

# Final Report

## Six-Month Attachment as Junior Professional Officer

April 30 – October 31, 2009

FAO SUBREGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE  
PACIFIC ISLANDS

Apia, Samoa

Maria Tuoro

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank Dr Vili A Fuavao, FAO Subregional Representative for the Pacific (SRR) for the support provided to me during the tenure of this attachment with the organization. A special thank you to all of the technical officers who are very diverse in nature but very effective in their complexities. The various FAO Consultants I worked with especially Dr Steve Rogers and all the FAO staff for making this a great working atmosphere.

I am very happy to be returning to the Cook Islands with a better understanding of FAO, its role and function internationally, within the region as well its responsibility to its member countries. I am certain to use the skills acquired to benefit my country in its effort to strive for sustainable development.

## **Introduction**

As part of the attachment, the Junior Professional officer was to be a part of the FAO technical team to observe and develop new skills while in the FAO Subregional Office for the Pacific Islands (SAP) office by playing an active role within the SAP Multidisciplinary team (MDT), providing support to SRR for the implementation of SAP work program where possible and supporting the implementation of key tasks during the attachment.

I became a member of the MDT and attended its meetings, deliberating on key issues of contention at the time. It was a very busy atmosphere and I spent a whole month trying to read up on literature one needed to be knowledgeable about in order to participate actively as part of the FAO team.

## **Highlights**

Key highlights of this attachment were:

1. Meeting the Director General for FAO – HE Jacques Diouf at the Eighth Meeting of the FAO South West Pacific Ministers for Agriculture in May 2009 in Niue
2. Having unlimited support and guidance from the SRR to be able to access information to concerns and providing incentives or opportunities to be involved
3. Contributing to the Policy Paper for the Niue Ministerial meeting as well as to the organization for the meeting
4. Being a part of a very diverse MDT in SAP
5. Understanding the importance of linking the NMTPF, Ministers Communique' to FAO programme and implementation

6. Meeting key people from FAO Headquarters in Rome who will be instrumental in supporting programme implementation at country level
7. Seeing how FAO interacts with other key development partners in the region and internationally
8. Seeing the importance of FAO Consultants in supporting the implementation of FAO programmes
9. Seeing FAO assistance in action during the UN response exercise to the Samoa Tsunami of September 29, 2009 with assessments of the Agricultural Sector and the partnership with local Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
10. Participating in the TCP Training Workshop conducted by FAO officers from Headquarters in Rome.

### **Technical Officers**

Being a part of the MDT technical team of FAO was a good experience for me as a lot of work involves using team work to solve many issues. The MDT is still a robust team framework and needs to be strengthened by all involved. I think that the group approach provides support and also other ideas to improve or support better decision making processes done by each technical office (TO). I found that my time spent with each TO gave me an opportunity to observe the complexities of their job, the activities each conducted and the different approaches they took in making a decision and/or solving a problem.

### **Consultants**

It was a good eye opener to be exposed to many different consultants who brought their own capacities to support FAO programmes and I especially would like to thank Steve for transferring skills and knowledge during the tenure of this attachment. I learnt so much more on asking questions to get the information required especially for the Agriculture for Growth Study and hope that by adopting this approach I can be able to explore multiple opportunities for growth in the Cook Islands.

### **FAO Framework**

Key programmes within the FAO framework has helped shape FAO assistance to member countries. These were the documents I worked with in order to understand how FAO operated within countries. It was useful to spend as much time as possible trying to understand each document and relay it back to a common purpose. It helped me realize that FAO's comparative advantage in terms of service delivery was to mobilize resources effectively and efficiently while using technical capacity available to do so.

### **Pacific Multi-Country National Medium Term Priority Framework (NMTPF)**

The NMTPF is an excellent source document for supporting key activities in each member country of the region. It is linked to national development priorities as well as regional mechanisms that guide FAO assistance.

### **Ministers Communiqué**

The Biennial Ministers Meeting is a key component to finalizing FAO assistance or priority areas for the next two years. It is key to the continuing support of FAO within the region to ensure that the Ministers are kept informed and understand the importance of their commitment to this process.

### **FAO (Programme of Work and Budget)**

Understanding that FAO was undergoing a reform process within the SAP office was a good exercise as I did a literature review exercise to better understand the changes that will ensure efficiency in programme delivery as well as create an effective office that serves its members while developing capacity at the same time. I missed the initial inception of this report done by FAO Consultant Carine Rouah, but thought that this was a very robust document to facilitate the reform process. It will be useful to me in the long run also when considering similar options for in country processes especially with FAO taking on the Results Based management approach as well.

### **Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods in the Pacific Island Countries – Development Partners Mapping Study**

This is an excellent document to use as a reference whether one is a country, a regional stakeholder or donor. It provides information on key programmes supported by various agencies within the region. I spent a lot of time reviewing the literature to understand the process undertaken for this study and found it very useful to be able to develop a similar approach upon returning to the Cook Islands. I did some basic work on this to better understand it and will hand it over to FAO Consultant Alise Stunnenberg to update the study with new work where possible by Agencies in the region.

### **Agriculture for Growth Study - Samoa**

I worked closely with FAO Consultants Steve Rogers and Laisene Mariner to gathering information on this study for Samoa. The study focused on Nonu (*Morinda Citrifolia*) and its success and how this could provide lessons learned and adapting some of the key aspects of what Samoa did to make this commodity successful. I thoroughly enjoyed the field visits and talking to various stakeholders involved in the industry. This is a good initiative by FAO to better understand success stories and share the experiences with others to improve their respective processes as well. This concept of using case studies is not a new initiative however this was endorsed by the Ministers and will be used by FAO to support key programmes in country.

## **Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods Programme (FSSLP)**

I for one am looking forward to the launch of the FSSLP within the SAP Office at the end of the year. I am eager to return to the Cook Islands to see how I can help support this process either from a National Planning perspective and/or from the Ministry of Agriculture view also. As it is the Cook Islands I feel need to step up and look at their Priorities under this programme. I feel that I would spend the next month focusing on this programme and how to localize the process with key programmes running in country to ensure that the local portion for support to the FSSLP is robust and achieves favorable outcomes for the country.

### **Activities/Tasks**

During this tenure, I got an opportunity to provide support to technical officers and represented the FAO Office in activities/meetings :

#### Field Visits

- Visits of Agricultural farms observing the ISFP (Initiative on Soaring Food Prices) in action here in Samoa.
- Visiting organic farmers with workshop participants throughout the tenure – namely Mr. Richard Cook (founding Organic farmer in the Region)
- Visit to Tsunami struck area to observe FAO assistance in terms of assessment of food security issue

#### Meetings/Workshops

- Attended several national meetings on behalf of FAO to observe and provide input where deemed necessary
- Supported several small workshops held with key development partners such as the University of the South Pacific, in-house with the National Correspondents, Organic fair trade workshop and the internal TCP training held for Technical officers and management (Administration and Operation) staff of FAO.
- Supported Technical officers at key functions such as World Food Day as well as the Samoa Small farmers Association strategy development workshop held in August.

## **TIMELINE OF KEY ACTIVITIES AND TASKS**

### May

- Joined Subregional Representative (SRR) and Technical Officers (TO's) on mission to Niue for the Eighth Meeting of FAO South West Pacific Ministers For Agriculture
- Supported the organization/logistics of the meeting as part of the FAO team

- Supported the note taking process for the meeting
- Wrote initial draft report for the meeting
- Joined MDT team for first meeting – Chaired by Policy Officer

#### June

- Complete draft report for Eighth Ministers Meeting – sent to Diderik DeVleeschauwer for editing
- Supported MDT meetings during the period
- Literature Review – NMTPF, FAO Workplan (PWB)

#### July

- Started on Agriculture for growth study project with local consultant and FAO consultant
- Research on Agriculture for growth study - Samoa
- Local Consultations for Agriculture for growth study with local farmers and processors
- Field trip to Savaii during this time to conduct more consultations and meet with processor
- Literature Review – Samoa Sustainable Development Strategy, Samoa ADB report

#### August

- Started on Mapping Study (update) work
- Research on Mapping Study
- Draft of Agriculture for growth study report – first draft
- Involved in meeting support for Ninth Roundtable Meeting on World Trade Organisation with FAO Consultant and FAO staff

#### September

- Joined SRR and TO's with FAO Consultant on mission to Wellington, New Zealand for Ninth Roundtable Meeting on World Trade Organisation
- Provided support to FAO Consultant during the meeting
- Supported Fisheries Technical officer in Fisheries Session
- Provided support to FAO Consultant for Round Table Meeting report

#### October

- Providing feedback to FAO Consultant on Nonu Study (Agriculture Growth Study) report
- Handing over documents and information to FAO consultant on Mapping Study
- Complete Final Report to FAO Administration and SRR

