

## Cook Islands Presentation by Secretary of Transport to the:

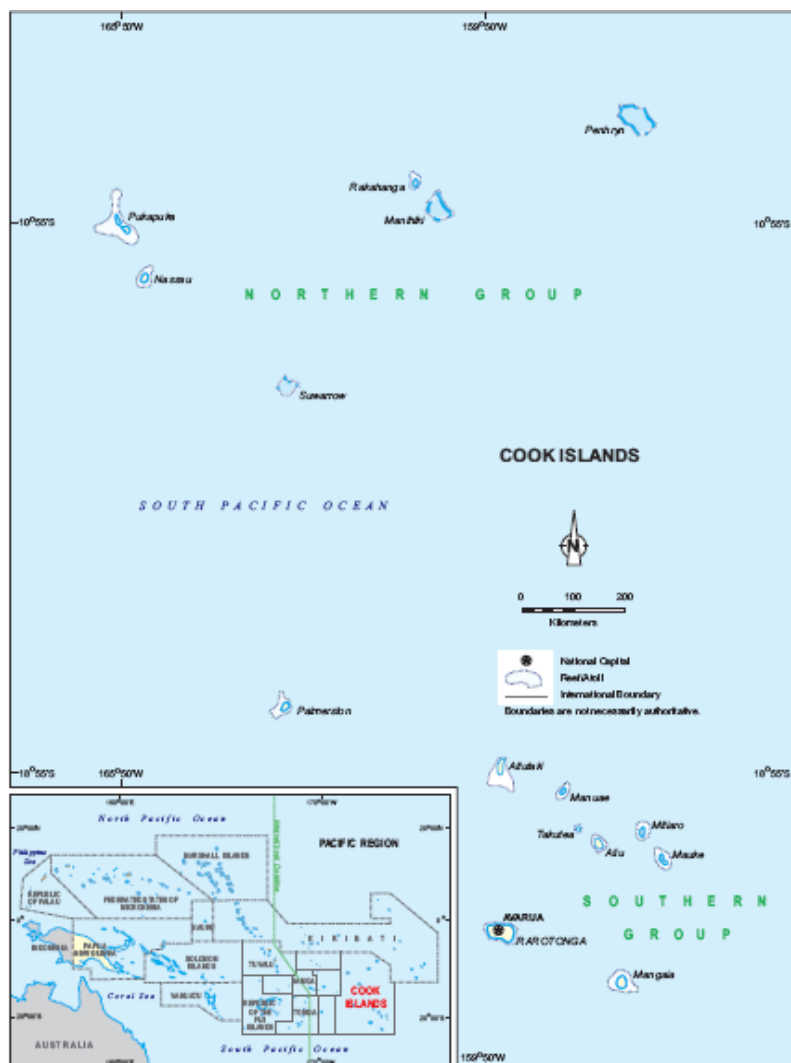
### HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON STRENGTHENING INTER-ISLAND SHIPPING AND LOGISTICS IN THE PACIFIC COUNTRIES. 23-25<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2013.

#### Introduction

The Cook Islands is comprised of 15 islands with a total land mass of only 240 square kilometres scattered over 2 million square kilometres of ocean. These islands are geographically located between 08 degrees and 23 degrees south latitude and 156 degrees and 167 degrees west longitude.

The 15 islands form two groups called the Southern Group, comprising of the islands of Manuae, Palmerston\*, Aitutaki, Mangaia, Atiu, Mauke, Mitiaro, Takutea and Rarotonga and the Northern Group, comprising of the coral atolls of Penrhyn, Pukapuka, Nassau, Manihiki, Rakahanga and Suvarrow. These islands are less developed and less populated than the Southern Group islands.

*\*Geographically, Palmerston is in the Southern Group. For shipping purposes it is considered a Northern Group island.*



## **Cook Islands National Sustainable Plan (NSDP)**

In 2007 the Cook Islands launched its 2020 visionary framework - Te Kaveinga Nui, articulating the National Vision and Development Outcomes desired by the Cook Islands hoped to be realised through a three phase medium term planning approach.

The purpose of the NSDP is to set national goals, the expected results and effective strategies to guide policy decisions over the medium term in order to realise the 2020 Development Outcomes that aim to deliver on Te Kaveinga Nui National Vision.

Our National Vision - **‘to enjoy the highest quality of life consistent with the aspirations of our people, and in harmony with our culture and environment’.**

“Te oraanga tu rangatira kia tau ki te anoano o te iti tangata, e kia tau ki ta tatou peu Maori e te aotini taporoporoia o te basileia”

*(Source: NSDP 2011-15)*

## **Shipping in the Cook Islands**

International and domestic Shipping in the Cook Islands is regulated under a licensing system set up in 1963, the *Cook Islands Shipping Licence Ordinance 1963* as amended in 1992. The Ordinance provides the Minister responsible for shipping authority to grant a licence or approval to operators and ships engaged in the carriage and transport of goods to and from the Cook Islands as well as ships operating within Cook Island waters.

## **Cook Islands Challenges**

1. *A safe, reliable and affordable shipping service.*
2. *Depopulation – the 2006 census figures show decrease in outer island community populations. Reasons are variable but most acceptable include job opportunities and better education and lifestyle for family.*
3. *Limited local technical knowledge- small island administrations has the same compliance obligations as bigger administrations.*

**Opportunities** – *A safe, reliable and affordable shipping service has the potential to stimulate small island communities’ confidence to develop small business ventures and export products to market in Rarotonga. These may include crafts, agricultural products and other products such as ‘tuna jerky’ and frozen fish for the Rarotonga market etc (Palmerston experience).*

### Confronting issues for Cook Islands:

1. *Status quo to continue* – this does not cost Government nothing but impact on outer island communities.
2. *Should Government offer Operating Subsidy* – Cost of providing subsidy?.
3. *Should international and domestic shipping combine with other regional ships eg Tokelau's ship?*. Cost to Government?.
4. *Should government consider acquiring a purpose designed ship?*. At what Cost?.

(Source: Cook Islands Shipping and Services Review – NZMFA and Trade)

### Major issues for the Cook Islands:

1. **Development and implementation of a maritime and sea transport policy and plan in line with National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP).**
2. **Modernization of the Shipping License Ordinance 1963.**
3. **Review of effectiveness of the Shipping registry under current privatization arrangements.**
4. **Institutional Strengthening to ensure the maritime sector stays abreast of international requirements as well as strengthen regulatory and oversight responsibilities.**

### Appreciation

To ESCAP, IMO, PIFS and SPC-EDD, thank you for coordinating this very important meeting. It is indeed a breath of fresh air to revisit this very important subject and re-echo the concerns of our Forum Leaders 40 years ago which lead to the establishment of the Regional Maritime Program (RMP) sadly no longer in existence. Yet today the importance of shipping is greater now than 40 years ago and without doubt will continue to be a concern. I look forward with very keen interest to new initiatives of action from this meeting.

In conclusion, I plead with our international and regional partners to please hear our voices. Our people are our most important asset and building appropriate national capacity is

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