



**PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT**

PIFS(05)FEDMA.07

**EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING**

*Apia, Samoa  
23-24 May 2005*

**SESSION EIGHT**

**REPORT FROM THE PACIFIC ASSOCIATION FOR TECHNICAL AND  
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (PATVET)**

This paper has been prepared by the Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PATVET), for the information of Ministers.



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### EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING

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*Summary brief*

#### **SESSION 8: REPORT FROM THE PACIFIC ASSOCIATION FOR TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (PATVET)**

##### **Purpose**

Ministers of Education welcomed the formation of PATVET at their meeting in 2002. This paper provides a report on PATVET'S activities.

##### **Background**

2. PATVET now has widespread membership across the region. It has worked closely with several key stakeholders including the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), The New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (TOPNZ), UNESCO, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

3. PATVET has undertaken various activities, outlined in the paper, and looks forward to future activities, including having its own secretariat.

4. A regional workshop held in February 2005 made several recommendations that are being presented to Ministers for consideration.

##### **Recommendations**

Ministers for may wish to consider:

- (a) Noting the progress achieved in moving the TVET agenda forward at both the national and regional level in the Pacific to date,
- (b) Acknowledging the lead role by PATVET in moving the TVET agenda forward,
- (c) Acknowledging the commitment by a large number of national, regional and international partners to work with PATVET to achieve the goals set by the Education Ministers in the FBEAP in relation to TVET.

- (d) Noting that while there has been some progress in TVET in some countries since the launch of the FBEAP 2001, TVET is often seen as a second-class alternative to academic education,
- (e) Championing the role, status and development of TVET at the national level in Pacific Island countries and help mobilise resources to enhance the wider understanding and acceptance of TVET in the region,
- (f) Endorsing the planned development of a regional Inventory of TVET institutions in the Pacific in 2005,
- (g) Endorsing the planned development of the regional Qualifications Register after the completion of the Inventory of TVET institutions, and subsequently the regional Qualifications Framework,
- (h) Noting the request for the SPC to host the regional secretariat of PATVET,
- (i) Encouraging PRIDE to place more emphasis on TVET and encourage countries to access PRIDE for support in this area. This would also put PRIDE in good stead against the backdrop of the **Bonn Declaration** on TVET quoted below:

**The Bonn Declaration**

*”...Since education is considered the key to effective development strategies, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) must be the master key that can alleviate poverty, promote peace, conserve the environment, improve the quality of life for all and help achieve sustainable development”.*

*UNESCO International Experts’ Meeting on Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Bonn, Germany, 25-28<sup>th</sup> October 2004*

# **PATVET ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION**

Presented by  
*Sala Perive Tanuvasa Lene (President)*

## **Introduction**

The Ministers of Education of the Pacific Region agreed in the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) in 2001 that it was important to develop a sound National Education policy and planning framework. The Plan recognized the importance of TVET and said that it should be included as a priority in the national plans of respective countries and that countries should endeavor to raise the status of TVET in their national policies. Ministers also agreed to consider the setting up of a regional qualifications framework, covering basic, primary, secondary, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and tertiary education, benchmarked against appropriate international standards and qualifications.

In 2002, Ministers of Education welcomed the formation of Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education (PATVET) and its role in the development of TVET in the region and agreed to recognize PATVET as having a key contribution to make in reducing poverty in our countries.

## **Background - PATVET**

In July 2001, TVET providers representing seven Pacific Island States met in Suva where it was unanimously agreed that a regional TVET providers association should be formed and recommendations were made to start developing such a regional body. In October 2002, PATVET was formally established and its constitution approved.

Since then, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), The New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (TOPNZ) and UNESCO have been sponsoring annual institutes for PATVET in New Zealand and Samoa. Current PATVET membership includes 13 countries: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Is, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

At its meeting in Samoa in June 2003, and in its presentation to the Ministers Forum, 2004, PATVET highlighted the difficulties that existed because there was no uniform Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) in the region. It was felt that there was a very significant need to develop a RQF to make it easier for TVET students to cross national borders within the region. This should also improve the mobility of labour. As a first step PATVET members felt that they needed to have a better understanding of the vision, the policies and approaches, which have been developed in each of the island states.

PATVET with financial assistance from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat commissioned and undertook a study to look at TVET policy in each of the countries. Out of the seven island states that were able to carry out the survey, only one had a national TVET Policy while the rest were either in the process through establishing of qualifications authorities or are included as part of their national Education Acts.

The following are the guidelines for PATVET Strategic Plan 2004 – 2007:

### **Vision**

To be a strong united voice and a regional forum for TVET providers in the Pacific.

### **Mission**

To lead and facilitate the development and establishment of a quality TVET system which will contribute to viable economy, sustainable environment, social and cultural developments

### **Goals**

- Support the development of a Pacific Qualifications Framework
- Set up a regional secretariat
- Pursue funding assistance to sustain PATVET activities
- Improve the sharing of information, access to databases, sharing of materials through the PATVET network.

### **Completed Projects**

- An Open and Distance Learning (ODL) course in “Learning About Small Business” was designed by the TOPNZ and Samoa Polytechnic during 2001 and is now delivered in several countries of the region
- A Pacific TVET Policy Review was carried out in 2003 under funding from PIFS
- A Tracer Study on the impact of “Learning About Small Business” to participants lives was done 2003 under PIFS funding in Samoa
- A CD Rom course for ODL Policy Makers was conducted in 2003 by SP for PATVET members
- Basic Trade Skills ODL course in basic carpentry was designed and put together by PATVET representatives from Kiribati, Tuvalu and Niue
- Formation of national TVET providers associations

### **Current and Future Developments**

As a result of on-going negotiations with SPC and PIFS on TVET, a Regional Multi-Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on TVET in the Pacific – “*The Way Forward*”, was sponsored by SPC and convened at the SPC Community Education Training Centre in Narere, Fiji, from 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> February 2005. It was attended by PATVET Members from eleven Pacific Island countries including the Cook Islands (Ministry of Education -MoE), Fiji (Ministry of Education, Fiji

Institute of Technology, Fiji Islands TVET Association), Nauru (MoE), Niue (MoE), Papua New Guinea (MoE), Samoa (Samoa Polytechnic & Samoa Association of TVET Institutions), Solomon Islands (Don Bosco Technical Institute), Tokelau (MoE), Tonga (Tonga Institute of Science & Technology – MoE), Tuvalu (DoE) and Vanuatu (Vanuatu Institute of Technology).

A number of key stakeholders in TVET in the Pacific also participated at the consultation meeting including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the South Pacific Board for Education Assessment (SPBEA), the South Pacific Applied GeoScience Commission (SOPAC), the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), University of the South Pacific (USP), the Pacific Regional Initiative for Delivery of (Basic) Education (PRIDE), the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) and the Council of Pacific Education (COPE).

1. The regional consultation meeting agreed on the following:
  - Establishing an inventory of TVET institutions existing in each country, the courses they offer, costs for the courses, entry requirements for courses, qualifications they award, linkages between TVET Institutions nationally or within the region.
  - Discuss and agree on mechanisms to develop a regional inventory of TVET institutions in the pacific region,
  - Discuss and agree on practical steps to be taken to work toward a regional qualifications register and subsequently a regional qualifications framework that will enable course comparison and accreditation opportunities between institutions,
  - Discuss and identify important 'skill gaps' that are not currently catered for by any form of education modality,
  - Discuss the issue of a regional secretariat to support the work of PATVET, and,
  - Develop a brief on TVET to be presented to the upcoming Forum Education Minister's meeting scheduled for May 2005 and provide some input on TVET to the Pacific Plan Task Force who is currently developing the Pacific Plan for strengthening regional cooperation and integration.
  
2. After discussions, the regional consultation meeting agreed on the following:
  - A Regional Inventory of all TVET institutions and courses offered needs to be developed as a matter of priority with a completion date by December 2005.
  - A regional qualifications register needs to be developed as a matter of priority,
  - A Qualification Framework would be the next logical step after developing the qualifications register, but it has to be a longer term goal, and would require substantial resources,

- Information regarding 'skill gaps' area will come to the fore as part of the survey on the inventory of TVET institutions.
- SPC be requested to host the regional secretariat of PATVET as there is an urgent need for it to support the work of PATVET in moving forward the following three issues: (i) regional inventory of TVET institutions in the pacific, (ii) a regional qualifications register and (iii) a regional qualifications framework which acknowledges the fact that HRD is SPC's core business,
- Welcomed and endorsed PATVET's decision to establish a working Sub-committee to lead and oversee the development of the regional inventory of TVET institutions as well as PATVET's support for the process of developing a regional qualifications register with a specific focus on the inventory in 2005,
- Expressed the wish to see TVET mainstreamed into the PRIDE project
- To provide this outcome statement to the Pacific Plan Taskforce for their consideration to incorporate the early wins identified herein in the Pacific Plan.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Ministers for may wish to consider:**

- (a) Noting the progress achieved in moving the TVET agenda forward at both the national and regional level in the pacific to date,
- (b) Acknowledging the lead role by PATVET in moving the TVET agenda forward,
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- (d) Noting that while there has been some progress in TVET in some countries since the launch of the FBEAP 2001, TVET is often seen as a second-class alternative to academic education,
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