12th Public Service Commissioners' Conference

Alofi, Niue

16th-17th September 2015

"Transforming the Public Service to Meet Modern Day Challenges"

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

DAY ONE – WEDNESDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER 2015

Conference Opening

The spiritual thought "Maintain justice and do what is right for salvation is close at hand" from Isaiah 56:1 offered by the Reverend Vili Kamupala, Vice President of Ekalesia Kerisiano Niuein the devotion had relevance to the process of transformation.

The Honorable Pokotoa Sipeli, Acting Premier and Acting Minister Responsible for the Niue Public Service Commission welcomed the delegates to the 12th Pacific Public Service Commissioners' Conference hosted by the Niue Public Service. He conveyed apologies from the Premier the Honorable Toke Talagi for his absenceat the event. Referring to the theme he said that transformation was a confronting and challenging task that must be continuous for sustainability and it also required ongoing evaluation. He further said that challenges are unique to each jurisdiction however lessons can be learned from neighbors in the region. He also encouraged building of public administrations to address issues that are relevant to the region, and most importantly your respective public service administrations.

In declaring the Conference open, the acting Premier wished the Commissioners well in their discussions and in their quests for better solutions and outcomes.

Official Handover Speech

Dr Maria Kerslake, representing the Chair of the Samoa Public Service Commission and host of the 11th Pacific Public Service Commissioners' Conference held in Apia, Samoa from 25th to 27th September, 2013, conveyed appreciation of the warm welcome accorded to the Conference delegates by Honorable Sipeli, Acting Premier and Acting Minister responsible for the Public Service, the Commissioners and by staff of the Niue Public Service Commission and the people of Niue.

"Transforming the Public Service to Meet Modern Day Challenges"

In handing over the chair to Commissioner Atapana Siakimotu as Chair of the 12th Public Service Commissioners' Conference 2015, Dr Maria Kerslake commended the Niue Public Service Commission on the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality accorded to all the delegates and thanked the Acting Premier and Acting Minister Responsible for the Niue Public Service Commission for his inspiring speech and address.

Special acknowledgement also to the Government of Australia for the funding made available through the Pacific Island Centre for Public Administration to host this conference. She also thanked the conference for the opportunity to host the 11th Pacific Public Service Commissioners Conference in 2013.

Welcome Remarks

Commissioner Atapana Siakimotu, Incoming Conference Chair and Chairperson of the Niue Public Service Commission conveyed a warm welcome to the dignitaries and delegates of the conference. He said that he was humbled by the auspiciousness of the preparation and the handover and acceptance of the role of Chairperson of the 2015 conference.He also said that with the Niue Public Sector reforms would realize the vision of the"Niue keMonuina, a Prosperous Niue" which will be elaborated on in Niue country experience presentation. He conveyed special acknowledgement to the Australian Government for the assistance provided to host this conference and well wishes for the remainder of the conference. Mementos were presented to the outgoing chair by the incoming chairman.

Conference Agenda

Ms Wennie Salatielu, Director-Secretariat of the Niue Public Service Commission presented the Conference Agenda to the delegates.

Conference Key Note Address

Dr Josie Tamate, Director General, Ministry of Natural Resources, Government of Niue delivered the Conference Key Note Address on "Transforming the Public Service to Meet Modern Day Challenges". She outlined the modern day challenges and address which inspire change, motivation, innovation, capacity building and commitments on all levels.

Dr Josie Tamate quoted McKinsey Consulting Groups' five phases of successful Transformation (5As - Aspire, Assess, Architect, Act and Advance). She then concluded with her take home messages. In the discussions which followed the Commissioners shared similar experiences in their jurisdictions with relevance to public sector reform.

Speaker 2: Challenges of Innovation in Small Island States

"Transforming the Public Service to Meet Modern Day Challenges"

Associate Professor Graham Hassall, Director Pacific Islands Programs, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand spoke on the challenges of innovation in small island states. He highlighted some factors driving public sector innovation in the Pacific Island Countries (PICS). He observed that one predominant influence has been the global trend away from traditional forms of bureaucratic institutions and behaviour, toward modules of "new public governance" and "new public sector", which place emphasis on responsiveness to citizen concerns and on the delivery of results. Another global driver of innovation he identified is the application of ICT – information and communication technologies – to the conduct of government (e-Government). He observed that in Pacific Islands' context these global trends, combined with current expectations concerning "deeper regional integration", require central agencies – and PSCs in particular – to set clear goals for innovation. He said that one constraint, however, is that innovation can only succeed to the extent that public sector institutions are already performing well. He suggested that the next stage for public sector development in PICs should focus on refining institutional settings and on their efficient functioning. This, in turn, requires refinement of feedback mechanisms and shared knowledge management platforms.
Discussions highlighted similar issues shared by various jurisdictions in the Pacific - post colonial mentality, ways in which ICT has been used, public sector leadership versus political leadership and differences in generational groups within the public service.

COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS ON THE TRANSFORATION EXPERIENCE

The Niue Experience

Mr Justin Kamupala, Executive Director of Transformation presented the Niue experience. He said that Niue faces certain realities that maybe distinctly different or more pronounced to the issues faced by other public services within the region, and these will always have an impact on how it operates such as:

- Small population base: limited resource pool in terms of qualifications, capacity, expertise and institutional knowledge.
- Retention: The ability to retain key personnel or those with particular skills from emigrating elsewhere or retaining them within their particular fields of expertise;
- Limited financial resources: which promotes the need for strategic planning, but it limits the ability to actively pursue and engage personnel with appropriate skill sets or calibre.
- Global Labour Market: the limited ability to complete with overseas employment opportunities and the adverse implications that it has on Human Resource Development.
- Initiatives such as the 4 day week: creating efficiencies
- Professional and Technical Scale: Targeting professional and skilled staff

- Endeavouring to bring about the development of a culture of constant and critical self - review of all aspects of the work of the public service, so that there is a constant drive for self-improvement

These are some of the initiatives that the Niue Public Service Commission will be implementing in the months and years ahead which are hoped to address the particular challenges that it faces.
In the discussions that follow, the Commissioners commented on Niue's retention strategies and the innovative 4 day working week.

The Cook Islands Experience

Ms Daphne Ringi, CEO of the Cook Islands Public Service Commissionshared with the Conference the newly approved Cook Islands Public Service Strategy 2015-2025 which was developed in response to the Cook Island Government's vision to ensure that the people of the Cook Islands enjoy the highest quality of life and achieve their aspirations through an effective and efficient Public Service. Extensive public consultations highlighted the need for reinvigoration of values and the national identity of Cook Islanders. Among other national development issues such as depopulation and weak parliamentary oversight, public sector reforms which complement political and private sector reforms were identified.

The Cook Islands public sector was found to be fragmented and costly with 52 entities. The Cook Islands Public Service Strategy 2015-2025 which was approved recently by the Cook Islands Cabinet addresses the issues of Public Sector Transformation across two key streams of "people and structures" with recommendations on, interalia, localization of the public service, leadership and development, service wide induction program, establishment of a comprehensive human resources management framework with performance at the core and structural and operational reforms.

Speaker 3: Leadership and Transformational Change

Professor Franco Gandolfi, Dean of the University of the South Pacific's Faculty of Business and Economics said that passion is prevalent in successful organizations and that it drives vision which in turn drives strategic intent. He talked about the pervasiveness of change and the relentless need for innovation while holding steadfast to 'unchangeables'. He observed that all transformation is change but that not all change is transformation which is a process of metamorphosis that required a change in perspective where leadership is characterized by charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individual considerations.

In the discussions that followed the Commissioners commented on the gender approach to the applications of the principle of leadership with men adopting a Transactional style versus the Transformation style of women and the applicability of these approaches to address issues such as gender balance.

OVERVIEW REPORT

Pacific Islands Centre for Public Administration (PICPA)

Professor Arvind Patel, Acting Director, PICPA spoke about the objectives of PICPA and its current work plan and he also advise that the current PICPA phase ends on 30th June 2017 which has implications for funding of the Pacific Public Service Commissioners Conference and its provision of Secretariat services to the PPSCC. He invited delegates to engage proactively with PICPA and he said that the matters raised during Conference discussions provided an opportunity to PICPA to align its work plans, particularly for the financial year 2016-2017 to the needs of the PICs.

Breakout Discussion Group Reports on the Challenges faced by the Pacific Public Services

Issues identified were similar throughout the region, namely generational differences, ageing workforce, succession planning, loss of institutional knowledge, knowledge retention, social media, depopulation, gender balance ensuring equity and merit, lack of policy writers and legislative drafters, human trafficking and disease, climate change, workforce migration, loss of skills, embracing IT and suggestions for regional mechanisms to address workforce planning, agriculture and food security and knowledge management.

Working Group Reports

Terms of Reference Working Group

Ms Charlotte Vuki, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Tonga Public Service Commission updated the Conference on the TOR Working Group. She conveyed that the role of Chair of this working group was previously assigned to the representative from Tonga who completed her term in the Tongan Public Service Commission in 2014.

In the discussions that followed, Ms Ringi from Cook Island suggested that the members of the TOR Working Group get together for discussion and submit recommendations on Day 2 on how to reinvigorate the working group.

Pacific State of the Service Report Working Group

Commissioner Atapana Siakimotu, Chairperson of the Niue Public Service Commissionconveyed that there were no new information to report and he also advised that Niue wished to relinquish the position of chair for this working group. It was agreed that this item be brought up on the agenda for Day 2.

Pacific Public Service Excellence Award Working Group

Mr Parmesh Chand, Permanent Secretary, Fiji Public Service Commission and Chair of the Service Excellence Award Working Group said that the resolutions of the 11th Conference with regard to the Service Excellence Award were not further progressed and that on balance it appeared that a Regional Service Award may not at this time be a sustainable proposition. He emphasized the need to remain focused on improvements on efficiencies, productivity and service delivery culminating on service excellence in each jurisdiction and he noted that it may be more practical and viable for a facility such as PICPA to develop its capabilities as a Centre to be able to promote service excellence in member countries through exchanges of information, personnel and programs, training and advisory services and twining of countries who have sustainably implemented service excellence programs with those seeking to introduce such a program.

Welcome Dinner

Day 1 culminated with a Dinner hosted by Honorable Pokotoa Sipeli, Acting Premier and Acting Minister Responsible for the Niue Public Service and Mrs SapatiSipeli at the Scenic Matavai Resort at Tamakautoga.

DAY TWO – THURSDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015

Review of the Day 1 Conference Proceedings

Commissioner from Samoa confirmed the record of day 1 Conference Proceedings. It was seconded by the Commissioner from Solomon Islands.

Chairs of the TOR and the Pacific State of the Service Working Groups

It was resolved that members of the working groups elect a new chair amongst its members. Nauru was elected as the chair for the TOR Working Group and New Zealand for the Pacific State of the Service Report Group.

After further discussion about a review of the Conference, the proposal from the Terms of Reference Working Group that the assistance of Australia be enlisted in consultation with PICPA to carry out the review was adopted. Timelines were also provided for the Australian Public Service Commission's consideration that within a month, it will provide draft Terms of Reference for the review to the working group for review and concurrence. When finalized the Chair of the working group will circulate the reviewed TORs to all member states for comment and agreement.It was also endorsed that the review be completed by January 2016 and findings circulated member countries for discussions on further actions.

Speaker 4: Meeting Modern Demands through Evaluation

Mata'afa Dr Desmond Amosa, Capacity Development and Training Advisor of the Pacific Islands Centre for Public Administration said that the results of public sector transformation efforts in the past to improve public service delivery have remained equivocal due to the absence of systematic and comprehensive policy evaluation. He said that the theme of the Conference on transforming the public service to meet modern day challenges is timely and advised that transformation initiatives should be based on relevant and adequate evidence which require countries to engage effectively in evaluating its policies as a matter of priority for various reasons. He said that the evaluation process binds public officials with members of the community through dialogue to identify the needs and wishes of the community, resulting in what Moore (1995) refers to as "public value". He further said that this consultation process results in policies that work according to the wishes of the community.

In the discussions that followed the conference agreed that the issues raised were timely and highlighted that the collection of data and evaluation are critical for an effective public service. It was agreed that there is tension between conducting evaluation robustly on the one hand and having them done quickly with practical outcomes.

Commissioner from the New Zealand State Services Commission informed the meeting about the Better Public Service results.

Speaker 5: Managing Performance in the Public Sector to Meet Modern Day Challenges

Ms Saluma Hunt, Director, Saluma Human Resources Ltd said that managing performance is relevant tool in order for organisations to have long term survival. There is not much difference in same or similar products and services that organisations offer but how employees carry out their job functions is where significant differences lie. Motivating and recognizing performance that is over and above expectation on a consistent and ongoing basis in the public sector will

put the organization in better position to meet modern day challenges. Focus on all tasks that support the four perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard is critical however small but if not done well they are what will make a difference between a high and low performing organisation. It was also highlighted to celebrate success and show gratitude to our employees more.

Pacific Public Service Commissioners' Conference 2016

Host & Timing

The next conference will be held in The Republic of Palau on dates to be confirmed.

Funding of PPSCC

PICPA will revert to member countries on the level of funding available for 2016 and member countries all agreedthat they found value and relevance in having a conference.

Confirmation of Day 2 Record of Proceedings

The Record of Proceedings was confirmed by the Commissioner from Solomon Islands and seconded by Commissioner from Samoa.

Alofi, Niue
17 September 2015