XIII Pacific Public Service Commissioners' Conference

Koror, Republic of Palau
August 2 – 4, 2016

Record of Proceedings

"Building a Smarter Public Service through Research, Innovation and Strategizing"

DAY ONE – TUESDAY: AUGUST 2, 2016

Session 1: Opening and Handover

The Conference opened with a prayer by Ms. Bennie Brel, which was followed by a rendition of the Belau National Anthem by McKinley Emesiochel and a traditional Peace Chant by Ms. Akiko West.

Mr. Kevin Jenkins, Commissioner from Niue representing the Chair of the Niue Public Service Commission and host of the 12th Pacific Public Service Commissionersô Conference held in Alofi. Niue from 16th ï 17th September 2015, acknowledged His Excellency Tommy Remengesau Jr, the President of Palau for his support of this conference, the Honorable Minister of Finance Elbuchel Sadang, members of the Cabinet, the Honorable Senate President Camsek Elias Chin and the Speaker of the House of Delegates and the Director of the Bureau of Public Service Systems, Ms. Umerang Imetengel. In handing over the chair of the conference to the incoming Chair, he conveyed appreciation for the opportunity accorded to the Niue Public Service Commission to host the 2015 Conference. He reflected on the theme of the 2015 Conference and spoke about the role of evaluation in lending assistance to the public services to provide evidence that they have made tangible differences to the public that they serve. He commended the Palau Bureau of Public Service Systems for the theme of the 2016 Conference which builds on the 2015 Conference theme.

The in-coming Conference Chair, Ms. Umerang Imetengel, Director of the Palau Bureau of Public Service Systems, accorded a warm welcome to Commissioners and delegates to the 13th Pacific Public Service Commissionersô Conference and acknowledged the presence of members of the Diplomatic Corps and Palau Public Service Directors and Public Servants. She welcomed the opportunity to host the Conference which was a unique first experience for the Palau Public Service Systems. She thanked Niue for the hospitality extended to all delegates of the 2015 Public Service Commissionersô Conference. She explained the significance of the choice of venue for the opening ceremony saying that there was a parallel in the history of the venue with the conference. She explained that the framers of the Constitution of Palau set a time frame in Article XIII Section 2 of the Constitution to relocate the provisional capital in Koror to Babeldaob within ten years; as such, the Pacific Public Service Commissioners are faced with the challenge of framing its future direction and identifying sources of funding. She said that the Government of the Republic of Palau had achieved its vision as is evidenced by the magnificent Capitol buildings and that the stability and prospects for a bright future for Palau was due to important decisions made in Ngerulmud. She said that by association she hoped that the Conference would be similarly rewarded with an investment for a bright and stable future.

The Honorable Minister of Finance of Palau, Elbuchel Sadang, delivered remarks of welcome on behalf of the President of the Republic of Palau, His Excellency Tommy Remengesau Jr. who was unable to be present due to prior engagements. He conveyed the Presidentôs sincere apologies for his absence from the opening ceremony and he said that the Government of Palau was honoured to be hosting the 13th Pacific Public Service Commissionersô Conference. He commented that the conference theme shared similarities with the administrationôs

Management Action Plan which focuses on Good Leadership, program planning, functional management direction, innovative management and professionalism. He said that Palau leaders believe that in order to run an effective public service system, innovative ideas needed to be encouraged. Furthermore, the Minister reiterated that the Republic of Palau prides itself with encouraging economic development while preserving its natural resources.

The Conference Delegates posed for a group photograph with dignitaries of the Palauan Government before returning to Koror to convene the conference discussions.

The Conference adjourned at the Palau Tourism and Hospitality School of Excellence. The Director of the Pacific Islands Centre for Public Administration (PICPA), which provided the secretariat and funding support for the Conference since 2013, thanked the Government of Palau and the Director of the Bureau of Public Service Systems and her staff for their enormous efforts in the planning, logistics and hosting of the Conference. He said that although PICPA does not have a formal role in the Conference, his team has worked with the previous and current chairs to craft the conference themes and to develop the Conference programs. He said he was pleased to observe that there was full attendance in this conference by all the countries and furthermore that some countries had taken the initiative to send more than one representative whose attendance was funded through their Governmentsô sources. He acknowledged the attendance by Timor Lôeste and the presence of representatives from the Pacific Community, the Pacific Islands Training Initiatives of the Graduate School USA, the World Bank and The University of the South Pacific. He identified the pivotal issues of discussion in the conference program and said that the outcomes from the discussions on the Review of the Pacific Public Service Commissioners Conference would provide options for a way forward in the light of the impending end of funding by the Australian Government of the PICPA project. Discussions on the preliminary results of the researches conducted on the topics of adoption ad implementation of Performance Management Systems in Pacific Island Countries, the role of Information and Communications Technology in service delivery and the development of Workplace Friendly Policies would feed into the business case on PICPAôs transition into an institute of the University of the South Pacific.

Session 2: Review of the Pacific Public Service Commissioners' Conference

Mr. Bernard Grundler, Chair of the PPSCC Terms of Reference Working Group, recapitulated on the request made at the previous Conference to the Australian Public Service Commission to review the Conference. He highlighted the importance of sharing ideas and resources especially with capacity building and training. He invited the reviewers Ms. Jane Ryan and Ms. Deborah Meehan of the Australian Public Service Commission to facilitate discussions on the findings of the review which had been circulated in advance to the conference delegates.

In her comments prior to the breakout sessions for discussion, Ms. Meehan conveyed apologies and best wishes for the success of the conference from the Australian Pubic Service Commissioner, Mr. John Lloyd who was unable to attend the Conference. Conference delegates broke in groups to discuss their construal of the purpose of the conference, crucial enabling environments conducive for the recognition of the importance of the conference by political masters and resources required to underpin the success of the conference. These discussions were facilitated by Ms. Ryan and Ms. Meehan.

After lunch the delegates reconvened for presentations of discussions and recommendations by each group. Delegates were provided an opportunity to indicate their individual views by voting for each of the recommendations and the discussion points. The session was adjourned for consensus building and action planning to Day 2.

Session 3: Understanding Strategic Management: Smarter Management of Scare Resources - Interface of Tourism and Environmental Conservation in Palau

Ms. Nanae Singeo, Executive Director of the Palau Visitors Authority shared with the Conference delegates the strategies adopted by the PVA in its establishment phase in building its brand in the face of scarce resources. Before she began her presentation Director Singeo shared a short clip from the National Geographic Special on Palauôs Conservation efforts. This

clip exemplified Palau's emphasis on environmental conservation and branding of its unique traditional, cultural, and environmental resources. She spoke about the research undertaken by the Authority to create a profile of Palau which differentiated it from other competing markets and the identification of touch points that appeal to the segment of the target market that it wished to attract.

The conference delegates appreciated the insights shared by Ms. Singeo in arriving at the Pristine Paradise Palau brand and discussed the relevance of the PVA analogy to the PPSCC's quest for consensus outcome from discussions on the Conference Review and agreement for action going forward.

Session 4: Research on Public Service and Administrative Matters
Presentations of interim results of research conducted by PICPA were presented by:

Mr. Dhiraj Bhatru on *The Use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to Improve Quality of Service Delivery in PICs.* The objectives of this research were:

- determine the current status of the use of ICT for service delivery in the public sector of selected countries;
- identify barriers to ICT use impacting service delivery;
- provide recommendations to address these barriers to effective ICT use; and
- provide a future outlook on the application of ICTs in selected countries.

Five sets of recommendations were tabled, namely:

1. *Create, strengthen and engage ICT policies and strategies*

- Create ICT polices and strategies both at the national and sectorial levels that is consistent and practical.
- Sectoral policies should be closely linked to national policy and vice versa.
- National ICT polices should be tied to the country's overall development plan/strategy and regional and international development priorities, e.g. PRISAP.
- Consider a centralized ICT body with relevant Terms of Reference to better coordinate, diffuse and monitor ICT policies and practices.

2. *Enhance awareness and dissemination of information*

- A proper communication plan needs to be in place for better dissemination of policies/plans across the Public Service and to the public.
- More community centres should be set up to provide access to ICT tools for greater awareness of public services.
- Information regarding public services should be more accessible in the local languages.
- Mobile applications should be further explored.
- Improve the methods for data storage of essential records across the Public Sector by hosting on properly maintained servers that enable easy intra-ministry sharing of information.
- Government portals for information need to be updated, consistent and maintained properly.
- Evaluation of processes, systems and services need to occur at regular intervals with a consistent approach.

3. *Develop infrastructure and resourcing capabilities*

- A centrally coordinated audit of ICT infrastructure across the public service should be undertaken to map services provided to capacity to deliver in order to assess further steps to improve delivery.
- Consider infrastructure and resource sharing across ministries.

4. *Alleviate cost and access issues*

- Regulate the cost of standard ICT tools such as Internet access, mobile telephony and PCs/laptops to be more affordable to the public.
- Allow greater but monitored access to Internet use throughout the Public Service.
- Reduce the high cost of equipment and maintenance through subsidies for the public.

- Provide incentives for market entry of more ICT providers and remove the monopolistic approach to telecommunications provision.
- Explore the use of open source software and applications.

5. *Focus on human resource development and retention*
- Strengthen performance management systems for equitable opportunities and staff retention.
- Promote and encourage more ICT upskilling and workplace integration of ICT tools to bring about process efficiencies.
- Provide professional development and career plans for staff exploring cost effective means of upskilling such as undertaking relevant Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).
- Build a repository of relevant learning materials from Open Educational Resources (OER) related to the various sectors of the Public Service based on partnerships with regional and international organizations for the purpose of knowledge enhancement and sharing among ministries.

Day 1 concluded at 4.30pm with a summing up of the Dayôs proceedings by the Conference Chair.

DAY 2 – WEDNESDAY: AUGUST 3, 2016

Day 2 began with a Prayer led by Dr Akanisi KedreyateTabualevu, Commissioner from Fiji.

Recap of Day One Discussion

The Conference Chair recapitulated the discussions of Day 1. She further said that although delegates were from different parts of the Pacific there was a sense of shared challenges and needs and that the PPSCC was a forum where these challenges and issues may be discussed, deliberated on in the spirit of sharing and to seek workable solutions.

Mr. Bernard Grundler, delegate from Nauru, emphasised the need to share ideas and resources on capacity building and to seek ways to work collaboratively to find solutions. He emphasised the importance for the Conference to arrive at a consensus about the future of the PPSCC which will support the development of a plan to move forward.

Mr. Jiba Kabua the delegate from the Republic of Marshall Islands expressed the opinion that the future of the conference hinges on how political leaderswere informed about the conference and that the status of the conference needed to be elevated to the next level as a full blown organisation with a full time Secretariat.

Session 3: Understanding Strategic Management: Smarter Management of Scare Resources: Interface of Tourism and Environmental Conservation in Palau

The Honorable Minister Umiichi F. Sengebau of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism illustrated his Ministryôs problem solving strategy by sharing the approach it adopted towards the threats of climate change and global warming. Despite its best efforts, Palau suffers from the effects of climate change and global warmings but rather than allow itself to be consumed by it, it adopted proactive and innovative techniques to address the problem. It monitored successes and copied them and identified them as ñbright spotsòor ñrays of hopeòas the starting point to unravel complex issues.

The Honorable Minister acknowledged that problems can be overwhelming but may be alleviated by seeking positive outcomes to identify with as models of change. In response to information conveyed to him about the issues confronting the conference in its discussions on its future, he advised to look for practical solutions, finding, dwelling on and showcasing bright spots may deliver a game plan leading to solutions as it did for Pristine Paradise Palau.

Session 2: Review of the Pacific Public Service Commissioners' Conference

Discussions adjourned on outcomes of the presentations delivered onthe previous day. The facilitators presented the consolidated responses of the votes on the important issues identified during the group discussions under six headings as follows:

- **Concept**: PPSCC to continue, New Brand ï consistent message, platform, Tangible solutions and outcomes, Governments/Ministers recognise value.
- **Purpose** ï Develop strategies for Public Service Excellence in the Pacific Region.
- **Branding** ï Excellence
- **Funding** ï Options ï Government support, Cost sharing
- **Unpopular Options** ï Donors, Membership Fees
- **Logistics** ï Timing (biennial), Agenda setting, Format

Break out groups reconvened to discuss these findings in two groups. The session was adjourned to later in the afternoon.

Session 4: Research on Public Service and Administrative Matters

Status of Implementation of Performance Management Systems in PICs.

Associate Professor Anand Chand began his presentation on the research findings on the Status of Implementation of Performance Management Systems in PICs with the objectives of the research, viz:

- To examine the current status of PMS in four countries (Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati)
- To identify the strengths of the PMS of each country
- To identify any weaknesses/gaps of the PMS of each country
- To identify interventions required to address gaps and improve the PMS in these countries;

Recommendations arising from this research are:

- Need for evaluation/audit of PMS
- Training for Heads of Departments/Managers on PMS
- Training for Heads of Departments/Managers on Administration and Management and Leadership Development
- Training for Heads of Departments/Managers on writing of Job Descriptions
- Awareness and training of employees on the writing of Individual Work Plans (IWP)

Status of Development of Workplace Social Friendly

Professor Vijay Naidu delivered the interim results of the research on the Status of Implementation of Workplace Social Friendly Policies in PICs. He advised that the overall objective of the research on Workplace Social Friendly Policies on Child Protection, Gender Mainstreaming, Domestic and Sexual Violence, Disability, Climate Change and Occupational Health and Safety was to benchmark policies and their implementations in PICs.

Recommendations and possible action by the Pacific Islands Centre for Public Administration were identified as follows:

- Cross cutting issues such as gender mainstreaming require whole of government approach
- Capacity development and training required for expeditious implementation of polices
- Need for intragovernmental and wider community exposure of the policies to generate awareness and garner commitment and engagement
- Partnerships with CSOs, NGOs and Private Sector as governments cannot do it alone
- Resources and funding.

Delegates broke into discussions groups to discuss the interim findings and recommended as follows:

- Need for policies to be implemented at national levels.
- Integral roles for PICPA and PSCs for sharing of best practices.
- Recognition of the influence of culture on the Performance Management System and adoption of a 360 degree view of assessment as opposed to the top down method.

- Identification of "bright spots" as models of change such as the 50% composition of women in the Samoan Workforce and the 30% special measure adopted by Timor Lêste to increase the composition of women in its workforce.

Session 5: Gender Mainstreaming
Afioga Leituala Kuiniselani Toelupe Tago-Elisara of the Pacific Community spoke on Gender Mainstreaming in the Public Service.

In identifying the potential roles of the Public Service Commissions in adopting gender mainstreaming in PICs she highlighted the benefits that accrue. Afioga Leituala Kuinsilani provided various information about SPC and Gender Mainstreaming work that is very important in Public Service. Gender Mainstreaming requires data and statistics. Such information can and will ensure equity in the Public Service. In her presentation, Afioga Leituala Kuinsilani expressed how it was important to assess how policies and services benefit or affect men and women, because their needs and experiences are different. The delegates were urged to work to provide a public service that enables government institutions to contribute to and plan an active role in addressing gender disparities so that all citizens and community members can benefit from public services.

The Commissioner from the Solomon Islands, a bright spot in the Gender Stocktake conducted in 15 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), was invited to share his countries efforts and measures adopted to implement its gender mainstreaming strategy.

Afioga Leituala Kuiniselani Toelupe Tago-Elisara recommended that:
- Public services of each country identify measures to establish and support gender mainstreaming.
- A set of guidelines for mainstreaming gender through the Public Service be piloted in volunteer countries.
- A regional workshop on Gender Mainstreaming in the PIC Public Services in 2017.

Pacific Islands Centre for Public Administration – Future Directions
The Director PICPA briefed the conference on the future directions for PICPA which was in its final phase as a fully funded entity by the Government of Australia. He advised that effective from 1 July 2017, PICPA would be transformed as an Institute within the University of the South Pacific and aligned closely with the School of Finance, Business and Economics.

The delegates from the Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Marshall Islands pledged strong support for PICPA and its work in developing the capacity of the Public Services in the region.

The delegate from Papua New Guinea commended the Director PICPA on his leadership of PICPA and conveyed that he has had discussions with the Director PICPA about a strategic alliance between his department and PICPA and that will take shape when the Director PICPA makes a familiarization visit to the Papua New Guinea Department of Personnel.

Review of the Pacific Public Service Commissioners' Conference
The day ended with presentations of the discussions of the two groups regarding Concept, Purpose, Branding, Funding and Logistics aspects of the Conference.

The Groups reported as follows:
Group 1
Vision ï Public Service Excellence for all PICs
Purpose ï harmonising, sharing and advising on good practices on Public Service Delivery
Principle ï value adding, enabling platform, equity in order to get equality, access and strategic foresight
Outcomes ï Regional Standards, utilization of value-adding tools, capacity development, sharing of knowledge, strengthening of leaderships and governance, monitoring and evaluation.

Strategies ï focus on the region and extension of vision through networking, strategic partnerships and institutional partnerships.
Resources ï established governance structure and permanent full time secretariat.

Group 2
Purpose ï regional strategic directions for the Public Service
Focus ï regional and on good governance
Resources ï Aspirations for a permanent full time secretariat with support of political leaders.
Advisory and Management Board which meets twice yearly to discuss emerging theme and issues that would feed into the conference program.
Donor partners as sponsors.

Day 2 concluded at 4.30pm with an agreement that a final position on the Conference will be taken the following day.

DAY 3 – THURSDAY: AUGUST 4, 2016
Day 3 was held in the State of Peleliu which is located about 1 hour boat ride from Koror. The Delegates convened at around11:30 pm to finalize the ñWay Forwardò Document (appendix 1 of the Communiqué) and review and finalize the Communiqué.

The Conference delegates were welcomed by the Honorable Speaker of the Peleliu State Legislature, Ms. Euphrasia Remeliik.

Way Forward
Deliberation of the Way Forward for the PPSCC provided an avenue to address questions and concerns including establishing a formal TOR/Governance Structure that would be finalized by a smaller group. The smaller working committee will comprise of Papua New Guinea (Melanesia), Palau (Micronesia) and Samoa (Polynesia) and with technical support from the Australian Public Service Commission and PICPA to meet within three months of the Conference to map out the finer details of the way forward.

Communiqué
The Communiqué was finalized and delegates produced a Draft Document (Appendix 1 ï PPSCC Way Forward) that captured the essence of what the heads of PSCs around the Pacific saw as the future of the PPSCC. Please see Appendix ! for details.

14th Annual Pacific Public Service Commissioners' Conference
The Conference welcomed the Nomination and Acceptance of the Papua New Guinea to host the 14th Pacific Public Service CommissionersôConference in Papua New Guinea; dates to be confirmed.

Closing
Finally, the Delegates expressed their sincere gratitude for the Republic of Palau, specifically the Bureau of Public Service System of the Ministry of Finance for coordinating and hosting a successful and fruitful 13th Conference.

Day 3 ended at 1:45 pm.