



Communiqué of the Inaugural Pacific Islands Sports Ministers Meeting

Ministers and advisors from 12 Pacific Island countries in addition to 25 leading Sports Administrators representing the membership of the Pacific Games Council met in Rarotonga on 20 September 2009 under the theme “Governments and Sport – Working Together for the Pacific Islands People” focused on the use of sports as a tool for development.

Presentations were made by the Pacific Games Council, the host Cook Islands Government’s Minister for Sport, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Australian Sports Commission, Oceania National Olympic Committees, UNESCO, Oceania Regional Anti-Doping Organisation, Oceania Football Confederation, and the Minister for Sport in New Caledonia. As a result of these presentations, Ministers and Sports Administrators reached the following conclusions:

1. Ministers re-dedicated themselves and their governments to promote Pacific Values in Sport – commitment, discipline, integrity, fair play, respect of cultural and ethnic differences, gender equality, and to fight against doping.
2. Ministers agree to raise the profile of sports in their countries - to provide funding and resources to encourage the youth of the Pacific into sports participation and ultimately into the Pacific Games so that they may be exposed to these Pacific Values in Sport.
3. Ministers agree to use Sport and the promotion of physical activity as a positive vehicle, particularly amongst the Youth, to combat obesity, diabetes, crime, HIV/AIDS and other social problems prevalent in Pacific communities today.
4. Ministers agreed to utilise the elevation of Sport within the Pacific Islands Leaders Forum to develop the best methods for sports development and sport for development.
5. Ministers agreed to convey the outcomes of the Sports Ministers’ Meeting to their respective Prime Ministers to ensure that these outcomes can be included on the future agenda of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders’ meetings.
6. The meeting agreed that the Pacific Games Council will also convey these outcomes to the Secretariat of the Pacific Communities and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.
7. Ministers agreed that the Pacific Games Council will engage with the Secretariat of the Pacific Communities and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in order to develop mechanisms to leverage funding, resources, and other technical expertise in order to fully study the financial costs and benefits of sports development and sport for development.
8. The Meeting agreed that both Oceania National Olympic Committees and the Pacific Games Council should be formally recognised by the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders as observers to the annual meetings of Leaders so that they become direct partners in the allocation and implementation of resources committed to sport development and development through sports. Furthermore, it was agreed that the Pacific Games Council become a dialogue partner of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat for the development and implementation of the Pacific Plan.

9. Ministers agreed that in their own countries recognition and value must be placed on the role and contribution of National Olympic Committees and Pacific Games Associations in partnership to develop sports and delivering development through sports programs.
10. Ministers applauded the recently announced Australian Government funding initiative for the use of sport as a tool for development in the Pacific Islands. Ministers agreed to encourage the Australian Government to continue its efforts to broaden the program to include as many Pacific Islands countries as possible.
11. The Meeting agreed that each country should work towards including sport development and sport for development into their national development programs which form the basis of separate bilateral consultations with the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, respectively.
12. The Meeting concurred with the Olympic Education programs and applauded the commitment of the Olympic Solidarity programs through Oceania National Olympic Committees which are contributing US\$15 million to a range of National Olympic Committee programs over the 2009-2012 Olympiad.
13. Ministers agreed to encourage their respective governments to become signatories to the UNESCO Anti-Doping Convention and to apply to the Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport.
14. The Meeting applauded the role the New Caledonia Government is playing in the development of its sports programs and recognised that some of the initiatives undertaken by the New Caledonia Government may possibly be emulated by governments in other Pacific Island countries for the greater good of sport.
15. The Meeting applauded the role being played by the Oceania Football Confederation's 'Just Play' program in capacity building within Pacific Islands communities, and participants agreed to use their influence within other international federations for sport to facilitate similar community development programs.
16. The Ministers agreed to endorse the Oceania Football Confederation organised 2010 Pacific Sports and Youth Conference to be held in Auckland, New Zealand, from 8-13 March as a great opportunity for exchange of ideas by young people about pressing issues that affect their well-being. Furthermore, The Ministers agreed to explore:
 - a. the possibility of a common school holiday schedule to more easily enable junior sporting competitions at a regional level; and
 - b. The feasibility of tax concessions for the importation of sports equipment.
17. The Ministers applauded the initiative of the Oceania Football Confederation to build a regional sports facility in Auckland, New Zealand, which would be available for all sports organisations from within the Pacific and agreed to encourage their governments to lobby support for this initiative from the larger countries in the Pacific.
18. Ministers welcomed the idea of the Pacific Games Council that the Sports Ministers' Meeting should become a regular feature of each Pacific Games and Pacific Mini Games program, and agreed to convene again in 2011 on the eve of the XIVth Pacific Games in New Caledonia.

Rarotonga, Cook Islands
20 September 2009

