Qualitative Meeting Report

24th Consultation Meeting of the Pacific Heads of Education Systems (PHES)

Theme: Building Resilience in Education Systems and Harnessing the Pacific Regional Collaboration

27 – 30 July 2021, 10:00-14:00 Port Moresby Time (virtual meeting)

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Sustainable
Development
Goals

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APTC	Australia Pacific Training Coalition
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CIAG	Cook Islands Administrative Guidelines
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRT	Culturally Responsive Teaching
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFAT	Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DRC	Disability Resource Centre
EAPRO	East Asia and Pacific Regional Office
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESSP	Education Sector Support Program
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
FEdMM	Forum Education Ministers Meeting
FEMIS	Fiji Education Management Information System
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IE	Inclusive Education
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IERC	Inclusive Education Resource Centre
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
KEIP	Kiribati Education Improvement Program
KIT	Kiribati Institute of Technology
LPP	Local Performance Plan
MEHRD	Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development
MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MISE	Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disabilities
Pacific INDIE	Pacific Indicators for Inclusive Education
PacREF	Pacific Regional Education Framework
PDF	Pacific Disability Forum
PHES	Pacific Heads of Education Systems
PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations
PNG	Papua New Guinea

PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PRIEF	Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIEMIS	Solomon Islands Education Management Information System
SPC	Pacific Community
SPC – EQAP	Pacific Community - Educational Quality and Assessment Programme
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVSD	Technical and Vocational Skills Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USP	The University of the South Pacific
VESP	Vanuatu Education Support Program
VSPD	Vanuatu Society for People with Disability

Contents

Acknowledgement

UNESCO wishes to acknowledge and express its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Papua New Guinea for virtually hosting the 24th Consultation Meeting of the Pacific Heads of Education Systems. Our appreciation to Hon. Jimmy Uguro, MP. the Minister for Education, for his welcome address and to Mr. Uke Kombra, PhD, Secretary for Education, Government of Papua New Guinea for chairing the meeting over the four days. UNESCO is thankful to all Pacific member states' delegates, Development Partners, CSOs, and other regional experts for their active participation and invaluable contributions to discussions and presentations.

Introduction

1. The Pacific Heads of Education Systems (PHES) consultation meetings are held on average every second year prior to the Forum Education Ministers Meeting (FEdMM) by a host country on a rotational basis with UNESCO's support as the secretariat. The 23rd PHES consultation meeting was held in Niue in May 2019 hosted by UNESCO and the Government of Niue.

2. Due to COVID-19 related lockdowns and boarder restrictions the 24th Pacific Heads of Education Systems (PHES) and representatives of member countries met virtually for their Consultation Meeting from 27th July – 30th July 2021, with the theme, "Building Resilience in Education Systems and Harnessing the Pacific Regional Collaboration". The theme followed the discussion held at FEdMM 2021. This 24th Consultation Meeting was co-hosted by UNESCO and the Government of Papua New Guinea. The meeting was attended by Secretary Generals, CEOs, Directors and other senior officials of the ministries for education from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu with Development Partners, CSOs and Universities as observers.

Background
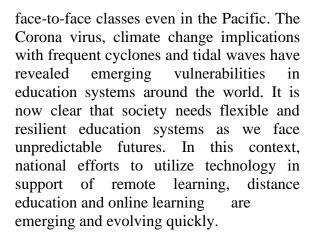
3. The Pacific Heads of Education Systems meeting is a consultative meeting of regional heads of education systems to dialogue on policy issues facing regional and national education systems, and explore effective ways to resolve the issues together.

4. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted at the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015, have provided new regional and global policy and directions, which impact education both in terms of national and regional education plans at all levels. The goal of SDG 4 is to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life- long learning opportunities for all". It is as a result of this, and the commitment of the Incheon Declaration on the Education 2030 agenda, that the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) was reviewed and reformed as a new Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

5. The theme for the 24th Consultation Meeting of the PHES was very pertinent in wake of COVID-19 Pandemic and associated lockdowns and closure of schools. Although the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDSs) have recorded a smaller number of cases of COVID-19, they have implemented travel restrictions and border closures to prevent imported cases of the COVID-19. Likewise, many countries have imposed public health emergencies, lockdowns, curfews and social distancing to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. In light of the rising concerns about the spread of COVID-19, a growing number of educational institutions have shut down in regards to

face-to-face classes even in the Pacific. The Corona virus, climate change implications with frequent cyclones and tidal waves have revealed emerging vulnerabilities in education systems around the world. It is now clear that society needs flexible and resilient education systems as we face unpredictable futures. In this context, national efforts to utilize technology in support of remote learning, distance education and online learning are emerging and evolving quickly.

PHES Meeting Objectives

6. The meeting objectives were to:
    (i) Discuss educational challenges, opportunities and way forward towards achieving SDG4 goals;
    (ii) Review of progress in regional SDG4 benchmarking and the importance of the usage of data in policy and practice;
    (iii) Review education quality and relevance and teacher professionalism issues;
    (iv) Follow-up of the PacREF implementation processes;
    (v) Consider learning pathways and issues of student well-being;
    (vi) Consider issues and opportunities in higher education;
    (vii) Hold the Pacific regional consultation for the Seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII; and
    (viii) Hold a closed-door meeting by the PHES members on the PHES Business Plan.

Summary of presentations and discussions

The following narratives detail the presentations, discussions and outcomes of the 24th PHES Consultation Meeting.

Day 1
Session 1: Welcome and Chairing Handover

7. Welcome address was provided by Hon. Jimmy Uguro, the Minister for Education, Government of Papua New Guinea. In his welcome address Hon. Jimmy Uguro acknowledged the presence of PHES members and thanked them for their participation in the 24th Virtual Consultation Meeting of the Pacific Heads of Education Systems (PHES). He encouraged members to work as a team in such times of uncertainty building resilience in education through meaningful dialogue. He assured members that PNG stood ready to continue its support for a regional cooperation and further enhancing the work of UNESCO on education of sustainable development. He welcomed the members to the virtual meeting and looked forward to successful discussions and outcomes in the meeting.

8. Ms. Stefania Giannini, PhD, Assistant Director General for Education, UNESCO welcomed members to the 24th Pacific Heads of Education Systems (PHES) meeting and thanked PNG for co-hosting the meeting with UNESCO. She emphasized that this was an essential regional platform

for cooperation and mutual learning. Over the past 18 months, the world had experienced unprecedented educational crisis that more than ever calls for re-thinking and co-creating and collaboration to accelerate the progress towards achieving SDG4. Some of the key points of her address were as follows:
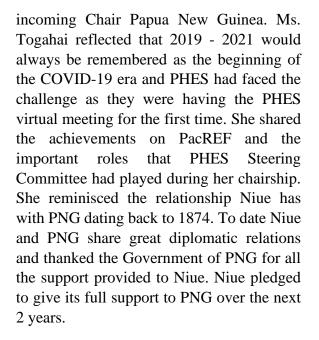
i) Covid-19 pandemic had exacerbated and amplified people existing in inequalities;

ii) COVID-19 had increased reliance on technology and making access to technological devices and connectivity increasingly important a condition for learning;

iii) Despite actions by governments to provide remote learning opportunities, limited connectivity and lack of teachers in remote areas and outer islands pose a challenge for the most vulnerable and marginalized learners including those with disabilities;

iv) SIDs are focusing on teachers' professional development and adopting technologies to diversify teaching and learning;

v) We now stand at critical crossroads to build resilience to future shocks and make education system more inclusive and adaptive to the challenges of our times;

vi) Education should be inclusive and transformative as they provide a pathway to more resilient and sustainable economies;

vii) Need for new competencies, values and skills to help youth cope with climate change, digital transformations and globalization; and

viii) Assured that UNESCO is committed to supporting the Pacific heads of education systems which remains a vibrant body for cooperation so that every child and youth enjoy inclusive and equitable quality education.

9. Ms. Nisha, Director of the Office and Representative to the Pacific States addressed the participants and facilitated the handover ceremony. She stated that it was a great pleasure for her to welcome everyone to the 24th PHES meeting with the co-host the government of PNG. Over the last two consultations of PHES she had seen transformative leaders in the Pacific. She stressed that each of the PHES members were individuals whose passion for education quality and social equity is equally matched by their knowledge of learning. Ms. Nisha emphasized the importance of collective action by PHES throughout education levels, responding to diverse needs and with efforts to reduce digital divide. She shared that it is UNESCO's honour to be part of organizational management of the education systems across the Pacific that helped translate their visionary ideas into actions.

10. Ms. Birtha Togahai, Director of Education, Government of Niue handed over the chairship, which was duly accepted by the

incoming Chair Papua New Guinea. Ms. Togahai reflected that 2019 - 2021 would always be remembered as the beginning of the COVID-19 era and PHES had faced the challenge as they were having the PHES virtual meeting for the first time. She shared the achievements on PacREF and the important roles that PHES Steering Committee had played during her chairship. She reminisced the relationship Niue has with PNG dating back to 1874. To date Niue and PNG share great diplomatic relations and thanked the Government of PNG for all the support provided to Niue. Niue pledged to give its full support to PNG over the next 2 years.

11. In his acceptance speech for the PHES Chairmanship, Mr. Uke Kombra, PhD, Secretary for Education, Government of Papua New Guinea, thanked the PHES members and shared the country's vision towards achieving SDG4. He also mentioned the need to take appropriate steps to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the Pacific as education systems had been affected by lockdowns that can exacerbate the inequalities in education. As such, there is an urgent need to rethink education strategies, that are culture and context specific and develop human resource who could apply their full potentials for their own social and economic development. While sharing his country's vision, he stated that he would like to give PNG children the learning they deserve from ECE education and supporting them to complete 13 years of education. He would create safe, healthy and supportive environment and see that education to be equitably accessible by those students who were challenged by geographical locations, economic circumstances, gender and disability. He emphasized the need for investment to sustain resilient education, infrastructure and capacity building to benefit all students. He highlighted the need for well-funded master plan for ICT in education so that students could be reachable and their learning is least affected during times of lockdowns and natural disasters.

12. The Chair requested PHES members' endorsement of PNG's Chairship for the 24th Consultation Meeting of the Pacific Heads of Education Systems and for the next 2 years. Tuvalu and FSM accepted the appointment and supported by Samoa. PHES members endorsed Mr. Uke Kombra's Chairship. Ms. Togahai, congratulated him on becoming the PHES chairman for two years.

13. PHES members adopted the meeting's Programme and Agenda after minor amendments in regards to Session 6, Wednesday 28 July. Ms. Birtha Togahai, Director of Education, Government of Niue proposed to present the PHES Steering Committee Report on PacREF after the PacREF Phase 1 Implementation Update and before the EQAP Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning presentation. Amendment was endorsed by PHES members and proposed working procedures were adopted as presented. Mr. Kombra thanked the Minister for Education of Papua New Guinea, Hon.

Jimmy Uguro and other colleagues and partners in education. He provided an overview of the following session and acknowledged significant progress had been made by Pacific countries in their education systems over the years. He stressed that there was a need to accelerate their efforts towards achieving SDG4 and inclusive education and lifelong learning for all.

Session 2: Education in the Pacific-Towards Achieving SDG4

14. Session 2 began with a talanoa session that provided an opportunity to the PHES members to deliberate on educational challenges faced and strategies in place for a way forward towards achieving SDG4 reflecting on the experiences of Papua New Guinea (Melanesia), Federated States of Micronesia (Micronesia) and Tuvalu (Polynesia).

15. The discussions centred around how embracing Pacific cultures and values in inclusive education could contribute towards eliminating disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and training for all, in particular the vulnerable including persons with disabilities andindigenous peoples.

16. Talanoa session also focused on how the roles of parents and communities/villages could be strengthened in education followed by a discussion of educational models that could support continuity of education in remote locations such as outer islands and atolls which do not have internet or multimedia.

17. This session was moderated by Ms. Ruuta Tekeraoi, Director of Education, Kiribati Ministry of Education. Three panelists: Ms. Annmarie Kona, Deputy Secretary for TVET and UNESCO Directorate, Government of Papua New Guinea; Mr. Wayne Mendiola, Secretary of Education, Government of Federated States of Micronesia; and Mr. Tufuoa Panapa, CEO of Education, Government of Tuvalu shared their thoughts and countries' experiences .

18. Highlighted points from the Federated States of Micronesia were:
    (i)   FSM has a very strong system of inclusive education;
    (ii) They not only taught culture but paid particular emphasis on cultural ways of doing things and making cultural products;
    (iii) In regards to strengthening the role of parents, they had completed new education sector strategic plan where one of the pillars is to strengthen the role of parents and community involvement in education; and
    (iv) They have learning packages ready for students in case of any future school closures due to COVID-19 and also flash drives with all the notes and exercises ready for distribution the students.

19. Highlighted points from Tuvalu were:

(i) Disabilities come in many shapes and sizes. There is not only learning disability but also needed to consider the social and economic factors that inhibit children from having equal opportunities to learning;

(ii) Culture teaches values and family and community support students with learning disabilities. The concept of 'Falepilli' assists students by supporting them in their learning process;

(iii) Literacy intervention such as reading sessions with parents and grandparents are encouraged in Tuvalu and chiefs in villages support this intervention by specially allocating time for this for the community; and

(iv) RACHEL, a prototype of a free offline digital library with a collection of leading educational resources is being utilized, that could be installed on computers. Learning materials were prepared for students and Government had installed satellite discs in all schools.

20. Highlighted points from PNG were:

(i) Lack of well-trained teachers to deliver quality education and achieving SDG4 by 2030;

(ii) Pacific Islanders are well known for their rich dynamic culture and historic knowledge and skills need to be preserved and passed on to the children in curriculum form;

(iii) Tailor children's instructions and involve parents to master foundation skills as these basic skills are important for lifelong learning; and

(iv) Had developed applications such as My Home Study, online and offline applications that helped students to have access to undisrupted learning during times of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns.

21. The moderator, Ms. Ruuta Tekeraoi, Government of Kiribati concluded that countries do face challenges such as lack of qualified teachers in rural areas but also countries had made progress towards values and citizenship curriculum. She encouraged parental participation as they contribute towards the holistic development of students. In light of online learning, she emphasized that devices should be accessible and affordable for the students. She thanked all the panelists for their informative presentations.

Session 3: Utilizing Data for Advancing Education

22. This session reviewed the status and process of regional SDG4 benchmarking with a presentation byMr. Gregory Keeble from the Pacific Community and discussed usage of data in policy and practice. This was followed by an example of MICS data analysis in Kiribati and its application to education, presented by Ms. Reetina Katokita from the Government of Kiribati

and Ms. Anna Smeby and Mr. James Kaphuka of UNICEF. The Moderator was Mr. Roshan Bajracharya PhD, from UIS.

23. In the Regional SDG4 Benchmarking Update, Mr. Keeble stated that the Forum Education Ministers Meeting, 2021 had agreed to the development of regional benchmarks for bridging the national, regional and global processes in monitoring and reporting of SDG 4 and supported harmonization of methodologies, tools, and periodicity of reporting on progress of SDG 4.

24. Pacific Regional Technical Consultation Meeting on The Regional Benchmarks in April 2021 agreed that the key indicators identified for the benchmarks as they were very much aligned with the PacREF policy priorities and acknowledged the indicators to be very useful for regional SDG4 progress monitoring. Agreed regional benchmarks were as follows:
    (i) Minimum Proficiency in Reading (SDG 4.1.1);
    (ii) Minimum Proficiency in Mathematics (SDG 4.1.1);
    (iii) Completion Rate (SDG 4.1.2);
    (iv) Out of School Rate (SDG 4.1.4);
    (v) ECE Participation (SDG 4.2.2);
    (vi) Qualified Teachers (SDG 4.c.1); and
    (vii) Education Expenditure.

25. Following additional benchmarks were also identified:

(i) Equity indicator (GPI);
(ii) Total Education and Training Participation;
(iii) Technical and Vocational Education & Training;
(iv) Tertiary Education (GER); and
(v) Tertiary Education in STEM field.

26. The minimum regional benchmark is calculated as the average of the country feasible benchmarks for the lowest tercile of countries in the region weighted by the school age population. It is the average country specific minimum benchmark for the lowest third of countries in the region. This would be the minimum acceptable level that all countries in a region to achieve. PHES members endorsed their commitments to establishing national benchmarks by September 30th 2021.

27. The second presenters were Ms. Reetina Katokita, Director of Policy, Planning and Research, Kiribati Ministry of Education and Ms. Anna Smeby, Chief of Education, UNICEF and Mr. James Kaphuka, Statistics and Monitoring Specialist, UNICEF who shared the analysis of MICS data and its application to education policy and practice. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) is made of different modules focusing on addressing data gaps. MICS EAGLE stands for the Education Analysis for Global Learning and Equity. It used 4 modules of MICS. They are Foundation Life Skills, Mass Media and ICT, Child Functioning and Parental Involvement.

28. MICS is important for the Kiribati Ministry because it:
    (i) Helped to monitor progress on the sector plan and SDG4;
    (ii) Provided a range of disaggregation;
    (iii) Provided analysis and evidence for specific policy areas;
    (iv) Allowed significant equity analysis;
    (v) Assisted in updating of indicators for the national education sector especially with linkages to SDG4;
    (vi) Provided additional information on Out of School Children;

29. Data and analysis helped in planning, making workplans, monitoring, policy review and development in Kiribati. In addition to Kiribati, Tonga, Samoa and Tuvalu have completed MICS. Data was also collected in Fiji and report compilation is underway. FSM, Nauru and Vanuatu are at survey design stage and work is in progress.

Session 4: Thematic Presentations & Discussion - Education Quality and Relevance

30. Members of the PHES suggested thematic sessions to structure around the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF 2018-2030) key policy areas and build on previous discussions held through 23rd PHES and 12th FEdMM and follow-up on decisions made at these meetings, as well as to inform PacREF implementation and further planning. In view of these needs, the thematic sessions were structured in alignment with PacREF key policy areas, namely,
    (i) Education Quality and Relevance (PacREF Key Policy Area 1);
    (ii) Teacher Professionalism (Policy Area 4);
    (iii) Learning Pathways (Policy Area 2); and
    (iv) Student Outcomes and Wellbeing (Policy Area 3).

31. This session featured three presentations on ensuring education quality and relevance, in particular, considerations to ensure continuity of quality education for all, including the marginalized populations at the time of pandemic and other adverse situations.

32. Ms. Jerielyn Teleni from the Government of Nauru shared a presentation on promoting gender equality in education in COVID era. She highlighted the role of Gender in Education Network in Asia Pacific (GENIA) as it responds to emerging issues in gender equality by encouraging collaboration, advocacy and partnership among member countries. Some of the areas of concern mentioned were:
    (i) Impact on WASH outcomes;
    (ii) Responsibility of women to do unpaid labour;
    (iii) High rates of violence against women including sexual violence;
    (iv) Discriminatory marriage ages;
    (v) Disempowerment and subordination of women;

(vi) Gender stereotyping in employment;

(vii) Lower boys and men enrolment rate due to domestic burden; and

(viii) Social alienation, stigma and discrimination against LGBTQ+.

She emphasized the need for gender equality in education, and COVID-19 should not lead to a crisis within a crisis. Every effort is needed to enhance learning opportunities for all learners through equitable management of resources (capital, physical) to ensure that no one is left behind.

33. Inclusive utilization of ICT in Education and multi-media teaching and learning was presented by Mr. Nehru Mauala of the Samoa Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture.In light of COVID-19 pandemic, Samoa made adjustments to the School Calendar and school holidays were shortened to lessen the effects on content coverage. The National examination dates were also pushed back by 3 weeks. Samoa prioritized provision of continuous support for school leaders and capacity development for teachers so that student learning was least impacted. Some of their achievements include:

(i) Strengthened ICT infrastructure capacity;

(ii) Improved school connectivity;

(iii) New Digital TV channel was introduced for Education;

(iv) Strengthened Audio Visual production capacity;

(v) Improved capability for video conferencing;

(vi) Implementation of Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) for schools; and

(vii) Zoom sessions were held with principals every Friday.

Mr. Nehru discussed that greater achievements could be obtained through government and private sector partnerships.

34. The final presentation of the session was provided by Mr. Wayne Mackintosh of OER Foundation and he shared some practical guidance and suggestions on the utilization of Open Educational Resources (OER) in the Pacific.

35. Open educational resources are freely accessible, openly licensed text, media, and other digital assets that can be utilized for teaching, learning, and assessing as well as for research purposes. Some of the action areas of the UNESCO OER recommendations were as follows:

(i) Build capacity of stakeholders to find, re-use, create, adapt and share OER;

(ii) Develop supportive policy for OER;

(iii) Ensure inclusive and equitable access to quality OER;

(iv) Nurture the creation of sustainability models for OER; and

(v) Facilitate international cooperation in OER.

36. OER Foundation provides strategic support in the Pacific region by providing capacity development and certification in OER and creative commons licensing. Free membership was provided to all SIDS higher education institutions to join the OER international outreach partnership program. They also provide digital skills capacity development for school teachers to establish national OER repositories. OER Foundation is committed to assist governments and higher education institutions in extending affordable access to learning in a collaborative fashion.

37. Moderator Ms. Anjeela Jokhan, PhD, Permanent Secretary, Government of Fiji commented on the challenges in transition to online teaching and learning as not all students have access to digital tools and internet connectivity. She stressed the importance of providing equitable access to education to all students and looking at the pedagogies involved in the various modes of education.

Session 5: Thematic Presentations & Discussion- Teacher Professionalism

38. Moderated by Mr. Raynold Mechol, Government of Palau, this session on Teacher Professionalism discussed considerations to help prepare and promote teacher professionalism and continuous professional development, as well as strategies to empower parents in support of their children's education. Mr. Mo'ale 'Otunuku from the Institute of Education, University of South Pacific presented preliminary findings on the research on the Pacific teachers' continuous professional development.
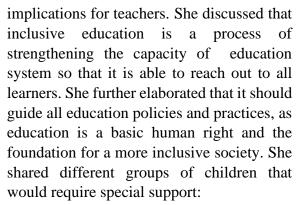
39. Professional development is a planned, continuous and lifelong process whereby teachers develop their personal and professional qualities and improve their knowledge, skills and practice leading to their empowerment and improved teaching and learning process. Based on feedback through classroom observations, teachers improve their teaching practice in order to improve students' performances. Teachers to:
    (i) Design and implement different strategies to address difficulties that students may be facing ;
    (ii) Assess the effectiveness of new techniques in teaching on students;
    (iii) Learn from other teachers' experiences; and
    (iv) Critically reflect on their teaching practices and take corrective measures.

    There is an urgent need to develop country-specific Professional Development programs based on identified needs of teachers.

40. The presentation was followed by the Pacific Inclusive Education Task Force representative, Professor Ann Cheryl Armstrong who shared considerations to understand learning disability and implications for professional development of teachers. She delivered her address on understanding learning disabilities and

implications for teachers. She discussed that inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of education system so that it is able to reach out to all learners. She further elaborated that it should guide all education policies and practices, as education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more inclusive society. She shared different groups of children that would require special support:

    (i)   There are many types of disabilities;

    (ii)   All those who are experiencing difficulty understanding and gaining outcome on a temporary or permanent basis;

    (iii)   Those who are repeating multiple times during their school years;

    (iv)   Those who are forced to work;

    (v)   Those who live on the streets;

    (vi)   Those who live far from any school;

    (vii)   Those who are extremely poor;

    (viii)   Those who are victims of wars;

    (ix)   Those who suffer from abuses; and

    (x)   Those who are out of school, for whatever reasons.

41. It is important to note that any child at any point in their development could have special educational needs and causes of gaps in learning could be due to poor pedagogical practice, illness, absenteeism and poverty. She stressed that teachers need to consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs as students' needs had been affected by COVID-19 pandemic.

42. The next presentation introduced examples from Vanuatu on working with parents in support of early learning, by Mr. Samuel Katipa, Director of Education Services from the Government of Vanuatu and Mr. Sandipan Paul, Education Specialist, UNICEF.

43. Children need nurturing care to develop to their full potential. Nurturing care is about children, their families and other caregivers, and the places where they interact. Moreover, an enabling environment is needed with appropriate policies, programmes and services that give families, parents and caregivers the knowledge and resources to provide nurturing care for young children. Parenting is further supported through the interactions, behaviours, emotions, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and practices associated with the provision of nurturing care.

44. Parent Support Programs (PSP) are seen as building understanding of fundamental principles for supporting child development. Likewise, PSP is being integrated with upcoming National Early Childhood Development Policy of Vanuatu. PSP has been fully integrated in development of homeschool package to support remote learning in ECE. A country wide implementation plan for scaling up PSP is being developed as it is concerned with:

    (i)   Development of parents' knowledge, skills, attitudes and values;

(ii) Building blocks of approach;

(iii) Respecting what parents/ caregivers already know and do;

(iv) Sharing experiences, drawing on cultural strengths and traditions;

(v) Building understanding of fundamental principles for supporting child development; and

(vi) Identifying issues that families face and generating solutions jointly with families.

45. Vanuatu developed a handbook titled 'The Parent Support Programme Handbook'. This handbook is of great value to teachers and parents as it helps them guide their students and provide them the scaffolding required.

46. The closing remarks for the day was made by Ms. Darrina Kun, Secretary of Education, Government of Nauru. She thanked the organizers for their efficient arrangements leading up to this event. She also thanked all the presenters for the day. She echoed that building resilience in the education systems and harnessing the Pacific regional collaboration is more relevant and important than ever.

47. Today provided the opportunity to dialogue on issues that concern development of our education systems in the Pacific, which is at cross road due to COVID-19. It had curtailed capacity building efforts that are vital for their progress. She emphasized that we need to adapt to the changing landscape and highlighted that the importance of the talanoa session as it showed solidarity and unity towards achieving common goals.

Day 2

Session 6: PacREF Implementation and MEL

48. The Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) outlines a transformative and sustainable regional education agenda aligned with global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly SDG4, the education goal and Education 2030: Incheon Declaration on Education for All Framework for Action.

49. A group of Pacific development partners, namely the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), The University of the South Pacific (USP), the Australia-Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNCIEF) came together to mobilize resource from Global Partnerships for Education (GPE) and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) with technical and management support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to implement basic education part of PacREF.

50. This session updated the latest development on PacREF implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), as well as Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF), which was adopted as an overarching inclusive framework in PacREF.

51. The PacREF basic education project encourages participating countries to share and learn from each other's experiences and best practices in education. To this end, the PacREF website (www.pacref.org) includes a space where member countries can sign up in order to participate in the discussions. This is a closed group forum for country participants from ministries of education and implementing agencies and development partners.

52. The PacREF Phase 1 Implementation Rolling Plan (IRP) was endorsed by PHES at their 2019 meeting in Niue which was structured according to various partnerships based on thematic areas. In early 2020, the Implementation Agencies (IAs) re-considered the structure and agreed to restructure the IRP into the four policy areas that PHES had originally identified as a logical organizing structure to better focus activities towards achieving the intended outcomes of each policy area. Their revision resulted in the formulation of 2021 IRP. Mr. Filipe Jitoko, PacREF Project Facilitation Unit (PFU) shared the updates of PacREF Phase 1 Implementation Update.

53. He informed PHES about:
    (i) The status of implementation of Phase 1 of the PacREF Programme as described in the 2021 Implementation Rolling Plan (IRP);
    (ii) Other components of the implementation strategy designed to increase information sharing among the participating countries and to facilitate countries to learn from each other's experiences and best practices; and

    (iii) The next steps in Programme implementation and to seek guidance on a mechanism for their engagement.

54. The intention of the web-based forum is for countries and IAs to develop discussion topics where members of the forum could provide commentaries on their experiences and on what they would like to receive further support on. It is anticipated that forum members would share experiences that worked well for their countries through PacREF for the benefit of other countries. In such cases, support would be provided for country knowledge exchanges through the PacREF mechanism.

55. Next steps:
    (i) *Country consultations*: The IAs propose to undertake rounds of consultations with each country to discuss updated country priorities and implementation strategies and timelines. It is understood that consultations to seek country priorities were undertaken in early 2020 and priorities may have changed since then;
    (ii) *Monitoring of progress*: Monitoring strategies and templates had been developed to track and monitor progress of implementation of activities. It is acknowledged that major challenges of travel restrictions could impact on monitoring;

(iii) *Review of implementation*: FEdMM called for a review of implementation of the PacREF Programme to be undertaken and the outcomes of the review would feed into the discussions on the priorities for Phase 2. The review is currently being planned by a team led by the PFU in close consultation with the PHES Steering Committee (SC). It was intended that an Annual Implementation Review would be completed each year and shared with Conference of the Pacific Education Ministers (CPEM, new term adopted following FEdMM) and the PHES; and

(iv) *The update of the IRP*: Each December the IRP would be updated to reflect progress, lessons learnt and country's changes of priority. The Annual updates would be reviewed by the SC and, once approved, shared with the full PHES.

56. Plans for PacREF Phase 2:
    (i) Over the course of 2022 the PFU and the IAs would plan to consult with all PHES members as part of the process of planning PacREF Phase 2 ;
    (ii) The PFU would present a PacREF Phase 2 proposal to the PHES and the CPEM in 2023.
    (iii) *Conference of Pacific Education Ministers (CPEM):* The first CPEM would be held in 2023 hosted by New Zealand as decided at FEdMM 2021. Preparations for the CPEM

would be led by the PHES SC and the IAs in close consultation with the next host Government of New Zealand and would commence shortly. Mechanisms would be established by the SC to ensure all PHES members were actively engaged in the planning and were kept well informed of progress.

57. PHES Decisions:
    (i) Noted the report of the status and next steps in Programme implementation;
    (ii) Agreed to the intention of the PFU and IAs to hold country consultations regarding country priorities and timelines for implementation; and
    (iii) Mandated the SC to take the lead in the review of PacREF implementation, development of the annual update of the IRP.

58. Ms. Birtha Lisimoni presented the PHES Steering Committee Report prepared by the PacREF PFU to inform PHES of the accomplishments and challenges faced by the Steering Committee, in particular on PacREF Phase 1 preparation. A Small Working Group (SWG) was first established in Port Villa, Vanuatu in 2015 to develop a new regional education framework now called the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF). Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Cook Islands and Palau volunteered to be part of the SWG whose task was completed in 2018 when FEdMM endorsed the PacREF in principle. The

meeting of the PHES in Niue 2019 streamlined the functions of the SWG to become part of the PHES Steering Committee (SC) tasks.

59. A review was undertaken in line with the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) conceptualization of inclusive education. This adopted a broad definition to ensure inclusion of all learners, but with a particular commitment to identify and address the specific barriers faced by students with disabilities, as well as other vulnerable students, to fully benefit from quality, relevant and inclusive education. The objectives of the review were to:
    (i) take stock of the status of, and approaches to, inclusive education in the Pacific; and
    (ii) launch a regional discussion on good practices, priorities and lessons learnt to date on inclusive education with an aim to inform next steps for inclusive education in the Pacific.

60. On Steering Committee paper, PHES:
    (i) Noted the report from the SC;
    (ii) Considered a communication mechanism for the SC with other members of their group;
    (iii) Encouraged countries representing the various groups in the SC to ensure participation at all SC meetings either through the PHES member or delegate; and
    (iv) Tasked the SC in regular consultation with the full PHES to prepare the agenda and working procedures for the first Conference

of Pacific Education Ministers (CPEM) to be held in 2023.

61. The PacREF Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework was discussed to update members of the PHES on the PacREF MEL approach to yield actionable results that would help strengthen education systems across the region.
    (i) The PacREF was designed to raise the quality of schooling and student outcomes for the 15 Pacific island countries involved over a 12-year period from 2018 through 2030;
    (ii) All activities for PacREF Phase 1 were detailed in the Implementation Rolling Plans (IRP) with the associated PacREF Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL Plan) to keep in check activities' progress with important lessons learned;
    (iii) An important outcome from the last PHES meeting in 2019, approved and adopted the PacREF MEL approach. The PHES Steering Committee (SC) was tasked to work with PHES members to identify any priority indicators to be focused in the MEL; and
    (iv) A robust PacREF MEL mechanism included tracking of performance trends against national and regional indicators.

62. The Programme adopted a three-level approach to MEL:

(i) Level 1 is concerned with compliance tracking, and is led by the PFU;

(ii) Level 2 involves continuous formative assessment led by EQAP;

(iii) Level 3 focuses on accurate and timely reporting on the performance of Pacific Education Systems.

63. At each level and across the levels, stakeholders use a learning lens to analyse, interpret and respond to results. Indicators of progress towards achievement targets comprised of a combination of quantitative indicators and trends against baselines, qualitative evidence of changes in behaviour, and evidence of action based on lessons learned.

64. On PacREF MEL, PHES was invited to:

(i) Establish a functional and sustainable national MEL framework, with relevant standards and mechanisms to feed into the PacREF MEL effectively and efficiently; and

(ii) Collate findings through MEL as an effective basis for further action to bring about suitable policy changes for future improvement on education in the region.

65. The next presentation was on Implementing the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) through PacREF presented by Ms. Anna Smeby, Chief of Education, UNICEF; Sally Baker, IE Adviser, IE Taskforce & Mr. Setareki

Macanawai, Pacific Disability Forum. They updated members of the PHES on the PacREF MEL approach to yield actionable results that would help strengthen education systems across the region.

66. The Pacific Inclusive Education Task Force reviewed the status of inclusive education legislation, policy, plans and standards, using the PRIEF. Countries had policies on inclusive education but more could be done in regards to practices regarding:

(i) Legislation on equity (disability);

(ii) Legislation on equity (gender);

(iii) Legislation on equity (ethnicity);

(iv) Legislation on IE;

(v) Policy on IE;

(vi) Implementation plan on IE;

(vii) Equitable financing and resource allocation;

(viii) Capacity of government and institutions;

(ix) Competency standards for teachers; and

(x) Competency standards for school leaders.

The review found regional mechanisms could facilitate access to useful technical information and resources, however, changes needed to happen at the national levels.

67. Key recommendations:

(i) Inclusive education needs to address inclusion of students disadvantaged by various factors;

(ii) Increased and sustained efforts must be made to assure the needs of learners with disabilities were met;

(iii) Inclusive Education Working Groups must have multi sectoral representation and a commitment from respective jurisdictions and agencies to collaboratively develop and implement required actions;

(iv) Inclusive education requires championing by education leaders, and operationalization by policy implementation plans that are resourced and closely monitored;

(v) Curricula should be accompanied by guidance to support teachers to adapt lessons and differentiate teaching approaches so that everyone can learn;

(vi) Pre-service and in-service teacher training to be strengthened, with stronger links to Ministry and school requirements;

(vii) Countries and agencies to increase emphasis and resourcing to support pathways between education and employment for marginalized students; and

(viii) Countries need be supported in sharing and learning from each other's wealth of experiences and practices, and be able to access and utilize contextual and regional resources.

68. The PRIEF is a guiding framework to the implementation PacREF initiatives. PRIEF was developed in recognition of the need to address the educational needs of learners at most risk of exclusion, noting that one group of learners who are frequently excluded are those with disability or special needs, while others may include those who were marginalized due to geographical location, socio-economic status, gender, ethnic minorities and other potentially marginalized groups. It focuses on five key priorities:

(i) Enabling policies & legislation for inclusive education;

(ii) Raising awareness about inclusive education in schools and the wider community;

(iii) Providing appropriate training and professional learning to enable leaders and teachers to implement effective inclusive practices;

(iv) Strengthening partnerships between schools, parents and community members; and

(v) Developing best practice pedagogy and curriculum for inclusive practices and accessibility.

69. PHES Decisions:

(i) Accepted the Regional Review of Inclusive Education on behalf of the FEdMM as per the decision of Ministers at FEdMM;

(ii) Agreed that the PRIEF and its guidance to inclusive practices in PacREF outcomes and implementation be a standing agenda item on the Steering Committee agenda, starting with a summary of the PRIEF mapping to

PacREF developed by the IE Taskforce; and

(iii) Agreed that countries to participate in a further regional review of Inclusive Education mid-way through PacREF implementation utilizing the focus areas of the PRIEF to guide that review.

Session 7: Thematic Presentations & Discussion - Learning Pathways & Student Outcomes and Wellbeing

70. This session discussed challenges and priorities for future action in TVET, in particular to address youth unemployment and gender equality. The session also addressed regional support on qualifications framework and how they supported the national level qualifications framework.

Professor Peter Kelly, School of Education, RMIT University, Australia was the first to present on addressing youth unemployment and creating learning pathways: Youth Activists for Sustainable Futures (YASFs). He shared a framework and model to help connect health, education/training and employment while engaging youth in this process and building micro-credits for qualifications.

71. Part of an inclusive global learning network, UNESCO-UNEVOC@RMIT is a leader in facilitating co-design approaches for creating a future of sustainable development for all young people in times of crisis and disruption. UNESCO UNEVOC partners with government, industry, and the not-for-profit sectors to lead applied and research-based activities for meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. They supported:

(i) Young people with 21st Century capabilities to make transitions in the future of work;

(ii) Building a networked approach to enabling and capturing shared social values in learning and training;

(iii) Exploring educational ecologies of well-being, resilience, and enterprise; and

(iv) Looking at developing more Suite of Micro-creds for Sustainable Futures.

72. UNEVOC believes that micro-credentials could deliver on the promise of developing place-based responses for young people's health and well-being, and education, training and employment pathways for sustainable futures. Micro-credentials (micro-creds or creds) are a relatively recent, digitally enabled approach to the accreditation of skills development and training outcomes, often in usually non-accredited, informal or non-traditional training contexts.

73. Micro-credentials are increasingly required in well-established business, where they are used to address particular skill requirements in new or emerging occupations, provide evidence of workplace capabilities, or warrant the currency of existing skills. The 'potential of micro-credentials had come into particular focus as a result of the impacts of

the COVID-19 pandemic, where the pandemic had shown the value of being able to pivot an economy in unforeseen ways. Prior to the economic shock of the pandemic, the market for micro-credentials was growing in both higher education and the TVET sector.

74. Ms. Janelle Chapman, Director of APTC in her presentation shared initiatives and considerations to promote gender equality in the Pacific Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

She reported that Governments across the Pacific acknowledge and appreciate the importance of TVET as a key strategy for helping drive economic growth and poverty reduction. This was reflected in regional strategies such as the Pacific Regional Education Framework 2018-2030 (PacREF) as well as in national policies. PacREF guidance for TVET include:

(i) Developing TVET models that emphasize value;
(ii) Ensuring that TVET delivery was aligned to industry and labour market needs; and
(iii) Pursuing opportunities for next generation skills and digital literacy.

75. National and regional policies recognizes the value of TVET in:
(i) Reducing unemployment; and
(ii) Training a skilled workforce that support the development of local industries.

TVET promotes regional and international labour mobility in ways of:

(iii) Remittances; and
(iv) Professional exposure to skilled employment in bigger markets.

Due to a multitude of factors, women remain under-represented in Pacific TVET. A World Bank report has found that women face numerous factors that inhibit or restrict access to TVET and employment. Those included:

(i) Social factors;
(ii) Attitudinal styles;
(iii) Situational aspects; and
(iv) Institutional considerations.

76. Social barriers were most prevalent and were underpinned by norms, perceptions of, and attitudes towards, women participation in TVET. Gender Equality (and disability/social inclusion) needed to be fully embraced as fundamental criterion for equitable development in all facets of society including all forms of education. Ms. Chapman recommended the following:

(i) Fully embracing female participation in TVET, other forms of education, and development policy and practice, as the key to realizing the Pacific regions full potential;
(ii) Ongoing efforts to be made to identify ways to improve support for gender mainstreaming;
(iii) Improved coordination between stakeholders was essential; and
(iv) Break down barriers and achieve the targets set for by the leaders.

77. The final presentation for this session was on

Pacific regional support for qualifications framework by Mr. Rajendra Prasad, Qualifications team leader, EQAP SPC and Ms. Perya Short, Manager for International Business Development, New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

78. Mr. Prasad highlighted that while a national qualifications framework describes the qualifications of the country's education and training system and their interlinkage, the regional framework functions as a tool to enable comparisons of qualifications across the Pacific. The Pacific Quality Assurance Framework sets and maintains quality standards while the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards has potential to be the region's education and qualifications information hub. Regional qualifications frameworks support study and work pathways, especially where they include school-tertiary transitions and vocational qualifications.

79. At the project's initial regional workshop in April 2021, the PIC treaty signatory governments pointed to the need for strengthening and better supporting the Pacific Qualifications Framework and its associated parts - the Pacific Quality Assurance Framework and the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards. They identified key things that needed to be done, including:
    (i) Pacific leadership support for the Pacific Qualifications Framework to be a strong central point for comparability and recognition of Pacific qualifications across and outside the Pacific region;
    (ii) The Pacific Qualifications Framework functions well for the whole system;
    (iii) New Zealand and Australia become more closely connected to the Pacific Qualifications Framework;
    (iv) The Pacific Qualifications Framework becomes a referencing point for other regional qualifications frameworks around the world;
    (v) Criteria and processes for referencing national qualifications to the Pacific Qualifications Framework are agreed to achieve greater consistency across the region;
    (vi) A revitalized Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards works for the region and meets regional needs;
    (vii) Quality assurance systems to be regionally supported; and
    (viii) The member countries to share and recognize quality assured qualifications and quality assurance processes and procedures.

80. Pacific countries benefit from greater qualification recognition within and outside the region. A key lever for achieving this was Pacific countries acceding to the Asia-

Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (Tokyo Convention).

The Tokyo Convention:

    (i)   Brings Pacific countries into a strong network of National Information Centers where international practices are shared and developed;

    (ii) Enables Pacific countries to be more connected outside the region;

    (iii) Increases support for qualification recognition within and outside the Pacific; and

    (iv) Informs ways for New Zealand and Australia to support the Pacific countries in seeking to ratify and implement the Tokyo Convention.

81. NZQA & EQAP facilitated the discussion of the benefits of the Regional Qualifications Framework with Pacific leaders' considerations for the region. Asia Pacific Regional as well as Global Convention for the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education to help advance qualifications recognition in the region.

82. Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF):

    (i)   Assesses opportunities for regional qualifications supporting improved mobility;

    (ii) Facilitates enhancing the capability of staff involved in development and accreditation of qualifications; and

    (iii) Develops policy and processes to ensure development of consistent, robust, regional qualifications for improved labour mobility.

83. EQAP is increasingly recognized as a leader and source of knowledge and expertise in education in the Pacific by:

    (i)   Building trust and confidence in the PQF Regional Architecture;

    (ii) Ensuring Pacific qualifications are well regarded regionally and internationally; and

    (iii) Ensuring PIC qualifications and qualification systems are well supported.

84. Ms. Birtha Togahai, Director of Education, Government of Niue moderated the session with inputs from Mr. Phil Loveder from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) as the resource person who shared his various regional and global TVET networks and resources. PHES discussed how countries could utilize regional programmes and partners, the roles of NGOs in accreditation and importance of connecting learning pathways from basic to higher and continuing education.

Session 8: Thematic Presentations & Discussion - Learning Pathways & Student Outcomes and Wellbeing (cont'd)

85. This session was a continuation from session 7 with a focus on Higher Education (HE) moderated by Ms. Mamea Vau Peseta, Deputy CEO, Samoa Ministry of Education,

Sports and Culture. Ms. Atelini Koroiwaca, Officer in Charge of Operations and Quality Assurance, Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) joined as a resource person. Presentations focused on quality assurance of higher education in the Pacific, in particular in the on-going transformation to online and blended learning; considerations and practical steps to ratify Global (and Regional) Conventions; and mobilization of resources and technical assistance.

86. Mr. Libing Wang, PhD, Chief of Section for Educational Innovation and Skills Development, UNESCO Asia and Pacific presented on advancing equity and excellence in HE in the Pacific and the new normal highlighting the following challenges:
    (i) Online learning was largely perceived as a supplement to "real learning" in a traditional classroom setting before the COVID 19 pandemic;
    (ii) Less confidence in the quality of online learning activities due to the lack of infrastructure support, and preparedness of HEIs and faculty members;
    (iii) Recognition of online learning at system, institutional, programme and course levels were yet to be established; and
    (iv) Online learning was initiated and piloted in many countries, but far from being mainstreamed before the pandemic

87. Mr. Wang further elaborated that online learning had become the most sought-after solution to maintain the continuity of learning. Inelastic demand for education during the pandemic had generated significant momentum to reimagine the role of technology in the delivery and quality of higher education programmes. He encouraged to keep the momentum towards mainstreaming online and blended learning in higher education. He reminded that there would be no return to the old normal where in person learning was the dominant modality of learning while 100% online would also not realistic, or desirable. Following could be considered in planning the way forward:
    (i) See blended learning as the way forward;
    (ii) Need policy support from Government;
    (iii) Develop supportive ecosystems to mainstream the new normal initiatives;
    (iv) Learning programmes can be more diverse, flexible, adaptive, and relevant to the needs of communities and individuals;
    (v) The use of ICT can make learning systems more resilient to overcome future disruptions to learning;
    (vi) Course objectives, learning outcomes and modules of learning should be the same whether online or offline;
    (vii) Modalities of lesson delivery, pedagogical considerations,

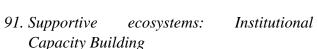assessment, learning resources should be considered as they were different for online and offline learning.

88. Mr. Wang mentioned a number of factors as prerequisites for quality education in the new norm.

89. *Advancing equity and excellence:*
   (i) For equitable access, the benefits of harnessing ICT could help higher education programmes to reach out to more learners, many of whom were non-traditional learners and those from underdeveloped or remote areas who would have otherwise been left behind.
   (ii) In terms of quality and excellence, the use of ICT had empowered learners with the same level, if not higher levels, of access to information and knowledge;
   (iii) Learning programmes could be more diverse, flexible, adaptive, and relevant to the needs of communities and individuals; and
   (iv) The use of ICT could make learning systems more resilient to overcome future disruptions to learning.

90. *Supportive ecosystems: Policy support*
   (i) National visions, policies and initiatives for online and blended learning in higher education (e.g. aligned with the Tokyo Convention on recognition);

(ii) National level Quality Assurance mechanisms for online and blended learning to be developed and implemented so that relevant credits and qualifications can be recognized within National Qualifications Frameworks;
(iii) Solid subject specific quality standards needed to be developed covering online and blended delivery of study programmes;
(iv) Templates should be established for programme development with suggestions on the design of online and blended learning programs;
(v) Quality infrastructure and user experience were main sources of confidence in online and blended learning, as they directly affected the learners;
(vi) Internet penetration rates and connection speeds were critical, as was the shift from 4G to 5G;
(vii) Common e-learning and communication portals and platforms needed to be established or launched by the governments, private sector or consortia of higher educational institutions;
(viii) E-content development and online subject specific portals of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and open educational resources (OERs); and
(ix) Supply of quality software to empower faculty members.

91. *Supportive ecosystems: Institutional Capacity Building*
    (i)   Integrate online and blended learning into institutional strategic planning, staffing and budgeting processes;
    (ii) Translate institutional planning into concrete internal templates, workflows and regulations;
    (iii) Establish teaching and learning support center with a mandate to facilitate innovative teaching and learning practices and provide Continuing and Professional Development (CPD) programmes for the faculty members; and
    (iv) Develop and maintain online learning portals and repositories of subject specific e-contents.

92. *Supportive ecosystems: Program Development and Course Planning*
    (i)   Align with upstream frameworks, both external and internal, such as NQFs, National Subject Specific Quality Standards, institutional visions and frameworks for teaching and learning;
    (ii) Course objectives, learning outcomes and modules of learning should be the same whether online or offline; and
    (iii) The percentage of online and offline learning should depend on the nature and needs of the study programmes and courses.
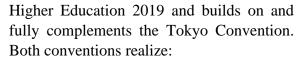
93. *In conclusion:*
    (i)   Online and blended learning would be the new normal after the pandemic which was transforming teaching and learning in higher education;
    (ii) Join hands to create accessible and supportive ecosystems to make the new normal happen efficiently and effectively;
    (iii) Equity and excellence cannot be achieved without functional ecosystems;
    (iv) Legalizing, regulating, empowering, financing and incentivizing are the ways forward;
    (v)   Ecosystem mapping can help to identify gaps and prioritize solutions; and
    (vi) UNESCO stands ready to contribute.

94. Ms. Jane Azurin, Director, Qualifications Recognition Policy, International Partnerships Branch, Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Government of Australia shared a presentation on the Global and Asia-Pacific Regional, commonly known as Tokyo conventions on the recognition of foreign qualifications. Ms. Azurin focused on Understanding the Convention from Australia's Experience.. Recognition of qualifications was essential to, and a key enabler of student and worker mobility and is an integral part of ensuring HE quality and supporting employment opportunities for graduates. Global Convention is about the Recognition of Qualifications concerning

Higher Education 2019 and builds on and fully complements the Tokyo Convention. Both conventions realize:
  (i) Individual has a right to an assessment;
  (ii) Transparent, fair, nondiscriminatory and timely assessment;
  (iii) Decisions based on quality information from the competent authorities;
  (iv) Presence of appeal mechanisms; and
  (v) Recognition may lead to further study, use of academic title, and employment.

95. Strategic importance of qualifications recognition was:
  (i) Essential to, and a key enabler of student and worker mobility; and an integral part of HE quality;
  (ii) Important for students, graduates and education providers;
  (iii) For recognition of overseas qualifications underpinned international education, skilled migration and skilled employment; and
  (iv) For Australian Government investment in the long term.

96. Tokyo Convention:
  (i) Asia Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education 2011;
  (ii) Operational in the Asia Pacific, open to any UNESCO MS; and
  (iii) Asia Pacific Network of National Information Centres established.

97. Global Convention:
  (i) Global Convention on the Recognition of qualifications concerning Higher Education 2019;
  (ii) Builds on and fully complements the Tokyo Convention; and
  (iii) Not yet operational (needs 20), open to any UNESCO Member States.
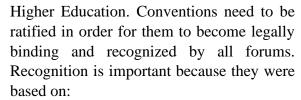
98. In essence, conventions:
  (i) Provided a framework to manage differences while minimizing barriers;
  (ii) Supported quality by protecting standards in academic, employment and occupational opportunities; and
  (iii) Respected that education systems were different and unique.

99. What was new in the Global Convention?
  (i) Assessed qualifications in the same way regardless of learning modes (e.g. face to face, online, joint degrees) or location provided quality assurance was comparable;
  (ii) Provided partial recognition where there was substantial difference;
  (iii) Recognised prior learning in addition to partial studies; and
  (iv) Sought to eradicate fraudulent practices.

100. Ms. Leticia Sakai, PhD, Associate Project Officer, UNESCO provided the final presentation towards ratification and implementation of Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning

Higher Education. Conventions need to be ratified in order for them to become legally binding and recognized by all forums. Recognition is important because they were based on:

(i) Principles of good faith;
(ii) Principles of transparency;
(iii) Principles of fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory processes;
(iv) Eradication all forms of fraudulent practices;
(v) Principles of Information sharing;
(vi) Rights to have qualifications assessed;
(vii) Respect for the diversity of higher education systems; and
(viii) Mechanisms to appeal decisions.

101. Evaluations are conducted because they:
(i) Provide information on recognition processes to applicants;
(ii) Determine the purpose for recognition;
(iii) Assure the necessary documentation;
(iv) Establish the official status of the institution awarding the qualification(s);
(v) Verify the authenticity of the qualification;
(vi) Assess the 5 elements of a qualification;
(vii) Compare qualifications at the appropriate level; and
(viii) Assist in doing final evaluation of outcomes and recognition of decisions.

102. Recognition is important because it enhances the right to access to education and represents trust in the quality of the Higher Education (HE) institutions. It also contributed to raise the quality of HE institutions and promotes international understanding of HE systems.

103.   Questions/Answers and Comments
A question was raised on the region's plans for some common learning platforms that could be implemented in schools.

104. Closing Remarks for Day 2 were made by the Chair, Mr. Uke Kombra, PhD, Secretary for Education Papua New Guinea who emphasized the importance of regional and global partnerships among different departments and ministries, higher education and research institutions, development partners and private sector to ensure quality TVET and higher education. Chair thanked the presenters and all the members and the attendees. He encouraged members to ensure that dialogue continues in regards to providing undisrupted learning for the students.

105. Ms. Nisha thanked the Chair and the presenters. She affirmed that more dialogues to come in regards to conventions and role in providing recognition to our qualifications.

Day 3

Session 9: CONFINTEA VII – Introduction

106. The International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) has taken place roughly every 12 years since 1949 in order to promote adult education with UNESCO Member States.

107. The seventh International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VII) would be hosted by Morocco in 2022. The conference would examine effective adult learning and education policies and practices to achieve lifelong learning within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Pacific sub-regional consultation would feed into Asia-Pacific regional recommendations on adult learning and education, highlighting the main regional trends and issues. Mr. Uke Kombra, PhD, Secretary for Education Papua New Guinea launched the Pacific regional consultation.

108. Opening Remarks were made by Mr. David Atchoarena, PhD, Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) highlighting that:
    (i) CONFINTEA VII would play a significant role in order to help Member States in achieving the SDGs in general and SDG 4 on education in particular by adapting a new framework for action that would replace the Belém Framework for Action, which was adopted in the last CONFINTEA VI in 2009 as well as the UNESCO 2015; and
    (ii) A new framework needed to be

developed for action at CONFINTEA VII.

109. He also shared that the fifth edition of UNESCO's Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE 5) was currently in preparation, and would be launched at CONFINTEA VII. GRALE 5 would provide a worldwide overview of the current state and key developments from an international perspective. This would be a key input for deliberation at CONFINTEA VII.

110. The overall goal of the Sub-regional Consultation was to share and understand the key common issues, innovations, challenges and forward-looking strategies to renew policies and action in youth and adult learning and education in preparation for the Asia Pacific Regional Consultation for CONFINTEA VII. He encouraged PHES to report on key challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for renewed policies and action in adult learning and education in the region.

111. Ms. Aya Aoki, PhD, Education Programme Specialist, UNESCO briefed on global preparation of CONFINTEA VII. She indicated that CONFINTEA was an international platform on youth and adult learning. Since 1949, six international conferences on Adult Education had been held by UNESCO. The Belém Framework for Action which was adopted in 2009 committed to strengthen Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in 5 key areas, namely:

(i) Policy;
(ii) Governance;
(iii) Financing;
(iv) Participation; and
(v) Quality.

112. CONFINTEA VII according to Ms. Aoki of UNESCO, would be based on the following 5 themes:
    (i)   ALE is central to Lifelong Learning (LLL);
    (ii) ALE and Education 2030 (and beyond)- based on the principle of leaving no one behind;
    (iii) ALE and COVID 19 response plan. See how COVID-19 had impacted overall and especially ALE;
    (iv) ALE as driver of social cohesion would be discussed to reduce inequality, social mobility, structure, employment and access to information and knowledge; and
    (v)   New partnerships, specifically with private/corporate sector to further develop ALE.

These themes would be discussed at CONFINTEA VII, along with other key issues being identified by regions. PHES was also asked to suggest issues, concerns, challenges and topics for consideration at CONFINTEA VII.

113. Mr. Ichiro Miyazawa, Programme Specialist, UNESCO introduced the objectives of the Regional and Sub-regional Consultation for CONTINTEA VII. He briefly explained the objectives of this sub regional consultation and also Asia Pacific Conference which would be taking place in September.

114. All inputs, suggestions and discussion points would be summarized as sub-regional recommendations, that would be submitted to the next Asia Pacific Consultation in September 2021, which later feed into the CONTINTEA VII in Morocco in 2022.

115. The overview on adult learning and education in the Pacific was presented by Mr. Timote Vaioleti, PhD, Indigenous Māori and Pacific Adult Education Charitable Trust (IMPAECT).

116. According to Mr. Vaioleti, the Pacific is facing a different context and set of issues from Asia, and not substantive attention has been given to ALE. Some of the contexts he highlighted were as follows:
    (i)   Limitation of being isolated and exposed to rising seas and extreme weather conditions;
    (ii) Importance of culture in maintaining our families;
    (iii) Informal, and non-formal education were the education traditions of pre-contact time. Currently, high prioritization is for children's education and not much emphasis is given to adult education.
    (iv) ALE is undervalued, and more emphasis has been placed for formal education;
    (v)   Diversity of Issues affected ALE e.g. literacy, road access to educational

institutions, representation at international arena;

(vi) Climate change mitigation is required as islands are surrounded by sea;

(vii) Impact of COVID-19 on health and education systems;

(viii) Collapse of informal/village economy everywhere they were first to lose jobs;

(ix) Unemployment and loss of opportunity to Non-formal & informal training; and

(x) COVID-19 had exacerbated the digital divide and widened it, had increased health and housing issue.

117. Talanoa is a traditional word used in Fiji and across the Pacific to reflect a process of inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue. The purpose of talanoa is to share stories, build empathy and to make wise decisions for the collective good. Using of talanoa in communicating and the value of education is emphasized in all Pacific cultures. Moreover, ICT was encouraged and this also promoted women participation in meetings and in seeking both formal and informal education.

118. *Questions/Answers and Comments*
Comments
Mr. Bernard Lovegrove suggested that a break through with decision makers and political leaders in finding funds to support ALE in the Pacific would be needed. This is because ALE had been under resourced for decades despite its importance to the Pacific people. Adults need to be literate in order to support their children at home.

Mr. Vaioleti concurred the need for a bigger voice and could exert bigger pressure on governments to recognize ALE and promote it through formal, nonformal and informal means.
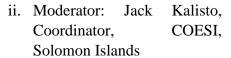
119. Professor Sandy Morrison, PhD, of Waikato University briefed the members about the breakout sessions.

Session 10 CONFINTEA VII – Consultation

120. In this breakout session, the participants were divided into 3 groups as follows:

(i) 10A Group A
    i. Australia, Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu
    ii. Moderator: Kilala Devette-Chee, Senior Researcher, PNG National Research Institute
    iii. Rapporteur: Tepora Wright, Post-graduate student, University of Waikato

(ii) 10B Group B
    i. Kiribati, RMI, FSM, Palau, Nauru

ii. Moderator: Jack Kalisto, Coordinator, COESI, Solomon Islands

iii. Rapporteur: Analiese Robertson, Director, ACE Aotearoa

(iii) *10C Group C*
   i. Cook Islands, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu
   ii. Moderator: Shirley Abraham, Coordinator, KOBLE Vanuatu
   iii. Rapporteur: Sandy Morrison, Associate Professor, University of Waikato

121. In each group, country representatives shared the following updates, followed by Q&A and discussion.
   (i) State of the art adult learning and education (ALE);
   (ii) Specific challenges and priorities for future action to promote ALE concepts and practice;
   (iii) Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on ALE;
   (iv) Innovative practices in citizenship education; and
   (v) Prospects for sub-regional cooperation.

Session 11 CONFINTEA VII – Sub-Regional Summary

122. This session resumed with reporting from groups and a CSO representative, followed by question, answer and discussion session. Based on the reporting, technical discussion was led by Ms. Angela Owusu-Boampong, UIL who identified priorities in ALE from countries. This was followed by Professor Sandy Morrison, University of Waikato where she synthesized the Pacific Sub-regional recommendations for CONTINTEA VII Regional Consultation. Mr. Franco Rodie, PhD, Permanent Secretary, Government of Solomon Islands moderated the session.

123. *Group A Report*. Ms. Tepora Wright from University of Waikato presented the report on behalf of Group A. She informed that:
   (i) In Australia the adult learning is mostly on user pay basis;
   (ii) In Fiji there is no entity responsible for ALE in particular, but skills training such as technical skills, rural farming and skills to support small and medium enterprise was provided by Pacific TAFE and FNU;
   (iii) In PNG the Government coordinated ALE with some intensity in terms of funding assistance. Most of the programs are faith based or run by non-state actors but there is a desire to have more government involvement;
   (iv) In Solomon Islands, the main providers are also faith-based organizations as well as some government agencies and NGOs;
   (v) Geographical layout of many

countries hindered the access to rural and remote communities;

(vi) COVID-19 pandemic had led to the destruction of continuity;

(vii) High cost of connectivity and mobile devices that could support ALE are identified as constraints; and

(viii) Adult learners are faced with uncertainty of the future.

124. *Group B Report.* Ms. Analiese Robertson, Director, ACE New Zealand reported groups discussion based on inputs from Nauru and Palau.

(i) *State of the art adult learning and education (ALE)*
   i. Importance of Vocational Education;
   ii. Focus on numeracy and literacy; and
   iii. Pathways to qualifications.

(ii) *Specific challenges and priorities for future action to promote ALE concepts and practice*
   i. Access to learning;
   ii. Capacity of staff; and
   iii. Lack of recognition on its importance;

(iii) *Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on ALE*
   i. Access to students;
   ii. Ability- upskilling of staff; and
   iii. Access to high speed internet connectivity and gadgets.

(iv) *Innovative practices in citizenship education*
   i. Local knowledge by local people-community outreach;
   ii. Availability of Sponsorship; and
   iii. Provided at no cost to students.

(v) *Prospects for sub-regional cooperation*
   i. Cooperation with universities;
   ii. Availability of scholarships; and
   iii. Donor countries and aid from donor agencies.

125. *Group C Report.* This was presented by Ms. Sandy Morrison, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Waikato. She made the following comments:
   (i) ALE needs to incorporate values;
   (ii) Adult education is mainly provided through universities and vocational centres are also supported by NGOs;
   (iii) ALE faced a number of challenges:
      i. Lack of political support and adequacy of resources;
      ii. Lack of digital literacy; and
      iii. Leadership training and capacity building; and

126. There is a large focus on youths in all the island nations. Ministries of Education also cater for ALE in the generational transfer of knowledge. The group proposed instead of CONTINTEA to take place every 12 years,

the Pacific ALE stakeholders could meet more regularly to discuss and share how ALE initiatives could be better implemented. This would also build better relationships and look at ways of helping each other so that they would develop their capacity through online exchanges.

127. *Questions/Answers and Comments*
  (i) Mr. Filipe Jitoko agreed that members could meet earlier and not wait for CONFINTEA being held every 12 years. He suggested it would be good to have discussion forums in between to update members about ALE;
  (ii) Ms. Nisha raised a few issues about ALE in the Pacific.
    i. She concurred that financing remains a major issue for ALE and training;
    ii. She also noted the practice of lifelong learning is not well established in the region with linkages to development outcomes. ALE has been viewed more as an individual initiative, than a state responsibility;
    iii. Limitations in technology and internet connectivity. There exists an urgent need to look at different types of technologies that can be utilized for ALE - internet based or local based in micro-enterprise manner; and
    iv. Social fears and stigma-feeling shy about learning at an old age. There is a need to consider ALE as a priority

agenda for the Pacific States.
  (iii) Ms. Tepora Wright also commented on lack of financing. She asked for greater government commitment and advocacy that would bear funding for the sustainability of such programs. One of the areas where funding could be directed towards is internet connectivity and access to learning devices;
  (iv) Mr. Jack Kalisto made a comment about the need for community learning centers to be strengthened as they assisted in literacy programs. He recommended that such centers should get recognized and get more support to really reach out to the community as they greatly contributed towards adult learning initiatives; and
  (v) Mr. Vaioleti emphasized the need to convince governments about the importance of adult learning. There was a need to continue stressing the need for ALE and the important role it played in creating a knowledge-based society.

128. Technical discussion was led by Angela Owusu-Boampong, UIL. She stated that the following were identified for discussion in the CONTINTEA VII Report:
  (i) Funding of ALE including technical and vocational learning;
  (ii) Motivation and stigma towards ALE;
  (iii) Teachers and adult educators-integrate values in teacher education

and in-service training programs; and

(iv) The importance of ICT skills, internet and funding.

She requested for priority recommendations from the countries.

129. *Recommendations*

(i) Mr. Bernard Lovegrove a CSO representative based in Australia supported the importance for financing of ALE in the Pacific where the economies were small and a lot of reliance was on overseas aid. There is an urgent need to provide better internet access and reach especially in rural and remote areas at a much cheaper price. People could access to laptops through community learning centers for example.;

(ii) PNG recommended for more funding for ALA and training;

(iii) Ms. Birtha Togahai recommended that cultural values should be overarching pillar for any training in ALE and presence of political will of the countries to enhance the progress of ALE in the Pacific;

(iv) Ms. Analiese, ACE Aotearoa Director, New Zealand made a number of recommendations in regards to the role of ALE in light of COVID-19 pandemic and more so from the social justice perspective:

i. Develop comprehensive, robust and explicit policies promoting cultural and responsive lifelong learning Framework;

ii. Re-thinking the notion of literacy and recognizing the different literacies and knowledge systems;

iii. Addressing the financial gaps between formal and nonformal education;

iv. Recognizing the importance of the partnership approach system for advancing ALA;

v. Need for consistent gender equality and women's empowerment across the globe;

vi. Importance of environmental literacy and digital literacy;

vii. Adoption of new and emerging technologies;

viii. Climate change implications-new forms of electricity;

ix. Importance of traditional knowledge & Cultural knowledge;

x. Creating opportunities for multiple pathways for students who have been pushed out by the formal education systems; and

xi. Need a Pacific representative on the UIL governing body for the largest region in the world.

130. Ms. Angela Owusu-Boampong summarized the *recommendations* as follows:
  (i) Adequate and sustainable funding and financing of ALE;
  (ii) Provide access to technology through community learning centres;
  (iii) Importance of Mother tongue and culture in preserving our languages and traditions;
  (iv) Political will and government assistance;
  (v) Impact of COVID-19 and the role of ALE in health education and awareness of safety measures during COVID-19; and
  (vi) How ALE could be included in the COVID-19 recovery plans.

131. *Sub-regional Recommendations* for CONTINTEA VII Regional Consultation was presented by Sandy Morrison, Associate Professor, Waikato University. She highlighted the following areas as of great importance:
  (i) Adult education matters a lot in the Pacific and leads to lifelong learning;
  (ii) Indigenous knowledge and skills must be imbedded in the ALE;
  (iii) Provide mobility to a way to better jobs and in search for greener pastures;
  (iv) Need for innovation as COVID-19 had required people to be multi-skilled and to become self-sustainable;

  (v) Data needed to collected as data synthesis would provide helpful information for decision making;
  (vi) Capacity to take charge and not to wait for 6-12 years and make changes; and
  (vii) Need to call on the customs and traditions of our ancestors and rethink education based on cultural values to become good global citizens.

132. Mr. Franco Rodie, PhD, the Chair for the session stressed on the expectations and aspiration of the people in regard to ALE. He encouraged the PHES members to work in the best interest of the people and assist them in fulfilling their expectations and aspiration.

133. Angela Owusu-Boampong, UIL thanked everyone for the fruitful deliberations and assured the members and participants that the recommendations would be taken to CONTINTEA VII in Morocco.

134. Chair, Mr.Kombra, thanked members, UNESCO office, university representatives and CSO and participants and expressed his sincere appreciation to all the countries and thanked them for their active participation and cooperation. He was convinced that the discussions would lead them towards better alignment of their policies and work with governments and developmental partners to allow for ALE to move forward.

135. Ms. Nisha thanked Mr. Franco Rodie, PhD, Permanent Secretary, Government of

Solomon Islands for moderating the session and Mr.Kombra for the Chariship. She highlighted the need to critically examine the approaches and interventions to see that all groups of people were catered for, especially those who couldn't be reached through main stream or regular programs. She discussed that ALE to be fully integrated in Pacific education and becomes more inclusive not only in terms of gender equality but also included those in remote areas. She thanked the chair and the team for the flexibility in taking in additional responsibilities. She thanked everybody and wished them a pleasant day ahead.

Day 4

Session 12: Discussion on PHES Business Plan

136.   PHES members discussed business plan in this closed session with the Chair Mr. Uke Kombra, PhD, Government of Papua New Guinea. Issues discussed in the session included:
    (i) needs, purposes, and functions to best utilize this network – draft Terms of Reference
    (ii) 25th PHES Chair and Steering Committee membership

137.   PHES members recommended that the PHES decisions would be circulated through email among the members for finalization,

before wider dissemination. Refer to 24th PHES Decision Paper.

Session 13: Closing Session

Mr. Joseph Auli, Government of Papua New Guinea shared the draft Meeting Outcomes which was followed by discussion and endorsement by the PHES members. Meta-synthesis revealed that the topics for discussion in the different sessions were well linked to one another and contributed to the achievement of SGD4. Education was looked at in a holistic way from early childhood education to adult learning. There was a progressive coverage of themes from talanoa mode to achieving of quality education and setting of benchmarks. Teacher professional development was discussed followed by higher education to adult learning education and the subsequent formulation of recommendations for CONFINTEA VII. Refer to 24th PHES Consultation Meeting Outcomes Document.

138.   *Question/Answer and Comments*
    (i) Mr. Filipe Jitoko reminded that some important decisions were made during the closed meeting, which would be released at a later date. He acknowledged the hard work of the steering committee who had progressed the work very well;
    (ii) Ms. Amy McAteer of New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade enquired about the status of her attendance at the PHES meeting; and
    (iii) Ms. Birtha Togahai stated that she supported the Outcomes Document

and thanked all the members, donor partners, UNESCO secretariat and PNG for being a good virtual host.

139. Palau moved the motion that the meeting outcome document be accepted and was seconded by FSM. PHES members unanimously agreed and adopted the document.

140. Ms. Simona Marinescu, the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Samoa Multi Country Office provided remarks. She thanked the host country for virtual deliberations and congratulated all for very intense discussions that had led to the adoption of the Outcomes Document. On behalf of the United Nations in the Pacific she shared her few thoughts.
   (i) Education is considered one of the most important areas in order to progress the achievement of the SDG 4. It must be reprioritized and access to technology and use of digital resources to be encouraged;
   (ii) Capacity building of the teachers to be strengthened to ensure the education processes are of high quality and meet international standards;
   (iii) Human resources ought to be valued and recognized as they are the most important national wealth of a country;
   (iv) Outcome document to be shared with UN so that appropriate guidance and assistance could be followed-up; and
   (v) She was thankful to all the member states, development partners and

CSOs for the great work done towards achieving SDG4.

141. Closing remarks were made by Ms. Nisha, Director of the UNESCO Office and Representative to the Pacific States.
   (i) She highlighted the importance of continuously guiding the adult population towards learning;
   (ii) She affirmed that we need to keep our eyes and minds open to change. Change is an inevitable phenomenon and we need to be ready just like in times of COVID-19 Pandemic;
   (iii) She further acknowledged the Pacific education systems are independent, composed of varying approaches including private and public institutions, faith-based organizations and civil society organizations but we all need to focus on our strengths and build dialogue founded on diversity and common good of all;
   (iv) She thanked Ms. Simona Marinescu for taking the PHES outcomes document in shaping the upcoming UN Cooperation Framework so the young populations of the Pacific would be better served and benefit from equitable education opportunities; and
   (v) She acknowledged the following in her closing up remarks:
      i. PHES for the excellent collaboration, solidarity and support;
      ii. Support provided by the IA FONO with PFU of PacREF;

and
iii. Development partners and the Chairperson and his team for their hard work during the four days.

142. Closing remarks were also made by the Chairperson Mr. Uke Kombra, PhD, Secretary for Education, Government of Papua New Guinea. He noted that this meeting was the first international event they had hosted successfully virtually. He expressed his thanks and gratitude to:
(i) Colleagues heads of education systems in the Pacific;
(ii) Devoted developmental partners;
(iii) Stakeholders and well-wishers;
(iv) UNESCO Office in Apia for their guidance in the day to day running of the meetings; and
(v) Technical staff in PNG for putting together the country presentations

and the organization of the venue in Port Moresby.

He mentioned that as the globally agreed deadline for achievements of quality education drew nearer, their commitments needed to accelerate to progress the implementation and achievement of sustainable development goal number 4. The challenges faced by COVID-19 had provided opportunities as they were able to transform their education systems to be more resilient against forthcoming disasters and emergencies. He thanked everyone and declared the 24th Consultation Meeting of the Pacific Heads of Education Systems close.

143. The 24th Consultation Meeting of the Pacific Heads of Education Systems ended at 1:20 pm Port Moresby time on 30th July, 2021.