

**Managing the Blue Economy: Future of port and shipping in the Asia Pacific**  
**PECC International Project 2015-2016**  
**Seminar in Auckland, 5-6 December 2016**

Tena koutou katoa and bonjour

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council for giving me the honour of speaking to you today, at the third PECC seminar dedicated to the **'blue economy' and the future of ports in the Asia-Pacific region.**

This seminar is held here in Auckland at an important time, on the back of COP 22 which took place less than a month ago in Marrakech, and confirmed that the Paris spirit of COP21 is well alive

I would like to take this opportunity to address the conference and highlight four points with a strong focus on the sustainability of port and shipping :

- France's attachment to the protection of the oceans,
- France's great interest in PECC's activities for almost 20 years
- The strategic importance of developing the 'blue economy'
- The necessary innovation cycle our ports are undertaking

**1. Let me first say a few words on France's attachment to the protection of the seas.**

It might sound obvious, but ports are our gateways to the sea. Like many countries represented here today, France has a long maritime history. With 11 million square kilometres of marine domain, France has one of the world's largest domain, a significant part of which in the Pacific with New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia. Like all countries with a marine domain, France is taking a strong stand on the protection and enhancement of this special asset.

**The sea is a source of riches** whose extent we are still discovering. It is **also a fragile asset we must preserve.** Therefore, it is important that oceans are used responsibly and sustainably, so as to maintain their biodiversity and capacity to help regulate our planet's climate.

France is deeply attached to the protection of the marine environment, and is willing to collaborate in this field with governments worldwide. In this regard, I would like to mention the commitments for the oceans presented by our Minister for the Environment, Energy and the Sea, Ségolène Royal at COP21, and recalled at COP 22 in Marrakesh last month. France has committed itself in particular to:

- Extend the natural reserves in the French Southern and Antarctic territories<sup>1</sup>, and protect the marine area in Clipperton Island in the Northern Pacific ;
- Take part in an international coalition to reduce marine pollution ;
- Protect sea mammals in the Mediterranean and in the French Indies ;
- Launch an action plan with Australia to protect coral reefs, and
- Reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions in maritime transport.

**The oceans are also an important source of renewable energy.** France, which benefits from a strong potential for marine renewable energy both in Europe and overseas, is working to develop technologies needed to harness marine energy. In this field, 10 technological tests models were selected at the end of 2015, and the commercial phase is being engaged for advanced technologies like offshore floating wind mills and marine tidal turbines.

Environmental issues are not the only matters linked to the sea. **France is active in a variety of strategic areas:** these include **maritime safety and security, port logistics, fishing and aquaculture, exploration and exploitation of deep seabeds, nautical recreation and vessels modernization.** France is paying close attention to these issues, worldwide and in particular in the Pacific.

## **2. That brings me to my second point: France has taken a strong interest in PECC's activities.**

In 2017, France will celebrate 20 years of association with PECC. With a strong Pacific footprint thanks to New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia, France has a keen interest in PECC activities. We appreciate the character of the regional cooperation initiatives carried out through PECC. These initiatives are multi-actor and multi-discipline, with stakeholders including Pacific States, businesses and private groups, representatives of civil society and academia.

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<sup>1</sup> TAAF , ie Kerguelén, Crozet, Amsterdam, Saint-Paul Islands.

France is an active contributor to PECC. Take, for example, this series of seminars on the “blue economy” which brings us together today. France initiated it.

Assuming the success of these seminars, a new series will be organised next year with a very strong environmental focus. One of the themes proposed is the circular economy, a subject of growing interest for many countries, and also of the G7 with working groups meeting in Tokyo next week.

**3. I'd like to focus now on my third point, in relation to today's event: the strategic importance of developing the 'blue economy'.**

Let me share with you the following thoughts.

- **The protection of environment and the economy are not mutually exclusive** – quite the opposite. Increased productivity and growth can be combined with respect for the environment and energy efficiency. Let us just think about “sustainable cities” for example. But, this is also true of port and of maritime infrastructure and industry. We can draw benefits from the maritime sector while preserving the environment.

**Therefore, the blue economy can be a driver of development. It can generate income, revenue, and employment for our coasts, for other sectors and entire countries themselves.**

I haven't the time today to cover equally essential subjects like vessels of the future and greening our fleets, so I will concentrate on ports.

- **The sea is a critical infrastructure for globalization.** Trade globalization would not be possible without the sea and maritime transport. According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development, over 80 per cent of the 10 billion tons of merchandise transported worldwide last year went by ship. Macroeconomic data show that world merchandise trade has expanded at a slower pace than world GDP. World trade in goods expanded by 1.4% in 2015, down from 2.3% in 2014, while world GDP growth expanded by 2.5% in 2015, the same rate as in 2014. The recent weakening of the trade-GDP ratio could result from cyclical factors. Alternatively structural factors may be at play, such as the decline of vertical specialization. According to UNCTAD, in 2016, world GDP trade is expected to slow to 2.3%, and merchandise trade expected to remain even or pick up at the same rate of about 1.4%.

**We believe developing ports and infrastructure is critical for developing trade, improving connectivity and encouraging economic growth.**

Economies in the Asia-Pacific region depend for a large part on maritime trade. This geographical area, where the main world ports are located, concentrates 2/3 of the world cargo handling. Asia Pacific testifies of the intensity of globalization. Let's take the example of New Zealand which welcomes us today: more than 80% of its exports by value every year are transported in container ships. This achievement of course would not have been possible without active policies to shape international trade patterns. Asia Pacific has benefited from the global trade liberalization in WTO as well as from the number of FTAs negotiated bilaterally and regionally. If the prospect of implementing the TPP -which would represent 40% of world GDP - has drifted away, my understanding is that there is a renewed interest in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership which concerns 3 billion people and accounts for about 27% of global trade.

- **Maritime trade is only possible with effective, reliable and cost-effective port infrastructure and shipping services.** Making ports appealing is critical and several measures were taken by the French government. It might be of interest for the Asia-Pacific region to know that currently France is enhancing the appeal of its overseas ports for the cruise ship industry. The French policy for ports, which is in phase with European Union policy, is actively implementing innovative policies like "one-stop shop", to facilitate customs procedures to ships calling into port.
- Blue economy creates new opportunities for growth for France in the Pacific and at the same time fostering New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna regional integration. The welcoming of New Caledonia and French Polynesia as full members of the Pacific Islands Forum is excellent news in this respect.

Today's seminar is an opportunity to reinforce cooperation in Asia Pacific build on exchanges held in Papeete in October 2015 and in Busan in April 2016. Such seminars helped advancing discussions on port connectivity improvement in the Asia-Pacific region, economic growth as well as environmental and security questions. They rely on fruitful collaboration with actors involved in major international maritime projects, and showcasing best practices.

#### 4. **This brings me to my final point – how our French ports are involved in a cycle of innovation.**

French ports are committed to an ambitious and innovative transformation project. They aim to become “sustainable, future focused ports, integrating logistical and industrial activities of tomorrow”.

Let me mention the port of Bordeaux, situated on Europe’s biggest estuary. This port is carrying out a **Positive Energy and Economy Port** project. The project brings together local bodies, businesses, industrial environment experts, green energy experts, and the European Union. It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants, by rolling out a range of energy innovations which are fully integrated into port activities.

Innovation isn’t just technology. It also involves innovative economic models, like public/private partnerships.

Another example is the Ports of Paris, also committed to an **eco-port initiative**. Their project aims to promote waterways as an eco-friendly mode of transport, while integrating environmental constraints. The goal is to be an environmental role model, acting to protect biodiversity, manage water and waste and move the port towards green energy.

These innovative solutions, supported by the Government show that, **along with energy transition actors, ports are key actors for developing the innovation and technology needed in the future**. Ports are a major actor in tomorrow’s smart and sustainable cities. The initiatives taken at the local level by ports are contributing to **local energy transition strategies**, just like efforts to improve energy efficiency of buildings or development of low-carbon land transport.

Bordeaux and Paris are modest illustrations of what is going on in France. I know the initiatives and innovations in the Asia-Pacific region are also numerous and of high quality. The three days seminar here in Auckland will be an opportunity to share these experiences.

I wish you a fruitful conference, with the objective of developing a “blue economy”, equally shared through all the territories of the Asia Pacific region.

Thank you.

Florence Jeanblanc-Risler, Ambassador of France