

APCC - SPC ROUNDTABLE ON THE STATE OF THE ART OF COCONUT PROCESSING AND MARKET PROSPECTS OF COCONUT PRODUCTS IN THE PACIFIC COUNTRIES

COMMUNIQUÉ

That the following Pacific Island countries and territories: Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna plus the private sector (32 enterprises, NGOs and women's groups from 10 countries), International and Regional Bodies (including APCC, FAO, ITC, IFAP, SPC, SOPAC), research organizations (including, ACIAR, CIRAD and Bioversity International) have met for two days (17-18th June) in Nadi, Fiji and discussed the state of the art of coconut processing and market prospects for coconut from the Pacific Islands.

The delegates unanimously agreed that coconut has a unique potential to contribute to sustainable and healthy rural livelihoods throughout the Pacific Islands, and can provide an engine for growth in Pacific Islands economies.

The meeting further agreed that:

- In view of the fact that coconuts are by far the most important agriculture crop in the Pacific Islands and represent a vital element for the food security, nutrition and economic wellbeing of our peoples, the Coconut Sector must be included in the national priority agenda. The coconut sector warrants greater investment by national governments, private sector and donors.
- Coconuts because of their multipurpose and multifunctional roles, adaptation to salinity and climate extremes, have a major role to play in national food security and climate change adaptation strategies.
- Biofuel produced from coconuts in traditional Pacific Island farming systems has amongst the lowest greenhouse gas footprint of all biofuels, and needs to be more actively developed and promoted in the Pacific Islands, especially on outer islands, and for power generation and in shipping.
- Improved and more sanitary methods for processing and drying of copra need to be promoted and adopted.
- There is an urgent need for national coconut surveys; coconut replanting with appropriate genetic materials including especially superior local selections; and coupled with effective utilization of senile palms.
- An adaptive research and development program is needed to support the development of new and improved value added coconut products and markets, including VCO, tender coconut water, coconut milk, coconut flour, coconut sugar, coconut vinegar, coconut shell charcoal, timber, biofuels, biochar, coir products, and farming systems.
- Model, integrated commercially-operated coconut processing centres, farming systems and tender coconut water processing facilities should be established, through public-private sector partnerships, in strategic locations including at least one in each of the main regions of the Pacific Islands: Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.
- Replication of successful coconut businesses be undertaken through partnerships between communities, NGOs and private sector.
- APCC, SPC and CROP agencies in collaboration with Pacific Island governments and territories, the private sector, international donor community and other stakeholders to develop the potential of coconut, including through training programs, information sharing and promotion of coconut smallholder associations.