



Pacific Islands Universities Research Network (PIURN) COMMUNIQUE

A meeting of vice-chancellors and senior level representatives of interested universities and stakeholders was held at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji, between November 5 – 7, 2012, to discuss the formation of a network of universities from the Pacific Island countries and territories to support intra- and inter- regional knowledge creation and sharing, and to prepare succinct recommendations for the development of a regional Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) Policy framework.

Recognizing the benefits of a regional science and technology framework to strengthen national and regional agendas, the delegates discussed the capacity of universities to contribute to a collaborative network which would help foster research links and strengthen the policy processes in the region. Potential identified benefits from establishing a universities' research network included a capacity to:

- Generate new knowledge for addressing priority challenges in the Pacific region.
- Share physical and intellectual resources to facilitate quality research.
- Strengthen scientific research content in the curriculum and in teaching.
- Develop shared research training initiatives.
- Collectively work with regional and international organizations to strengthen the quantity and quality of research conducted in fields of major importance.
- Protect and build on local and indigenous knowledge systems in research programmes.
- Provide ST&I policy advice at the regional and national level.

The meeting resolved:

'That a Pacific Islands Universities Research Network (PIURN) be established with the principal purpose of building upon the quality educational capacity of these universities, for enhancing research and development collaboration in science, technology and innovation, to better serve the needs and aspirations of Pacific communities.'

To seek prominent inclusion of ST&I initiatives in the updated Pacific Plan and to further advance the development of the regional ST&I policy framework.'

To successfully implement these resolutions, the meeting agreed to:



1. Appoint Jito Vanualailai, Associate Professor and Director of Research, University of the South Pacific, as the Interim Coordinator of the network.
2. Appoint Anne Rouault, Head of Research Administration, University of New Caledonia, as the Assistant Interim Coordinator of the network.
3. Form a PIURN secretariat that will be hosted by the University of the South Pacific for three years in the first instance.

Establish a PIURN working group of ten prospective university representatives to formulate the terms of reference and operational structure for the network in partnership with relevant national, regional and international organizations. The working group is expected to report to prospective member universities within a 6-month period.

