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SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

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REGIONAL NUTRITION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING
(Suva, Fiji, 11 - 15 May 1992)

REPORT

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I. INTRODUCTION

The First South Pacific Commission Regional Workshop for Nutritionists, Dietitians and Nutrition Educators: Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Nutrition Education Programmes, held in April 1991, recommended that the South Pacific Commission assist with implementation of the recommendation that:

Nutritionists, dietitians and nutrition educators establish a professional association to:

- (a) Discuss issues related to nutrition in the Pacific and update current knowledge in nutrition;*
- (b) Act as a regional advisory body on regional food and nutrition issues and activities in the Pacific;*
- (c) Organise a regional technical meeting every two years, with assistance from the South Pacific Commission, the World Health Organization and other agencies.*

A Regional Nutrition Sub-Committee was elected to plan the formal establishment of a regional professional association of nutritionists, dietitians and nutrition educators. In May 1992, the Sub-Committee met with delegates from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Western Samoa. The meeting focused on two important areas;

- nutrition training and professional development; and
- the development of guidelines and strategies for the proposed association.

Funding for the meeting was generously provided by the New Zealand Government, Freedom from Hunger Campaign and the South Pacific Commission (SPC). SPC organised the meeting, with assistance from the Fiji Ministry of Health and the University of the South Pacific.

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II. AGENDA

Monday 11 May

Opening ceremony

Welcome to Fiji (Mrs Mona Chand, Ministry of Health, Fiji)

Opening prayer (Dr Laisa Naivalulevu, Assistant Director of Family Health, Ministry of Health, Fiji)

Welcome to SPC, Suva (Dr Sitaleki A. Finau, Health Co-ordinator, SPC)

Opening address (Mrs Gul Akbar, Suva City Councillor, Foundation Member of Fiji Home Economics & Dietetic Association)

Introduction and announcements (SPC Secretariat)

Review of meeting objectives; Review of nutrition workers in the Pacific (SPC Secretariat)

Nutrition training in the Pacific – review (Brenda Sio, Jimaima Tunidau, University of the South Pacific; Heather Wright, Fiji School of Medicine; Mona Chand, Ministry of Health, Fiji; and Enoch Posanai, Papua New Guinea)

Bringing food and nutrition to other professionals (agriculture and health) (SPC Secretariat)

Summary (Enoch Posanai, Papua New Guinea; Votausi Mackenzie-Reur, Vanuatu; Karen Ash, Cook Islands)

Tuesday 12 May

Experiences and review of regional and national organisations and associations (Raijieli Tuiqilaqila, Fiji Dietetic Association; Nirmala Nand, Fiji Association of Allied Health Workers; Salamo Fulivai, Pacific YWCA; Diane Goodwillie, Canada Fund)

Logistics in formulation of an association (Salamo Fulivai, Pacific YWCA)

Development and drafting of objectives (Jimaima Tunidau, Brenda Sio, University of the South Pacific)

Group review

Wednesday 13 May

Summary of main considerations for Constitution guidelines (Jimaima Tunidau, University of the South Pacific)

Group work

Field visits (Fiji National Food and Nutrition Committee, Diabetes Centre)

Thursday 14 May

Group work

Group presentations and review

Breast-feeding issues (Dr Dominique Lefèvre, World Health Organization)

Summary of draft Constitution (Enoch Posanai, Papua New Guinea)

Plans for next technical meeting (Karen Ash, Cook Islands)

Friday 15 May

Refining draft Constitution

Adoption of reports/recommendations

Closing ceremony

Closing address (Dr Malcolm Hazelman, Acting Agriculture Co-ordinator, SPC)

Closing prayer (Mrs Kiti Bulamainaivalu, Senior Dietitian, Ministry of Health, Fiji)

III. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Monday 11 May

1. The official opening ceremony was held at the South Pacific Commission (SPC) Centre, Nabua. Guests and participants were greeted by the Secretariat and Ms Brenda Sio, Chairperson of the Regional Nutrition Sub-committee. The meeting started with a welcome from Mrs Mona Chand, Chief Dietitian and Nutritionist, Ministry of Health. She wished the participants a regional association 'fruitful to your country'. Dr Laisa Naivalulevu, Assistant Director of Family Health, Ministry of Health, Fiji, said the opening prayer.
2. Dr Sitaleki A. Finau, SPC Health Co-ordinator, read a message of greetings and support from SPC Management. The message noted with appreciation that the development of an association of nutrition workers in the Pacific was timely. It was not isolated, but a logical link to other regional initiatives in nutrition, such as the South Pacific Community Nutrition Training Project, the development of a directory of nutrition workers in the Pacific, the First SPC Regional Workshop of Nutritionists, Dietitians and Nutrition Educators in the Pacific, the SPC video project, etc.
3. The special guest, Mrs Gul Akbar, Suva City Councillor, opened the meeting. In her opening address, Mrs Akbar, a home economics teacher, stated that 'proper nutrition and food at the proper time make a lot of difference to children's school performance'. Strengthening the nutrition profession in the Pacific was therefore timely and appropriate. She stated that 'school canteens are profit-oriented and make available foods that will give more returns, rather than health'. Other areas of concern that she identified included widespread use of junk food, poor quality boarding school meals, importance of breakfasts, and nutrition training. She noted that a regional professional nutrition association would provide direction and strengthen food and nutrition activities in the Pacific. She cautioned the participants to learn from the now defunct Fiji Home Economics and Nutrition Association. She concluded by appealing to the proposed association to work towards the promotion of health, for 'a healthy community is a lot better than a sickly rich one'.
4. After Mrs Akbar had declared the meeting open, participants introduced themselves. This was followed by a break for tea. The meeting resumed with Mr Enoch Posanai, Assistant Secretary of Community Health, Papua New Guinea (PNG) as the chairman for the day.
5. Mrs Mele'ofa Malolo, SPC Nutrition Education and Training Officer, reviewed the meeting objectives. She noted that the Sub-Committee was formed in April 1991 as a task force for the establishment of the association. The task force was then fortunate to receive financial support from the New Zealand Government and the Freedom From Hunger Campaign (United Kingdom Committee) to bring together representatives from the sub-regions to meet and discuss the formal establishment of the association. The objectives of the Regional Nutrition Sub-Committee Meeting were:
 - (a) To provide an update on current status of nutrition training activities in the region and to prioritise training needs and professional development of nutritionists in the region;
 - (b) To review and discuss existing national nutrition and health-related networks/associations in the Pacific;
 - (c) To plan, develop and formulate constitutional guidelines to assist with the formal establishment of a regional association of nutritionists, dietitians and nutrition education workers; and
 - (d) To develop plans, objectives and activities for such an association for the next two years.
6. A review of nutrition workers in the Pacific was presented by Mrs Malolo. A mail survey questionnaire had been distributed to 19 countries; 30 nutritionists responded. From these responses it was noted that: 99.9 per cent were women; the average age of nutritionists was about 35 years; 58 per cent of the respondents were expatriates working in the region; 48 per cent of Pacific Islanders who responded had university degrees, and 100 per cent of the latter obtains their basic training in regional institutions. The responses showed the expatriates to be the only ones stating that they specialised in

consultancies, research, nutrition education, food concepts in the Pacific, women's health issues, food and nutrition administration, surveillance and monitoring, and food production. Most of the Pacific Islanders had dietetics and community nutrition as their areas of specialisation.

7. The review indicated that the following were important areas for training: research, curriculum development, dietetics and public/community health. An examination of the participants in the South Pacific Community Nutrition Training Project and Household Food Security showed that about 90 per cent of the people involved were non-nutritionists. They included teachers, nurses, economists, agriculturalists, community workers and anthropologists. This indicated the wide involvement of other professions in regional nutrition activity. It was also noted that nutritionists in the Pacific had performed a broad range of activities and this should be reflected in the components of their training programmes.

8. Mrs Malolo appealed to the participants to enhance the quality of this review through assisting with the completion of the survey questionnaire. It was suggested that participants complete the form and be responsible for distribution to appropriate colleagues in their countries. The SPC would follow this up with contacts within other countries not represented in the Sub-committee.

9. Ms Brenda Sio, Development Officer – Community Nutrition, University of the South Pacific (USP) presented a proposed community nutrition training programme. This was part of Phase Two of the South Pacific Community Nutrition Training Project (SPCNTP). It consisted of a three-semester programme leading to a Certificate of Proficiency in Community Nutrition (CNC) from USP. This programme would be based on the 13 SPCNTP nutrition books that had been developed by regional nutritionists and nutrition educators. The programme would be taught through the USP Extension Services as a continuing education project, using in-country tutors. It would be a bridging course to prepare nutrition workers for the diploma and degree courses available in the region.

10. The participants raised concerns regarding the countries outside the USP region, cost of the programmes to students, details of how to register and the maintenance of standards. Ms Sio explained that USP would depend on SPC for activities in the non-USP countries. Standards would be maintained through the use of satellite conferences, training of tutors, and having the assignments and tests set and marked by the USP Extension Services. It was expected that community workers (e.g. in health and agriculture) and teachers would enrol in this programme. Selected students from the SPC Community Education Training Centre, Narere, Fiji might also enrol in the programme, giving it wider regional utilisation.

11. Ms Jimaima Tunidau, Senior Lecturer, School of Pure and Applied Science, presented the USP degree programme in home economics. She said that students could major in nutrition for either a B.A. or a B.Sc degree. These took three years of study. The disadvantage with the USP programme was that nutrition had been labelled as 'home economics' courses; this affected student enrolments. Ms Tunidau told the meeting that a diploma in nutrition was being considered, but it would be some time before a final decision was made. She also pointed out that the University of Technology, Lae, PNG, was considering a nutrition programme. She suggested that Lae should focus on food technology and that PNG use the USP course for community nutrition. The delegate from PNG, Mr Enoch Posanai, responded that he would look into this when he returned to his country.

12. Mrs Heather Wright and Ms Mona Chand presented the Fiji School of Medicine (FSM) dietetics and nutrition training programme. The entry criteria would be the Form 6 level for a three year period of study for a Diploma in Dietetics and Public Health Nutrition or a Form 7 entry for two years to complete the programme. A Form 6 level course for a certificate programme would be designed to lead into the Diploma. It was also noted that, while FSM had consulted the region with a view to meeting other countries' needs, the priority for this programme was the needs of Fiji. It was expected that a new FSM curriculum would be developed in 1993 and used in 1994.

13. Participants were concerned that the FSM nutrition programme had the same criteria for entry as USP. The FSM programme would provide a diploma after two years, and USP a bachelor's degree after three years. This difference might affect enrolment from other countries. The FSM programme should focus on dietetics while USP emphasised community nutrition. Ms Chand pointed out that the current Fiji nutrition programme was recognised in Australia for post-graduate training of dietitians because of its high content in basic sciences. There were discussions on whether the science content was essential and appropriate for nutrition, since the FSM medical education programme did not

emphasise basic science *per se*, but only those components relevant to solving local problems in the Pacific way. However, it was noted that FSM medical education students were required to have good passes in Form 7 science subjects. It was obvious that there was very limited understanding of the proposed problem-based method for nutrition training in relation to the basic science content of the curriculum. The group felt that all nutrition training programmes should be closely linked, to provide a logical progression of nutrition knowledge and skills through different institutions involved in training of nutrition workers in the Pacific.

14. Mr Enoch Posanai presented the nutrition training programme in PNG. In 1976 – 1981, the College of Allied Health Science in PNG had a Diploma of Nutrition programme. This took 12 months to complete, with the entry criterion being Form 4 level and relevant work experience. This programme stopped in 1981; consideration was being given to re-starting it. In the meantime, PNG had sent students to the Philippines, Australia and the Netherlands for post-graduate training. As in most Pacific countries, the need was for graduate nutritionists in policy, planning, management, community assessment, public relations, and communication. Again the discussions that followed echoed the need to link up regional training institutions, focus on national needs, provide graduate and postgraduate qualifications, and standardise nutrition training. Some participants felt that perhaps undergraduate training should focus on community nutrition and a post-graduate programme on dietetics.

15. Dr Malcolm Hazelman, Acting Agriculture Co-ordinator, SPC, presented a paper on 'Bringing nutrition to agriculturalists: comments and possibilities'. He began by reviewing activities and recommendations from past meetings. By showing current resources available in the region, he indicated that much was already known on how to integrate nutrition into agriculture at both formal and informal levels. He noted that there had been much talk but little action. He appealed to nutritionists to see how much agriculture context was included in the training programmes for nutritionists.

16. Dr Hazelman suggested that there seemed to be agreement on what was to be taught but it was not clear whether the institutions involved in training were actually using the information available. He emphasised the need for integration and the fact that guidelines for integrating nutrition into agriculture had been developed and documented, for example in the publication *Curriculum guidelines for integrating nutrition into agriculture training* (edited by J. Eusebio). He noted that nutrition was a component of the Fiji College of Agriculture programme. By 1993, a greater portion (a total of 15 hours) would probably be integrated into the curriculum of the diploma programme. In summary, Dr Hazelman indicated that materials on integrating nutrition into agriculture were readily available and further action was required to strengthen this process. He felt that efforts should focus more on national-level activities, to include 'sensitisation' of training institutions to make greater use of available materials and local resources; support to the Household Food Security Project; and Government commitments for food-first policies.

17. Dr Sitaleki Finau, SPC Health Co-ordinator, gave a paper on 'nutrition training of other health professionals'. He felt that food- and nutrition-related activities within the Pacific fell into two broad categories: economic or productive, and welfare or health-related activities, and that there was considerable tension between the two functions. The proposed association should consider these conflicts and note the important assistance that other health professionals could provide to the nutritionists and dietitians (who were often in a minority) in strengthening their programme activities. A good example was the range of people involved in the South Pacific Community Nutrition Training Project (SPCNTP). Dr Finau also emphasised the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to nutrition activities and networking, where cross-fertilization of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours was essential. He suggested that the existing curricula for training other health professionals be reviewed for their nutrition content; other health professionals be included in the new association; and the new association support a multi-disciplinary journal to include food and nutrition together with other allied health disciplines.

18. Discussions focused on the need to upgrade levels of nutrition training in the Pacific, especially those of trainers in nutrition. A review of the nutrition curriculum used in training other health professionals was seen as an area that the proposed association could take up once it was formed. It was also pointed out that the SPCNTP had gone a long way towards integrating agriculture into nutrition at community level and that a similar approach might be needed for tertiary training.

19. Mrs Votausi Mackenzie-Reur, Nutritionist, Vanuatu, and Ms Karen Ash, Dietitian, Cook Islands, summarised their views on the day's sessions and how these related to their own situations. They suggested that national institutions should pool resources to enhance nutrition and dietetic training and that these institutions should continue to work together to avoid duplication. FSM should focus on specialised training in dietetics, as USP and SPC already offered courses in community nutrition at different levels.

Tuesday 12 May

20. Ms Jimaima Tunidau was elected chairperson for the day. Ms Raijieli Tuiqilaqila, immediate past President of the Dietetic Association of Fiji, presented the experience of the Association. It started in the 1970s as the Fiji Home Economics and Nutrition Association. However, only the sub-branch of nutritionists and dietitians was active; eventually this became the Fiji Dietitians and Nutritionists Association, then the Dietitians Association of Fiji, and there were now plans to include the nutritionists again. The Constitution was reviewed in the 1980s and was being prepared for registration with the Fiji Trade Unions. Over the years the Association had acted as advocate for members (e.g. for scholarships, career structure and the creation of senior dietitian posts in public health nutrition). Currently the association had 34 full and 13 associate members, with the personal subscriptions being \$5 and \$2.50 respectively. Members had been requested to fund-raise individually to help finance the association. Many executives used their personal funds to pay for routine activities of the association. The main problem had been the election of executives and maintaining the enthusiasm of the members.

21. Ms Salamo Fulivai, Director of the Pacific Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) presented her experience with this organisation. The Association started in April 1991 and was registered in Fiji. The members were the national YWCAs from American Samoa, Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Western Samoa. This association grew out of the World YWCA when it left the Pacific in 1990. The main problems had been funding and confusion of regional versus national roles. Ms Fulivai advised the participants that the new association needed to be very clear on its purpose early in its formation. If it was going to be a programme office, a secretariat would be necessary. This might not be the case if the association acted as an information clearing house. Other problems discussed included the membership of Pacific Rim countries and donor agencies, and the differing interpretation of conceptual issues by member countries, e.g. militarism. This difference had been problematic during development of regional programmes.

22. Ms Nirmala Nand, Treasurer of the infant Fiji Association of Allied Health Workers, presented her experience. This association consisted of seven groups of health professionals, including health inspectors, pharmacists, dental therapists, dietitians, X-ray technicians, physiotherapists and laboratory technicians. This association aimed to act as advocate for its members.

23. Ms Diane Goodwillie of the Canada Fund raised several fundamental questions about the formulation of the association. Was it worth the trouble? Who was going to sustain it? Would the aims be professional, networking, advocacy, etc.? She described experiences with archivists, auditors and pre-school associations in the Pacific. She stressed the importance of patron institutions fostering these associations. She advised that funding agencies might not be keen to support administrative costs. During the discussion, Ms Fulivai added that the new association must be very focussed: her experience with the diverse objectives of the Pacific Island Association of Non-Government Organizations (PIANGO) indicated that this diversity might threaten the future of the association.

24. Ms Fulivai then discussed the problems she had experienced in starting regional organisations. These included core funding, communication, maintenance of accountability and expensive infrastructure. The location of the secretariat office needed to take into account the administrative needs and logistics of rotation through member countries. A regional organisation based on volunteerism needed very committed and resourceful people, especially in the first few years. The task of keeping in touch with scattered executives and clients was very daunting and time-consuming. However, she added, it was worth the effort needed to ensure the use of local resources for appropriate development. She encouraged the new association to take a 'leap of faith'.

25. The participants discussed the presentations. The consensus was to continue to plan for a new association. The chairperson, Ms Tunidau, then asked the participants to address two questions individually and to prepare for group discussions. The questions were:

- Why do nutritionists need a regional association (Purpose)?
- What do we want the association to do for members?
(what do members want from the association?)

26. The afternoon session started by addressing the above questions. A brain-storming session generated a list of the reasons for creation of a regional association. These were in the areas of professional development, food and nutrition advocacy, networking, provision of advisory and information services, and standardisation of training, qualifications and activities. There was considerable discussion on who should be members and the criteria for membership. After the brain-storming session, the participants divided into four groups to formulate specific criteria and comments on the issues raised.

Wednesday 13 May

Group work

27. The four groups met separately to continue the discussions. Before lunch, each group presented at a plenary session its comments and reviews on the draft objectives for the association. These were based on the points raised during the brain-storming session and the draft constitution prepared by the SPC Secretariat prior to the meeting. The following were the major components of the association's objectives:

(a) Promotion and encouragement of professional development through:

- (i) Lobbying for training scholarships with national, government, regional and international funding agencies;
- (ii) Providing consultants and resource personnel from its members for national and international seminars and projects;
- (iii) Encouraging the formation of national nutrition boards;
- (iv) Encouraging the standardisation of programmes and the utilisation of local and regional education and training institutions;

(b) Advisory Services:

- (i) Development of curricula for food, nutrition and dietetic training;
- (ii) Food legislation;
- (ii) Formulation of food and nutrition policies;
- (iv) Screening of prospective nutrition workers from outside the region;

(c) Food and nutrition promotion;

(d) Affiliation and collaboration;

(e) Registration and fund-raising.

28. In the afternoon, regional participants visited the Fiji Diabetes Centre and the Fiji National Food and Nutrition Committee office.

Thursday 14 May

29. Mrs Raijieli Tuiqilaqila, Lecturer, Fiji School of Medicine provided her group's review of the existing training programmes in nutrition and dietetics and major areas of work for graduates of these. She also outlined the links needed to strengthen and improve opportunities for nutrition training. The links were:

- (a) Suitable candidates from the SPC Community Education and Training Centre programme would do the Community Nutrition Certificate programme and proposed PNG Nutrition Course;
- (b) Suitable CNC graduates would progress to a Diploma in Food and Nutrition offered through USP and a Diploma of Public Nutrition and Dietetics from FSM;
- (c) Diploma holders from FSM, PNG and USP would progress to a degree programme;
- (d) Degree graduates from USP and other academic institutions would progress to Master's and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) levels.

30. The need to upgrade qualifications of nutrition workers was also emphasised, especially thought specialised post-graduate programmes for Pacific graduates and other health professionals and also upgrading qualifications of FSM graduates (who still hold the old certificate-level qualification) to a diploma through consideration of their work experiences.

31. Ms Karen Ash, dietitian from the Cook Islands, outlined her group's summary of suggested plans for the next technical meeting. She indicated that important issues pertaining to the proposed theme, venue, dates, etc. should be considered after the draft constitutional guidelines had been completed.

32. Tentative objectives suggested were:

- (a) Formally endorse the outcome of the current Regional Sub-committee Meeting and elect executive members;
- (b) Implement objectives of the new association;
- (c) Discuss relevant papers of interest pertaining to the theme of the meeting. Suggested topics included:
 - Nutrition and AIDS,
 - Research epidemiology,
 - Non-communicable diseases,
 - Project proposal preparation,
 - Programme planning,
 - Topical issues - nutrition updates.

33. Ms Mona Chand outlined her group's activities, which concerned the develop of a strategic plan of action for the association based on its objectives. She highlighted the following as the major issues on which the association should focus:

- (a) Developing nutritional guidelines for the region;
- (b) Encouraging establishment of national- and provincial-level food and nutrition committees;
- (c) Production of a bi-monthly newsletter;
- (d) Scheduling regular satellite meetings (with approval from USP);
- (e) Holding biennial seminars/workshops (beginning June 1994);
- (f) Sponsorship of one student for training;
- (g) Compilation and maintenance of register/directory of nutrition workers;

- (h) Establishment of a directory of available training courses;
- (i) In addition to subscriptions, fund-raising in each country;
- (j) Establishment of register of NGOs and other agencies;
- (k) Establishment of editorial sub-committee to assist SPC or individual countries;
- (l) Establishment of guidelines for uniformity of nutritional information, e.g. three food groups (not four), breast-feeding and supplementary feeding.

34. Dr Dominique Lefèvre, Nutrition Advisor, World Health Organization (WHO), highlighted strategies and principles set out in the joint WHO/UNICEF statement on breast-feeding and maternity services. He outlined issues related to the practicalities of the international code of marketing of breast milk substitutes. He also discussed the WHO/UNICEF Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative aimed at strengthening breast-feeding promotion in the region. Following a request for information from Dr Lefèvre and a representative of UNICEF, Barbara Lochman, each participant gave a brief summary of the current situation in his/her country. In most countries breast-feeding is universal. However, the problem lies with duration of breast-feeding, which decreases after three months. Dr Lefèvre indicated that WHO intended to review practices/policies at country level and then follow up with appropriate programmes.

35. During the final session for the day, plans for the immediate future of the new association were discussed. The participants unanimously agreed to start immediately with the election of a foundation executive. The participants eligible for full membership paid their registration fee of 20 Fijian dollars and scheduled a meeting to elect executive members the following day. All the participants were excited by the prospect. This excitement extended into the social evening hosted by the Secretariat.

Friday 15 May

36. Ms Brenda Sio was the chairperson for the day. The first half of the constitution of the new association was reviewed. Participants then went on to discuss the draft report and recommendations of the meeting. After prolonged discussions these were endorsed. It was also decided that the new association's first meeting, to elect its executive members, should be convened after the official closing of the Regional Sub-committee Meeting.

37. Dr Malcolm Hazelman, Acting Co-ordinator of the SPC Food and Materials Programme, was invited to close the meeting. In his closing remarks, Dr Hazelman stated that each association incorporates a profession, professionals and professionalism. The constitution of the new association had taken these into account but needed to lay more emphasis on the concerns of its clients. Other aspects of importance included: avoiding an exclusive association, ensuring appropriate remuneration and recognition for members, encouraging proper articulation of different food and nutrition programmes, and maintaining dialogue among members. He indicated that successful and sustainable associations in the region had the following characteristics:

- A clear purpose, known and understood by all members,
- Dedicated and honest leaders,
- Relevant activities that met the interest of the members,
- A strong identity and feeling for the association,
- Constantly kept in touch with members,
- Strong financial base and good control over the use of funds,
- Results shown through strong participation by the members.

38. Dr Hazelman congratulated the Sub-Committee on achieving the objectives of the meeting. He thanked the New Zealand Government, the participants and the SPC Secretariat for the work done. He then declared the meeting closed. Mrs Kiti Bulamainaivalu, Senior Dietitian, Colonial War Memorial Hospital, Suva, gave a closing prayer.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sub-Committee meeting, recognising the social, economic and political constraints on the formation of a regional professional association, made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

A regional association for nutrition workers in the Pacific Islands should be formed immediately. The meeting also recommended that SPC and other regional organisations continue and strengthen their support to the new association.

Recommendation 2

The nutrition and dietetics training programmes in the Pacific should be closely linked to each other, to provide continuity, credibility and standardised qualifications throughout the region and to minimise duplication.

Recommendation 3

The training institutions should seek and incorporate the advice of the new association in order to provide appropriate training for all countries of the Pacific region.

Recommendation 4

SPC and other regional organisations should support training programmes and institutions whose primary aims are to meet the needs of the Pacific region.

Recommendation 5

SPC should complete the directory of nutrition workers in the Pacific, in collaboration with the new association.

Recommendation 6

SPC and other regional organisations should support Phase Two of the South Pacific Community Nutrition Training Project, especially in the non-USP countries, and USP should develop a mechanism to allow and enhance the participation in this programme of all Pacific Island countries.

Recommendation 7

The new association, in collaboration with SPC, WHO, and other regional organisations should encourage the incorporation of appropriate food and nutrition aspects into training programmes of health and other professionals and vice versa.

Recommendation 8

The new association should inform the governments of the region of its existence and request their support to enable its members to strengthen and implement the objectives of the association.

Recommendation 9

SPC should circulate the draft report of this meeting and the constitution to relevant people for comments.

Recommendation 10

The Regional Nutrition Sub-Committee should be dissolved once the founding executives of the new association have been elected.

DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF THE PACIFIC ISLAND NUTRITION AND DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

SECTION 1:0 GENERAL

Subsection 1:1 Name

The Association shall be known as the 'Pacific Island Nutrition and Dietetic Association' (PINDA).

Subsection 1:2 Address

The temporary mailing address of the Association shall be that of the Secretary: Continuing Education, Extension Services, University of the South Pacific, P.O. Box 1168, Suva, Fiji (Phone: (679) 313-900; Fax: (679) 300 482; Telex: FJ 2276).

Subsection 1:3 Financial Year

The Financial Year of the Association shall be from July 1 to June 30 each year.

SECTION 2:0 MISSION STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Subsection 2:1 Mission Statement

PINDA is a non-government, non-profit-making regional organisation committed to support and promote the professional needs of its members and maintain a high standard of nutrition services in the region in order to improve the well-being of Pacific Islanders and residents.

Subsection 2:2 Objectives

The objectives of the Association are:

- 2:2 (i) To promote better nutrition in the Pacific through:
 - (a) Liaising with other professional groups for the incorporation of nutrition and agriculture into their curricula and vice versa;
 - (b) The development and use of relevant and appropriate nutrition and resource materials in collaboration with other national and regional agencies;
 - (c) The use of innovative mass media approaches;
 - (d) The development and implementation of community-level nutrition training and education;
- 2:2 (ii) To act as an advisory body to Pacific Island governments on all matters relating to food and nutrition:
 - (a) For the development of curricula for food, nutrition and dietetic training;
 - (b) Food legislation;
 - (c) Formulation of food and nutrition policies; and
 - (d) provision of information on training institutions and qualification of food and nutrition workers.
- 2:2 (iii) To promote and encourage professional development and training of members;

- 2:2 (iv)** To provide technical and moral support for food and nutrition workers through networking and sharing information and ideas;
- 2:2 (v)** To promote the profession in the region through:
- (a) Lobbying for training scholarships with national governments and regional and international funding agencies;
 - (b) Providing consultants and resource personnel from its members for national and international seminars and projects;
 - (c) Encouraging the formation of criteria and mechanisms for the registration of food and nutrition workers;
 - (d) Encouraging the standardisation of training programmes and the utilisation of local and regional education and training institutions;
 - (e) Keeping and updating a register/directory of nutrition workers in the region, in collaboration with the South Pacific Commission and other regional agencies;
- 2:2 (vi)** To affiliate and collaborate with relevant professional groups in the Pacific and around the world;
- 2:2 (vii)** To raise funds and acquire equipment and other resources through subscriptions, donations, etc. and to utilise it to achieve the objectives of the Association.

SECTION 3:0 MEMBERSHIP

Subsection 3:1 Eligibility

A person who has obtained a relevant professional qualification from a recognised training institution and/or with appropriate working experience is eligible to become a member.

Subsection 3:2 Categories of Membership

3:2 (i) Full Membership

Any person in the Pacific region with qualification from a recognised tertiary institution may be accepted to be a full member of the association.

3:2 (ii) Associate Membership

Associate membership shall be open to:

- (a) People with food- and nutrition-related qualifications whose applications shall be approved by the Executive Committee;
- (b) Any person who occupies a professional position in work or research relating to food, nutrition and dietetics;
- (c) Students studying to be dietitians, nutritionists or food technologists who satisfy the requirement for registration.

3:2 (iii) Affiliate Membership

Affiliate membership shall be open to other associations with similar or related objectives and interests.

3:2 (iv) Honorary/Life Membership

Honorary or Life membership may be conferred by the Association on any member who has contributed to food and nutrition development and advancement of the profession in the Pacific.

3:2 (v) Corporate Membership

Corporate membership shall be open to business organisations, commercial agencies and groups whose interest are allied to the philosophy of the association.

Subsection 3:3 Acceptance of Membership

- 3:3 (i)** A person may become a member upon making a written application to the Association's Secretary.

The Secretary shall notify the applicant of the Executive Committee's decision.

- 3:3 (ii)** When accepted, the member shall thereafter pay a registration fee and subscription as determined by the Association.

Subsection 3:4 Privileges and Responsibility of Financial Members

A financial member is one who has paid his/her registration fee and all due subscriptions.

- 3:4 (i)** All financial members of the Association have the right and responsibility to attend any regional meetings of the Association.
- 3:4 (ii)** All financial members have the right to receive information produced and/or circulated by the Association.
- 3:4 (iii)** All members have the responsibility to conduct themselves in accordance with professional standards accepted by the Association.
- 3:4 (iv)** Only full members have the right to vote and be elected to the Executive.

Subsection 3:5 Cessation of Membership

The Executive shall have the power to remove from membership the name of:

- 3:5 (i)** Any member whose annual subscription is in arrears by 12 months.
- 3:5 (ii)** Any member whose professional conduct has not been in accordance with the professional standards of the Association;
- 3:5 (iii)** Any member who voluntarily leaves the Association or resigns.

A person can re-apply for membership and may be re-instated upon paying all arrears and, as a penalty, one year's advance subscription.

Subsection 3:6 Subscription

- 3:6 (i)** A minimum registration fee of F\$20.00 shall be levied on all members.
- 3:6 (ii)** The annual subscription shall be a minimum sum of F\$10.00 for all members. The subscription may be adjusted with the approval of members by a simple majority at any regional meeting.
- 3:6 (iii)** New members joining at any time of the financial year shall pay the full subscription for that year.

Subsection 3:7 Patrons

- 3:7 (i)** Two prominent persons of two Pacific Island countries shall be invited to be Patrons of the Association on a revolving basis for a period of three years (one term).
- 3:7 (ii)** Their nomination will take place at Regional Meetings, with letter of offer prepared by the Executive Committee and sent by the Chairman of the Executive Committee.
- 3:7 (iii)** Acceptance of offer should be acknowledged by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Association. All members to be notified accordingly.

SECTION 4:0 MEETINGS

Subsection 4:1 General Meetings

- 4:1 (i)** Regional Meetings of the association shall be held every three years and when funds are available.
- 4:1 (ii)** All financial members should be notified of Regional Meetings by the Secretary at least six months prior to the meeting.

A call for nominations for office-bearers shall also be made at this time.

- 4:1 (iii)** The quorum for Regional Meetings shall be 50 per cent of the full financial members.
- 4:1 (iv)** Agenda and business of meeting:

The business of the Regional Meeting shall be:

- (a) To receive the minutes of the previous Regional Meeting;
 - (b) To receive the President's report;
 - (c) To receive the Audited Financial Report for the last term;
 - (d) To elect officer-bearers of the Association;
 - (e) To consider any other business;
 - (f) Where a change in constitution is proposed, it shall be specifically stated in the Agenda.
- 4:1 (v)** The Agenda for Regional Meetings shall be prepared by the Executive Committee.
 - 4:1 (vi)** Voting
 - (a) All full members who have paid current subscriptions are entitled to one vote;
 - (b) Full members who are eligible to vote but are absent during the election shall make prior arrangements with the Secretary for written proxy or postal voting;
 - (c) Written proxy votes and postal votes received by the Secretary prior to the regional meeting will be accepted as valid;
 - (d) Voting shall be by secret ballot;
 - (e) Associate, affiliate, honorary/life and corporate members shall not have voting rights nor be entitled to hold office.

SECTION 5:0 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Subsection 5:1 Membership

5:1 (i) The Executive Committee shall consist of:

- (a) The President,
- (b) The Vice-President,
- (c) The Secretary,
- (d) The Treasurer,
- (e) 3 Executive members,

and shall represent the three sub-regions in the following composition: 3 from Melanesia, 2 from Polynesia and 2 from Micronesia.

5:1 (ii) These officers shall be responsible for giving effect to the decisions of the regional meetings and of the Executive Committee on all occasions.

5:1 (iii) The Executive Committee shall from time to time appoint/nominate members of the Association to form working sub-committees to assist it in its duties.

5:1 (iv) The Executive Committee shall appoint an Auditor for the Association.

Subsection 5:2 Location

Fiji will be the interim location for the Executive until the first regional meeting of the Association.

Subsection 5:3 Nomination and Election of Officers

Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected at the regional meeting according to the following procedure:

5:3 (i) Nominations for positions on the Executive Committee shall be in writing signed by two members, with a written acknowledgement by the nominee that he/she is willing to accept nomination.

5:3 (ii) Nomination forms are to be received by the Secretary one month prior to the session set down for election of Officers. Late or informal nominations shall be rejected.

5:3 (iii) The Secretary shall make a list of nominations according to sub-regional areas.

5:3 (iv) These lists shall be made available to each sub-region to use in the election of their members to the Executive Committee. The membership shall be as follows:

3 Melanesia,
2 Polynesia,
2 Micronesia.

5:3 (v) Each sub-region is responsible for arranging a suitable time to elect its members of the Executive Committee prior to the election of new officers.

5:3 (vi) At the beginning of the Regional Meeting the President shall call for the names of members of the Executive Committee from the three sub-regions.

5:3 (vii) All voting for the Executive Committee shall be by secret ballot, except where only one candidate is nominated for any position, in which case the nominee shall be declared elected unopposed.

- 5:3 (viii)** Names of candidates for any office or committee shall be listed in alphabetical order.
- 5:3 (ix)** Where a secret ballot is taken, the candidate polling the highest number of votes of those present at the time and entitled to vote shall be declared elected.
- 5:3 (x)** Two returning officers shall be appointed by the meeting to conduct the necessary ballots.
- 5:3 (xi)** All officers declared elected shall assume office after the final business session of the Regional Meeting. The handing over of responsibilities should occur within one month of the date of election.
- 5:3 (xii)** Any full member who has paid his/her subscriptions to date is eligible to stand for any elected position and to propose and to second nominations for such positions.
- 5:3 (xiii)** Any officer is eligible to stand for re-election provided he/she has not already served for two consecutive terms.
- 5:3 (xiv)** The post of President shall be rotated amongst the three sub-regions, with the position being held for one term only.

Subsection 5:4 Duties and responsibilities

5:4 (i) President

The President shall preside at all meetings, but shall have the power to nominate a Chairman for any particular session of the Regional Meeting. In the absence of the President the Vice-President shall preside.

- (a) The President shall request the Secretary to call all meetings, including all extraordinary meetings.
- (b) The President shall regulate proceedings of the meeting and countersign all minutes of the meeting.
- (c) The President shall have a casting vote only.
- (d) The President shall be required to prepare an annual report of the activities and finances of the Association, to be distributed to all members of the Association.

5:4 (ii) Vice-President

- (a) The Vice President shall preside at meetings in the absence of the President and shall exercise all duties and responsibilities of the President.
- (b) In the absence of the Secretary, the Vice-President shall take the minutes of Executive or Regional Meetings.

5:4 (iii) Secretary

- (a) The Secretary shall carry out and perform such duties and function as are conferred or imposed on him/her by this Constitution or which may be conferred on him/her from time to time by the Regional Meeting or the Executive Committee.
- (b) The Secretary shall:
 - (i) Attend all meetings of the Association and keep accurate minutes of its proceedings;
 - (ii) Conduct all correspondence of the Association and keep the other members of the Executive informed;

- (iii) Keep an up-to-date register and directory of all members in liaison with the Treasurer;
- (iv) Send notices, relevant information, correspondence and the agenda of Regional Meetings to all members;
- (v) Produce and hand over all documents and other property belonging to the Association at the end of his/her term of office.

5:4 (iv) Treasurer

- (a) The Treasurer shall be responsible for collection and accounting of all funds of the Association and shall issue official receipts for all payments made to the Association and shall bank the monies within fourteen days of receipts.
- (b) The Treasurer shall prepare the accounts to be submitted to the Regional Meeting, but shall first submit such accounts to the Association's Auditor for verification.
- (c) The prepared accounts shall be approved by the Executive Committee prior to being submitted to the Auditor.
- (d) The Treasurer shall liaise with the Secretary for the maintenance of an up-to-date register of all financial members and subscriptions paid.
- (e) The Treasurer shall be required to submit an annual financial report to the Executive Committee.
- (f) The Treasurer shall be required to produce and hand over all documents and records to the Association at the end of his/her term of office.

Subsection 5:5 Term of Office

Members of the Executive may serve for no more than two (2) consecutive terms. A term is equivalent to three years.

Subsection 5:6 Vacancies

If vacancies occur on the Executive Committee between Regional Meetings, the Executive Committee shall have the right to co-opt members to fill those vacancies until the next Regional Meeting.

Subsection 5:7 Removal of Members of the Executive Committee

- 5:7 (i)** A member of the Executive Committee found to have acted contrary to the principles and objectives of the Association may be removed from the Committee by simple majority decision of the remaining Executive Committee members.
- 5:7 (ii)** Notice of removal shall be communicated to the person in writing by the President of the Executive Committee.

Subsection 5:8 Resignation of members of the Executive Committee

Any officer may resign from the Executive Committee by giving the Secretary at least three months notice in writing of his/her intention to do so and paying all contributions and levies owing by him/her to the Association up to the date of expiration of such notice.

SECTION 6:0 FINANCE

Subsection 6:1 Sources of Funds

Funds for the Association shall be from the following sources:

- (a) Registration fees,
- (b) Subscription,
- (c) Donations,
- (d) Other sources as the Association sees appropriate.

Subsection 6:2 Association Account

- 6:2 (i) The Association shall maintain a bank account at a bank approved by the Executive Committee.
- 6:2 (ii) The account shall be operated by three signatories. At least two signatures shall be required for withdrawal of funds from the Association's account.

Subsection 6:3 Management of Account

- 6:3 (i) The Executive Committee shall have the power to allocate, utilise and manage the funds of the Association as it sees appropriate.
- 6:3 (ii) The Executive Committee shall have the power to use at its discretion an amount not exceeding \$200.00 (Fijian) at any one time for general expenses of the Association without requiring prior approval from the Association.
- 6:3 (iii) The Executive Committee shall be responsible to the Association for the proper use of funds.
- 6:3 (iv) The Executive Committee shall be responsible for keeping proper records of all financial transactions.
- 6:4 (v) The funds of the Association shall be used solely for the achievement of its objectives.

SECTION 7:0 CONSTITUTION

Subsection 7:1 Acceptance

- 7:1 (i) The first Regional Meeting shall vote on acceptance or rejection of the draft Constitution.
- 7:2 (ii) After its adoption, only the Regional Meeting shall have the authority to rescind, alter or add to any part of the Constitution, with the decision being made by not less than two thirds of financial (full) members.
- 7:2 (iii) A copy of the Constitution shall be distributed to all financial members.

SECTION 8:0 WINDING UP OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 8:1 (i) In the event of the Association failing to achieve a quorum at two consecutive Regional Meetings, the Executive Committee at that time shall have the power to dissolve the Association.
- 8:1 (ii) All members registered with the Association must be notified regarding intent to dissolve the Association.
- 8:1 (iii) Notice of intent must be circulated for a minimum of three months prior to the dissolution becoming effective.
- 8:1 (iv) In the event of dissolution, the Association's asset, after all liabilities have been met, shall be given to any regional organisation with similar objectives. The Executive Committee shall make the final decision on the matter.

VI. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Cook Islands	<p>Ms Karen Ash Dietitian Ministry of Health P.O. Box 109 RAROTONGA</p>
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SPC SECRETARIAT

Dr Sitaleki Finau
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Instructor in Food and Nutrition

Mrs Mele'ofa Malolo
Nutrition Education and Training Officer

Ms Kasa K. Kuriyawa
Clerk Typist

VII. PAPERS DISTRIBUTED AT MEETING

A. Information Papers (IP)

IP.1 General information

IP.2 Background paper (Purpose of meeting)

IP.3 Programme

IP.4 Provisional list of participants

IP.5 Directory of nutrition resources personnel in the Pacific (draft)
(SPC Secretariat)

IP.6 Summary report of the Fiji School of Medicine Nutrition Curriculum
Workshop - 1991

IP.7 Draft constitutional guidelines (SPC Secretariat)

B. Working Papers (WP)

WP.1 Nutrition workers in the Pacific - A review (SPC Secretariat)

WP.2 Nutrition training of other health professionals (SPC Secretariat)

WP.3 Bringing nutrition to agriculturalists: comments and possibilities (SPC Secretariat)

WP.4 Review of nutrition training and workforce in Papua New Guinea (Enoch
Posanai, PNG)

C. Reference documents on nutrition and dietetic associations distributed for background information:

- * Association of State & Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors: Constitution (United States)
- * Nutrition Society of New Zealand Newsletter
- * News and Views - New Zealand Dietetic Association
- * Memorandum and Articles of Association - Dietetic Association of Australia
- * Draft Constitution of Dietetic and Nutrition Association of Fiji

*Note: Copies of the above papers can be obtained from:
Nutrition Education and Training Officer
South Pacific Commission
B.P. D5
NOUMEA-CEDEX, New Caledonia.*

