



SUBJECT: 2019 Pacific Environmental Security Forum

1. Purpose: To provide stakeholders with the concept, background, description and objectives for the 2019 Pacific Environmental Security Forum (PESF).

2. Background: Environmental security can be broadly defined as countering vulnerabilities caused by the abundance or scarcity of environmental resources and/or degradation. Increasingly, environmental factors—extreme and frequent weather and climate events, water resources, food security and environmental disasters—can affect national and regional security by exacerbating hunger, poverty, instability and conflict. Environmental factors often have cross-border impacts. Sharing lessons-learned and encouraging militaries and governments to plan, operate, and execute in an environmentally sustainable manner that supports regional cooperation will improve security for all.

The PESF is the cornerstone of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command’s (USINDOPACOM) Environmental Security Program, which seeks to 1) increase understanding of environmental stewardship obligations among militaries in the Indo-Pacific region; and 2) lead a multilateral civil-military organization focused on mitigating environmental security threats, advancing collaborative partnerships, sharing information and resources, and developing strategy that advances the Indo-Pacific region.

The PESF is currently undergoing a transformation from an event-centric initiative to a non-binding multilateral initiative known as the *Pacific Environmental Security Organization* (PESO). The PESO is designed to be a sustainable structure for cooperative environmental security. PESO transformation will take time, and its path will be shaped by PESF activities.

The PESF will remain an annual event, PESO’s keystone activity, where civilian and military representatives can gather to discuss and share environmental security best practices and lessons-learned. The PESF will also continue as a platform to service a community of action focused on prioritizing regional environmental security projects that couple unique civil and military capability and expertise, deliver tangible and efficient results, and advance security in the region.

Environmental security projects and cooperation are platforms for building relationships and opening doors for dialogue on other subjects. Ultimately, USINDOPACOM is dedicated to promoting environmental security awareness and sustainable environmental operations, and will continue to partner with civilian and military agencies in order to achieve environmental security objectives.

3. Description:

a) WHO:

- The 2019 event will involve 30+ countries in the Asia-Pacific region dedicated to advancing environmental security.
- New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade will host the event, supported by USINDOPACOM.

b) WHAT:

- The 2019 PESF will be the ninth annual Indo-Pacific environmental security Forum.
- The primary theme for the event will be *Building Resiliency in the Pacific*.
- The sub-themes include climate security challenges in the Pacific, environmental security and resource sustainability, multilateral approaches to environmental security, and environmental security transformation.

c) WHEN:

- 21-24 May 2019

d) WHERE:

- Wellington, New Zealand

4. Objectives: The 2019 PESF objectives are:

- To increase awareness of environmental security issues, best practices and lessons-learned in the Pacific region;
- To maintain a network of civil-military environmental security practitioners;
- To educate and advance partner capacity;
- To contribute to Pacific regional environmental security strategy; and
- To mitigate environmental security threats and vulnerabilities.

5. Points of Contact:

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