



HONORABLE MR. VIJAY NATH

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

**OFFICIAL OPENING ADDRESS AT THE PACIFIC MARITIME
TECHNICAL OFFICERS WORKSHOP**

*Tanoa Plaza
Suva, Fiji*

*Wed, 07 January 2018
08:30am*

Salutations

- ***Your Excellency, Mr. Patteson Oti, High Commissioner of Solomon Islands in Fiji and Chair of the PIDF;***
- ***Delegates from Pacific Island Countries and Territories***
- ***Deputy Secretaries and CEO MSAF;***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen.***

Bula vinaka and a very good morning to you all.

It gives me great pleasure to join you here at the opening ceremony of this Pacific Island International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Technical Officers Workshop.

Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to all executives, professionals and experts, technical officers including participants from your respective agencies and Pacific Island Countries.

I am extremely pleased by the strong interest shown in the turn out today. I believe the commitment you continue to show will enable us to lay a platform for sharing of knowledge, ideas and experiences in developing the strategic IMO Roadmap. This roadmap will map out our

contribution towards the reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions within the international maritime sector.

The Fijian Government through the invaluable support of the Government of France is proud to support the Pacific Island Development Forum (PIDF) in hosting this workshop. The two countries had entered into an Administrative Arrangement signed last year to further strengthen partnerships in the reduction of GHG emissions from the international maritime sector. This partnership will enable better representation of Pacific Island Countries at the IMO meetings in London.

This workshop today will involve deliberation on matters surrounding GHG emissions reduction within the international shipping sector. In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the presence of experts from the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF), University of the South Pacific/Micronesian Centre for Sustainable Transport (USP/MCST) and University College of London (UCL) who will be actively engaged as guest speakers throughout this 3-day workshop.

As you are aware, this year is an important one for the IMO, as the adoption of an initial strategy on GHG emissions reduction will take place in April. As COP President, Fiji is all too aware of how critical it is for all sectors to play their part in keeping global temperature rise to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. At Bonn, Fiji along with your respective leaders spoke strongly on the need for all sectors and actors to take immediate and significant action to address this.

Our presence at the IMO in April this year will give us another opportunity to reiterate the sentiments of our leaders. Through this workshop you are expected to collectively make formal contributions on technical papers that could be further discussed for adoption at IMO.

FIJI'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS REDUCING GHG EMISSIONS

In terms of the National Determined Contributions (NDC), Fiji has two relevant outcomes guiding us in the medium term:

- Firstly, the obligation for the maritime sector to contribute to global efforts to reduce GHG emissions whereby all stakeholders are

required to take appropriate action to progress low-carbon maritime transport in the Pacific Islands region;

- Secondly, the reduced reliance on imported fossil fuel and greater energy security.

In doing so, we are clearly stepping forward in addressing national and regional climate change issues hence, contributing to global efforts to reduce GHG emissions.

FIJI NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Fijian Government's commitment to the reduction of GHG emission is now an integral part of our 5 and 20 year National Development Plan which focuses on strategies to achieving a sustainable transport sector.

To name a few, the strategies include;

- a) supporting the transition towards a low carbon sea transport future;
- b) improving the operating efficiency of vessels;
- c) introducing age limits on second hand vessels;
- d) supporting technological innovation such as having better hull and propeller designs to ensure fuel savings.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to commend the actions undertaken in other Pacific Islands countries like Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands. These 2 countries through the support of regional and international development partners have taken the lead in promoting the reduction of GHG emissions from international shipping.

The international shipping is one of the significant emitters and is predicted to increase over time. Our connectivity with the rest of the world is essential and it is important that the Pacific Islands are well represented and unified in IMO meetings.

We are all maritime people and with our countries surrounded by the oceans, we are therefore vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise

which can come about through the increase in global temperatures. Furthermore, shipping is critical for our survival.

So the key question for this workshop is – how we can effectively align ourselves towards the IMO targets on GHG emission reduction without compromising the transport needs of our small island states.

This is our opportunity to talk openly and honestly with each other, discuss issues that we all face, and plan together for the work ahead. On that note, I wish you well in your deliberations and hope for a successful 3-day workshop.

Thank you and Vinaka Vakalevu.