

Written by Zarin Khan

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A landmark event for the Pacific region took place today with the launch of the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre in the Pacific (MTCC-Pacific). The MTCC-Pacific will become part of a global network, joining centres in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. Together, these centres will develop and promote low-carbon maritime transport systems in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The MTCC-Pacific will be based in Fiji and hosted by the Pacific Community (SPC) in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

The vision of the MTCC-Pacific, which has been funded by the European Union in partnership with the International Maritime Organisation is to promote a Pacific low-carbon maritime transport that supports the sustainable development goals of PICTs. MTCC-Pacific forms part of the Global Network of MTCCs to work together with MTCCs in Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Latin America to achieve common objectives.

Speaking at the official launch ceremony, Fiji's Minister for Forests Acting Minister for Fisheries, Hon. Osea Naiqamu highlighted the importance of the Centre both to Fiji and to the wider Pacific community saying, "Fiji is privileged to host the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre in the Pacific (MTCC-Pacific) on behalf of the Pacific. This centre of excellence will provide invaluable support to Pacific Island Countries and Territories towards progressing their respective priorities and commitments towards achieving sustainable transport and reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

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The European Union Ambassador to Fiji and the Pacific His Excellency Julian Wilson said: "The EU is proud of the partnership with IMO in supporting the establishment of the MTCC-Pacific in Fiji. This institution has an important role to play on climate mitigation in the maritime shipping sector, thus helping the global community reach the Paris Agreement goals,"

"The EU strongly hopes that this project will help the Pacific countries to accelerate the uptake of technical and operational possibilities to improve the energy efficiency of shipping and promote clean energy shipping. This will have an immediate impact on global GHG emissions," added Ambassador Wilson.

SPC's Deputy Director General, Dr Audrey Aumua, emphasised the historic nature of the MTCC launch and highlighted the importance of ensuring that the Pacific is well represented in the global network, given the central role that the maritime industry plays in the region. Dr. Aumua also stressed how this new 'maritime centre of excellence' will support the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific. "MTCC-Pacific compliments our regional efforts towards the FRDP and will provide us with an effective platform to accelerate progress towards the objectives of our regional climate change mitigation strategy."

MTCC-Pacific forms part of the Global MTCCs Network (GMN), a project implemented by IMO and funded by the European Union with the overall objective of promoting climate mitigation in the maritime industry and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from maritime transport.

International Maritime Organization (IMO) Deputy Director/Chief, Office of General Services, Mr. Aubrey Botsford welcomed the establishment of MTCC-Pacific noting that, "efforts to mitigate climate change and promote energy efficiency in the maritime sector, through actions taken by Pacific governments and maritime industry, show the dynamic approach taken by your region. IMO is strongly supportive of this approach and of the various actions taken in the Pacific"

Today's launch was part of a MTCC-Pacific Regional Conference, a week-long gathering of maritime industry leaders and experts from across the globe. The conference will conclude on Friday.

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