaware of his role this week. Chairperson responded that on Day 01, the Board was not in the position to open this discussion hence it was his call to not introduce the consultant to the Members.





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Niue – Mr. Aue went back to the discussion regarding the review of the PPPO (including its Constitution) where it was agreed that representatives from the three sub-regions will assist Mr. Ogden in the work, however, he hoped for the whole of PPPO to be involved. He further stated that he's confused with the non-recognition of the PPPO by FAO. Ms. Mapusua (SPC LRD) clarified that FAO does not need to officially recognise the PPPO Constitution and the IPPC recognises the PPPO without legal recognition required. Chairperson added that some countries are not members of FAO/IPPC but members of the PPPO, hence the constitution is legally binding in that sense, being established by the SPC Conference of Parties (COP) in 1994. In 2006, when the COP was not meeting, the CRGA endorsed the revised PPPO Constitution.

IPPC (Observer) – Ms. Adriana Moreira contributed that in her experience at the IPPC, with new RPPOs coming on board recently, there isn't a need for FAO to legally recognise a RPPO. Because establishment of a RPPO is contained within IPPC instruments, only the CPM needs to recognize it.

Fiji – Mr. Bartlett then asked if the PPPO is an autonomous body. Ms. Mapusua (SPC LRD) stated that if taken legally, the PPPO is an auxiliary body of the SPC established by the COP. She stressed that we should not get trapped in the legalities, rather focus on the intent of the organization which is the PPPO as a body in its own right with a clear mandate.

Cook Islands – Mr. Ngatoko, on behalf of the NPPO of Cook Islands, stated that he's concerned that the review of the PPPO was not informed to the Board before it commenced. He was also concerned how this process will be executed with the best interest of Members at the core. Australia (Dr. Smith) also raised a few questions: first, what are the key risks envisaged by SPC that the PPPO presents in performing its normal activities. Secondly, should legal advice also be sought from other agencies and thirdly, the process – length of time this process will take and types of consultations that will be done. Ms. Mapusua responded that SPC's main concerns are usually financial and reputational. While not high risks but these are real, and gave the example of SPC having to pay back money to the EU that was used for PPPO activities from the SAFE Pacific Project. She added that SPC is only looking at the legal aspects of the PPPO review from the perspective of how the PPPO could best fit in SPC's governance set-up. The Chairperson stressed on the need to allow time for the PPPO Members to think through what has been presented and discussed.

Fiji – Mr. Bartlett stated that the '*elephant in the room*' is whether the PPPO is happy with the review, whether we've seen the terms of reference for this work and if we could discuss these further. Ms. Mapusua confirmed that the TOR could be reviewed with the PPPO Board and requested it be shared by the Secretariat and that it was important to focus on how to move forward together.

There was further discussion on the legality of the PPPO and concern from Chairperson that we do not want to see the PPPO become another work stream of SPC LRD. He stated that the PPPO needs to maintain its independence in view of the critical role it plays for biosecurity and plant health in the region. He questioned the exclusion of PPPO from SPC's governance compendium, asking how did this eventuate? Ms. Mapusua responded that there is no finger pointing, instead genuine intent to find a positive solution and how best to move forward – Chairperson asked if there could be a review of the governance compendium to include the PPPO. Ms. Mapusua mentioned that this would require a decision of the SPC Executive and then CRGA. If there was a need identified for this then it would be addressed through those channels.



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Australia – Dr. Vivian-Smith added that we’ve voiced our feeling of concern but the current approach to the review is also giving her a feeling of disempowerment. While this is not a good position for PPPO Members to be in, she wanted to concentrate on how the PPPO could help to move the work forward, but in a beneficial way.

Niue – Mr. Aue stressed that the country’s Biosecurity Act legally connects/binds Niue Biosecurity to the PPPO. To this, Chairperson added that the preamble of the country biosecurity texts also bind the NPPOs to the PPPO. Ms. Mapusua appreciated these inputs and mentioned that this is valuable information that needs to be brought to the attention of SPC Legal Team as well.

Vanuatu – Mr. Armstrong also mentioned that the country’s Biosecurity Act binds Biosecurity Vanuatu to the PPPO and hoped that the review will be in the best interests of the organization. Ms. Mapusua agreed and highlighted that the intention is to iron out the grey areas and provide the PPPO Secretariat more support from SPC hence, the focus of the discussions need to be on what does support to PPPO from SPC look like.

Ms. Mapusua confirmed that the information gathered from the consultancy and draft reports will be brought to the attention of the PPPO for consultation before being progressed further within SPC and any decisions being made.

Cook Islands – Ms. Kamana, with the assurance that representatives from PPPO sub-regions will be involved in the review process/assist the consultant and that PPPO needs to re-establish its footing within SPC; also that the PPPO Secretariat needs to be better resourced, stated that on behalf of Cook Islands, she is happy for the review to go ahead.

Tuvalu – Mr. Lonalona asked whether the PPPO Secretariat will continue to be housed at SPC. Ms. Mapusua confirmed that there was never any thought to disestablish the PPPO or disassociate SPC and the PPPO. She strongly reassured SPC’s ongoing commitment and support to the PPPO.

Samoa – Ms. Malele requested that the information pertaining to the review of the PPPO be also shared with the countries (as there are only a select few participants from the countries present at the workshop). She further mentioned that as the contract is signed, we should go ahead with the consultancy with the hope that Member concerns will be addressed, and the review will result in the most optimal outcomes. Chairperson mentioned that the PPPO, as an organization, can also veto and have the PPPO Secretariat housed at another organization, if there was an absolute need.

New Zealand – Ms. Lisa Winthrop presented New Zealand’s position on the matter stating that the reaction of the Members to this SPC review is natural based on the fact that this was introduced to the Members very late at this meeting (when the contract with the service provider had already been signed). She agreed with Samoa’s position but stated that we need to contribute to the process constructively. She further stated that there might be historical records that could help fill in gaps in SPC’s records and support the consultancy. She asked if there was any flex in adjusting the terms of reference, if required. Ms. Mapusua responded that this is possible to ensure the PPPOs concerns are addressed, and will need to be discussed with the consultant and contract revised.

### **Endorsement 3:**



With the understanding that the PPPO will be involved in the review process (through sub-regional representation) and consultations, and considering that the contract has already been signed, requiring PPPO to contribute constructively to the review to ensure the best outcomes for the organization, the Board endorsed the Consultancy for the review of the PPPO and its Secretariat functions to go ahead.

Afternoon Tea Break

### **Session 3: New Proposals for PPPO Regional Technical Board Endorsement**

#### **3.1 Presentation of paper on:**

##### **Regional standard setting process including a request for endorsement to develop regional standards or guidance on:**

- a. safe provision of humanitarian aid during emergency situations,
- b. movement of sand and gravel,
- c. movement of handicrafts to assist with events such as the Pacific Festival of Arts and also South Pacific Games, next scheduled to take place in 2023 in the Solomon Islands, and
- d. disposal of international waste

**Dr. Sophie Peterson (DAFF)**

At their meeting in March 2020, the PPPO ExCo endorsed the development of Regional Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (RSPMs) to address issues of priority and support biosecurity and safe trade outcomes for the region. The PPPO has a process to develop RSPMs, compiled in 2020, but it had not been used and required review. A revised process for the development and adoption of RSPMs and development and agreement of Regional Implementation Guidance (RIG) texts has been drafted. Together with this, four documents on priority topics have been compiled for development either as RSPMs or RIGs (see a – d above).

Please refer to '*Paper on Regional Standard Setting Process*' for full details on the proposed RSPM development procedure (Attachment 2) and priority topics proposed to be developed as RSPMs or RIGs (a – d above).

**Correction:** In section 2.4, there was an error in accepting track changes and Australia and New Zealand were mistakenly omitted from the PPPO SC structure. The proposal is to have 3 members from each of the sub-regions and Australia and New Zealand – total of 11 with 5 making up a quorum.

Tonga – Ms. Tupou proposed two members per sub-region plus Australia and New Zealand; total 8 members with 5 making up the quorum (minimum 1 member per sub-region). **This was endorsed.**

The PPPO Board:

1. Noted that the PPPO has an historical standard setting procedure that has not been widely used;
2. Noted the PPPO ExCo have developed and reviewed the draft PPPO standard setting procedure and consider it appropriate for use;
3. Adopted the PPPO Regional Standards Setting Procedural Guidelines with the composition of the PPPO SC to be two (2) members per sub-region plus Australia and New Zealand (total of eight (8) members with five (5) making up the quorum); and
4. Endorsed the four (4) priority topics for the development of RSPMs or RIGs (a – d above).

#### **Endorsement 4:**



Paper on the regional standard setting process including a request to develop regional standards or guidance material on a – d was endorsed. Motion moved by Vanuatu and seconded by PNG.

#### **Action Item 9:**

Secretariat was tasked to re-initiate the process of seeking nomination for the SC and WGs; Members were tasked with responding with nominations for the SC and WGs.

#### **3.2 Presentation of paper on: IPPC's Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE)**

- Report on the review of PCE in Fiji, Cook Islands, Tonga, Samoa & Vanuatu
- IPPC PCE Tool and how the region would use it to conduct assessments and work collectively to improve biosecurity outcomes for the region

#### **Dr. Sophie Peterson (DAFF)**

For many years, members of the PPPO have voiced a desire for PCEs to be conducted in their countries to support the analysis of their phytosanitary systems and in turn, support proposals for development activities. When investigating how this might be done for the region, Australia and New Zealand delegates met with an IPPC Implementation Facilitation Unit (IFU) representative in May 2023. Through this meeting, it was identified that conducting a PCE using the IPPC Secretariat agreed format costs in the vicinity of USD 130,000 (significantly more than the USD80,000 as on the IPPC website). This cost is as a huge impediment to the region as this will further take away limited available funds to support countries improve their phytosanitary systems. NZMPI, through a consultancy with Dr. Stephen Butcher, have recently refreshed the PCE findings of a more in depth PCE conducted a number of years ago, but this is only for a subset of countries.

Without access to the PCE tool initially, an informed decision about whether this tool is appropriate for the region's needs is unable to be made. When a request was made to the IFU for access to Australia to enable the South-West Pacific (SWP), as a region to review the system and determine how the region might use this tool, the request was denied. The IFU would not entertain any conversation that sought to use the tool regionally as a way to identify potential improvements or gaps in the phytosanitary systems of PPPO Members or use it as a mechanism to evaluate progress or improvement.

To gain access to the system to allow this regional discussion to be held, Australia and New Zealand proposed the following.

- a. Each Contracting Party of the IPPC from the SWP region (Head of NPPO) write to the Secretary of the IPPC seeking access to the PCE tool (template letter at Attachment A).
- b. When access is provided, a PPPO workshop be held (ideally in-person, pending funding approval) to review the tool and determine how the PPPO will best use this in the region to assess and monitor phytosanitary systems and improvements.
- c. The region implements the tools as PPPO Members consider appropriate for their needs.

Australia and New Zealand consider that this proposal is within the rules of use of the PCE tool. The IPPC Secretariat has specified that a PCE is not something that is “done” to Contracting Parties and that Contracting Parties are in control of the process. As such, if this is the method through which PPPO Member Countries chose to use the tool, PPPO considers it within the current rules of the IC's PCE team.

Alongside this, Australia and New Zealand have advocated at IPPC fora for more open and transparent access to the PCE tool for all members of the IPPC community along with the development of “PCE light” to allow more routine use of the tool's modules to assess, monitor and evaluate phytosanitary





systems (or small components of them). This was agreed by the CPM but has yet to be progressed by the IFU or the IC. It is considered that if the PPPO Members are able to gain access individually, as a region SWP will have opportunity to develop a regionally appropriate approach to PCE that could inform the IC and the CPM on options for the proposed “PCE light” concept, improving access and utility of this tool.

Please refer to *‘Paper on the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool’* for full details.

New Zealand – Ms. Winthrop questioned that in requesting grant of access, will this come with a cost? Dr. Peterson responded that IPPC says the PCE is not something “done” to countries, but a process undertaken by countries. Upon grant of access, a country coordinator would have to be appointed to coordinate the PCE work. For the region, a workshop may need to be held to discuss how this can be progressed. So there will be cost for these, but no cost to access the PCE.

RMI – noting that access will be granted to contracting parties only, Mr. Jacklick asked about access for non-contracting parties. Dr. Peterson responded that although non-contracting parties will not be granted access to the PCE suite, participation in regional activities will still enable such countries to benefit from PCE work.

The PPPO Board:

1. Noted the description of the issue;
2. Discussed and considered the options for utilising the PCE tool in the Pacific region; and
3. Agreed that contracting parties will send letters to the IPPC Secretary seeking access (template of the letter to be re-circulated (by Australia through) the PPPO Secretariat).

#### **Endorsement 5:**

Paper on the Phytosanitary Capacity Evaluation (PCE) tool was endorsed. The motion was moved by FSM and seconded by Kiribati and Samoa.

#### **Action Item 10:**

Dr. Peterson will send the letter template to PPPO Members and PPPO Members are then to send individual country letters to IPPC Secretary (Mr. Osama El-Lissy).

#### **3.3 Presentation of paper on:**

- **Regional representatives’ nomination process to IPPC fora for adoption**
- **Vacant positions for the SC, IC and Bureau**

**Dr. Sophie Peterson (DAFF)**

The Regional Nomination Standard Operating Procedure (RNSOP) describes the formal process for nominating regional nominees from the SWP region to various IPPC fora. The procedure will apply to nominations of PPPO members’ representatives to fora of the IPPC, including the CPM Bureau, Standards Committee (SC), Implementation and Capacity Development Committee (IC), and other ad hoc groups formed from time-to-time.

Please refer to *‘Paper on Regional Representatives Nomination Process to IPPC Fora’* for full details on the procedures to follow, email templates to circulate the call to PPPO Members, template for nominations and flow chart describing the process.



The PPPO Board:

1. Noted the nomination process PPPO Members shall follow for appointment of representatives to the IPPC fora; and
2. Approved the procedures, email templates and nomination templates to be used by PPPO Secretariat and Members to formalize the appointment process.

#### **Endorsement 6:**

Paper on regional representatives' nomination process to IPPC fora and filling vacant positions for the SC, IC and CPM Bureau was endorsed. Motion moved by Cook Islands and seconded by Fiji.

Cook Islands – Ms. Kamana informed the Board that Cook Islands will put forward a nomination for alternative member to the CPM Bureau (and will follow through the procedures as endorsed).

Australia – Dr. Peterson added that there are vacant positions, that is, SWP representation on the CPM Bureau, SC and IC that need to be filled. There is travel support available for PPPO representatives when physical/face-to-face meetings are organized. New Zealand (Ms. Winthrop) encouraged PPPO Members to also participate in other FG and TWGs as this will not only leverage PPPO's voice at the IPPC but also help build knowledge and experience.

#### **Action Item 11:**

PPPO Member Countries to follow the nomination process and send nominees for vacant SWP positions on the CPM Bureau, SC and IC.

#### **3.4 Presentation of paper on:**

- **A regional workplan for the Sea Container Hygiene System capacity building, synergies and implementation workplan**

**Dr. Visoni Timote (SPC)**

Given the continued work of the IPPC in the area of sea container hygiene and the significant phytosanitary risks that contaminating pests continue to pose, the August 2022 PPPO ExCo meeting discussed the importance of preparing a potential international standard on this topic and implementing activities to reduce the ongoing risks to PICTs' plant health status, agricultural sustainability and livelihoods. The PPPO ExCo referred to the suite of historical and recent work related to sea container hygiene that has been undertaken in the region and discussed the importance of ensuring regional coordination in this pace. To this end, the PPPO ExCo emphasised the importance of developing a regional sea container hygiene workplan which could potentially be coordinated through the PPPO Secretariat. To inform the development of a regional workplan, a stock-take of existing activities relating to sea container hygiene in the region was undertaken by DAFF covering work by PACER Plus, PHAMA Plus, European Union (EU) funded Safe Agricultural trade Facilitation through Economic integration in the Pacific (SAFE Pacific) project, DAFF and NZMPI (SCHS), APPPC and the IPPC Focus Group on Sea Containers.

Please refer to '*Paper on Regional Workplan For Sea Container Hygiene Capacity Building And Implementation*' for full details on the activities implemented by each of the agencies.

#### **Deferment 1:**



Considering the paper on ‘regional workplan for the Sea Container Hygiene System capacity building, synergies and implementation workplan’ required sub-regional discussions and further deliberation by the Board, it was moved to Day 02.

### 3.5 Presentation of paper on:

- **Mid-Term Nomination of a Chairperson/Vice Chairperson**

**Dr. Visoni Timote (SPC)**

At every regular session of the PPPO Board, which occurs every three years, the Board elects from among the representatives of Members, a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson who will serve until the next regular session. There is currently no agreed process for the election of a Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson, should either position fall vacant midway through the three-year term. The paper proposed a process election of a Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson in between a complete term.

Please refer to ‘*Paper on Mid-Term Nomination of a Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson*’ for full details and explanation of the process.

### Deferment 2:

The paper on the ‘Mid-Term Nomination of a Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson’ was moved to Day 02 requiring clarity – text in the boxes were to be improved by the PPPO Secretariat based on Member suggestions.

### 3.6 Presentation of information on:

- **PPPO submission to the 2023 IPPC Call for Topics submission for a commodity standard for Taro with the Caribbean and African regions, and**
- **A proposal for an annex to ISPM 46 for other commodities that may not have many measures (e.g. coconut)**

**Dr. Sophie Peterson (DAFF)**

Draft for commodity standard for taro in collaboration with the Caribbean and African regions is being developed. This is after Dr. Peterson attended the TC-RPPO meeting on behalf of the PPPO Executive Secretary held alongside CPM in 2023.

The PPPO region had agreed that coconut would be a priority commodity for the development of a commodity standard and that a proposal for the IPPC’s call for topics would be developed for this commodity. Since this decision, the Technical Panel for Commodity Standards (TPCS) has met, and Ms. Joanne Wilson (New Zealand, Assistant Steward for the TPCS) advised that development of a standalone commodity standard for commodities like coconut, with limited pests and measure options, may not be the most efficient course of action. To ensure that some guidance can be developed for commodities that have a limited number of pests and measures, a proposal for the Call for Topics is being developed to request an Annex be developed to contain these commodities in a more simplified manner. Coconut will be used as the example for this Annex so as to ensure that it is addressed as soon as possible (assuming this proposal is accepted for inclusion on the IPPC Standards Committee (SC) work program).

### Endorsement 7:



Based on the information provided by Dr. Peterson, the Board endorsed taro to be the priority commodity for development of a commodity standard (with the Caribbean and African regions) and that coconut will be dealt in another way.

New Zealand – Ms. Winthrop asked whether the Secretariat needed help with drafting of the commodity standard for taro? Dr. Peterson responded that a draft was compiled by Australia and will be circulated for comments by Members [Action Item 12].

### **3.7 Presentation of report (verbal) for the:**

- **International Year of Plant Health (IYPH) conference in London (SWP Region to consider hosting next conference and what this will require)**

Cook Islands (Ms. Kamana) addressed the Members and informed that she attended the IYP Conference together with other Members from the region. She mentioned that she was overwhelmed with the issues of invasive pests and if we, the PPPO Members are not vigilant at our borders, there are high chances of these pests intruding into the region. She added that Mr. Ngatoko presented on emerging pest risks in relation to climate change and this was well appreciated by the conference attendees. Ms. Kamana thanked the IPPC Secretariat for travel support and strongly recommended that more PPPO/SWP Members needed to attend these forums.

Australia – Dr. Vivian-Smith endorsed Ms. Kamana's comments; she highlighted that there's a webpage on IPPC website on the IYPH conference and this could be of interest to those Members who weren't able to attend.

The Chairperson thanked Cook Islands, Australia and other countries who attended the IYPH Conference on behalf of the region. There are no dates set for the next conference, the next host country is also yet to be confirmed. This will need to be discussed at a later time in one of the PPPO Talanoa sessions [Action Item 13].

The Chairperson thanked all Members for their time, patience and contributions to Day 01 of the meeting. Members agreed to begin Day 02 at 08.00 am. Mr. Piriiriki Maa (Cook Islands) closed Day 01 with a word of prayer.

**End of Day 01**





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## Day 02 – Friday, August 25

Chairperson (Mr. Waqa) welcomed all participants to the second and final day of the 10<sup>th</sup> Regional Technical Board Meeting. Mr. Christian Perez (Tokelau) then opened proceedings with a word of prayer.

The re-worked agenda from yesterday was further revised and in the essence of time, several items were moved to the PPPO *Talanoa Sessions* [Action Item 14]. These included:

- 2.3.3: Discussion on options for sea container cleanliness tracking
- 2.3.4: Regional training on SPS
- 2.3.5: Training for new incoming staff
- 4.4: Presentation of paper on a regional workplan for the Sea Container Hygiene System capacity building, synergies and implementation workplan
- 4.5: Power-point presentation on quarantine treatments for fruit flies, alternatives & challenges to HTFA in the Pacific
- 4.8: Presentation of paper on GAP analysis report regarding emergency response preparedness and early warning systems based on PPPO feedback
- 4.9: Presentation of paper on summary of Kalang CoE report with the report provided as an attachment, and summary of other relevant initiatives as well as paper to facilitate discussion and agreement on updated priorities

Australia: Dr. Vivian Smith requested that the PPPO Secretariat send out a placeholder for the next 12 *Talanoa Sessions* and schedule each of the items above in the sessions as not all papers can be covered in one *Talanoa Session*. This will help NPPOs plan attendance and ensure there is a quorum at the sessions. Dr. Timote responded that the Secretariat Team will be happy to send out the calendar invites [Action Item 15].

With the above changes, the further revised agenda was re-adopted.

### Session 4: PPPO Business

#### 4.1 Chairperson's Progress Report

**Mr. Nacanieli Waqa (Vice Chairperson (and acting Chairperson) of the PPPO, NZMPI)**

Mr. Waqa firstly acknowledged SWP (PPPO) Member representatives to various IPPC fora, Director SPC LRD and the PPPO Secretariat. He stated that his report, under special circumstances cover five years (2018 – 2023), instead of the normal three. Mr. Waqa talked about him assuming the role of the Chairperson after Dr. Glen Dulla (Guam) resigned mid-term due to personal reasons. While



acknowledging Dr. Dulla and the government of Guam, he was happy that a process will be put in place at this Board Meeting to elect a Chair or Vice Chair if the incumbents vacate their positions before completion of their term.

Mr. Waqa talked about navigating through the difficult times presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and not being able to remain in communication, leading to the establishment of the PPPO *Talanoa Sessions*, with the first one being opened by the Prime Minister of Samoa. He highlighted that one key achievement of the PPPO is the work on provision of safe food and other humanitarian aid – he was the chair of the working group, and this work was strongly pushed at the CPM by the region and strong sentiments were shared by the CEO of Samoa Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF). Factsheets have also been developed for guidance. Mr. Waqa was happy with the increased participation of Members in the CPM meetings; and not just participation but also being able to make significant contributions through purposeful interventions. He was happy that the senior officers were leading our work (members of SC and IC) and new officers are coming up the ranks (Mr. Maao's representation in the ESG). He was also impressed with PPPO's participation at the International Plant Health Conference held in London in 2022.

Mr. Waqa further highlighted the evolution of PPPO to be able to endorse papers and make decisions off-session (at the PPPO *Talanoa* and virtual ExCo meetings). He was particularly glad with the design of a PPPO logo and launch of the PPPO webpage (alongside the revamped BIF and PLD). He acknowledged development partners, especially Governments of Australia and New Zealand for their support as well as PPPO's representation at the HOAFS.

Mr. Waqa made a few recommendations as well. These included documenting PPPO systems and processes; development of a clear strategy for the PPPO; development of a succession vision (both at national and regional levels); training vision and package for Heads of NPPO (leadership and representation at high level events) and Biosecurity Officers; drafting of a training coordination plan (including taking ownership of capacity building, empowering and strengthening officers within the NPPO). He once again thanked the PPPO Members and the ExCo for their support towards his role the past 5 years. He acknowledged NZMPI for the support and allowing him the time and space to perform his role. He also thanked DAFF for their support. Mr. Waqa reminded new leaders that this is only the launching pad, it was an honour and wished everyone the very best.

#### **4.2 Vote of thanks and echoes from the floor**

Mr. Ngatoko (Cook Islands), on behalf of the PPPO family, with local chants and heartfelt appreciations, thanked Mr. Waqa for his leadership and service to the organization for the past 5 years. He classed Mr. Waqa as a great warrior and servant of the region; he individually mentioned names of each of the countries present at the meeting as well as the sub-regional groups (Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia) and acknowledged Mr. Waqa's support to the PPPO. Ms. Kamana presented tokens of appreciation to Mr. Waqa as he bid farewell to his executive role at the PPPO.

### **Session 5: Election of PPPO Office Bearers**

#### **5.1 Election of new PPPO Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Committee Members**

The Polynesian sub-region informed the Board that they had made their selections for Chairperson as well as ExCo members and did not need time meet. Melanesia and Micronesia were allowed time to discuss and decide on their sub-region's representation to the ExCo.



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#### **Elected Executive Committee (ExCo) Members:**

- Melanesia: Papua New Guinea (Ms. Marjorie Kemoi) and Vanuatu (Mr. Sam Armstrong)
- Micronesia: Federated States of Micronesia, FSM (Mr. John Wichep) and Republic of Marshall Islands, RMI (Mr. Byrelson Jacklick)
- Polynesia: Cook Islands (Mr. Ngatoko Ngatoko) and Samoa (Ms. Nafanua Malele)
- Vice Chairperson:** Australia – Dr. Sophie Peterson
- Chairperson:** Niue – Mr. New Aue

#### **5.2 Address by new PPPO Chairperson Mr. New Aue (Head of NPPO Niue)**

Mr. Aue acknowledged his colleagues from the Polynesian sub-region for his nomination to the Chairmanship of the PPPO. He also thanked the Melanesian and Micronesian sub-regions and the PPPO Secretariat. He recollected his days as a young Biosecurity Officer and learnings from the biosecurity leaders in the region, including Mr. Waqa who was with SPC back then. He spoke of his journey from a Biosecurity Officer to Head of Niue's NPPO and some of the work he had to take on (review of Niue's Biosecurity Act and Phytosanitary Certification System) as young leader. He mentioned that his focus as PPPO Chairperson will be on cooperation and coordination. While funding remains a challenge, he was certain that PPPO will excel as an organization. He acknowledged the assistance of development partners and requested that we all work together the next three years.

#### **5.3 Address by the new SWP-CPM Bureau Member**

##### **Dr. Gabrielle Vivian-Smith (DAFF Australia)**

Dr. Vivian-Smith congratulated the newly elected executives and assured Members that we are in great hands. She iterated the PPPO theme – Connected, Informed and Prepared, a PPPO family where no member is left behind. She was honoured to be the SWP representative to the CPM Bureau and requested the input and ideas of Members to help her in her work. She stated that the Executives now have a big commitment up their sleeves and reminded Members that they have a lot to achieve still. She wished all executives the very best in their roles and looked forward to working with the PPPO family.

#### **Session 6: Items Carried Over from the IPPC/PPPO Draft ISPMs Regional Workshop**

##### **Captured as Agenda 2.3: Additional items raised during the Draft ISPMs review meeting**

##### **2.3.2 PPPO member participation and representation at IPPC fora**

##### **c. TC-RPPO representation – consideration of alternate/proxy RPPO representation**

Australia – Dr. Vivian Smith suggested that an ExCo member should take up the role (who is not a SWP representative of any other IPPC forums – this was important to avoid splitting up roles in high-level meetings, such as at the CPM Bureau). Vice Chairperson Dr. Peterson responded that this could be on a case by case basis and as determined by the Chairperson. She requested if the Board could agree to include new lines in the paper '*Mid-Term Nomination of a Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson*' to reflect this, as below.

“The following process is proposed for the proxy representation of the RPPO at the TC-RPPO:

1. The PPPO Secretariat will advise the Chairperson that the RPPO representative is unable to attend and suggest a proxy representation based on PPPO Members attending the meeting.
2. The proxy representation will be approved by the Chairperson. This will preferably be an ExCo Member who is already attending the meeting.”



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The above was agreed to by all Members; motion was moved by Cook Islands and seconded by Kiribati.

Vanuatu – Mr. Armstrong asked when a Chairperson resign or retires, will a replacement be from the same country, or the sub-region re-convenes and decides? Vice Chairperson Dr. Peterson responded that the sub-region could meet and decide either way (depending on what is best in that situation). This was

Tonga – Ms. Tupou requested that clarity on the rotation of the sub-regions be also included in the nomination process. New Zealand (Ms. Winthrop) suggested that it will provide clarity if the leading sentence under way forward was changed to include *'nomination of a chairperson or vice chairperson should either position fall vacant mid-term'*. This was agreed to.

#### **Endorsement 8:**

The paper *'Nomination of a Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson'* after inclusion of a simplified process (instead of boxes, six steps were included) was endorsed.

#### **Session 7: Plenary: Scope for the PPPO Review Consultancy**

##### **Led by Ms. Karen Mapusua – SPC LRD**

Ms. Mapusua took Members through Section B of the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the SPC PPPO review consultancy: Purpose, Objectives, Scope of Services.

Fiji – Mr. Bartlett requested clarity on the relationship between the PPPO and APPPC and whether this should also be included in the TOR. Vice Chairperson stated that not all members of PPPO are members of APPPC; this is complicated because of the way the two RPPOs are set-up, however, our representation to the IPPC is through the PPPO. Ms. Mapusua mentioned that it may be helpful to develop an induction package on the PPPO so that new Members and staff of SPC in high-level roles can quickly become acquainted with its work as an RPPO.

New Zealand – Ms. Winthrop suggested SPC consider putting 'ways to get to a fully functioning, supported and well-resourced PPPO Secretariat' into the scope as is desired by Members. Mr. Waqa suggested that the discussion on the legality of the PPPO also needs to come out clearly in the TOR. Fiji (Mr. Bartlett) added that clarity on the role of the PPPO Secretariat should also be added to the scope.

Australia – Dr. Vivian-Smith noted that given the investment in this contract, it may not be a best use of resources to come to a consensus as part of number 5. She suggested that as a more outcome based scope, number 5 could include a presentation of options for the Board to consider. These options could also look at SPC management processes and support for the Secretariat. There should then be consultation on these options with the PPPO Members.

New Zealand – Ms. Winthrop mentioned that each option should include indicative costs for Members to consider. Not the SPC costs, but indicative costs to donor partners. Ms. Mapusua agreed and stated that this is something that would be valuable to the process. Ms. Winthrop further noted that for number 4, there is a lot of information online, and that several members could assist in pointing the consultant in the right direction, to avoid him spending a long time on this. She requested that the consultation process is made clear, and that Members would very interested in this process. Ms. Mapusua agreed that this will be included.





Australia – Dr. Vivian-Smith mentioned that as PPPO Members would like to see it, the consultancy should provide several options for consideration. These options should include Secretariat and governance arrangements, be legally appropriate and acceptable for SPC; meet the PPPO constitution; outline any impediments that may exist; and be efficient, effective and future focussed. Ms. Mapusua agreed that developing these options was a good idea and assured that as a way forward, SPC will revise the TOR based on today's discussions (which will also mean revising the contract) and present this back to Members for feedback. She hoped to send this to the Members via the PPPO Secretariat by September 01 [Action Item 16].

Please refer to the '*SPC Request for Proposal (RFQ)*' document for full details.

Morning Tea Break

## **Session 8: Plenary: Developing scope for new PPPO Strategic/Business Plan (2023 – 2026)**

### **8.1 Presentation on:**

- **Proposed new PPPO Strategic/Business Plan for endorsement**

**Dr. Visoni Timote (SPC)**

Dr. Timote presented the PPPO Revised Workplan 2023 – 2026, highlighting that the text in blue refers to proposed activities that have been added after the last PPPO ExCo meeting held in August 2022. The participants were requested to break into sub-regional groups, review the activities and make suggestions.

Please refer to '*Pacific Plant Protection Organization REVISED WORKPLAN 2023 – 2026*' for full details.

### **8.2 Presentation on:**

- **PPPO 2023 – 2026 workplan for endorsement**

The PPPO 2023 – 2026 workplan was displayed on screen and the sub-regions were allowed to make real-time changes (contributions and comments) based on their group discussions. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the revised workplan.

**Questions and comments during workplan drafting** (only substantive comments are captured below while general comments were discussed/considered, and edits were made directly on the workplan)

Tonga – Ms. Tupou asked whether the EPMAP project could assist with the costs related to identification; she also questioned about assistance for countries that were not part of EPMAP. New Zealand (Ms. Winthrop) responded that she will consult with PHEL (Dr. Kumarasinghe's team) regarding diagnostics and sample verification costs. On the other hand, she encouraged countries to compile a list of priorities including capacity building needs and seek assistance of relevant donors which can include New Zealand.

Tonga – Ms. Tupou requested clarification on the approach and where each of the countries are with the review of their biosecurity legislations. She also requested coordination by the PPPO Secretariat for this work. Dr. Timote responded that the PPPO Secretariat had earlier circulated a template (PPPO model



legislation) for consideration by countries. He added that the SAFE Pacific Project workplan is under review and what assistance can be provided and to which countries will be informed in due course.

Lunch Break

## **8.2 Continued: PPPO 2023 – 2026 workplan for endorsement**

The sub-regional groups continued to provide comments and make edits against planned activities for each of the outputs. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the revised workplan.

Tonga – Ms. Tupou suggested that staff from regional NPPOs should become involved in real emergency responses in Member Countries as part of on-the-job learning. Dr. Timote informed the Board about an upcoming SAFE Pacific Project/DAFF/Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) collaboration for a regional emergency response simulation exercise which will provide training opportunity for officers from around the region (to be held in Q1, 2024). Ms. Tupou stressed that an actual response provides greater learning versus simulation, adding that some countries are already dealing with issues which could be utilized for this exercise. The Board agreed that a general statement should be included in the workplan and the PPPO Secretariat shall explore the possibility of facilitating this exercise when the opportunity presents.

Afternoon Tea Break

New Zealand – Mr. Waqa requested clarification from SPC on the status of the RTMPP as representatives from country agriculture research organizations were previously supported to also attend the Regional Technical Board meetings (which coincided as RTMPP meetings). Ms. Mapusa (SPC) responded that it would help if the role of the RTMPP was clarified and their TOR (if the document exists) shared. Mr. Waqa then provided background on how the RTMPP traditionally linked to the PPPO and its Regional Technical Board Meeting. Ms. Mapusua responded that the RTMPP can continue to discuss and provide regional agricultural research priorities through the PPPO Secretariat, but this will need to feed into SPC's Regional Research Agenda (RRA).

The Working Group that earlier worked on the first draft of the workplan were tasked to finalize the 'PPPO 2023 – 2026 workplan' based on the edits/changes made at the Board Meeting and share with Members at the next Talanoa Session (September 22, 2023) for endorsement [Action Item 17].

New Zealand – former Chairperson Mr. Waqa took this time to highlight a correction to the ExCo elections. For nomination of the sub-regional ExCo members, a sub-regional representative (that is, a country from the sub-region), after their own sub-regional discussions are completed and nominations finalized, is supposed to announce their nominated Members and not the Secretariat. Also, the newly elected Chairperson needs to inform the PPPO Secretariat of any requirements to inform his/her government of their nomination and commitment to the PPPO for three years.

Chairperson – Mr. Aue thanked Mr. Waqa for the intervention and stated that we can correct the error now before the Board Meeting is closed. He requested each of the sub-regional representatives to announce their nominations to the Board.

-Micronesia: Kiribati (Ms. Oromita) informed the Regional Technical Board that Micronesia nominates FSM and RMI to the PPPO ExCo.



-Melanesia: Fiji (Mr. Bartlett) informed the Regional Technical Board that Melanesia nominates PNG and Vanuatu to the PPPO ExCo.

-Polynesia: Tokelau (Mr. Christian Perez) informed the Regional Technical Board that Polynesia nominates Cook Islands and Samoa to the PPPO ExCo, and that Polynesia also nominated Niue (Mr. New Aue) as the Chairperson of the PPPO ExCo.

The new Chairperson (Mr. Aue) informed the Board that the PPPO Secretariat, through SPC LRD will need to inform his immediate supervisor and line Minister of his nomination as the Chairperson of the PPPO ExCo [Action Item 18]. Dr. Timote added that SPC LRD will send this notification letter to governments of all ExCo members including the Vice Chairperson [Action Item 19].

Cook Islands – Ms. Kamana, on behalf of the Government of Cook Islands and especially the Ministry of Agriculture, thanked all delegates and presented parting gifts to all participants. The new Chairperson presented PPPO's heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved in the organization of the week-long event from the Cook Islands for their support.

Mr. Kokoa (PNG) presented gifts from his country to representatives from the IPPC Secretariat and Cook Islands Ministry of Agriculture.

## **9.0 Meeting evaluation**

All participants were requested to complete the online meeting evaluation form before close of proceedings.

## **10.0 Adoption of the Meeting Report**

After briefly going over the meeting report, lead rapporteur Mr. Gosai highlighted the Action Items and Endorsed Matters from the meeting. The report was adopted in principle pending finalization and circulation. Motion moved by New Zealand and seconded by FSM.

## **11.0 Address to close the 10<sup>th</sup> PPPO Regional Technical Board Meeting**

### **Ms. Karen Mapusua – Director, SPC LRD**

Ms. Mapusua acknowledged all delegates of the 10<sup>th</sup> Regional Technical Board Meeting for their valuable contributions over the two days. While there were a lot of achievements for the PPPO to be proud of, she mentioned that more efforts were needed to elevate the work of the organization as the key platform for biosecurity, plant health and related matters. She highlighted the need for a Communications Plan, which as a start, could include:

- inclusion of the PPPO on the agenda of the virtual '*Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services*' (HOAFS) 2024 to highlight the important role of the organisation
- hosting a side event at the '*Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations*' (CRGA) to commemorate 30 years of the PPPO

She acknowledged that Pacific leaders are crafting a strong image of the region by putting our strengths forward. Reflecting upon this, she stated that despite its strong presence as a key technical and scientific advisory body, PPPO faces many challenges, funding being a key shortfall. Also, the PPPO is currently not included in the SPC governance compendium and the PPPO review consultancy may help to address



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this. She congratulated PPPO on the success of the *Talanoa Sessions* as a way to remain connected and platform for important discussions and decisions. Ms. Mapusua stated that she appreciated the tough conversations, which were necessary and timely, and she was sure that together, we will do great work in this space.

She thanked the outgoing ExCo – particularly for navigating the organization through the COVID-19 pandemic. She specially acknowledged the outgoing Chair Mr. Waqa for his leadership and the legacy he's leaving behind. She congratulated the incoming ExCo, the new Chairperson and assured SPC's support to the PPPO. Ms. Mapusua also congratulated Dr. Vivian-Smith on her new role as the CPM Bureau rep for the SWP region. She thanked the Government of Cook Islands and the 'local organizing committee' for hosting the meeting with grace, warmth and true Pacific hospitality. She thanked the PPPO Secretariat team for their work and wished everyone safe journey back home.

Final farewell remarks from new Chairperson (Mr. Aue) and closing prayer from the host country (Mr. Ngatoko).

#### **End of Day 02 and End of Meeting.**

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