



*The Pacific environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.*

## Twenty Third SPREP Meeting of Officials

4-7 September 2012  
Noumea

# REPORT

### Introduction

1. The 23rd Annual SPREP Meeting was held at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community Conference Centre in Noumea, New Caledonia from 4 to 7 September, 2012.
2. Representatives of the following SPREP countries and territories attended: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States of America and Wallis and Futuna. Observers from a range of regional, international and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also attended. A list of participants is attached as Annex I.
3. The opening ceremony was conducted on the evening of 3 September. Mr Anthony Lecren, Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development of New Caledonia attended and welcomed representatives.

### Agenda Item 2: Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

4. In accordance with the “Rules of Procedure of the SPREP Meeting” (Rules 8.1 and 8.2), the Meeting:
  - *confirmed* the Representative of **New Caledonia** as **Chair**; and
  - *confirmed* the Representative of **Wallis and Futuna** as **Vice-Chair**.
5. The Director-General thanked the outgoing Chair, Republic of Marshall Islands, for their leadership in the past year and welcomed the incoming Chair, represented by Mrs Caroline Machoro.



### **Agenda Item 3: Adoption of Agenda and Working Procedures**

6. Nauru requested that Agenda item 9.3.1 also include an update on general activities in waste management in addition to Clean Pacific campaign updates.
7. The Secretariat requested that agenda item 6.4 be moved immediately after the adoption of this agenda item, so as to enable the UK to participate in the discussions following its anticipated acceptance as a Member of SPREP.
8. The Meeting:
  - **considered** and **adopted** the revised Agenda as contained in Annex II;
  - **agreed** on hours of work; and
  - **appointed** an open-ended Report Drafting Committee comprising a core group of Australia, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Kiribati, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, United States of America and Wallis and Futuna. The Vice-Chair of the 23SM (Wallis and Futuna) would chair the Report Drafting Committee.

### **Agenda Item 6.4: Request by the United Kingdom for SPREP Membership**

9. The Secretariat advised Members of the request by the United Kingdom for SPREP Membership and noted that no Member had submitted a written objection to this request, which was made in accordance with Article 10, paragraph 5 of the SPREP Agreement. The six-month period for objections lapsed on 27 August 2012.
10. Samoa, as the Depository of the SPREP Agreement, advised that nine SPREP Members had announced their formal support in respect of the application for Membership by the United Kingdom: Australia, Cook Islands, France, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Tuvalu and United States of America.
11. American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Niue, Tuvalu and Wallis and Futuna conveyed their support for the application and welcomed the United Kingdom back to the SPREP membership.
12. American Samoa queried the financial support that the United Kingdom would bring to the region. The Director-General of SPREP advised that the United Kingdom would contribute the same membership fees as other metropolitan members and would also have the opportunity to support activities in the region at their discretion.



13. The Chair consequently invited the United Kingdom to join the meeting. The representative expressed appreciation of the support from Members and indicated United Kingdom's willingness to become an active SPREP member in the region. He advised that the Instrument of Accession was currently being signed and that would complete the formal application process.

14. The Meeting:

- *Considered* the request from the United Kingdom for SPREP Membership; and
- *Invited* and warmly welcomed the United Kingdom to join the 2012 SPREP Meeting.

**Agenda Item 4: Action taken on decisions made by the 22<sup>nd</sup> SPREP Meeting**

15. The Director-General tabled a report on actions taken on the decisions of the 22nd SPREP Meeting, and on action taken on suggestions made by individual Members during the Meeting. These are detailed in 23SM/Officials/WP.4.

16. Tuvalu congratulated the Secretariat on the work it had carried out in the past year and for maintaining the Members' trust in its work. The representative noted that despite all this work, Tuvalu still faced challenges with staff turnover and capacity and sought SPREP's support in areas of capacity building and in implementing the recently approved Climate Policy and National Strategy and Action Plan.

17. Fiji congratulated the Secretariat on the actions undertaken and requested an update on the Green Climate Fund and on the work programme on Loss and Damage. The Secretariat advised on progress in both areas noting that this would be discussed in detail under Item 9.2.4. The Secretariat also advised that a paper was being prepared by the UNFCCC Secretariat and that inputs were being sought on this (to be discussed during a side event at the Meeting).

18. Samoa also confirmed the advice provided by the Secretariat and stressed that active participation of the Parties in the Green Climate Fund was important.

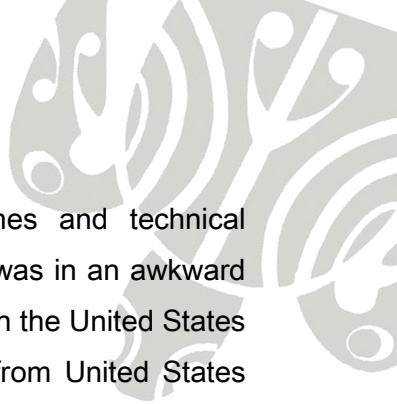
19. The Meeting:

- *Noted* the Report.

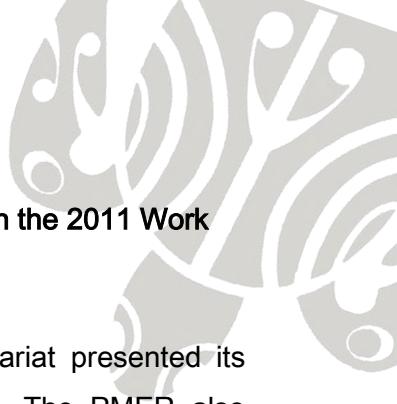


## Agenda Item 5.1: Presentation of Annual Report for 2011 and Director General's Overview of Progress since the Twenty-Second SPREP Meeting

20. The Director-General presented the Secretariat's Annual Report for 2011 and highlighted the change management process that the organisation had implemented over the last 3 years to make SPREP better able to respond to, and support, Pacific island members.
21. The Director-General thanked the Government of Samoa as the host country for their continuous support to SPREP. He also acknowledged support from donors and partners and further expressed appreciation to SPREP members for their wise guidance and partnership. He also thanked the Government of New Caledonia for hosting the 23<sup>rd</sup> SPREP meeting and SPC for the venue. *Details of the Annual Report are contained in 23SM/Officials/WP.5.1.*
22. American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa and Wallis and Futuna acknowledged the presentation by the Director-General on the annual report and the support by SPREP staff.
23. Niue highlighted Secretariat support in the area of technical back-stopping for the PACC project and assistance with Niue's GEF National Prioritisation Formulation Exercise (NPFE) application as well as recent work on invasive species. However, Niue considered that more work was needed to address asbestos disposal options. In this regard, the Secretariat advised that the regional asbestos strategy had been approved in the previous year. The region now needed to move to implementation, which would require support from metropolitan members. The Secretariat advised that this would be addressed in agenda items 9.3.1 to 9.3.3.
24. Cook Islands acknowledged Secretariat support in developing their National Sustainable Development Plan, noting that this reflects the country's main environmental issues.
25. In response to a query from French Polynesia on the "SPREP campus", the Secretariat advised that this was not a formal programme, but is the principle of co-locating with similar like minded organisations to provide a win-win situation. All these organisations are implementing activities in the region (e.g PACC SAP and J-PRISM).
26. Samoa recognised Secretariat achievements on fund raising and the growth in financial resources and looked forward to discussion in a subsequent agenda item on PMER monitoring and reporting on impacts of SPREP work. Samoa noted with appreciation the close relationship between Samoa as the host of SPREP and the Secretariat, and also acknowledged the joint activities and partnerships with America Samoa, assisted by SPREP.

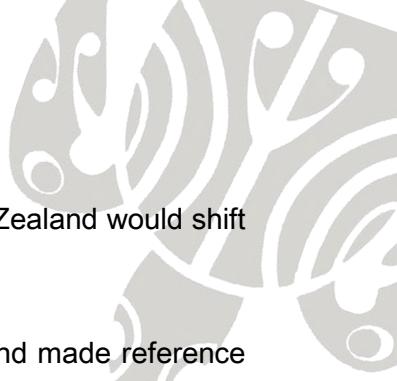


27. American Samoa encouraged Pacific Islands to utilise the programmes and technical assistance provided by SPREP. The representative noted that his country was in an awkward position because technical assistance is provided through its association with the United States of America. American Samoa expressed appreciation for the assistance from United States and acknowledged joint activities with Samoa. American Samoa also acknowledged the Director-General's visit to American Samoa and extended an invitation to the Director-General to attend the first green building dedication in October. This building could serve as a model for the Pacific on the use of green technology.
28. Wallis and Futuna noted the positive contribution of the Secretariat to the region and advised that it had paid its contributions on time. However, the representative observed that Wallis and Futuna was not mentioned in the activities in the report. He requested greater support from SPREP to Wallis and Futuna, particularly noting the contribution from France.
29. Kiribati noted its close technical and financial work with SPREP adding that much support was given by SPREP during the development of the Kiribati Integrated Environmental Policy. The representative was appreciative of the prompt response from SPREP and acknowledged the doubling of technical and financial support, noting that this was particularly helpful for under-resourced Pacific countries.
30. Fiji extended appreciation for the highly informative report by the Director-General noting that it had helped provide better understanding of the volume of work and responsibilities of the Secretariat. The delegate noted three main issues which include new initiatives, sub-regional presence and member contributions. The representative stressed that, given the need to implement new initiatives, it is important to report and address arrears.
31. The Secretariat thanked American Samoa and Wallis and Futuna for payment of their membership dues and acknowledged the lack of Secretariat support to Wallis and Futuna. This was partly caused by a lack of bilingual staff in SPREP, and the Secretariat was looking to address this. The Director-General also advised that the Secretariat's ability to respond to member requests was dependent on the organisation's resources.
32. The Meeting:
  - **Noted** the report.



## Agenda Item 5.2: Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER) on the 2011 Work Programme and Budget

33. In accordance with the SPREP Meeting Rules of Procedure, the Secretariat presented its Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER) report for 2011. The PMER also provides a tool for the Executive and Management to identify important emerging issues and challenges and to make adjustments in areas of its work where improvement may be needed in the course of the year. The Secretariat noted that the 2011 PMER was presented on the basis of the previous structure, which has been replaced by the new organisational structure approved by the 22<sup>nd</sup> SPREP Meeting in 2011. Reporting to future SPREP Meetings will follow the format of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2011-2015.
34. The Secretariat further highlighted its view on the usefulness of the PMER, particularly as a transparency and accountability tool on the work of the Secretariat. The Secretariat expressed hope that, with donor support and availability of funding in the future, this internal assessment would be supplemented with independent evaluations of aspects of the organisation's work on a rolling basis.
35. United States acknowledged the new website but noted that it, along with several other countries, United States was not shown on the site as being SPREP members. The Secretariat apologised for this oversight and advised this would be rectified immediately.
36. In response to a request from United States, Niue and Samoa for clarification on the gap between core and programmatic funding, the Secretariat advised that core funding came from member contributions and programme funding from donors and other partners. This would be discussed under subsequent agenda items, in which a request would be made for a small increase in member contributions. The proposal for increase in membership fees would allow SPREP to be more fiscally responsible.
37. Samoa congratulated the Secretariat on its efforts to report on its activities and also expressed its gratitude to donors and partners who have contributed funding to SPREP. The representative sought clarification on the legal assistance requested from the Secretariat relating to various legislations including on Samoa's Waste Management Act.
38. New Zealand joined others in congratulating the Secretariat on the report and, noting that as this was the last year of reporting under the current strategic plan, New Zealand looked forward to the new reporting structure with an emphasis on actual results, focussing on what had actually been achieved through the various regional and national interventions. The



representative further advised that his government had confirmed that New Zealand would shift to multi-year financing with a 3 year funding cycle to commence in 2013.

39. Fiji echoed earlier comments congratulating the Secretariat on the report and made reference to the Pacific Environment Forum discussion, on the State of the Environment Reporting which had focussed on using scorecards to measure the success of activities and their outcomes. The representative expressed hope that next year's reporting would have something similar.
40. Australia congratulated SPREP on its report and, noted the absence of this detailed member country reporting by other CROP agencies.
41. The Meeting:
  - *noted* the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the 2011 Work Programme and Budget.

#### **Agenda Item 5.3: Audited Annual Accounts for 2011**

42. In accordance with the Financial Regulations, the Secretariat presented its Audited Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 2011 noting that these were prepared in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The auditors had provided a clean and unqualified opinion of the Secretariat's financial operations for 2011.
43. Niue commended SPREP for the report, observing that this was an indication of a strong commitment from the Director-General and of the effectiveness of the financial management of SPREP. The representative further observed that while there was a significant increase in programme funding, personnel numbers in the finance area had not changed. He suggested that either the team members were working smarter or were overloaded. Niue recommended that consideration be given to a reward scheme for staff concerned or that additional staff be employed. The representative further acknowledged, with appreciation, the work of the Finance Adviser and her team's work.
44. Cook Islands echoed Niue's comments and commended the finance team on the report.
45. New Caledonia noted, with appreciation, the inclusion of the table in the report outlining what SPREP invests in each Member. The representative added that this provided a clear vision and understanding on what SPREP does in member countries and territories.



46. Samoa also congratulated SPREP, particularly the finance team, on the well-prepared report. The representative recalled the finance reports provided to the two Conventions (Waigani and Noumea) and observed that the Convention finances are handled together with overall Secretariat finances. Samoa observed that where it appeared that some countries (such as Samoa) had overpaid their 2010 annual membership contribution, it was likely to be due to the Party contributions to the two Conventions. He suggested that these contributions be clarified in the future and shown separately from the annual contribution to SPREP. The Secretariat agreed to address this.

47. The Director-General advised that, as reflected in the auditor's comments, the change management process had placed emphasis on improvement of financial management. He also agreed that staffing was a continuing challenge but that the Secretariat had recently taken the significant step in appointment of an Internal Auditor who works closely with the Finance Advisor.

48. The Meeting:

- *adopted* the audited Financial Statements and Auditors' Report for 2011.

**Agenda Item 6.1: Strengthening Regional Linkages**

49. The Secretariat presented the Consultant report outlining the costs and benefits of establishing a sub-regional presence for strengthening regional linkages and Members' access to SPREP services.

50. Several options were examined and are detailed in 23SM/Officials/WP.6.1: (1) co-location with other regional agencies in Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu or Solomon Islands; (2) establish a single agency or country office in six countries; (3) establish SPREP Small Island States (SIS) Desk Officers; (4) maintain *status quo*; (5) establish project-based regional or sub-regional presence; (6) periodic sub-regional fora especially for the North Pacific Members; (7) develop country-specific SPREP strategies; and (8) placement of SPREP technical officers in Federated States of Micronesia or Marshall Islands until the end of the current Strategic Plan period. The first four options were based on the recommendations of the earlier Gowty report.

51. The Secretariat highlighted that the purpose of the report was to present the options and provide the best information to enable decision making, however, the Secretariat had adopted a neutral position with respect to a preferred option.



52. Marshall Islands, supported by Nauru, expressed interest in hosting a sub-regional office in Majuro, noting that this was supported by the Presidents of Palau and Federated States of Micronesia at the 2012 Micronesian Chief Executives Summit. Marshall Islands had submitted a letter to this effect and sought further guidance from the SPREP Meeting regarding making a decision on this offer.
53. United States indicated that although they were sympathetic to the idea of a sub-regional presence and recognised its value, core budget resources were fixed and if the decision was adopted it would require other SPREP activities to be cut to pay for any new associated costs.
54. New Zealand expressed concern regarding the potential budget implications, especially in light of the other agenda items relating to increase in Members' contributions. The representative sought further information on how the option of an SIS model would function.
55. American Samoa observed that many countries had not yet paid their obligatory contributions and objected to the idea of a sub-regional presence, due to potential duplication. Nonetheless if the issue of a sub-regional presence were to progress, American Samoa proposed a doubling or tripling of the contributions of the countries benefiting from this. The representative recommended the need to investigate the budgetary implications further.
56. France, citing the clear picture given by the budget associated with the various options, qualified that while previous SPREP Meetings had endorsed the strengthening of regional delivery, the idea of a sub-regional presence had always been subject to further discussion and agreement. The representative also cautioned that a decision should be made based on current available funding without further increasing Members' contributions.
57. Tonga questioned the efficiency and effectiveness of establishing a staffed sub-regional office, stressing that the mandate and TOR of such an office would need to be clearly articulated to avoid duplication. The representative cited previous experience with another CROP agency undergoing a similar exercise that has led to overlap and confusion of roles.
58. Fiji supported the concept of working together and indicated that the member states of the Melanesian Spearhead Group looked forward to the outcomes of this discussion as an input to the Melanesian Environment Ministers' Meeting later in 2012.



59. New Caledonia supported the principle of regional strengthening, but cautioned that the economic situation had changed since 2009, when the independent institutional assessment citing the need for sub-regional strengthening was first carried out. In the present economic climate, the creation of a sub-regional entity seemed impossible and the representative urged Members to quickly reach a consensus on the issue to avoid further delays.
60. Samoa supported the idea of strengthening regional presence, and suggested that there was a need to further examine the financing options for the proposed options. The representative added that compartmentalisation of SPREP into sub-regional units could compromise effectiveness in the long-term. The Director-General suggested that an appropriate course of action would be to first agree on an option and then develop a fundraising strategy.
61. French Polynesia agreed on the principle of strengthening regional links but questioned whether it was really necessary given the number of staff of SPREP. French Polynesia disagreed with establishment of sub-regional offices because of the budgetary implications.
62. Federated States of Micronesia urged Members to consider the benefits over the cost, before killing the idea of a sub-regional presence and suggested that some of the potential benefits might not be easily foreseen at present.
63. In responding to some of the issues raised, the Secretariat clarified that the report made no specific recommendations but presented several options for consideration, with the costs presented in the context of a cost-benefit analysis, as per the TOR and direction given by Members at a previous SPREP Meeting. The Secretariat stressed that it had adopted a neutral position on this issue and was committed to strengthening support to members regardless of the decision taken with respect to a sub-regional presence. It emphasised that a decision for a country-hosted presence would have implications and obligations for the host country and advised that there were no provisions in the 2013 budget for a sub-regional presence.
64. As the discussions were at an impasse, the Chair directed the establishment of a working group consisting of Australia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Marshall Islands, Samoa and Tokelau and to discuss the options further and report back to the Plenary with concrete recommendations.
65. New Zealand, as Chair of the working group, reported on the outcome of the discussions, noting that there was a genuine consensus on the way forward.

66. The Meeting:

- *Noted* the report of the KVA Consultant;
- *Recommended* the placement of SPREP contracted technical desk officers in Federated States of Micronesia and Marshall Islands for a one year trial period, subject to funding being available within the existing SPREP budget;
- *Directed* the Secretariat to negotiate and finalise appropriate host-country agreements with the two Governments;
- *Agreed* to reconsider a sub-regional office for the North Pacific at SM 2014 based on resource availability and updated cost benefit analysis; and
- *Recommended* that the Secretariat explore partnership mechanisms with the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) secretariat to enhance coordination and delivery of services to South West Pacific members.

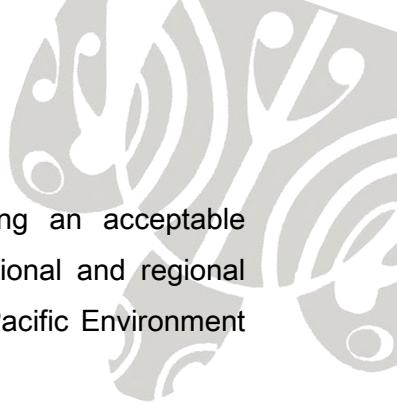
**Agenda Item 6.2: Establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for SPREP**

67. The Secretariat advised Members on the development of its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and presented a number of key documents for consideration of the Meeting. These were:

1. An overall performance management framework
2. Results measurement process for projects and activities
3. Monitoring and evaluation work plan format for project and activities
4. Revised format for PMER reporting commencing for 2013 reporting
5. Establishment of an internal Project Review and Monitoring Group.

68. The Secretariat noted that the framework aims to ensure that all levels of SPREP programme implementation are results based and outcome focused. It will also enable outcomes and effectiveness to be measured over short to long term time frames.

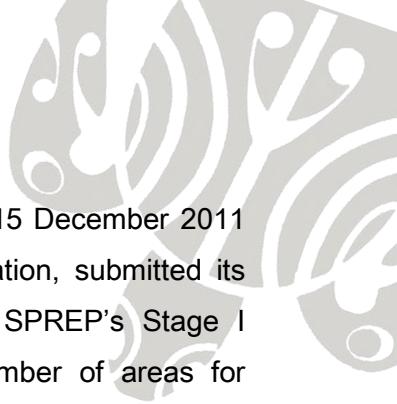
69. The framework takes into consideration the need to link institutional M&E requirements of the Secretariat with regional and national environmental monitoring to assess progress in achieving environmental outcomes for the region. This requires indicators at three levels – Secretariat institutional monitoring and reporting of activities; outputs and outcomes; national environmental performance and achievements; and regional level environmental monitoring, evaluation and reporting undertaken by the Secretariat in collaboration with Members and partners.



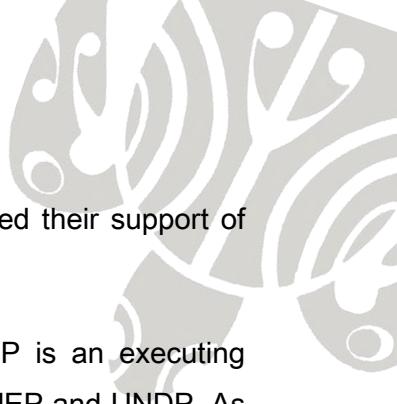
70. The Secretariat advised that it had commenced work on developing an acceptable methodology for ongoing monitoring of environmental outcomes at national and regional levels and that this was part of the issues discussed during the 2012 Pacific Environment Forum.
71. The Secretariat also acknowledged the assistance of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to develop a results-based M&E framework. It noted the collaborative work between SPREP and the Frankfurt School “Fit for Funds” Programme (outlined in 23SM/Officials/WP. 9.2.1), which would allow further development of the framework in view of the M&E standards and criteria required by multilateral funding agencies such as the GEF and Adaptation Fund. This refinement will assist SPREP in its applications to both agencies.
72. Further work in progress includes:
  1. Defining Standard Output Indicators for each strategic priority to enable data to be consistently aggregated across the organisation.
  2. Reaching agreement with Members on a process for monitoring long term impacts of SPREP support/interventions beyond the life of funded programmes, projects and activities.
  3. Reaching agreement with Members on national and regional environmental indicators to underpin objective assessments of medium and long outcomes of Strategic Plan implementation.
73. New Caledonia thanked the Secretariat and acknowledged the support of New Zealand in the work.
74. The Meeting:
  - ***endorsed*** the M&E framework presented.

#### **Agenda Item 6.3: SPREP’s Application to become a GEF Agency**

75. The Secretariat provided an update on progress made for SPREP to become a GEF Project Agency and noted the directive of the 22SM that the Secretariat apply for accreditation as a GEF Project Agency under the GEF Pilot Scheme. The overall goal of this exercise is to increase funding from GEF for Pacific Island member countries. Details of the process are outlined in 23SM/Officials/WP.6.3.



76. The Secretariat advised that it had submitted its Stage I application on 15 December 2011 and, subsequent to GEF Secretariat comments on the Stage I Application, submitted its Stage II Application on 21 May, 2012. The GEF Council assessed SPREP's Stage I Application on the basis of the report of the panel and noted a number of areas for improvement before SPREP's application could proceed. These areas included Environmental Safeguards, Fiduciary Requirements and Project Development, Monitoring and Evaluation.
77. The Secretariat advised that it was now working with the GEF Secretariat to obtain assistance in addressing the identified areas for improvement through a Medium Sized Project in time for the second round of agency accreditations (the date of which will be decided at the 43<sup>rd</sup> GEF Council Meeting in November 2012). The Project Identification Form for the Capacity Building Medium Sized Project was submitted to the GEF Chief Executive Officer on Friday 27th July 2012. The Secretariat emphasised that SPREP is the only agency receiving this type of assistance from GEF.
78. The Secretariat advised that it was also cooperating with the UNEP Collaborating Centre based at the Frankfurt School in the context of the SPREP application for Regional Implementing Entity status to the Adaptation Fund Board (see 23SM/Officials/WP.9.2.4 for more details) and this process had identified concrete steps to be taken in ensuring SPREP's compliance with the Adaptation Fund's project and fiduciary criteria as well as those of the GEF. The Secretariat will ensure that support provided under the medium sized project is closely linked and integrated with support provided by Frankfurt School.
79. The Secretariat further advised that an internal auditor had been recruited to assist with additional financial improvement. In response to a query from American Samoa, the Secretariat clarified that there had been agreement between SPREP and EU about the need to start with an internal auditor based within SPREP, given the limited size of SPREP. An external auditor could be adopted in the future if the organisation were to grow. The Secretariat advised that the internal audit and control framework was in line with accepted international standards.
80. The Secretariat also noted the establishment of the internal audit function within the organisation; the development of the internal audit charter; a committee charter; an Internal Control policy and plan to comply with GEF requirements; and an effective monitoring and evaluation process.



81. Members congratulated the Secretariat on this undertaking and expressed their support of this process.
82. In response to a query from Niue, the Secretariat clarified that SPREP is an executing agency while implementing agencies for GEF include the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP. As an executing agency, SPREP takes an overhead/management fee of around 6%, while the rest of the funds go to countries. The Secretariat stressed that the 6% fee applies only to operating costs and not to any funds that are ear-marked for countries. It also advised that UNDP applies a 10% fee on GEF projects.
83. Tonga recommended an additional evaluation layer, at the international level – in addition to the national, SPREP and regional evaluations. Tonga also suggested to use the SPREP Convention in order to have more binding legal instruments. Tonga asked what kind of support SPREP required in order for it to become a GEF implementing agency and whether there was a template available for countries to show their support.
84. United States asked whether SPREP would become a GEF implementing agency before the end of the GEF 6 funding round.
85. Nauru recommended that SPREP seek support of those members attending meetings where GEF representatives are also present. Member countries could also support this process through their representatives at the GEF Council. The representative advised that it would be very helpful to always stress the fact that the process is country-driven and is in the benefit of countries.
86. Responding to a question from New Zealand, the Secretariat advised that to the best of its knowledge, no other regional or sub-regional agency had yet obtained GEF accreditation.
87. Tuvalu expressed its support to this process but also expressed some concerns that this process may divert energies and resources of the Secretariat from its responsibilities of providing technical support to members.
88. Responding to a request from Marshall Islands, the Secretariat advised that the GEF accreditation was separate and independent from its application for accreditation with the Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund. However many requirements were similar to the GEF application, hence applying to both these accreditations made sense and actually would save resources and time.

89. The Meeting:

- ***Noted*** the progress made by the Secretariat and ***encouraged*** the work to be continued as quickly as possible;
- ***Encouraged*** Members of SPREP, who are also Members of the GEF, to strongly support the application of SPREP to become a GEF Project Agency; in accordance with the accreditation criteria established by the GEF council;
- ***Encouraged*** interested donors and partners to ***support*** the implementation of any new standards, regulations and operational structures through possible secondments or financing.
- ***Noted*** the establishment of an internal audit function within the Secretariat.

#### Agenda Item 7.1: Report on Members' Contributions

90. In accordance with Financial Regulation 14, the Secretariat submitted a report on the receipt of Member contributions in 2012 (up to 30th June) and provided an update on the status of contributions as at the end of 2011. A summary sheet was also provided as part of 23SM/Officials/WP.7.1.

91. A number of Members submitted comments clarifying their outstanding fees. Many also commented that payments had been made recently affecting the amounts shown in the attached summary. It was the consensus of the Meeting that the Secretariat make further effort to pursue outstanding fees.

92. Fiji noted the success in their country of awareness raising internally within their government when seeking support for funding for such purposes, and proposed that the Secretariat assist Members by raising awareness for this purpose.

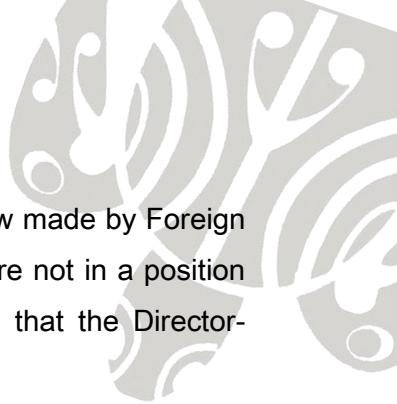
93. The Secretariat noted that payment of outstanding fees was a collective responsibility of the Secretariat and Members, and urged delegates to pursue the matter of outstanding fees with their respective governments on their return from the meeting.

94. The Meeting:

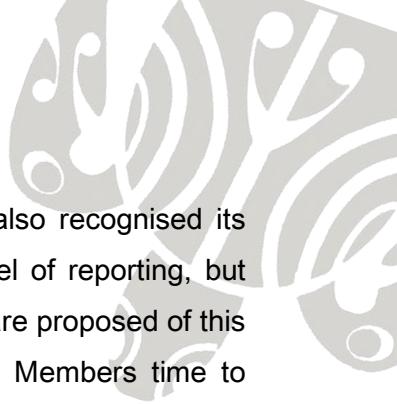
- ***Committed*** itself collectively and individually to paying current and outstanding contributions in full in 2012

## Agenda Item 7.2: Increase in Membership Contributions

95. The Secretariat presented background on SPREP membership fees and sought approval of the SPREP Meeting for a twenty percent increase in membership contributions.
96. The Secretariat cited the growth in services it has provided to Pacific Island Members over the past five years noting that this growth has made SPREP better able to attract and catalyse financial flows to the region in areas relevant to its mandate. This has resulted in greater levels of assistance flowing to Pacific member countries and territories. Further, the change management process at SPREP over the last 3 years has made SPREP a more focused and efficient organisation and has improved internal efficiency ensuring that the majority of funding coming to SPREP is directed to support the priorities of Pacific island members.
97. Despite the increasing, and welcomed, levels of support from donors and partners, the Secretariat advised that the core funding from Members' contributions has remained static since 2004. Core funding largely covers the organisation's basic operational expenses (finance, human resource management and other essential services). The Secretariat stressed that limited core funding limits the ability of SPREP to support delivery of programmes in member countries and recalled the decision of the 19SM (2008), at which Members had reaffirmed the need for a regional environment agency and committed to adequately manage and fund the agency. However, the Secretariat advised that membership contributions had remained unchanged since that meeting.
98. The Secretariat requested Members' consideration of a specific increase of 20% noting that this would translate into an average increase of about USD 2,037 for a small island state and USD 4,072 for other Members.
99. In response to queries from Niue and Samoa, the Secretariat advised that despite increases in project (implementation) funding and management fees, these are specific to management of the project and were not available to support broader corporate services.
100. United States, in calling for zero budget growth, indicated that they could not support the proposal.
101. Fiji and Federated States of Micronesia also indicated they were unable to support the proposed increase as their national budgets for 2013 had already been approved. Fiji noted the value of creating awareness within governments on need for increases in membership contributions and encouraged the Secretariat to consider this.



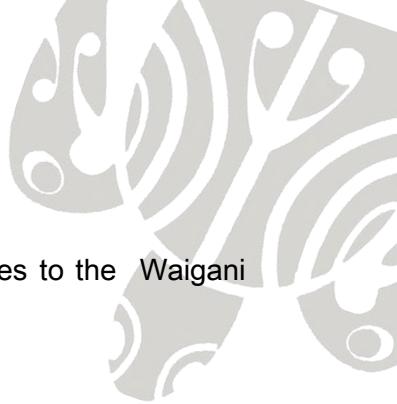
102. Cook Islands advised that all budgetary decisions in Cook Islands are now made by Foreign Affairs, not the Environment Department, and the delegation was therefore not in a position to make a decision on the proposal. The representative recommended that the Director-General visit countries to try and resolve the issue of arrears.
103. Wallis and Futuna questioned the rationale of raising fees, when arrears remained unpaid. The representative also noted that the Secretariat records did not reflect his country's payment for 2010.
104. American Samoa acknowledged that the issue of arrears is a difficult and sensitive one for the Secretariat and urged that a plan be developed to recover outstanding arrears through a personal approach from the Director-General. The representative also recommended establishing a working committee to investigate the problem and come up with recommendations and suggested that the Ministers' meeting might also be an opportunity.
105. France indicated that they would be unable to support an increase in contributions as long as there were arrears in payments, and until a cohesive approach to recovering outstanding amounts is developed.
106. New Caledonia, Kiribati and Tokelau strongly supported the recommendations of the Secretariat, noting this was a way of strengthening efficiency of SPREP and in recognition of the work of the organisation. The representative of New Caledonia further stated that the proposed increase was consistent with support provided to other regional organisations. Kiribati also encouraged the Secretariat to find a strategy to work with Members to clear their arrears.
107. French Polynesia suggested that any increase be implemented over a 2-3 year period. The representative stressed that any financial increase should be used to increase support to those members who have fully paid their arrears, including French territories, and to improve French translation of official documents. The representative further stressed that increases should not be used to fund sub-regional offices.
108. Tuvalu, while recognising the important role of SPREP in technical delivery of environmental services in the region, sought clarification on what the increase would be used for.



109. Australia acknowledged the financial limitations of the Secretariat and also recognised its delivery of tangible services, including a marked improvement in its level of reporting, but recognised that countries need time to plan, and when budget measures are proposed of this nature, suggested that at least a year's lead time be provided to give Members time to consider the proposal in terms of their budget cycles.
110. Niue, recognising the increasing work load to be delivered by SPREP in coming years, supported the proposal in principle but advised that further endorsement would be required from higher authorities. Niue supported the lead time of one year proposed by Australia.
111. United Kingdom suggested the decision be deferred by one year to allow the Secretariat to make a stronger case. The representative suggested the Secretariat prepare a list of activities that can be funded or not funded if membership fees are not increased. This was supported by New Zealand.
112. The Secretariat noted that a requirement for fiduciary responsibility required SPREP to better balance its core budget against project expenditure and stressed that project funding and management fees were specific to management of that project and limited in ability to be moved around in the overall organisation budget. The Secretariat agreed on the proposal to develop a discussion paper, noting that this would build on the current proposal but would need to take into account the recent changes in organisation requirements. The cost of preparing the paper would be within the existing budget as it would be prepared by SPREP staff.
113. The Meeting:
  - ***Noted*** the importance of core funding for the continued viability of SPREP and also the fact that SPREP membership fees have remained unchanged since 2004; and
  - ***Requested*** that the Secretariat prepare a discussion paper on how SPREP work is being impacted by unchanged membership fees since 2004 within the next 3 months.

#### **Agenda Item 8.1: Report on the Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention**

114. The Report of the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention, held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> August, Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, was tabled by the Chair of the Conference (Australia). The Chair provided a summary of the report for the benefit of Members.



115. The Meeting:

- *noted* the Report of the 6th Meeting of the Convention of the Parties to the Waigani Convention.

**Agenda Item 8.2: Report on the Convention of the Parties to the Noumea Convention**

116. The Report of the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention held on Friday 31 August 2012, was tabled by the Chair of the Conference (France). The Chair provided a summary of the report for the benefit of Members.

117. The Meeting:

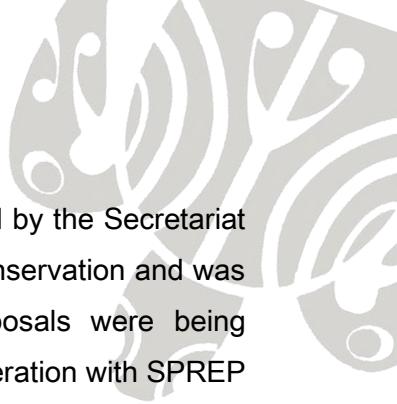
- *noted* the Report of the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention.

**Agenda Item 9.1.1: 9<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, November 2013**

118. The Secretariat advised of the plans for the 9<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas (the Conference) to be convened in November 2013 noting that SPREP is the lead regional organisation responsible for coordinating the Conference. The last Conference was held in Alotau, Papua New Guinea in October 2007. Despite the remoteness of the venue, the conference was attended by over 400 people.

119. The Secretariat noted that the past conferences had been instrumental in developing new initiatives and partnerships in nature conservation, explaining that the regional 5-year Action Strategy for Nature Conservation is developed at each conference. It also highlighted a number of initiatives and activities that have been initiated as a direct result of the conferences.

120. The next Conference will be held in Fiji in November 2013, hosted by the Government of Fiji and SPREP in partnership with the Roundtable for Nature Conservation. The Conference aims to establish new conservation and protected area targets and actions in the Pacific region. These will form the basis for developing the next Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific.



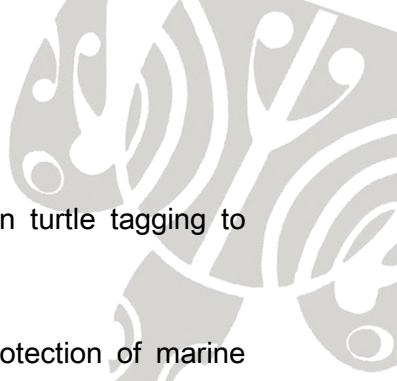
121. A concept paper to guide preparations for the Conference was developed by the Secretariat with input from members of the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation and was shared with the Meeting. The Secretariat advised that funding proposals were being developed to raise USD500,000 to support the Conference, in close cooperation with SPREP member countries and Roundtable members. Additional assistance had also been received from the New Zealand Volunteer Services Abroad, which is supporting an 18-month position volunteer position to assist with the Conference.
122. Cook Islands stated its full support for the Conference and requested donor agencies to consider providing support for this. The representative highlighted the recent launch of the Cook Islands national marine park and advised that marine conservation was a priority for the Pacific.
123. Fiji updated the Meeting on progress towards hosting the Conference, noting that approval had been confirmed by Cabinet with budgetary support, and that an internal organising committee had been established and was in close communication with the Secretariat to ensure common understanding of needs and objectives for the Conference.
124. American Samoa, Kiribati, Samoa and United States also endorsed and supported the Conference.
125. Kiribati observed that the Conference looks at developing a 5-year strategy for regional activities in nature conservation and encouraged the Secretariat to consider enhancing synergies between biodiversity and climate change. The representative called on SPREP to consider the formulation of an action-oriented strategy for the next 5-years and further requested that the country level practicality in terms of implementation also be taken into account. She welcomed and called on donors and partners to assist with funding not only for the Conference, but also for post-conference activities.
126. Samoa welcomed the proposal to host a ministerial meeting during the Conference, observing that this would give the Conference a higher priority. The representative also requested clarification on funding for national delegations and the Secretariat advised that the funding being sought was to enable country representation.
127. The Meeting:
  - ***Endorsed*** the Concept Paper for the 9<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas;



- ***Gave full support*** to the Secretariat to enable it to successfully deliver and achieve the expected outcomes for the 9<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas; and
- ***Welcomed and encouraged further efforts by*** partners and donors to provide financial support to ensure the effective planning and implementation of the Conference.

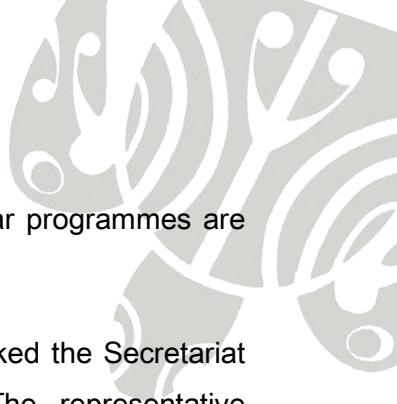
#### **Agenda Item 9.1.2: Regional Marine Species Action Plans 2013-2017**

128. The Secretariat presented the revised regional Marine Species Action Plans for the next five year period, 2013-2017, noting that SPREP has been facilitating implementation of 5-year regional marine species action plans that focus on three groups of marine species of conservation concern: dugongs, marine turtles and cetaceans (whales and dolphins). The revised Plan was developed following extensive consultation with SPREP Members and partners in the region, including a major review meeting in Nadi, Fiji in March 2012.
129. SPREP's work on marine species has been linked with and supported by species related Conventions, in particular, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) which is supporting an officer at SPREP; and the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
130. United States commended the Secretariat on its work in this area and indicated that although comments on the Action Plans had been previously provided, an opportunity to provide further written input would be appreciated. The representative observed that many of the actions had been rated as "high" priority and suggested that a different rating framework may be necessary to differentiate high, medium and low priorities. The Secretariat noted that an attempt was made to accommodate individual national priorities, which may have led to many actions being rated as "high".
131. United States expressed interest on the issue of whale and dugong by-catch, and viewing guidelines, and sought advice on how it could contribute to work in these areas.
132. New Zealand indicated that Whale Watching Guidelines have recently been reviewed in Tonga and these could be shared with other Members.
133. In terms of marine turtles, United States advised that NOAA had previously supported the SPREP turtle-tagging programme, but sought further clarification on the process of data collection, transmission and sharing. The Secretariat clarified that it provides an annual data report to countries that have submitted data, and that each country had ownership of its data.



It was therefore up to each country to communicate their own data on turtle tagging to interested parties.

134. France also commended the Secretariat on work carried out in the protection of marine species and expressed support for the results of the action planning workshop. While France had not been able to attend the workshop, it wished to contribute to the action plans. The representative indicated that it would have been desirable to have more time to allow for comments. It would also have been desirable to have in advance the results of the implementation of expired plans.
135. With respect to the Marine Turtle Action Plan, France acknowledged the importance of traditional structures and practices, but cautioned that such traditional species management practices should be assessed in light of conservation goals and encouraged only when compatible with such goals. The representative requested that appropriate text reflecting this position be included in the Action Plan.
136. France urged that Dugong Range States be encouraged to sign the MOU on dugong conservation and that signatory states be encouraged to implement the MOU. The Secretariat clarified that all Members who are potentially concerned have signed this MOU.
137. France further urged that dugong watching activities should not be developed beyond a level that is consistent with conservation goals.
138. French Polynesia joined other Members in congratulating the Secretariat on the excellent action planning workshop and urged the Secretariat to translate the workshop outcomes and recommendations into French, given the difficulties faced by the Department of the Environment of French Polynesia in working with the English language version. The representative noted the importance of the regional action plans, which are the basis for development of action plans in French Polynesia. He also thanked the Secretariat, for ongoing support provided in marine species conservation on the territory of French Polynesia.
139. New Zealand also congratulated the Secretariat on the Action Plans, and noted that they were pleased to be partnering with SPREP on a marine turtle conservation and eco-tourism initiative to be implemented in Tonga, Fiji, Kiribati and Solomon Islands. This initiative will explore how turtle conservation could work synergistically with locally-based businesses in support of local livelihoods, and will involve education and training for locally-based community monitors, sustainable management of turtles, turtle based ecotourism



programmes at selected sites, and a study tour to Vanuatu where similar programmes are being implemented.

140. Kiribati confirmed support for the Marine Species Action Plans and thanked the Secretariat and partners for ensuring Kiribati's participation in the process. The representative acknowledged support from New Zealand for the turtle conservation and eco-tourism initiative. She encouraged SPREP to consider integrating legislation, community-based initiatives, and the concepts of communication, education and public awareness at all levels, into the Action Plans to strengthen implementation of the plans. She noted that a draft regulation on protected species existed for Kiribati that requires full consultation of communities, and hence Kiribati would benefit from integrated communication, education and public awareness in this area.
141. Kiribati also encouraged the Secretariat to explore a technical exchange workshop for Members to allow local counterparts to work at other successful sites in the region. Further, the representative urged that the capacity building needs of government officers and other stakeholders must be considered in order to contribute to the success of implementation of the action plans in the future.
142. Fiji expressed support for the work of the Secretariat on the Action Plans, and acknowledged the Secretariat's input on the ratification of CMS. The representative indicated that Fiji's ratification instrument would be submitted to Cabinet in September.
143. New Caledonia advised that a partnership was launched in 2008, involving WWF South Province, and *Operations Cetaces*, which led to the development of a charter, and the adoption and implementation of good practices for whale watching.
144. In response to a request from Australia on the nature of the proposed amendments by United States and France, United States advised that it would provide further written input but was happy to allow the Secretariat to act on the input as appropriate and France requested that that their earlier comments regarding traditional practices being compatible with conservation goals be incorporated.
145. Niue informed the Meeting that its whale watching regulations were being implemented.
146. The Secretariat advised that Regional Whale Watching Guidelines had been recently published, and had been adopted in other regions. These guidelines, along with Australia's recently revised guidelines, would be helpful in the development of national guidelines.



147. Australia, noting progress on whale watching activities in the region, suggested that the Secretariat organise a forum for sharing experiences on whale watching.

### Recommendation

148. The Meeting:

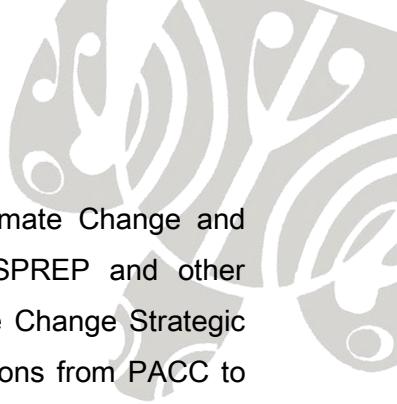
- *Endorsed* the revised Marine Species Action Plans for 2013-2017;
- *Urged* Members to strengthen their commitment and effort for species conservation work in general and marine species in particular; and
- *Called* on partners and donors to increase their efforts to support, conserve and manage marine species in the Pacific region.

### Agenda Item 9.2.1: SPREP Climate Change Adaptation Programmes - PACC & PACC+ Progress Report and Key Issues

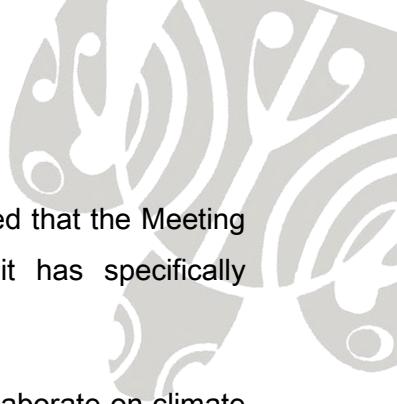
149. The Secretariat provided a report on the progress made by the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) project and associated projects including PACC+. The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) project is funded from the Special Climate Change Fund of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It is executed through UNDP and SPREP, and is now in its third year of operation. The goal of the PACC is to reduce vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity to the adverse effects of climate change in three key development sectors (coastal, food security and water) identified as priorities by the 13 participating Pacific Island countries. The total PACC budget is USD13.125 million. Details of the PACC achievements and issues are outlined in 23SM/Officials/WP.9.2.1.

150. Members congratulated and commended the Secretariat for the informative and excellent report on the PACC and PACC+ update and made additional comments.

151. Niue advised that its focus under PACC is water resources, which was not included in the presentation. The representative acknowledged the work of the PACC and PACC+ in establishing a platform for adaptation activities in the region and commended the Secretariat and UNDP for their technical assistance. The assistance by AusAID and USAID was also acknowledged. However, the representative raised concern on the number of additional projects being implemented by other regional organisations, which seemed to have appeared unannounced, and he stressed the need to consolidate some of these projects under the PACC project. Niue noted the importance of the role of the CROP CEO committee to clarify roles and responsibilities in adaptation in the region to enable countries to approach the relevant agencies accordingly.

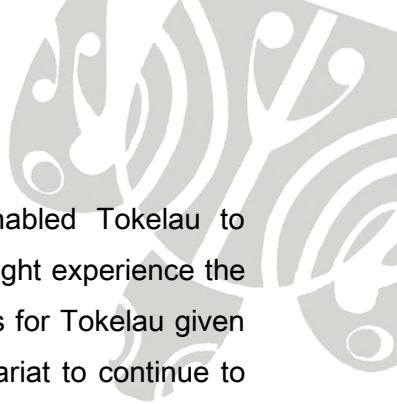


152. Tuvalu thanked SPREP for its support to the development of the Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Strategy. The representative called on SPREP and other partners to assist Tuvalu to implement priorities identified in the Climate Change Strategic Action Plan and suggested that the Secretariat consider up-scaling lessons from PACC to other islands. He also acknowledged the financial support from AusAID and USAID.
153. France noted the positive outcomes of the PACC project and raised concerns on the exclusion of the French territories in the presentation. The representative considered that this needs to be addressed, given that territories were members of SPREP. He requested the Secretariat to consider establishing closer relationships with all overseas territories in the region on its climate change programmes.
154. Cook Islands updated the Meeting on the Cook Islands' Climate Change Policy, which is now ready for implementation, and acknowledged SPREP's support in its development.
155. Nauru stated that PACC should be recognised as the regional framework for adaptation in the region, which provides opportunities to replicate and upscale adaptation projects. The representative raised an issue regarding the slow disbursement of funds to countries due to UNDP requirements and urged SPREP to continue to liaise with UNDP to resolve this long outstanding issue.
156. On the proposed recommendation 5 in the working paper, Tonga pointed out that the SPREP Council makes decisions and gives directive to CROP CEOs through the Director-General of SPREP. He gave an example from Tonga where the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change coordinates all climate change projects regardless of which donor or agency is involved. He suggested that this approach should be practiced at the regional level.
157. Samoa advised that the work of PACC had created a feeling of security in Samoan communities and noted that a number of the coastal adaptation activities which are being funded by the Government are complemented by PACC. The representative acknowledged the assistance of Australia and United States which has helped with the integration of disaster risk management and climate change in coastal areas. He also acknowledged the technical assistance by New Zealand, GIZ and Japan. In response to the proposed recommendation 5, the representative of Samoa pointed out that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment deals directly with both SPC and SPREP, and that Samoa has always considered SOPAC as the research institution that provides accurate or near accurate climate and weather data. He also noted the need to be alert and take advantage of the opportunities to build synergies with similar initiatives in the region as it was inevitable that other CROP agencies would be interested to contribute and assist Pacific Island



Countries to address climate change issues. The representative suggested that the Meeting consider the language in the Forum Leaders' communiqué where it has specifically requested SPREP and SPC to increase efforts in climate change.

158. New Zealand noted and welcomed all efforts from CROP agencies to collaborate on climate change and suggested that a level of coherence and coordination was needed to clarify mandates on climate change as there are sector-specific areas of climate change adaptation particular to SPC as well as to SPREP.
159. French Polynesia noted the need to expeditiously reach an agreement on the issue of coordination. The representative stressed the absence of territories in the presentation, noting that French Polynesia has established a strategic plan on climate change which could be shared with other countries in the region. The representative requested SPREP for technical assistance on climate change.
160. Australia congratulated Tokelau on joining the PACC+ and on its progress in implementation thus far. The representative emphasised the role of SPREP as the leading agency in coordinating climate change in the region, which helps to bring CROP agencies together.
161. United States was concerned that the presentation showed different levels of actions by Members and pointed out the importance of inclusiveness, which helps to bring together all parties involved in climate change.
162. United Kingdom reiterated SPREP'S expertise in and role as the lead coordinator on mitigation and adaptation, which the representative advised was the key reason for the United Kingdom becoming a member of SPREP. United Kingdom looked forward to actively partnering with SPREP and Pacific Island Countries, and indicated interest in exploring EU support to SPREP.
163. Kiribati advised that it was not part of PACC and requested the Secretariat to consider ways to strengthen involvement and participation of Members that are not part of PACC, especially on capacity building activities and sharing of information on adaptation tools. The representative queried whether disaster risk management was part of the PACC project and requested the Secretariat to look at ways to integrate disaster risk management as part of the climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes. She also urged better coordination across CROP agencies to reduce confusion in-country.



164. Tokelau thanked SPREP and Australia for the support that has enabled Tokelau to participate in PACC+. Tokelau's focal area is water in response to a drought experience the previous year. Coastal management and food security remained priorities for Tokelau given the fragility of the environment. The representative called on the Secretariat to continue to supplement on-the-ground efforts. She noted the difficulty of participating in many of the programmes and added that Tokelau was working with New Zealand to address this.
165. Wallis and Futuna gave full support for the recommendations and echoed earlier comments regarding the current non-inclusion of overseas territories. The representative further stated that while climate change impacts all countries, small island countries were feeling these impacts directly. The representative urged industrialised countries to take this into account and asked members France, United Kingdom and United States to do their utmost and intensify their efforts to support this programme, particularly to support Pacific small island states.
166. Marshall Islands echoed other speakers in its appreciation of the Secretariat and the donors and welcomed the SPC initiative on the climate change alliance project. The representative also referred to the issue raised by Nauru regarding delays of funds from UNDP and noted that this had been raised in the last two multi-partite review meetings.
167. The Secretariat, in addition to supporting the points raised by Members, advised that it was pleased to report improved collaboration at CEO and technical level. On the issue of engaging territories, the Secretariat clarified that the GEF framework does not allow support to territories. However, the Secretariat was looking at broadening this through collaboration with Australia and United States and suggested that this could perhaps also be explored with France and United Kingdom.
168. The Meeting:
  - ***Noted*** the positive outcomes from the PACC project in assisting Pacific Island Countries and Territories to adapt to climate change;
  - ***Welcomed*** the increased support from the Governments of the United States and Australia for adaptation efforts under PACC+;
  - ***Reaffirmed*** the vital coordinating role of SPREP in the Pacific Region on climate change adaptation and mitigation, and mainstreaming climate risks in national and sector development plans and budgetary planning and implementation; and
  - ***Commended*** SPREP's technical back stopping assistance on climate change provided to PICTs through the PACC project and ***noted*** this should be adequately resourced to continue beyond the life of the PACC Project

#### Agenda Item 9.2.2.1: General Update on Meteorological Activities

169. The Secretariat reported on the progress it had made in meteorological support for Members, in particular, the advent of five positions in meteorology and climatology at the Secretariat. This included securing a 2-year secondment from the Commonwealth Secretariat for the Meteorology and Climatology Advisor (MCA) and the approval of two positions through AusAID funding, for the Pacific Meteorological Partnership Desk (PMPD), namely the Meteorology and Climate Officer (MCO) position and an Administrative Officer. The Secretariat advised that the Pacific Island Ocean Observing System (PI-GOOS) position had been transferred to SPREP under the Regional Institutional Process (RIF) and had also been filled, while the Secretariat was securing funding for the Pacific Island Global Climate Observing System (PI-GCOS) position.

170. The Secretariat advised that its work on meteorology was carried out in close partnership with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), National Meteorological Services and other partners. It was also implemented as an integral element of SPREP's overall work on climate change.

171. New Zealand advised that when it moves to multi-year funding, the Island Climate Update funding would be incorporated into the multi-year funding as additional funds over a three-year period.

172. United States reiterated its great interest in meteorological issues, and agreed that progress had been made in recognising the importance of meteorological issues in the region. The representative requested clarification on the organisational structure of the five new positions and further noted that the PMDP (Pacific Meteorological Desk Partnership) concept had been recommended through a regional review as the mechanism to best provide a platform for delivery of meteorological support. United States noted disappointment that neither United States nor SPC (SOPAC) were acknowledged directly in the paper. United States further questioned how SPREP and WMO work together in providing support to SPREP members, suggesting that the PMDP and MCA should engage more fully with the chair of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC).

173. The Secretariat agreed to provide the organisational structure for the five positions to the United States, noting that the MCA position was only a 2-year position. The Secretariat also clarified that the MCA and MCO had worked closely with the chair of PMC in determining their work plan. It further noted the lack of acknowledgement of SPC (SOPAC) and NOAA in



the Secretariat paper and emphasised that these partnerships were active and important for delivery of key support to members on meteorological issues.

174. The Meeting:

- ***Noted*** the progress made since the last SPREP meeting in advancing the objective of strengthening national meteorological and hydrological services in the region; and
- ***Noted*** the support given by regional and international partners who have made financial and in-kind contributions to SPREP in the ongoing work to strengthen meteorological and hydrological services in the region.

**Agenda Item 9.2.2.2: Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy (PIMS) 2012-2021**

175. The Secretariat presented the Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy 2012-2021 (PIMS) developed by the Pacific Meteorological Desk (PMDP), which comprises SPREP and the World Meteorological Office in Apia. The PIMS was endorsed by the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC) in March 2012 and will serve as a strategy for partners, donors and Members to implement and for the PMDP to provide support in the areas of: coordination; fundraising; technical advice; and monitoring and evaluation.

176. The Secretariat noted that although the Strategy is closely aligned with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Regional Area V Asia and Pacific (RA V) Strategy, it is more focused on Pacific meteorological needs. Implementation of the PIMS will provide a major contribution from the Pacific to implementation of the RA V Strategy.

177. Tuvalu supported the Strategy, recognising the vital nature of meteorological data for better adaptation planning by Pacific Islands. Tuvalu encouraged continued support to these key programmes.

178. New Caledonia noted that the PIMS is in line with the goals of Meteo France and that, should funding be available from the SPREP programme, Meteo France International could provide training and technical expertise to support these efforts..

179. The Meeting:

- ***Endorsed*** the Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy (PIMS) as the principal guide to regional cooperation between meteorological services and partners for the region, and
- ***Noted*** the role of the Pacific Meteorological Desk (PMDP) in the context of the PIMS and for servicing the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC).



### Agenda Item 9.2.3: Pacific Islands Global Ocean Observing System – Support for Fundamental Climate Science in the Pacific

180. The Secretariat provided an overview of the Argo programme, which has involved the deployment of three thousand drifting floats since 2003. The Argo floats measure the heat and salt content of the top 2000 metres of the ocean and thus far, 32 countries are actively deploying floats with a total annual investment of USD 25 million. Many SPREP Members have assisted the Argo programme through a 2002 agreement, signed by the SOPAC Member countries at that time<sup>1</sup>. The Secretariat noted that data from these Argo floats is providing valuable information that will help with predictions of weather and climate around the islands.
181. The Pacific Islands Global Ocean Observing System (PI-GOOS) coordinator is the contact point for Pacific Island countries for the Argo programme and other ocean observing activities relevant to the Pacific Islands. Hosting of PI-GOOS moved from SOPAC to SPREP under the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF) process. The founders of the PI-GOOS coordinator position (the United States of America National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission) are committed to providing ongoing support for the position.
182. The Secretariat advised that it was currently searching for funds to implement workshops to enhance the capacity of SPREP Members to access, interpret and use available ocean data. This included data from Argo, remote sensing satellites and other sources. The ocean data collected in the region will be critical in analysing current and predicting future sea level rise in the region.
183. The Secretariat also highlighted its input to the SEREAD programme, which is the educational aspect of Argo, supported within the Pacific by the PI-GOOS Coordinator. SEREAD works with primary and secondary school teachers to include Climate Change and Variability into school curricula. SEREAD has been active in Samoa, the Cook Islands and Tonga, and is looking to begin work in Kiribati.
184. Australia advised it would continue support for the PI-GOOS programme and that, through the Climate and Ocean Support Program for the Pacific (COSPac), would continue its support for Pacific Ocean monitoring.
185. Kiribati thanked SPREP for its work and urged the Secretariat to seek funding to assist SPREP members to access, interpret and use the GOOS data.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.argo.ucsd.edu/Organisation.html>

186. The Meeting:

- ***Noted*** the ongoing oceanographic science in the Pacific region and how improved information and understanding of ocean science benefits SPREP Members;
- ***Directed*** the Secretariat to continue to seek funds for enhancing the capacity of SPREP Members to access, interpret and use available ocean data;
- ***Agreed to provide guidance*** to the Pacific Islands Global Ocean Observing System (PI-GOOS) Coordinator and collaborating international programmes on regional priorities for applications of ocean observations; and
- ***Agreed to support*** the Argo float deployment and operation in the Pacific.

**Agenda Item 9.2.4: SPREP's role in assisting Members to access climate change financing – and other international climate support mechanisms**

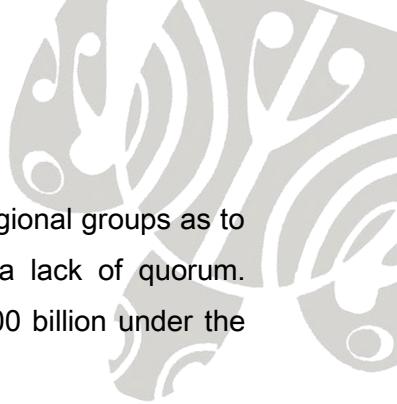
187. The Secretariat provided updates on its application for accreditation as a Regional Implementing Entity (REI) of the Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund (AF); development of a work programme on Loss and Damage under the UNFCCC mechanism; and on the Green Climate Fund.

188. The Secretariat advised that the process of applying to be a REI had been beneficial for the Secretariat and had generally strengthened its capacity. Based on the experience it had gained in this area, the Secretariat would prepare a guiding document on the accreditation process for Members that wish to seek accreditation as National Implementing Entities (NIE).

189. The Secretariat was now working with the Frankfurt School-UNEP Collaborating Centre (FS) in the context of the UNEP National Climate Finance Institutions Support Programme, also known as Fit for Funds, to build institutional capacity for financing issues related to climate change. A capacity building plan has been developed and will be extended to other CROPs.

190. On the development of the work programme on Loss and Damage, the Secretariat advised that a decision was expected to be made at the UNFCCC COP 18, Doha in December 2012. The establishment of this International Mechanism, could become a source of financing for climate change adaptation in combination with disaster risk reduction, as well as separate financing for a solidarity fund for unavoidable losses due to slow onset climate change impacts like sea level rise and ocean acidification.

191. The Secretariat advised that the Green Climate Fund (GCF), established at COP16 in 2010, provides a mechanism for simplified and improved access to funding, including direct access; has a country-driven approach; and will encourage the involvement of relevant stakeholders, including vulnerable groups and addressing gender aspects. However, so far, its



operationalisation has been hampered by a lack of agreement in some regional groups as to its membership, which has prevented the GCF from meeting due to a lack of quorum. Despite this, developed countries have reassured commitment to USD100 billion under the GCF.

192. The Secretariat also highlighted concerns regarding long term finance including clarity, access modalities, time frames and adequacy of the USD100 billion. It noted the need to consider the inter-linkages between finance and different components of the financial mechanism including: measuring, reporting and verification of support and funding for developing countries; and funding for mitigation and adaptation for LDCs and non-LDCs. Further details and background are outlined in SM23/Officials/WP.9.2.4.
193. Niue and Tuvalu noted the importance of the funding mechanisms for SPREP members and requested the Secretariat be more pro-active in assisting Members prepare funding proposals.
194. United States, on the loss and damage issue, urged caution among member countries that they not take too narrow an approach on the issue. The representative noted the World Bank programme on global risk. United States also requested that it be apprised of SPREP's work on this issue.
195. United Kingdom commended SPREP's work on climate change negotiations and accessing funds for members. The representative advised that the United Kingdom had funded a workshop prior to the UNFCCC COP in Durban to assist SPREP members ahead of the COP. United Kingdom had also presented a document titled "Owning Climate Adaptation" at the Pacific Island Forum the previous week. The document presented 75 practical recommendations on adaptation finance, including best practice, which could be applied across the region.
196. Kiribati noted the lack of capacity in understanding and complying with the complex methods of applying for GEF funds and asked for assistance from SPREP in building such capacity. The representative also noted that the SIDS workshop on loss and damage to be hosted by Kiribati mentioned in the working paper had been deferred.
197. Australia observed the challenges in obtaining accreditation to become a regional implementation entity for the Kyoto Adaptation Fund and encouraged SPREP to continue its efforts in this regard. Australia advised that it is a member of the Green Climate Fund and would continue to act on behalf of Pacific island countries for access to these funds.

198. Nauru advised that it was conducting an in-country review with the Pacific Island Forum on accessing financing for climate change support activities.

199. The Meeting:

- ***Noted*** the update on SPREP's work to support Members;
- ***Directed*** the Secretariat to continue its support for member countries in the UNFCCC negotiations and to disseminate all relevant information including Loss and Damage; and
- ***Directed*** the Secretariat to continue to provide support to Members on climate financing, through the continuation of cooperative efforts with other agencies.

#### **Agenda Item 9.3.1: Clean Pacific Campaign Update**

200. In response to an earlier request from the Meeting for an update on SPREP's waste management work, the Secretariat provided an outline of its various activities and initiatives over the past year.

201. The Secretariat also provided an update on progress of the Clean Pacific 2012 Campaign which was endorsed at the 21st SPREP Meeting as an activity to be implemented under the Pacific Regional Solid Waste Management Strategy 2010-2015.

202. French Polynesia congratulated the Secretariat for its work in the waste management result areas. The representative encouraged close collaboration between Members to ensure lessons in technologies and systems would be shared and highlighted French Polynesia's extensive experience with hazardous waste management. He also advised that lessons from French Polynesia in health care waste management, particularly through incineration, may be helpful in avoiding possible future mistakes in this area. He further requested the Secretariat for a report on the outcomes of the visit by the SPREP/AFD solid waste management consultant at the beginning of the year, noting that this would shed some light on how the work of French Polynesia is perceived from the outside. In this regard, the Secretariat clarified that the purpose of that visit was to identify lessons learned.

203. Nauru sought clarification on whether the Regional Asbestos Management Strategy was a static or living document and requested information on the means for accession to the Strategy. The representative proposed that the strategy and action plan be guided by best practice models of SPREP's metropolitan members (for example, referring to Occupational Health and Safety standards, etc) rather than reinventing the wheel, and urged that benchmarks be sought from those members such as Australia, who have established codes of practices for asbestos management. He noted that these best practices could be shared



and adopted by Nauru and other Members and requested the Secretariat for immediate assistance on asbestos waste management.

204. Niue echoed the points raised by Nauru in relation to obtaining existing best practices to guide the asbestos strategy and acknowledged the Secretariat's assistance in preparation of Niue's National Waste Management Plan. The representative also requested further information on EDF10 and its contribution to regional waste management. The Secretariat clarified that the EDF 10 is a USD10-12 million programme explicitly designed to manage hazardous waste in the region with a focus mainly on atoll waste management, health care waste, e-waste and asbestos.
205. Samoa requested that the lessons and experiences of countries from the Clean Pacific Campaign be shared at the planned symposium in October in Apia. Samoa acknowledged the work of JICA, noting their significant contribution to waste management in the Pacific. Samoa also recalled earlier mention by the Director General of the Pacific Garbage Patch and suggested that this could be included in SPREP's work programme.
206. Fiji thanked the Secretariat for the waste management support to Fiji and acknowledged the Secretariat's support of grassroots waste management activities and the involvement of smaller groups in communities. The representative encouraged more of these initiatives to be more visible at community level rather than only at higher levels of Government. He thanked the Secretariat for setting up preliminary work on waste oil management, which Fiji is embarking on. Fiji expressed support for the recommendations.
207. Marshall Islands thanked the Secretariat for assistance in completing the Marshall Islands Marine Pollution Plan and also for progressing the Solid Waste Management Plan. The representative looked forward to the proposed training in Honolulu and suggested that there should be a better coordination of solid waste management initiatives in the region. Marshall Islands also sought clarification on whether the asbestos free strategy was a static or living document.
208. Kiribati acknowledged the Secretariat work and commented that Kiribati is one of the countries facing serious waste and pollution issues. The representative thanked the Secretariat for the opportunity to participate in training in Fiji earlier in the year and noted that Kiribati had received USD2,000 for the Clean Pacific Campaign. She advised that Environment Youth Club members who had participated in the training were preparing to put into action some of lessons learned from this training.

209. Wallis and Futuna noted that they were impressed with the activities and the amount of work undertaken by the Secretariat to assist the region in waste management. The representative acknowledged the significant help to the region from this campaign and related activities and noted, with regret, that Wallis and Futuna was not eligible for this type of funding. He reiterated earlier comments that there is no significant involvement from the Secretariat in Wallis and Futuna and requested that the Secretariat consider some future involvement particularly in the area of waste management.

210. United States reaffirmed commitment to the campaign and added that it expected the Secretariat to identify and document any lessons learned. This should include inputs from members and all the good work that was carried out during the campaign. There should be a way for countries to share lessons learned and the Secretariat should ensure all these are captured. United States looked forward to seeing a matrix of progress by the Secretariat.

211. The Secretariat clarified that the asbestos strategy was designed to be a static document but development of national policy and guidelines would ensure its viability.

212. The Meeting:

- **Reaffirmed** commitment to implement the Clean Pacific 2012 campaign in each country; and
- **Noted** the progress in Regional Waste Management Initiatives.

#### **Agenda Item 9.3.2: Regional E-waste Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2015**

213. The Secretariat presented the Regional E-waste Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2015 (*Pacific E-waste: A Regional Strategy and Action Plan, 2012*) for Members' consideration and approval and explained that E-waste typically refers to end-of-life electrical and electronic products including computers, printers, photocopy machines, television sets, washing machines, radios, mobile phones and toys. The Secretariat advised that the management and disposal of end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment (E-waste) was an increasingly important issue for Pacific island countries as increasing quantities of electrical and electronic equipment are imported into the region.

214. The Secretariat stressed that sustainable management of E-waste would require enforcement of national legislation that enables transfer of costs of disposal of E-waste to the consumer.

215. In outlining the content of the draft strategy and action plan, the Secretariat advised that these were circulated to Members for comment and review in July 2011. America, Australia, Cook Islands, France, New Zealand, Samoa, SPC and JICA were acknowledged for their input to the draft strategy.

216. Cook Islands supported the recommendations, especially adopting the e-waste strategy and action plan and encouraged partners and donors to continue to provide support for implementing the plan.

217. Tuvalu also complimented the Secretariat and asked for Secretariat support in drawing up agreements with Australia and New Zealand for meeting the cost of shipping e-waste, as needed.

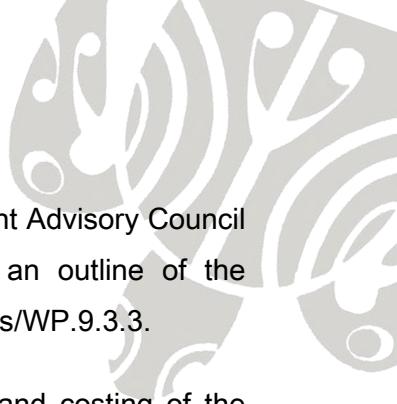
218. Fiji confirmed support for the strategy and recommendations and requested that Fiji be added to the list of countries noted as signatories to the e-waste strategy.

219. The Meeting:

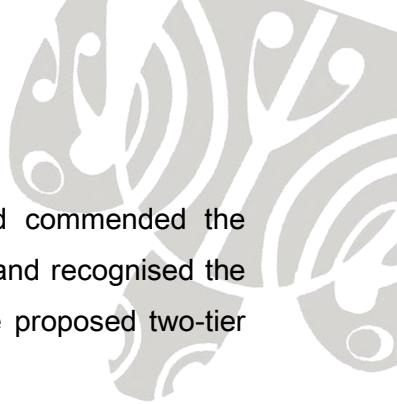
- ***Endorsed*** the Regional E-waste Strategy and Action Plan (*Pacific E-waste: A Regional Strategy and Action Plan, 2012*);
- ***Called*** on partners and donor agencies to provide assistance where possible to ensure completion of the Action Plan;
- ***Noted*** the involvement of multiple partners (including SPC and the National Environment Service, Cook Islands) in development of the Strategy and Action Plan; and
- ***Directed*** the Secretariat to provide assistance to Members in the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan where possible.

#### **Agenda Item 9.3.3: Improved Regional Solid Waste Coordination and Monitoring**

220. The Secretariat presented a proposal for the establishment of coordination and monitoring mechanisms to improve delivery of the Regional Solid Waste Management Programme, noting that the increase in support and funding for various regional and national initiatives in recent years necessitated a long-lasting structure that would eliminate duplication, allowing for pooling of limited resources, and promote exchange of ideas and lessons learnt which would benefit countries, projects and relevant organisations involved in this area.



221. The Secretariat proposed to establish a Pacific Islands Waste Management Advisory Council and a Pacific Islands Waste Management Partnership and provided an outline of the mechanism and structure. The proposal is further detailed in 23SM/Officials/WP.9.3.3.
222. United States and France requested further clarification on the nature and costing of the proposed mechanism and France, while supportive of better regional level coordination and cooperation in waste management within the Pacific, indicated that more information was required before it could make a decision. The representative of France also raised concerns that the proposal was duplicating the work already being done by SPREP.
223. Cook Islands, Kiribati and Marshall Islands expressed their full support for the recommendation, recognising the benefits of the committees to assist in coordination and planning in the important issue of waste minimisation.
224. Nauru, Federated States of Micronesia, Tonga and Kiribati also gave their full support to the recommendations.
225. Nauru commented that this top down guidance would be very helpful in reducing duplication of the many projects and programmes.
226. Federated States of Micronesia applauded the efforts of the Secretariat in coordinating with Members and suggested that, given that there was increasing private sector involvement in waste management, financing of the committees could be addressed through such partnerships.
227. Niue noted the opportunity for the Secretariat to offer assistance to Niue, especially with regard to asbestos management, currently funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Niue also expressed reservations about the proposal for two advisory bodies and suggested that perhaps these could be combined.
228. Samoa considered the management of waste and pollution initiated by SPREP to be excellent. The representative noted that the proposed mechanism is to coordinate efforts at a bilateral, rather than a regional, scale. He cautioned against setting up new coordination bodies, adding that these could mean extra work at a national level to contribute to these committees. He suggested that Members and the Secretariat look for other means to compile information at a country level, such as additional effort at other meetings, including the SPREP meeting.



229. New Zealand was conscious of the region's solid waste issues, and commended the Secretariat for its excellent work over the past twelve months. New Zealand recognised the need for coordination of efforts, but agreed with Niue in questioning the proposed two-tier approach.
230. Fiji thanked the Secretariat and questioned whether there was a specific current problem requiring this greater coordination in waste management. On the Secretariat proposal that the committees could meet on the perimeter of another meeting, he observed that many countries fund themselves to regional meetings and these additional commitments meant additional costs to countries. Fiji asked for a cost benefit analysis of options, and advised they were not ready to confirm the recommendations.
231. United States recognised the pressing and urgent need for better coordination of waste management in the region and suggested a mechanism for further consultation and further input from other regions, such as perhaps the Caribbean, on best practice lessons learned and effective coordination mechanisms.
232. New Caledonia commented on waste management in the southern province of New Caledonia, which hosts the majority of the population and industry of the country. This was an opportunity for centralization of waste processing and communication for behaviour change. Through strategic partnerships and financial instruments, New Caledonia had successfully implemented a waste management plan in the southern province, working towards the preservation of the environment.
233. The Meeting:
  - *Directed* the Secretariat to further develop the proposals for establishment of an efficient regional coordinating mechanism to include cost implications, and to ensure wide distribution of these proposals for comment; and
  - *Directed* the Secretariat to continue to use existing fora to collate information on national waste management activities.

#### **Agenda Item 9.3.4: Regional Radiation Contamination Information Collation and Review**

234. The Members met in closed session for an informal discussion of the environmental consequences of nuclear testing and nuclear pollution in the Pacific and French Polynesia offered to host a workshop in 2013 which will be described in a forthcoming SPREP circular.



## Agenda Item 9.4.1: Report on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) – Rio+20

235. The Secretariat provided a report on SPREP participation in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) or Rio+20 which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 20 to 22 June 2012.
236. Other than Cook Islands and Niue, all SPREP member countries and the territories of New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Tokelau attended. Cook Islands and Niue did not attend due to a change in the UN criteria, which downgraded these countries from the full status they had enjoyed in the previous summits. The Secretariat acknowledged Samoa for enabling SPREP to participate on the Samoa delegation.
237. SPREP was involved in four side events, including the *Pacific Islands - Applying the Green Economy in our Blue World*, which was coordinated by SPREP. The event was a highly successful platform for presenting Pacific issues and initiatives and was a high profile event with the panel consisting of the heads of government of Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Vanuatu and Tokelau and the Minister for Environment for Samoa.
238. The Secretariat advised that the Rio+20 Outcomes Document “The Future We Want” was, on balance, good for Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS). PSIDS had two key issues leading in to Rio+20 and both were generally addressed to Pacific satisfaction. The two issues were (i) Maintaining SIDS special case and (ii) Highlighting Oceans issues.
239. Details of the outcomes of the Rio+20 are detailed in 23SM/Officials/WP.9.4.1.
240. The Secretariat advised that a regional follow up to Rio+20 would be coordinated through the CROP Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG). SPREP will continue to play a key role on this Working Group, which will also liaise closely with all Member countries and territories and with the PSIDS missions in New York. The CROP SDWG has developed a matrix that will be developed into a more detailed regional roadmap for Rio+20.
241. Australia commended the excellent side event on Applying the Green Economy in a Blue World at Rio+20. Australia also noted its side event on the International Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, Land and Sea Managers Network, with a follow up conference to be held in Darwin from 27-31 May 2013, and noted that the Australian delegation would be providing more information to interested members in the margins of the Meeting.

242. New Caledonia acknowledged SPREP for the invitation to the side event and noted the huge success of event. The representative advised that the outcomes of Rio+20 would be further raised at the Ministerial meeting.

243. The Meeting:

- ***Noted*** the report on Pacific participation at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) - Rio+20); and
- ***Endorsed*** the coordination of post Rio+20 activities through the SDWG.

**Agenda Item 9.4.2: A Framework for Regional State of the Environment (SoE) Assessment and Reporting**

244. The Secretariat presented a draft framework titled "*A Vision for Effective and Streamlined Reporting in the Pacific*" which aims to integrate and streamline and eventually reduce national and regional reporting requirements. It stressed that the state of the environment report is not only a reporting mechanism but can be used as a management tool to facilitate good environmental governance and "best practice".

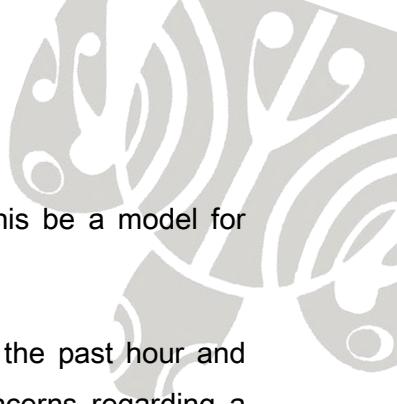
245. The Secretariat advised that the draft framework had been developed through a regional workshop "*Streamlining Regional Agency Reporting and Linkages to Mainstreaming of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Regional Ecosystem Condition Reporting*" held in March 2012. The framework is provided in 23SM/Officials/WP.9.4.2.

246. The Secretariat also tabled the *Pacific Environment and Climate Change Outlook (PECCO) 2012* report developed as part of a series of regional assessments being undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The draft PECCO was circulated to members in July 2012 and can be downloaded at the following web link:  
[http://www.sprep.org/attachments/reports/Draft\\_PECCO\\_June\\_2012.docx](http://www.sprep.org/attachments/reports/Draft_PECCO_June_2012.docx)

247. The report of the Pacific Environment Forum (PEF), held on 3 September was also tabled. The PEF report outlined a suggested process for progressing regional state of environment reporting.

248. French Polynesia, France, Australia, Samoa, Tonga, USA and Kiribati commended the Secretariat for progressing work on the SOE reporting framework.

249. French Polynesia reminded the Secretariat that French Polynesia is currently updating its SOE. The first SOE report was drafted in 2006 and French Polynesia requested technical assistance from SPREP to assist with development of terms of reference for preparation of an improved version of their SOE. The representative also stated that he would like to learn



from other countries' experiences such as Samoa and proposed that this be a model for future activities in member states.

250. France noted that the PEF report had only been made available within the past hour and expressed concerns regarding the process followed. He expressed concerns regarding a statement in the report that suggested that the PEF was inviting the SPREP Secretariat to undertake specific tasks.
251. Australia recognised the challenges of undertaking work on SOE and noted that there were useful outcomes from the PEF which could help countries to move forward. The representative also pointed out that Australia could only note the PECCO report as it did not include Australia.
252. Samoa echoed the congratulatory remarks to SPREP and thanked the organisation for using Samoa as a pilot. The representative noted the excellent opportunities provided for sharing experiences with other countries however, he observed that fund raising would be an issue to consider and welcomed the technical support offered by Australia.
253. United States, while agreeing with comments by France regarding process, suggested that perhaps there was no need for the 23SM to endorse the SOE Framework as it was already in the Strategic Plan. On the PECCO report, the representative indicated he was prepared to note this but could not endorse it as his delegation had not had adequate time to peruse the document.
254. Kiribati noted that the importance of the SOE reporting and encouraged the Secretariat to ensure the reporting be aligned with the MEA reporting timelines to avoid additional reporting burdens on countries.
255. The Meeting:
  - ***Noted*** the State of the Environment (SOE) framework, and reaffirmed the direction on the SOE in the Strategic Plan;
  - ***Noted*** the Pacific Environment and Climate Change Outlook report (PECCO);
  - ***Noted*** progress on SOE formulation; and
  - ***Noted*** the report of the Pacific Environment Forum.



### Agenda Item 9.4.3: Progress of the EC funded project “Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries”

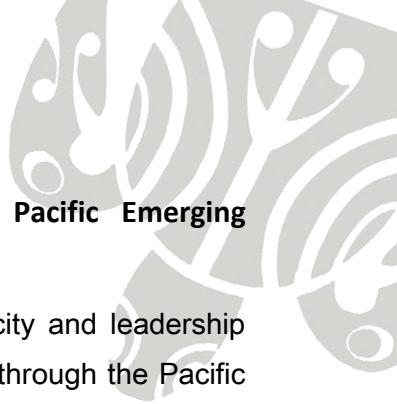
256. The Secretariat provided an outline of the progress made in the implementation of the project “Capacity building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries”, funded by the European Union. The four-year project started on 1 March 2009 and, in the Pacific, supports capacity building related to MEAs in Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Timor Leste is also involved in this project. SPREP is the Pacific Hub, with a budget of USD1,410,301.

257. The Secretariat advised that, as the Pacific Hub, it is delivering quality capacity-building services to the Pacific island countries, such as practical training on issues such as: project writing; negotiations training; drafting of legislation, policies and plans, information management and exchange of lessons learnt. It provided details of its achievements in 23SM/Officials/WP.9.4.3.

258. The Secretariat further advised that discussions were under way with the EU regarding phase II of the project, which will build on the achievements to-date and target future capacity building needs identified through the first phase of the project, and also through the mid-term review. Phase II will commence in March 2013 and continue for a further 3 years. The Secretariat added that it was also working with UNEP to develop a proposal to the GEF Capacity Building Funds to further support capacity building for improved knowledge management at the national and regional level. There is an opportunity to submit this proposal to the GEF Council in November 2012.

259. The Meeting:

- **Noted** the progress being made by the EU funded project Capacity building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in ACP countries; and
- **Endorsed** continuation of this project through a proposed Phase II of the project and the development of a GEF Proposal.

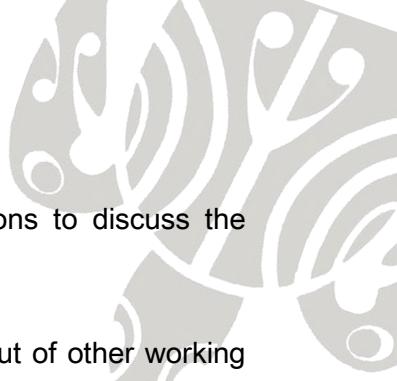


## **Agenda Item 9.5: Building Leadership Capacity for Environment: The Pacific Emerging Environment Leaders' Network**

260. The Secretariat provided an update of Secretariat efforts to build capacity and leadership skills of young environment and sustainable development professionals, through the Pacific Emerging Environment Leaders' (PEEL) Network.
261. Funding assistance was provided by the Commonwealth Foundation and the International Climate Change Adaptation Initiative of the Australian Government, with 25 participants selected from across the region on a competitive, merit-based approach.
262. The Secretariat highlighted the value of the PEEL Network as a pool of qualified young people with a vision to “lead, generate and inspire environmental action in the Pacific region” and outlined a number of activities carried out by the network since its establishment in October 2011. The Secretariat also noted that currently PEEL was coordinated by a volunteer from amongst the group but that work was under way to resource this activity.
263. In response to a request from French Polynesia, the Secretariat clarified that participants at the PEEL symposium were selected on a competitive, merit basis and all countries had been sent notifications. The Secretariat advised that one of the participants was from French Polynesia.
264. Australia suggested that PEEL link with other regional leadership programmes such as the Pacific Leadership Programme and the Emerging Pacific Leaders' Dialogue and also with national leadership programmes, such as Leadership Fiji, as well as the USP Future Climate Leaders' Programme.
265. The Meeting:
  - **endorsed** the Pacific Emerging Environment Leaders' Initiative and Network as an important mechanism through which the Secretariat can strengthen capacity of young emerging leaders for environment in the region;
  - **agreed to involve** PEEL members in relevant national and regional meetings, where appropriate and relevant; and
  - **agreed** to work with the Secretariat to **encourage** the further development of PEEL.

## **Agenda Item 10.1: Review of Staff Regulations**

266. The Secretariat advised that the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the Staff Regulations, which included representatives from Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, New



Zealand, Samoa, Tokelau and United States, had met on four occasions to discuss the Secretariat's proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations.

267. New Zealand, as the Chair of the Working Group, acknowledged the input of other working group members and reported on the recommendations of the Group. A two-pronged approach was recommended wherein the Director-General of SPREP could make unilateral decisions on staff regulation changes that did not have significant budgetary implications. These would be tabled as information papers at the SPREP Meeting as a transparency measure. Conversely, decisions with significant budgetary implications should be tabled for decision by the SPREP Meeting. The presentation of information papers would provide an opportunity for Members to inspect the Secretariat's actions and raise questions if necessary.
268. With respect to changes already implemented by the Director-General of the Secretariat, specifically the introduction of a Staff Security Allowance and Staff Retention Allowance, the Working Group recommended that these be tabled at the present meeting for consideration.
269. United States applauded the anticipated effect of the recommendations in streamlining the meeting proceedings. However, the representative indicated that United States could not adopt the regulations without further consultations, and suggested that they be allowed to submit advice of their adoption through letter. In response to a question from Australia, the United States advised that 30 days would be sufficient to provide this advice.
270. New Zealand, supported by Australia, urged the United States to facilitate a more timely adoption of the recommendations, given their involvement in the Working Group, and stressed that the recommendations were based on CROP related rules and requested that any further analysis take this into account.
271. Tonga expressed the view that this Meeting was the forum for endorsement of decisions, and it was inappropriate to defer decisions to any other forum. The Secretariat further elaborated that decisions on this issue could only be made by the SPREP Meeting and suggested that a proposed option to merely note the paper would not be helpful.
272. Tokelau, supported by Samoa, sought clarification on the process to move forward. Noting that United States was a part of the Working Group, Tokelau questioned the rationale of United States agreeing to put forward recommendations that it could not endorse. United States further clarified that it had hoped to be able to present a clear position on the recommendations at this SPREP Meeting, but that more time was needed for consultation.



273. France, supported by United States, suggested provisionally approving the recommendations, unless there were objections by a specific date.

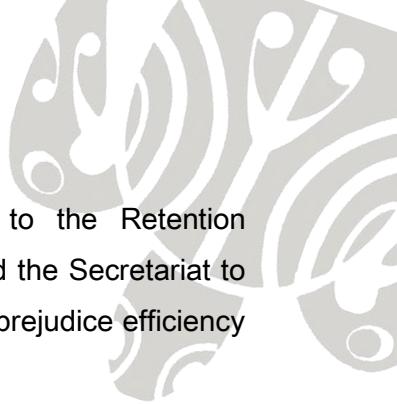
274. French Polynesia further questioned the process, and sought clarification on what would happen, if on the stipulated date, there were objections to the recommendations of the Working Group, or if more time was required. The representative expressed the view that the SPREP Meeting's purpose was to advance discussions and decision on issues, however a lot of time was being spent unnecessarily on administrative issues instead of discussing substantive matters such as species conservation.

275. The Secretariat provided rationale for the introduction of a Security Allowance, and Staff Retention Allowance. The Security allowance was introduced to reduce security threats and incidences of attacks on staff members and their families. In 2011, an allowance totalling USD11,820.77 was disbursed to 17 staff (or 30% of total staff). In 2012, the amount disbursed was USD4,520.85 to 8 staff (or 13% of total staff).

276. The Retention Allowance is paid on acceptance of a new contract by a staff member, and serves as an incentive to retain qualified staff. In 2011, a total allowance of USD13,348.94 was disbursed to 11 staff. In 2012 USD7,964.68 was disbursed to 5 staff (or 8% of total staff). The Secretariat noted that, as a result of the allowance, the retention rate of qualified staff was much higher.

277. United States thanked the Secretariat for its transparent reporting, and indicated that, based on advice from Washington, it could now approve the amended Staff Regulations with the exception of the Retention Allowance, which the representative noted was not standard practice among CROP agencies. The representative further elaborated that United States was supportive of the Security Allowance provided there was no overall budget increase. He also sought the circulation by email of the Secretariat speaking notes on these two allowances.

278. American Samoa, Niue, FSM, Fiji and Samoa supported the two allowances, citing that recruitment and retention of qualified staff was an issue even within national jurisdictions, and it was to the benefit of SPREP to retain capable staff. Fiji further elaborated that its support was conditional on the allowances being paid within the current budget without affecting the assistance delivered to Members. Samoa questioned whether the practice of paying a Retention Allowance was similar to that of other CROP agencies.



279. French Polynesia supported the Security Allowance. With respect to the Retention Allowance, the representative supported the measure for 2012, but urged the Secretariat to explore and present other means of ensuring that staff turnover does not prejudice efficiency of the Secretariat. This was supported by American Samoa.

280. The Secretariat elaborated that while other CROP agencies do not have a retention allowance, there is an equivalent measure where staff can re-negotiate the salary and other terms and conditions of their contract at the renewal stage. The Secretariat does not have this practice. SPREP's staff salary movements are performance based, and are not re-negotiated on contract renewal.

281. United States stated that CROP harmonisation was a guiding principle in these decisions.

282. The Meeting then discussed procedural issues when there was objection from only one country. The Secretariat's Legal Adviser explained that under Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure, all decisions are to be made by consensus. He further explained that the views of all Members should be taken into account to determine consensus, and that consensus does not necessarily mean unanimity, which is a trend observed in other international organisations. He elaborated that consensus should take into account the overwhelming sense or spirit of the Meeting, and factors such as the number of parties for or against, and whether an objection is frivolous or vexatious.

283. New Zealand, noting that the United States had raised a legitimate objection that was not frivolous or vexatious, moved that this should therefore be considered.

284. The Meeting:

- *Adopted* the draft Staff Regulations with the exception of the Staff Retention Clause; and
- *Agreed* that an intercessional working group be established to address the issue of staff retention that is consistent with agreed practices across CROP agencies and to report to the 2013 SPREP Meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 10.2: Amendment of Financial Regulations**

285. The Secretariat tabled the financial regulations revised to bring them in compliance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Specific changes are outlined in 23SM/Officials/WP.10.2.

286. The Meeting:

- *Approved* the proposed new financial regulations to become effective immediately after the conclusion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> SPREP Meeting.



**Agenda Item 10.3: Annual Market Data: Internationally Recruited Staff and Locally Recruited Staff**

287. The Secretariat presented the outcomes of the 2012 Annual Market Data Review for both International and Local Staff. The reviews were carried out in accordance with the remuneration guidelines adopted by the governing bodies of the participating CROP agencies in 2004 and which have been used for comparing salaries over the past years.

288. The Meeting:

- *Noted* the outcomes of the 2012 Annual Market Data for Internationally recruited staff salary scales and that the Secretariat is not in a position to propose implementation of any or all of the proposed increases; and
- *Noted* the delay in the 2012 Annual Market Data report for locally recruited staff salary scales – any substantive salary increases shall be presented to the SPREP Meeting and that implementation will be subject to availability of funding through savings.

**Agenda Item 10.4: Report of the Inter-sessional Working Group on the Director-General's Salary Banding**

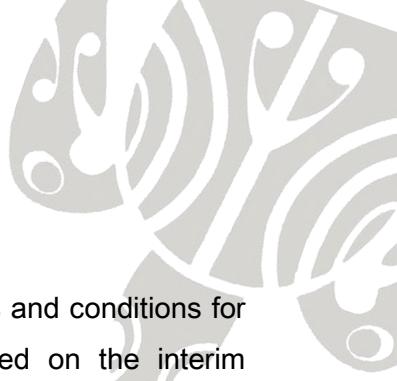
289. The Meeting met in closed session and:

- *Endorsed* movement of the Director-General's salary banding from Band 17 to Band 18, on the understanding that the core budget would not be impacted in any way.

**Agenda Item 10.5: SPREP Director-General's Performance Assessment and contract renewal**

290. The Meeting met in a closed session and:

- *Noted* the Director-General's Performance Evaluation for 2011-2012 and *endorsed* his Performance Development Plan for 2012-2013; and
- *Agreed* that David Sheppard's contract as Director-General of SPREP be renewed for another term in accordance with SPREP rules.



#### Agenda Item 10.6: Review of Professional Staff Terms and Conditions

291. The Secretariat present the outcomes of the joint CROP Review of terms and conditions for positions advertised internationally (professional staff) and also advised on the interim measure approved in the 22 SPREP Meeting for the SDR Stabilisation Mechanism. Details are outlined in 23SM/Officials/WP.10.6.

292. The Meeting:

- ***Noted*** the outcomes of the 2012 CROP Triennial Review of Internationally recruited staff terms and conditions;
- ***Noted*** that the Secretariat requires further analysis of key recommendations before consideration of any implementation strategy; and
- ***Noted*** that the interim measure for the SDR Stabilisation Mechanism approved by the 22 SPREP Meeting was not implemented due to unavailability of funding and therefore the Secretariat maintained the 2011 rates.

#### Agenda Item 10.7: Report by the Director General on Staff Appointment Beyond 6 years

293. The Secretariat reported on the reappointment of Ms Makereta Kaurasi-Manueli for a further 3-year term, to the position of Financial Accountant, Corporate Services, noting the recruitment had been conducted in a rigorous and transparent manner and in accordance with the Staff Regulations. Details are outlined in 23SM/Officials/WP.10.7.

294. The Meeting:

- ***Noted*** the reappointment of Ms Makereta Kaurasi-Manueli to the position of Financial Accountant, Corporate Services, for another three year term.

#### Agenda Item 10.8: Appointment of External Auditors

295. The Secretariat advised on the appointment of Auditors to audit the SPREP's accounts for the financial year 2012 and 2013 and outlined the process undertaken, in 23SM/Officials/WP.10.8.

296. New Zealand supported the appointment of Betham and Company of Samoa, but expressed concern that only one company had applied for this tender.

297. The Secretariat shared this concern stressing that the tender had been widely advertised through the usual focal points, the SPREP website and shared with other auditors in Fiji and Tonga.

298. The Meeting:

- **Endorsed** the appointment of Betham & Co to audit SPREP's accounts for the financial years 2012 and 2013.



**Agenda Item 10.9: SPREP Building Proposal (Update)**

299. The Secretariat provided an update on the progress of its application to the Government of Japan for construction of a Pacific Climate Change Centre at the SPREP compound. The Secretariat advised that it had first submitted the application in July 2011 and had preliminary discussions with the Government of Japan. The Secretariat has been requested to better link the proposed building with climate change outcomes and programmes in the region, and to resubmit it for consideration in October 2012.

300. The Meeting:

- **Noted** the progress made on the application to the Government of Japan; and
- **Endorsed** the follow-up application being made to JICA for Grant Aid to Build a Pacific Climate Change Centre.

**Agenda Item 11.1: WWII Wrecks in the Chuuk Lagoon – A paper submitted by FSM**

301. Federated States of Micronesia presented a paper outlining the issues surrounding shipwrecks noting that there are over 3800 WWII wrecks within the waters of the SPREP region. The representative advised that in Federated States of Micronesia, it was believed there are at least six WWII wrecks currently discharging oil within the Chuuk Lagoon. Details of work done and possible strategies were outlined in 23SM/Officials/WP.11.1.

302. Federated States of Micronesia sought support and assistance for removal of oil from the *Hoyo Maru* and other Japanese vessels sunk in Chuuk Lagoon to prevent future oil pollution from WWII wrecks in the Chuuk Lagoon.

303. United States noted that previous decisions at SPREP indicated this was a bilateral issue between the flag state of vessels and the state where a given wreck was located. United States asked about the status of discussions with Japan, assuming this was the flag state of most vessels, and also requested some further detail as to where the *Hoyo Maru* is located. Federated States of Micronesia responded that discussions had been initiated with Japan.

304. The Secretariat confirmed that the wreck lies at a depth of 40 metres, close to the Fefan Islands. It is unknown how much oil remains in the vessel, although it is currently leaking.



305. United States clarified that their understanding was that shipwrecked vessels remain the responsibility of the flag state and reinforced the recommendation from the last SPREP Meeting that the best mechanism was through a bilateral approach with vessel flag states to moving forward on this issue.

306. The Meeting:

- **Endorsed** the proposed pilot activity in Federated States of Micronesia to minimise future oil pollution from WWII Wrecks;
- **Endorsed** a detailed assessment of the *Hoyo Maru* to determine the extent of the vessel's hull corrosion and amount of oil left in board; and
- **Called** on partners and donor agencies to provide assistance where possible to ensure staged removal of oil.

**Agenda Item 11.2: A Broad Look at the Impacts of Invasive Alien Species and Collaborative Pacific Efforts to Prevent Them (A paper submitted by USA)**

307. The paper presents a brief summary of invasive alien species (IAS) on Pacific islands, demonstrates the direct linkage of IAS to critical Pacific island issues, emphasises the importance of coordinated efforts to address IAS issues and highlights some proactive efforts to address IAS concerns in the region. It seeks the Meeting's endorsement of Resolution 7 from the 17<sup>th</sup> Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit.

308. The representative of the United States National Invasive Species Programme presented a paper, 23SM/Officials/WP.11.2, outlining the specific issue of invasive species in the Pacific and current project plans to assist in addressing this issue, noting significant regional collaborations with SPREP, SPC and other key groups.

309. Cook Islands strongly supported the recommendations, acknowledging the importance of invasive species issues and advised that comments by the Cook Islands Prime Minister on this issue were reflected in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Pacific Island Leaders' communiqué. Paragraph 34 of the Leaders' communiqué requests SPREP and SPC to look for mechanisms to increase efforts in the area of invasive species.

310. France thanked United States and fully supported the recommendations, noting that the Pacific Fund also has provided significant funds for the control of fire ants, a project implemented by SPREP.

311. Federated States of Micronesia noted appreciation of the report and of the support provided to Federated States of Micronesia.



312. French Polynesia congratulated Members for the importance they have given to this issue and, regarding the comment on the project on fire ants, asked for assistance with an early warning system to prevent the propagation of fire ants from Tahiti to other islands.

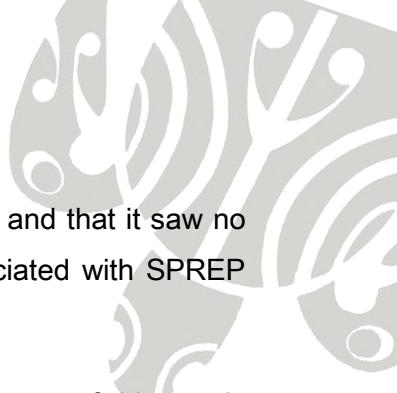
313. The Meeting:

- ***Noted*** the impacts of invasive alien species (IAS) throughout all strata of society and ecosystems and that these impacts are exacerbated by climate change. IAS impacts directly affect ecosystem resiliency to climate change, food security, the conservation of biodiversity and the establishment of sustainable economies;
- ***Requested*** that SPREP consider integrating its IAS work as much as possible in the areas of climate change adaptation, food security, threatened species conservation and other biodiversity areas, and sustainable development;
- ***Noted*** Resolution 7 of the 17<sup>th</sup> Micronesia Chief Executives Summit; and per the communiqué of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Pacific Islands Forum, ***encouraged*** SPREP to work with SPC and enhance their efforts on IAS in collaboration with relevant national, regional and international partners, such as the Pacific Invasives Partnership, to develop initiatives that will prevent and mitigate IAS damage through effective biosecurity and IAS control and eradication efforts.

**Agenda Item 11.3: The Future of the Pacific Environment Forum (PEF) – (A paper submitted by USA)**

314. United States advised that it considered the Pacific Environmental Forum (PEF) discussion is too important to be separated from the SPREP Meeting. Given the region's ongoing and clearly expressed desire to reduce the number of meetings, frameworks, reports and document preparation, United States considered that consolidation of the PEF agenda with the SPREP Meeting both in the current year and in future years would bring many benefits while reducing the burden on officials of attending more meetings.

315. United States further stated that regarding this year's PEF agenda, no single meeting could begin to address the diversity of national environmental challenges in the Pacific. The representative noted that one size does not fit all and suggested that formulation of a Joint Country Strategy with each of the Island members of SPREP would go much further in capturing the individual Member's challenges and SPREP's response. United States noted that the SPREP Secretariat had pronounced itself neutral on the question of whether the PEF continued.



316. Cook Islands stated that it considered PEF to be a very important forum, and that it saw no other way to cut costs. The representative proposed to keep PEF associated with SPREP annual meetings.
317. In response to a query from Tonga, the Secretariat advised that the outcome of this year's PEF was a brief document with key issues tabled soon after the PEF at the 23SM.
318. Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Samoa and Tuvalu stated that PEF was a good informal way to discuss environmental issues, and they had enjoyed participating in it in both years as this was a good way to allow them to focus on concrete and substantial issues.
319. Tonga said that the PEF is actually useful as a lead-in to the SPREP meeting, noting that issues raised at PEF can be then endorsed by SPREP meeting.
320. The Secretariat acknowledged the wide agreement by Members of the value of this forum for enabling informal discussion on environmental issues.
321. United States acknowledged the enthusiasm of other Members for the PEF and advised that it would be keen to be guided by the advice of Members and by the Secretariat.
322. The Meeting:
  - ***noted*** that most Members strongly felt that the Pacific Environment Forum offers a useful forum for broad and informal discussion of key and new issues that complement the work of the SPREP officials meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 12.1: CROP Executives Meeting Report**

323. The Director-General reported on the outcomes of the CROP CEO Group, which had met three times in 2012. He advised that the meetings are chaired by the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and noted that this arrangement had contributed to improvement in cooperation among CROP Agencies on key issues including harmonisation of staff benefits and conditions. He added that the CROP CEO Group is supported by various Working Groups such as the Working Arm on Climate Change, which played a key role in increasing cooperation on climate change programmes; the Sustainable Development Working Group, which played a key role in bringing together efforts of CROP on Rio+20; the Marine Sector Working Group, which is focused on practical implementation of the Oceanscape Framework; and the Human Resource Working Group, which played a key role on harmonisation on staff conditions.

324. Nauru suggested that consideration be given to also addressing waste management issues through the CROP Working Groups.

325. New Caledonia requested a copy of the report of the CROP CEO Meeting which was not available as part of the meeting documents. In response, the Director-General informed the Meeting that the report was not part of the formal meeting documents and would be circulated to Members for information.

326. The Meeting

➤ ***Noted*** the outcomes of the CROP CEOs Meetings in 2012.

**Agenda Item 9.6: Consideration and Approval of Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2013**

327. The Secretariat tabled its Work Programme and Budget for 2013.

328. United States, Australia, New Zealand, Niue and Wallis and Futuna commended the Secretariat on the previous year's financial management and the presentation of results. United States asked for confirmation that the budget figures for next year would not include the requested 20% increase in Member contributions. Australia requested that in Climate Change Item 2, greater emphasis be placed on coordination of knowledge services, given the SPREP overarching coordinating role.

329. New Zealand noted the gap between project and programme funding, and hoped that other Members would increase their programmatic funding to help address this gap. New Zealand also asked if the Waste Management budget figures included the new initiatives that would be coming online this year.

330. Niue noted there was no mention in the work programme regarding asbestos, and requested this be included. Niue also noted that there is much on the ground work being done regarding Ozone Depleting Substances that needs to be backstopped by SPREP, and requested this also be included in the work programme.

331. Wallis and Futuna requested that presentation of the budget be included at the start of the next SPREP meeting, directly after adoption of the agenda.

332. The Director-General also noted the work done by the SPREP Finance Division, and noted that specific questions will be addressed in next year's budget. He advised that next year's budget did not include future money such as the GEF-PAS.

333. The Director-General also noted appreciation for the programmatic funding from Australia and New Zealand, and applauded the move of New Zealand to commitments of multi-year funding.

334. Regarding the request of Wallis and Futuna, the Director General advised that previous meetings had decided to present issues that would have impacts on the following year's budget before presenting the budget for approval.

335. The Meeting:

➤ *Approved* the proposed Work Programme and Budget of USD18,882,502 for 2013.

#### **Agenda Item 13: Statements by Observers**

336. Statements were made by: Conservation International, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the New Caledonian Society for the Protection of Birds. Observer statements are provided in Annex III.

#### **Agenda Item 14: Other Business**

337. United States noted public awareness was a key element of tsunami preparedness, and requested the SPREP Meeting to take the progressive step of declaring a Pan Pacific Tsunami Awareness Day in 2013. The representative noted that the proposal being made had no implied costs to Secretariat or to Members who associated themselves with it. A document was circulated to all delegations and is included in Annex IV.

338. Samoa advised that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment commemorates a series of national events including the National Environment Week in late October/early November. The representative indicated that Samoa would be quite flexible to consider other events as necessary.

339. United States noted that it was not proposing a particular day. Rather it hoped the Secretariat could work with Members to determine all appropriate dates to declare a Pan Pacific Tsunami Awareness day, week or month.

340. New Zealand noted that in conjunction with the EU, it would be co-hosting a Renewable Energy Summit in April 2013. The aim will be to provide a platform for Pacific Island countries to present their national energy sector plans and targets and to mobilise additional finance to help Pacific Island countries implement these plans.



341. The Meeting:

- *Endorsed* the creation of a Pan Pacific Tsunami Awareness Day;
- *Requested* that SPREP engage with other appropriate CROP organisations at the next meeting of the CROP heads to advance the creation of a Pan Pacific Tsunami Awareness Day; and
- *Further requested* that the SPREP Secretariat work with its Members to hold the first annual Pan Pacific Tsunami Awareness Day in 2013.

**Agenda Item 14: High Level Ministerial Segment**

342. Ministers from French Polynesia, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Samoa, Tuvalu, and senior officials from Australia and Cook Islands made statements and discussed issues pertaining to innovative financing for climate change and biodiversity; renewable energy; implementing the Oceanscape agenda; and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) – Rio+20. Ministerial statements which were submitted to the Secretariat are attached as Annex V.

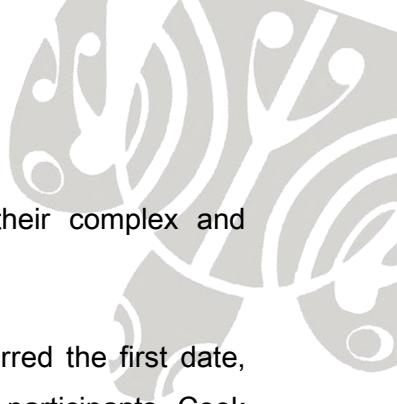
343. The Ministerial Communiqué is attached as Annex VI.

**Agenda Item 15: Date and Venue of Twenty-Fourth SPREP Meeting**

344. The next SPREP meeting will be Apia, Samoa, in accordance with established practice. The Secretariat proposed that the meeting be held during the week commencing the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013. The discussions on this took place during the Ministerial segment of the 23SM.

345. The Minister of Federated States of Micronesia requested information on whether a decision was made during the Officials meeting to hold the next SPREP meeting prior to the Forum Island Leaders' Meeting in order to table important issues at the latter. The Secretariat clarified that it was not aware of a specific decision for the 2013 SPREP Meeting, but that the Pacific Environment Forum had made a suggestion relating to State of the Environment reporting.

346. United States indicated that the first week of September was not ideal as it coincided with national holidays and commencement of the school year. The representative suggested shifting to the week commencing 9<sup>th</sup> September 2013. He further noted that meeting preparations later in September coincided with the American August school vacation, but



indicated he would defer to the Pacific countries in recognition of their complex and infrequent travel routes.

347. Samoa, as the host of the next SPREP Meeting, indicated that it preferred the first date, given that it coincided with national festivities that may interest intended participants. Cook Islands supported the Samoan proposal.

348. The Meeting:

- *Agreed* that the 2013 SPREP Meeting would be held during the week commencing the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013.

#### **Agenda Item 16: Adoption of Report**

349. Marshall Islands, recalling Agenda Item 6.1, reiterated its offer of hosting a sub-regional office in Majuro, citing that this would be a positive step towards achieving sustainable targets, and reducing vulnerability to negative impacts of climate change. The Minister indicated that while the outcome desired by Marshall Islands had not been achieved, he welcomed the recommendations of the Officials Meeting, and expressed appreciation to Members for their support. He further congratulated the Secretariat for a successful meeting.

350. The Meeting adopted the Report.

#### **Agenda Item 17: Closing**

351. In his closing remarks, the Director General of SPREP expressed his appreciation for the wise guidance of Members through the Ministerial component and the Officials meeting, despite the challenging and difficult nature of some sensitive matters. He registered deep appreciation to SPREP staff, SPC as the host venue, and the hard-working translators and interpreters. He further thanked Ministers and Heads of Delegations for their constructive guidance, and the Chairs of the Officials Meeting and Ministerial Meeting for their excellent and positive leadership through agenda items.

352. The Chair of the Ministerial segment, Mr Anthony Lecren, Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development of New Caledonia, expressed his thanks to the Members for their faith and support to New Caledonia as the Chair of the SPREP Council and reaffirmed New Caledonia's commitment to the task of Chair for the next 12 months.

353. The 23SM Meeting was then closed.

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## AGENDA

**Agenda Item 1:** **Opening Prayer**

**Agenda Item 2:** **Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair**

**Agenda Item 3:** **Adoption of Agenda and Working Procedures**

**Agenda Item 4:** **Action Taken on Matters Arising from Twenty-Second SPREP Meeting**

**Agenda Item 5:** **2011 Overview**

- 5.1 Presentation of Annual Report for 2011 and Director General's Overview of Progress since the Twenty-Second SPREP Meeting
- 5.2 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the 2011 Annual Work Programme and Budget
- 5.3 Audited Annual Accounts for 2011

**Agenda Item 6:** **Institutional Reform and Strategic Issues**

- 6.1 Strengthening Regional Linkages
- 6.2 Establishing a Monitoring and evaluation framework for SPREP
- 6.3 GEF Application
- 6.4 Request by the United Kingdom for SPREP Membership

**Agenda Item 7:** **Strategic Financial Issues**

- 7.1 Report on Members' Contributions
- 7.2 Increase in Member Contributions

**Agenda Item 8:** **Regional Conventions**

- 8.1 Report on the Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention
- 8.2 Report on the Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention

**Agenda Item 9:** **2013 Work Programme and Budget**

- 9.1 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management
  - 9.1.1 *9<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, November 2013*
  - 9.1.2 *Regional Marine Species Action Plans 2013-2017*
- 9.2 Climate Change
  - 9.2.1 *SPREP Climate Change Adaptation Programmes PACC and PACC+ Progress Report and Key Issues*
  - 9.2.2 *Meteorological Initiatives in the Pacific region*
    - 9.2.2.1 *General Update on Meteorological Activities*
    - 9.2.2.2 *Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy (PIMS) 2012 – 2021*
  - 9.2.3 *Pacific Islands Global Ocean Observing System – Support for Fundamental Climate Science in the Pacific*
  - 9.2.4 *SPREP role in assisting members to access climate change financing and other international climate support mechanisms*
- 9.3 Waste Management and Pollution Control
  - 9.3.1 *Clean Pacific Campaign: update*
  - 9.3.2 *Regional E-waste Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2015*
  - 9.3.3 *Improved regional solid waste coordination and monitoring*
  - 9.3.4 *Regional Radiation Contamination Information Collation and Review*

- 9.4 Environmental Monitoring & Governance
  - 9.4.1 *Report on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) – Rio+20*
  - 9.4.2 *A Framework for Regional State of the Environment (SoE) Assessment and Reporting*
  - 9.4.3 *Progress of the EC funded project “Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries”*
- 9.5 Building Leadership Capacity for Environment: The Pacific Emerging Environment Leaders' Network
- 9.6 Consideration and Approval of Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2013

**Agenda Item 10: Corporate Services**

- 10.1 Review of Staff Regulations
- 10.2 Review of Financial Regulations
- 10.3 Annual Market Data
- 10.4 Report of the Inter-sessional Working Group on the Director General's Salary Banding
- 10.5 SPREP Director General's Performance Assessment and contract renewal
- 10.6 Review of Professional Staff Terms and Conditions
- 10.7 Report by the Director on Staff Appointment Beyond 6 years
- 10.8 Appointment of External Auditors
- 10.9 SPREP Building Proposal (Update)

**Agenda Item 11: Items Proposed by Members**

- 11.1 WWII Wrecks – proposed by FSM
- 11.2 Linkages between invasive species and climate change adaptation, biodiversity and other critical issues facing the Pacific - proposed by USA
- 11.3 The Future of the Pacific Environment Forum (PEF) – proposed by USA

**Agenda Item 12: Regional Cooperation**

- 12.1 CROP Executives Meeting Report

**Agenda Item 13: Statements by Observers**

**Agenda Item 14: Other Business**

**Agenda Item 15: High-Level Ministerial Segment (7<sup>th</sup> September)**

- 15.1 Innovative financing for climate change and biodiversity
- 15.2 Renewable energy – achieving our ambitious targets and road maps in the Pacific
- 15.3 Conserving the Pacific Ocean – implementing the Oceanscape agenda
- 15.4 Report on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) – Rio+20

**Agenda Item 16: Date and Venue of Twenty-Fourth SPREP Meeting**

**Agenda Item 17: Adoption of Report of the Twenty-Third SPREP Meeting**

**Agenda Item 18: Close**

## STATEMENT BY OBSERVERS

### 1. Conservation International (CI)

Conservation International (CI) welcomes the opportunity to participate in the SPREP Annual Meeting. CI's Pacific Islands and Ocean Programme is based in Apia because we value our relationship with SPREP as our most important regional engagement. Our two organisations have many similar goals and objectives and share a commitment to the preservation of natural capital in the Pacific Islands region. CI believes that only by preserving natural systems for the benefit of human well-being can we stem and reverse the tide of degradation of the region's marine and terrestrial environment, with its consequent loss of ecosystem services and reduction in the quality of life for Pacific Islanders. Our projects seek to demonstrate the feasibility of developing innovative and sustainable approaches to the management of both terrestrial and marine environments and then advocating for such approaches to be amplified on a much broader scale by governments, inter-governmental organisations and development agencies.

We appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with SPREP on several important projects, the most significant of which is the Pacific Oceanscape. In our view, for the Pacific Islands at least, this must be the Decade of the Ocean. As we saw both at Rio+20 and at the Pacific Islands Leaders Forum last week in Rarotonga, oceans issues are receiving global attention like never before. CI has worked closely with SPREP and the Marine Sector Working Group to develop the framework for this globally-significant initiative. During last week's meeting of Pacific Islands Leaders, the Cook Islands committed an area of 1.1 million sq km as its contribution to the Oceanscape. This became the world's largest declaration of a marine protected area; but only briefly, because New Caledonia promptly announced its intention to declared a protected area of some 1.4 million sq km of its Exclusive Economic Zone, much of it within the Coral Sea. CI congratulates the governments of New Caledonia and the Cook Islands on these two outstanding initiatives, which show enlightened self-interest for the benefit of all humanity. In conjunction with Kiribati's Phoenix Islands Protected area, they have placed the Pacific Islands front and centre as the global leaders in protection of the ocean; and the Pacific Oceanscape as the most far-reaching and ambitious international collaboration for conservation that the world has ever seen. We look forward to continuing to work with SPREP, the Marine Sector Working Group and Pacific Islands governments to grow the Oceanscape even further.

But declaring such large areas for conservation is only the first stage – delivering effective management is a significant challenge, especially for poorly-resourced Pacific Islands countries. Liaising with other states which face similar challenges, sharing their experiences and learning from their successes and their mistakes is an important way in which both SPREP and CI can support the development of the individual country-led components of the Pacific Oceanscape. CI has facilitated the membership of the Cook Islands and New Caledonia in the global Big Ocean network, which has already delivered significant benefits.

While marine conservation is a prime focus of the Oceanscape, we must not ignore the urgent conservation needs of the islands strewn across the vast tracts of our ocean. Like SPREP, CI is also engaged in a ridge-to-reef approach in many of our terrestrial projects throughout the region. We are also delighted to have collaborated closely with SPREP in the development of an ecosystem-based approach to climate change adaptation, and to currently have the opportunity to work with SPREP in trialling such an approach in Choiseul Province in the Solomon Islands.

CI also acknowledges the leadership shown by SPREP as a coordinating agency for a regional engagement in many important international conventions, in particular the Convention for Biological Diversity. We have collaborated with SPREP in developing a Programme of Work for Protected Areas (PoWPA) for Kiribati, and we are committed to working closely with SPREP, the Government of Kiribati and other partners to deliver improved protection for the islands of Kiribati. In this regard, CI welcomes the announcement made in Rarotonga last week by the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, that the US would collaborate with Kiribati in the development of joint management plans for the Phoenix Islands and Line Islands Ocean Arcs – the largest transboundary commitment to integrated island and ocean management ever announced, and another major achievement of the Pacific Oceanscape.

The presence of invasive alien species can have a devastating impact on not only the ecology of Pacific Islands states, because of its catastrophic consequences for many endemic species, but also the economy, because of their impact on commercial crops. CI is an active part of the SPREP network established to coordinate regional efforts, and through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund we have supported the efforts of community groups in many different countries in Polynesia and Micronesia to combat the threat of invasive species over the past five years. We are very pleased to see the US National Invasive Species Council represented at this meeting and congratulate them and the countries of Micronesia on the efforts they have made to mitigate the impacts of invasive species. We would welcome new initiatives in the future to bring together the experiences of the numerous skilled conservation practitioners in the region for any collaborative and inclusive undertakings. CI gratefully acknowledges the contribution made just last month by the New Zealand Department of Conservation in providing technical advice for deer, pig and rat control in our demonstration site at Mt Panie on the north-east coast of New Caledonia.

In conclusion, Conservation International wishes to reaffirm its commitment to an ongoing collaboration with SPREP and its member countries in the protection of our shared environment of ocean and islands for the benefit of all its inhabitants; because in the Pacific Islands even more than for most areas of the world, people need Nature to thrive.

## **2. Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)**

On behalf of the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), I would like to extend my greetings to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and to the Members and participants of this 23rd Meeting of Officials and associated meetings which will review achievements and lay the ground for an even better future for SPREP.

Significant for CMS in the region this year, has been the recruitment of Ms Penina Solomona to the position of CMS Pacific Officer. SPREP has contributed a portion of the funding of the post, and is hosting the Officer in its headquarters in Apia. In a short time, Penina has made great strides in raising awareness about CMS along with SPREP and migratory species issues as part of her duties. She is contributing to the implementation of CMS in the region, including the three CMS MOUs for the conservation of Pacific Islands Cetaceans, Dugongs, Sharks and their related Action Plans. The role also contributes to the implementation of the SPREP and CMS Joint Work Programme 2012-2014 and any other activities of common interest in the region, and working in support of the SPREP regional marine species programme. The post is providing significant added value in the region, and CMS and SPREP are currently seeking funds to ensure long-term financing for this position.

As you will be aware, late last year CMS concluded its 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP10) and the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CMS Scientific Council. Below are some of the key outcomes of relevance to SPREP:

- Our COP theme on “Ecological Networks” and the need to recognize the link between species and their habitats and, in particular, protect stopover sites and migratory corridors have been recognized. Good publicity was generated by the launch of the publication entitled: [\*Living Planet, Connected Planet: Preventing the End of the World’s Wildlife Migrations through Ecological Networks\*](#), prepared by the Secretariat and UNEP Grid Arendal.
- Four resolutions focusing on marine species were adopted, such as one dealing with bycatch in gillnet fisheries, which remains a significant threat to seabirds and marine life, requiring additional efforts to ensure that bycatch is reduced to or controlled at levels that do not threaten the conservation status of these species. Another resolution addresses underwater noise, calling for the application of best practice and best available techniques in order to minimize impacts on cetaceans and other biota.
- Marine debris, which threatens seabirds and marine life through ingestion, entanglement and habitat degradation, is another issue which the CMS Parties are pursuing to further the protection and preservation of the marine environment and its living resources. Finally, a comprehensive work programme on cetaceans was developed for the CMS Scientific Council, which seeks to address concerns on a regional basis and use synergies with as well as lend support to ongoing processes and initiatives such as the valuable work done by SPREP and under the CMS Pacific Cetaceans MOU.
- There was also recognition at COP10 of the increasing need to consider climate change, and ensuring the on-going debates on mitigating climate change do not leave behind migratory species.
- A review of invasive alien species will be undertaken, with a special emphasis on islands and the impact of rats, cats and other introduced mammals. The involvement of the SPREP members and the Secretariat would be welcome, given the impact of invasive alien species on seabirds and islands.

Three MOU Signatories meetings of relevance for the region are taking place within the next few months:

- First, back-to-back with this meeting, on 8 September the Signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region will convene for the third time. Many of you will attend this meeting, too, and we are looking forward to progressing this important area of work with you. Our thanks go to SPREP for invaluable logistical and also financial support in order to make this meeting possible.
- From 24-27 September, the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks will be held in Bonn, Germany. This global MOU was concluded in 2010 and fills an important gap in the management of these species under intense human pressure.
- Finally, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Signatory State Meeting to the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range will take place on 4-5 December 2012 in Manila, Philippines.

Another significant development for CMS this year has been the establishment of a working group of CMS Party states to begin drafting a new CMS Strategic Plan for the period 2015-2023. A final draft strategic plan is to be presented to the next CMS COP11 in 2014. SPREP members are welcome to contribute to the process, along with other CMS partners, and it is important that all stakeholders are included in the CMS strategy to conserve and manage migratory animal species, and encourage full participation in its future implementation. This should help to give the Strategic Plan 2015-2023 the desired high profile and impact as a key instrument for delivering the Convention's mission for migratory species. A dedicated page has been created on the CMS website to provide information as work progresses ([www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)).

With those few updates, I wish you a productive and successful meeting, and please be assured that the CMS Secretariat is on hand to work and collaborate with you as required and as necessary.

*Notes:*

*The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) is an intergovernmental treaty, concluded under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme. It aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. The Convention provides a framework for the development of global or regional Agreements for species that would significantly benefit from international co-operation. For this reason, the Convention encourages species Range States to conclude either legally binding treaties (called Agreements) or legally non-binding instruments.*

*SPREP and the CMS share common goals in the conservation of ecosystems and the protection of migratory species, which can only be successfully met by enhanced and concerted actions. The Secretariats of CMS and SPREP acknowledge the need to coordinate the migratory species-related activities being developed by each organization in the Pacific Islands Region. These include developments on marine mammals through the Pacific Islands Cetaceans and the Dugong MoUs, and on fish and reptiles through the CMS Sharks MoU.*

### **3. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

Thankyou Madame Chair,

The United Nations Environment Programme congratulates SPREP on a well run meeting which has been extremely useful for its partners like the UNEP. UNEP thanks SPREP for another year of close cooperation and looks forward to another shortly to be cemented in our Memorandum of Agreement. We will continue to support the SPREP in its journey to becoming an Implementing Agency of UN Trust funded projects by providing advice if requested. There are similarities between our agencies in this respect since SPREP is, in effect, intending to become both an Implementing and an Executing Agency which creates a particular challenge. In our future similar roles as Implementing Agencies in the region, we would like to take the lead from our MOA, and continue to collaborate and complement each other, rather than compete. The part time co-location of our office on the SPREP campus is highly valued and has benefitted both parties enormously such as facilitating the GEF PAS projects for which SPREP is Executing Agency and UNEP is Implementing Agency. This includes two regional projects such as the ACP MEA capacity building project, and one sub-regional project. UNEP looks forward to developing more projects with SPREP in the next and future Global Environment Facility funding rounds and stands ready to advise SPREP collaborating wider with UN agencies in the Pacific such as through the UN Development Assistance Framework.

Thank you Madame Chair.

### **4. Birdlife international / Caledonian Ornithology Society**

Madam Chair, Mr Director-General and SPREP team, SPREP Officials, Distinguished delegates and representatives of Pacific governments, Observers, I would like to thank you on behalf of the Caledonian Ornithology Society and BirdLife International for giving us the opportunity to attend the 23rd SPREP Meeting with its many debates and topics. I would like to make this statement on behalf of the two organisations that I represent and revisit a theme discussed during the Meeting.

Our planet is faced with environmental problems that jeopardise or destroy the web of life on earth. These include alien invasive species; plants, animals and pathogens have spread beyond their natural range and threaten biodiversity, infrastructures, economies and cultural heritage.

The impacts of alien invasive species are felt more strongly in islands, in particular in the Pacific. Economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts on communities, resources and patrimonial heritage are unfortunately well known and rapidly increasing.

Invasive species currently affect about three quarters of all threatened island bird species. In the Pacific, this means about 350 endemic bird species, such as Cagous in New Caledonia, Petrels in Fiji, Flycatchers in Tahiti, Kakeroris in the Cook Islands, Maos in Samoa, Kakapos in New Zealand, Makiras in the Solomon Islands, Orange-bellied parrots in Australia, ElePaios in Hawaii. The list goes on and all those species are declining due to predation, invasion of ecological niches and spread of disease.

Introduced rats and cats are the two main threats, but pigs, goats, deer, dogs, mongooses, invasive plants and mosquito-borne diseases, such as avian malaria, accelerate their decline.

History tells us that, unless we act, extinction will occur. It is estimated that 65 bird species have disappeared from the planet since 1600, in whole or in part due to alien invasive species.

However, we also know that much can be done to prevent invasions and rehabilitate affected areas. In recent years, the Caledonian Ornithology Society, in partnership with Birdlife International and local stakeholders, has implemented a number of actions to eradicate introduced predators from high biodiversity areas.

In the Northern and Southern provinces, 30 islets are today free from predators and provide safe breeding habitats for more than 15 species of sea birds. In forested areas of *Grande Terre*, we are trialling pig and deer control in the *Massif des Lèvres* IBA. This trial aims to improve the state of the forests for the benefit of bird species (18 endemic species are connected to the forest) and to develop sustainable livelihoods that promote the well-being of local communities. While this only partially reflects the efforts undertaken with other partners, Provinces, Government, *Groupe Espèces Envahissantes*, non-governmental organisations (CI) and local communities, to target alien invasive species in New Caledonia, it is clear that a lot more needs to be done as a matter of urgency.

This challenge was recently addressed during the Pacific Island Forum and again during this Meeting. We must recognise that invasive species management is a priority for the region in terms of awareness-raising and public policies mainstreaming in Pacific countries to improve biosecurity, eradication tools, control methods, and knowledge and information sharing.

This effort must be made in partnership with CROP agencies, NGOs and local communities to protect the cultural and natural heritage of the Pacific and change the pattern of extinction.

With its new 2013-2020 strategy, BirdLife International intends to implement new regional programmes. Invasive species management provides a ready focus for the Pacific region. This year, BirdLife will celebrate its 90th anniversary while the Caledonian Ornithology Society will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2015. Inspired by the awareness-raising campaign that took place during the Year of the Dugong in 2011, we dream of a year that would focus on the wealth and preservation of Pacific birds. Their flight conveys the ideas of freedom, exchange, innovation, discovery and delight in life. Sea birds connect us to one another and their survival depends on the fragile balance between land and sea, over the huge expanse that is the Pacific. Like birds, we depend on this link between land and sea that we must preserve for the future of humanity.

To conclude, I would like to renew my thanks for allowing us to attend this Meeting and to congratulate you all for the actions taken and those that we will undertake in the future.

## **PAN PACIFIC TSUNAMI AWARENESS DAY**

Seventy percent of the world's tsunamis occur in the Pacific. Ninety percent of the Pacific Islands populations live on the coast or within a short distance of it. In response to a destructive ocean-crossing tsunami caused by the 1960 Chile earthquake, the Tsunami Warning System of the Pacific was inaugurated. Since its inception, the system has had great success in saving lives through timely warnings, hazard risk assessment, mitigation, preparedness, and awareness.

Maintaining high public awareness necessary for tsunami preparedness is challenging because fatal, destructive tsunami events are relatively rare. Although public awareness is high after a tsunami event, as memory of the event fades, so does the public's awareness and readiness.

One effective tool to sustain public awareness has been Hawai'i's annual Tsunami Awareness Month held in April, which reminds the Hawaiian public each year of Hawai'i's tsunami vulnerability.

The declaration of a Pan-Pacific Tsunami Awareness Day (or week or month), encompassing all of the Pacific Island Countries and Territories, could be a useful significant step in sustaining public awareness and tsunami preparedness at no cost.

### **Recommendations:**

- That the members endorse the creation of a Pan Pacific Tsunami Awareness Day.
- That SPREP engage with other appropriate CROP organizations at the next meeting of the CROP heads to advance the creation of a Pan Pacific Tsunami Awareness Day.
- That the SPREP Secretariat work with its members to have the first annual Pan Pacific Tsunami Awareness Day in 2013.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### 1. COOK ISLANDS

#### **Remarks by Vaitoti Tupa on *Conserving The Pacific Ocean – Implementing The Oceanscape Agenda***

Honourable Chair,

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Representatives, Director General of SPREP Mr. David Sheppard, Deputy Director General, Mr. Kosi Latu and all staff of SPREP, Our new member to the SPREP Council from the United Kingdom, Ladies and Gentlemen, Kia Orana.

On behalf of the Cook Islands Delegation and Government, I would like to extend my warm thank you to the Government of New Caledonia through you Hon. Chair for the warm welcome.

The Cook Islands Government strongly supports the issues on Oceanscape.

Our ocean, your ocean, is under increasing threat. And because this ocean is the foundation of our lives and livelihoods we, the people of the Pacific, are also under threat – threat in ways our ancestors could never have imagined. I can recall that President Tong of Kiribati first had the vision that the Pacific Islands countries and territories needed to come together to implement better protection of our oceans. In September 2010, Pacific Islands Leaders unanimously endorsed his proposal for a new framework for integrated ocean management - the Pacific Oceanscape. A key focus of the Oceanscape is to support large marine protected areas, and it has been built on the lessons learned from the establishment of Kiribati's Phoenix Islands Protected Area. The Cook Islands have been, and remain, strong supporters of the Oceanscape and its framework for implementation.

Almost daily we receive information on the threats to our ocean, and the amount of information available can be overwhelming. Yet when it comes to understanding what this means for us in the Cook Islands, we are at somewhat of a loss, because there is generally a lack of information from within the Cook Islands to help us to interpret the scale of the threat.

The Government and people of the Cook Islands have therefore decided that the most prudent option for us to address the threats facing our ocean is to adopt a precautionary approach and to establish in the southern Cook Islands a marine park of 1.1 million square kilometres. My Prime Minister, Hon. Henry Puna, formally launched the Marine Park at last week's 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Pacific Islands Leaders Forum, which we had the honour to host in the Cool Islands. It is our hope that this Marine Park will foster the much-needed investment in the Cook Islands for protection of the ocean, and will provide at scale, an ocean package for conservation and sustainable development, that will generate interest and supportive action by the global community. We see this as a logical extension of our commitment to marine conservation - back in 2001; we were the first country in the world to declare our whole Exclusive Economic

Zone, which covers 2.4 million square kilometres, as a whale sanctuary. Many other SPREP members, of course, have since followed our example on whale sanctuaries, and we hope that there will be a similar response to this initiative.

We have already been very encouraged by the announcement last week by New Caledonia that they will also be establishing a marine protected area in the Coral Sea. Indeed, we are delighted that New Caledonia has proposed the development of a sister site agreement with the Cook Islands, so that we may learn together from our experiences in this exciting voyage. We are also grateful to our fellow voyagers, SPREP and Conservation International, who have been our trusted advisers since we first began developing the concept of a Cook Islands Marine Park; and who have committed to an ongoing role in support of our endeavours.

To many from outside our region we are seen as small because of the size of our islands and our small populations in a vast ocean – we are commonly referred to as small island developing states. However, we are no longer seeing ourselves as small states. Rather we, as ocean people, increasingly describe ourselves as Large Ocean States. The Exclusive Economic Zones of the Pacific Island countries and territories cover some 8% of the planet's surface and 10% of its oceans. Balancing our need for sustainable economic development with the need to conserve our part of the planet is a huge challenge to my country and to our fellow island states. It is a challenge that the Cook Islands has decided to meet head on.

The Cook Islands Marine Park is being developed with the full support of both sides of our Parliament, all of our traditional leaders and widespread and overwhelming community support in the Cook Islands. The global community is also realizing the need to scale up marine protected area efforts. The renewed commitment for marine protected areas of 10% of coastal and marine areas under protection by 2020, agreed by the global community in 2010, reflects this concern. However, even with the 2.4 million sq km committed by my country and New Caledonia towards the 10% protection target, the global total for protected marine areas is still only 1%.

To go from 1% to 10% protection in only 8 years is the challenge at hand for the global community, and the Pacific Islands are leading the way. However with over 31 million sq km still to secure, there is no time to rest on our laurels. We need to create another 30 Cook Island marine parks, or more than 75 PIPAs to reach this target. We have no choice but to rise to this challenge. It underlies why the Cook Islands has declared one of the world's largest marine parks; it underlies why we are excited to be working with New Caledonia on developing our joint commitment to marine conservation; and to working with other countries in our region under the Pacific Oceanscape to realize a new scale of ocean management. I hope that Dialogue Partners, donors and supporters will join us in meeting this challenge - a challenge for all of us to realize our legacy and stewardship of the ocean, for the benefit of our children and grandchildren.

**2. FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA****Remarks by Hon. Andrew Yatilman on *Rio+20 – follow up and future directions***

Honorable Ministers, officials, Director General Sheppard, ladies and gentlemen.

I join the previous speakers in thanking The Honorable Minister Anthony Lecren for chairing our meeting this morning and also thanking and expressing my profound appreciation to the people and government of New Caledonia for the hospitality extended to FSM's one-man delegation since my arrival here. Thank you, too, for the excellent accommodations and facilities.

In Madang two years ago, I called on Ministers' support to lobby with the Global Environment Facility to continue its funding to the fisheries monitoring program in the Pacific given that fisheries is a vital resource for us.

This time, I want to share a short story of my country and our initiative in the multilateral environmental arena with the hope of generating interests and support from you again as fellow Pacific Islanders.

The Federated States of Micronesia ("FSM") is a small Pacific Island developing nation located just north of the equator approximately half way between Hawaii and the Philippines. A culturally diverse region, it consists of four different states, Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap, each with their distinct languages and cultures. Formerly part of the United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia ratified its own Constitution as an independent nation in 1979, and is an active member of the United Nations and other multilateral organizations. While the FSM has successfully achieved political independence and a stable government committed to the rule of law, it is currently focused on economic development and attempting to increase the fiscal autonomy of the government through sustainable development policies. The primary areas of economic focus are the fisheries, agriculture, and tourism sectors, although the FSM economy continues to be reliant on overseas development assistance.

As a small island developing nation located near the Intertropical Convergence Zone in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, climate change is an existential issue for the FSM. Many of the inhabited islands are low-lying atolls that could either disappear entirely or become uninhabitable through the effects of climate change.

Scientific studies show that in the Eastern portion of the FSM, average temperatures have increased in a manner consistent with global warming, while average rainfall has decreased. Satellite data indicates that sea levels in the FSM have increased by over 10 mm per year since 1993. This increase is substantially larger than the global average of 2-3 mm per year.

In addition to weather changes and sea level rise, FSM has been affected by ocean acidification. As the increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere interacts with the oceans, the result is acidification of seawater. This can affect the growth of corals and other marine life that are necessary for healthy island ecosystems. Scientific data confirms increasing acidification of Micronesian waters over the last two hundred years.

Although climate forecasting is an evolving science, studies from the Pacific Science Climate Change Program using various climate prediction models indicate substantial future impacts on the FSM from climate change. Under medium future carbon emissions scenario, the models predict temperature increases of 1-2 degrees Celsius by 2055, translating to sea level rise of 9-32 centimeters.

The impact of such large sea level changes would be devastating to the people of the FSM, especially those living on remote atoll islands. The FSM has been hit by numerous extreme weather events in recent years, including a severe drought in 1997-98 and a typhoon after that. Most recently, a series of extreme tides inundated the FSM in 2007 and 2008, resulting in a national state of emergency as the inhabitants of the atoll islands faced critical food and fresh water shortages.

Low lying coral atolls are sparsely inhabited, low technology communities that often do not have any reliable transportation to larger, higher islands. Inhabitants of these islands rely on the natural resources that have sustained them for thousands of years, fishing in the ocean and practicing agro forestry. Those natural resources are now under threat. Rising sea levels and inundation events have resulted in saltwater intrusion into fragile freshwater aquifers, destroying taro patches that have sustained generations of islanders. During the recent inundation events, taro or breadfruit crops were destroyed in more than 60% of atoll communities, resulting in a state of emergency requiring the delivery of fresh food and water to some of the remotest places on earth. Many of the atolls affected have still not recovered from the chemical damage resulting from saltwater intrusion.

While the low lying atoll islands of FSM are most immediately affected by climate change, even the higher islands face major challenges. Coastal erosion has already severely affected the island of Kosrae, and most of the infrastructure of the main islands is located on or near the ocean. For example, three of the four international airports in the FSM are located on the shoreline, and much of the other basic infrastructure is similarly vulnerable to sea level change. Indeed, most of the development infrastructure FSM has struggled to build over the last thirty years or so could potentially be obsolete as the sea rises.

Therefore, as we continue to strive for greater ambition under the UNFCCC (i.e. larger emissions reductions pledges), we must also look for climate mitigation opportunities elsewhere.

For years now, FSM has been pushing in the MP for the phase out of SLCFs or SLCPs for very obvious reasons. One, the MP is the most successful treaty of all MEAs. Second, these SLCFs live in the atmosphere for a short period of time so it makes sense to also deal with them and bring immediate cooling benefit to the global atmosphere. Third, it will buy us time as we work to address the more serious and long-lived CO2 emissions. There are more very good reasons why we should address SLCFs now but in the interest of time I will not list all of them here.

Our proposal is gaining support in the MP, but not quite enough yet to pass. In the last MP OEWG meeting in Bangkok this summer, the number of parties that supported our proposal grew to 108 but that is still not enough. The US and Canada and Mexico has a similar proposal. And the US is starting a coalition to address the SLCPs.

At Rio+20, the global community agreed to support the gradual phase-down in the consumption and production of HFCs, ozone depleting substances (ODS) that have high global warming potential to the environment. There is momentum here and the FSM will be happy if all the other Pacific Islands are supporting us to bring immediate cooling benefit to our planet and give us more time to address CO2 emissions. All that we talk about here will mean nothing if global warming is not reversed and our oceans, which we rely on heavily for livelihood, are acidified to a point where no ecosystem can live in it.

Thank you.

### **3. FRENCH POLYNESIA**

#### **Remarks by Hon. Jacky Bryant on *Climate Change and Renewable energy – addressing key issues and targets in the Pacific***

Like many Pacific countries, French Polynesia is faced with numerous issues. Its 118 islands stretch across just under 5 million square kilometres, or the size of Europe. These islands are relatively far from each other, which entails significant travel costs.

French Polynesia's development is overly focused on the Papeete urban area where the majority of economic activity, political actors and resources are concentrated. This is largely due to the location of its international port and airport facilities. As a result of this overcentralisation, our country is heavily reliant on fossil fuels, particularly in the transport sector. In spite of our sunny climate, 70% of our electricity is generated by oiled-fired power stations while the remaining 30% comes from hydropower. Such choices belong to another era... an era of cheap and abundant oil... of irresponsibility towards future generations... of indifference to the impacts of pollution.

This mindset will be felt for many years to come, since the Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls, where French nuclear tests were conducted, trap – for now – the radioactivity of close to 160 underground nuclear explosions. Today, the threat of collapse of the barrier reef reminds us that every one of our choices has profound and lasting consequences. Should the radioactivity be released into the ocean, contaminating, among other things, tuna that come to reproduce in our waters, this would remind us of our strong interdependence as Pacific people, in spite of the several thousand kilometres that separate us.

Our urbanisation and land use are the result of easy choices, on both structural and financial levels. Activities were initially concentrated on coastal areas and, with increasing land pressure, many hazard-prone areas have been urbanised. The race for economic development often occurred without considering the impact of those activities on natural environments or cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible). For a few years now, and more acutely today, the issue of climate change has been compounding those “non-choices” that reflect a very limited mindset. This mindset could very well jeopardise the development of French Polynesia as well as that of our Pacific neighbours and brothers.

French Polynesia developed its Strategic Climate Plan to give itself a genuine development tool as well as real choices. The Plan aims to provide our country with a sustainable development perspective that integrates the constraints of climate change. It will, I hope, bring an end to this era of easy choices, of indifference to and disregard for the generations to come. I hope that the Strategic Climate Plan will pave the way for other perspectives on our planning, on the essential role of cultural referents in our adaptation, and on our responsibility towards future generations.

The Strategic Climate Plan was developed between February and May 2012 following five consultation workshops, attended by about one hundred participants from the technical and administrative services of French Polynesia, municipalities, civil society, private businesses, research centres and churches. Transport, urbanism, energy, production systems and natural and cultural heritage were at the heart of our discussions. Two roundtables were also organised to openly discuss potential climate migrations as well as risk management.

This resulted in the development of some 140 policy directions, organised around six thematic areas: transport, urbanism, energy, production systems, heritage and future issues. Each thematic area is articulated around five pillars: information, regulation, economic tools, innovation and governance. Social equity, cultural identity, public health and gender equity are treated as cross-cutting issues.

Other consultations will soon take place to develop our action plan, while a Climate Unit will soon be established within the Energy and Mining Department. In the meantime, French Polynesia will decide on a proposed amendment to the statutory law to integrate sustainable development in the context of climate change.

**4. KIRIBATI**

**Remarks by Hon. Tiarite Kwong on *Innovative financing for climate change and biodiversity***

Madame Chair

Honorable Ministers

Director General – Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

Director General – Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Ambassadors

Donors and Partners

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

I extend to you all warm greetings from Kiribati: *Kam Na Bane Ni Mauri!*

Let me at the outset congratulate you Madam Chair on your assumption of the role of chairperson. We have full confidence in your leadership and guidance on our deliberations today.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the Director General and staff of SPREP for the excellent support and services that they have provided to facilitate the convening of this important ministerial meeting.

All this would not have been possible, Madam Chair, without the support of the Government of New Caledonia. It is in this regard that I would like to express our deep gratitude to the Government of New Caledonia for hosting this 23<sup>rd</sup> SPREP Ministerial Meeting, but especially for the warm hospitality and reception accorded to me and my delegation on our arrival in this beautiful country.

Madam Chair, I have been tasked to give a brief presentation at this ministerial forum on '*innovative financing for biodiversity and climate change*'. This is indeed an interesting but challenging topic and one that needs to be grounded on empirical facts for meaningful and informed discussion of this important theme.

I commend the programme organisers for their foresight in including this important session on innovative financing as part of this ministerial dialogue. It provides an excellent opportunity for us to explore innovative financial solutions to fulfilling the climate change and biodiversity targets agreed globally and at the regional and national levels. It also enables political environment focal points like ourselves to communicate, exchange ideas and views and reflect on existing experiences we have had in financing climate change and biodiversity at the

national, regional and international levels. I have no doubt that the outcome of our dialogue on this important issue would assist in enhancing our strategies for a safer and healthier environment in our region.

***Madam Chair, distinguished colleagues,***

I would attempt to discuss this topic on innovative financing at three levels – global, regional and national. Because of its relevance to our national conservation initiatives, I would also highlight some of the key opportunities and challenges that Kiribati has faced in accessing and securing various funding supports, especially in relation to our flagship and well renowned conservation project – the *Phoenix Islands Protected Area*, or PIPA for short.

**Distinguished colleagues,**

Finance is the pillar of our planning and programming to safeguard the health and integrity of our environment for current and future generations. Put simply, ‘innovative financing for biodiversity and climate change’ is about ‘more, better and faster financial resources from all public and private sources through traditional and innovative mechanisms to support the declarations of the two Conventions’ (Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)). Most of our countries in the region are Parties to these two Conventions.

One of the objectives of the CBD is the sustainable use of biodiversity and its components. This is crucial for us in the region considering that biodiversity forms the basis of the ecosystems that provide us with the air we breathe, the water we drink, and much of the food we eat. As such, it is our important role as Ministers of the Environment to safeguard the existing biodiversity in our respective islands for our and future generations’ survivals.

At the other extreme is the global issue of climate change and how this would seriously affect us in the Pacific. The ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is to achieve the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. This objective reminds us, yet again, of the important role that we must play as Environment Ministers for the Pacific region to ensure that the future generations are not made worse off as a result of the impacts of global climate change on our islands.

There are global funds made available under these two Conventions that we can access to support our respective national conservation and climate change programmes. For instance, under the UNFCCC, there are several funding mechanisms including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Kyoto Adaptation Fund, LDC Funds (LDCF), and the Green Climate Fund. Under the CBD, the GEF provides mostly the financial resources that we need to access at the country level. Additionally, there are also private and partnership sources of funding pledges specifically earmarked to address biodiversity and climate change issues at the country level. Recently,

during the last Rio Meeting held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the World Bank's new Global Partnership for Oceans that also bring forward new funding sources for like-minded countries, with interest to preserve their oceans. This underscores the growing interests and commitment at the global level to support efforts aimed at protecting the environment and the ecosystems.

We acknowledge that accessing most of these funds is not easy given the strong competition for them but, more so, because of the excessively stringent processes and procedures that have to be complied with by countries before they can access them. The GEF is one case in point. This is a real concern to us, especially with the whole urgent issue of global climate change. Often, we are faced with human resources and capacity limitations to fully access and utilize these available global funding, in a timely manner. This is one of the reasons why the Government of Kiribati welcomes and supports SPREP's application to become a GEF Project Agency and a Regional Implementing Entity under the Climate Change Adaptation Fund.

Furthermore, considering the importance of funding that underlies the work we need to do on climate change and biodiversity at the national, regional and international levels, Kiribati seeks SPREP's assistance to consider, in consultation with SPREP member countries, the development of a regional resource mobilization strategy for financing climate change and biodiversity. This strategy needs to be user-friendly to both SPREP as an organization and its member States. Effective planning and strategy to accessing these available global and regional sources of funding for utilization at the country level for financing climate change and biodiversity is vital in our region considering the smallness of our office and the existing resources available.

***Madam Chair, distinguished colleagues,***

If there is one ideal model of innovative financing on biodiversity and climate change existing in our region, it would be the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (or PIPA for short). This may be a biased statement on my part but I truly believe that PIPA is quite unique in many ways, including the financing of its operation through what has been termed 'reverse fishing licensing fee' – an innovative financing mechanism that has been central to PIPA's funding strategy.

With your permission Madame Chair, let me at this juncture talk briefly about the PIPA and its innovative financing mechanism.

PIPA constitutes the Government of Kiribati's conservation and sustainable use strategy for the Phoenix Islands archipelago and surrounding marine environment. It is an integrated approach to biodiversity conservation encapsulating the terrestrial, near-shore and off-shore ecosystems as well as adaptation and mitigation to the impacts of climate change. Importantly, PIPA underscores Kiribati's commitment to regional and international agreements and conventions such as the CBD, UNFCCC, World Heritage Convention, and many more.

When PIPA was established in 2006, it was done on the basis that it should be a self-sustaining and self-financing operation. This triggered the enactment of the PIPA Trust Act by Parliament in 2010, which legalised the establishment of the PIPA Trust as a charitable, non-government organization. The main objective of the Trust is to address the need for a long-term sustainable approach to funding PIPA and the implementation of its Management Plan through the establishment of an endowment fund, which will be capitalised by private and public contributions. The goal is to capitalise the endowment at a level that would be able to generate an income stream sufficient to cover the operating and management costs of the Trust, and the foregone revenues from fishing associated with the closure or restriction of activities within the PIPA region.

The PIPA partners that is, the Government of Kiribati, New England and Conservation International have teamed up to structure global financial support for the capitalisation of the PIPA. To this end, the PIPA Trust Fundraising Framework has been developed which sets out the various opportunities and strategies that the PIPA partners can explore and employ to increase PIPA's funding base and attract external funds for the capitalisation of the PIPA Trust Fund.

PIPA is a unique approach to conservation that meets the twin objectives of economic growth and biodiversity conservation. It seeks to ensure that the closing of the Phoenix Islands region from extractive activities would not compromise the economic growth and development of the Kiribati economy and its people. This is to be achieved through a conservation contract approach. The basis of this Conservation Contract arrangement is a unique "reverse fishing license" financing program in which the Government of Kiribati will be reimbursed by the PIPA Trust for the amount that they would have made from selling fishing licenses if PIPA were not protected - conditional on the satisfactory performance by the Government of Kiribati on its obligation to ensure the long-term protection of the terrestrial, coral, and oceanic natural resources as well as any cultural resources within PIPA.

It is encouraging that to date both the Government of Kiribati and Conservation International, through its managed Global Conservation Fund, have each pledged US\$2.5 million in grant to capitalise the PIPA Endowment Fund. Madame Chair, I'm not mandated to do a fundraising campaign for PIPA during this presentation but I simply cannot resist the temptation to ask our donor partners present here today to consider contributing to the PIPA Endowment Fund. It's a win-win cause, I can assure you.

***Distinguished colleagues,***

The moral of the PIPA story is that innovative financing for biodiversity and climate change is not necessarily limited to multilateral funding sources. Indeed, funding supports from these multilateral institutions will always be needed. However, in the face of the current economic downturn and tightening of funds by donors, such funding supports will become increasingly scarce. We really need therefore to be ahead of the curve and to be creative and innovative in our fundraising approach. And this means extending our search beyond these traditional funding sources, accompanied by the provision of an appropriate incentive structure that would

engender strong support from both the local and international community for the protection of our environment.

**Madame Chair, Distinguished colleagues**

Let me conclude my presentation by wishing this ministerial dialogue great success, and I do so with our traditional Kiribati blessing of Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa - which means Health, Peace and Prosperity to you all.

Kam bati n rabwa.

**5. SAMOA**

**Remarks by Hon Faamoetauloa LT Dr Faale Tumaalii on *Climate Change and Renewable energy – addressing key issues and targets in the Pacific***

Mr. Chairman, Fellow Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me take this opportunity on behalf of my delegation, to express our sincere appreciation to Hon Harold Martin, President of the Government of New Caledonia, Hon Anthony Lecren, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, and the government and people of New Caledonia, for hosting the 23<sup>rd</sup> SPREP Meeting of Officials and the High Level Segment this year, and for the warm hospitality accorded me and my delegation since our arrival. Let me also congratulate the Director General of SPREP, Mr. David Sheppard, and his staff, for a well prepared and coordinated meeting.

My brief remarks this morning will provide this High Level Segment meeting, with a snapshot of Samoa's renewable energy development initiatives and efforts, with the ultimate goal of providing a healthy and productive natural and social environment for Samoa and our people, hoping also, that it could be of use, to addressing key issues and targets on Climate Change and Renewable Energy in the Pacific. There is no doubt in my mind that we all share the same concerns and challenges on global warming, climate change, the ever escalating cost of fossil fuels, and the effects of greenhouse gas emissions on the global environment, and especially our Pacific region. Such challenges however, have presented new opportunities for all of us, to develop and increase the uptake of alternative renewable sources of energy, which are sustainable, reliable, practical and financially affordable for our governments and people.

The outline of my brief talk this morning is as follows: Firstly, I will introduce the Strategy for the Development of Samoa for the years 2012 to 2016, and the Samoa National Energy Policy 2007, highlighting key development strategies relating to renewable energy. Secondly, I will briefly discuss the data on the volume of petroleum fuel imported into Samoa over the five-year period from 2007 to 2011, and the average annual retail price of the same, for the same period. I will then talk about the current total energy mix for electricity generation in Samoa. This will be followed by the listing of our national climate change and renewable energy policies, and the

agencies involved with their implementation, and also our greenhouse gas abatement and renewable energy programmes and projects, and their expected outcomes. Finally, I will conclude my brief talk with examples of renewable energy research and development work currently undertaken by our Government, and investment plans that we have for the production and supply of renewable energy.

The Strategy for the Development of Samoa for the period 2012 to 2016 presents the key development strategies and priority sectors for the development of Samoa in the next four years. The vision continues the longer term goal of achieving “Improved Quality of Life for All”, and the theme for this development period is “Boosting Productivity for Sustainable Development”. Renewable energy features in two priority areas – the infrastructure sector and the environment, which correspond to sustainable energy supply, and environment sustainability, respectively. Our Government recognizes the importance of energy security and efficiency as a key element to sustainable economic development, poverty alleviation, and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We also recognize the significance of whole-of-sector approach in reducing our dependency on imported fossil fuels for electricity generation, and increase private sector involvement in the energy sector. As such, our Government is committed to significantly increase the contribution of renewable energy in the total energy mix in the coming years, and to promote energy efficiency and security, as an enabling environment for our country’s sustainable economic development. Our National Energy Plan which was established in 2007 aims to increase the contribution of renewable energy in the total energy mix by 20% by the year 2030. Renewable energy is one of the five strategic areas of this policy, with the objective to successfully shift from fossil fuel dependency to renewable energy investment.

There has been a consistent increase in the consumption of petroleum fuel in Samoa over the five-year period from 2007 to 2011, especially diesel and unleaded petrol, as reflected in their volumes imported. Whilst kerosene consumption peaked at 18.6 million litres in 2009, and thereafter gradually decreased to 13.9 million litres in 2011, there were steady increases in diesel consumption from 36.3 million to 43.8 million litres, and unleaded petrol from 25.9 million to 29.4 million litres. These quantities equate to diesel increasing by an average of 5%, and unleaded petrol by an average of 3%, annually. Coupled with this increase in consumption, is the relatively high retail prices per litre for these petroleum fuel products at the pump, ranging from about USD\$1 to USD\$1.50 based on the last five years averages, with no sign of dropping. In fact, the average annual total volume of petroleum fuel imported into Samoa in the last five years drains our foreign reserves of about USD\$80 to USD\$90 million annually, which equates to about 16 to 18% of our current GDP. Our Strategy for the Development of Samoa for the next four years details strategic areas, to develop and increase the uptake of alternative renewable sources of energy, to replace a considerable percentage of these imported petroleum fuel, and lessen the strain on our foreign reserves, thus freeing up capita for investment into other equally important sectors of our local economy.

In regards to electricity generation in Samoa, about 68% of it is reliant on imported diesel at a volume of about 19 million litres and a cost of over USD\$20 million annually. The remaining 32% is from renewable energy sources, with a significant proportion of it from hydro and less than 1% from solar. For this reason and other energy demands reliant on imported petroleum, our Strategy for Development that I had alluded to earlier, has identified “sustainable, reliable, affordable and environmentally sound energy services and supplies” as a key outcome, and our Government has pledged to have 20% of its total energy mix from renewable sources by the year 2030.

Our Government has also formulated and established various national policies on climate change and renewable energy, in partnership with our key development partners. Examples include the National Policy on Combating Climate Change 2007, National Greenhouse Gas Abatement Strategy 2008 -2018, National Adaptation Programme of Action, Forest Management Act 2010, National Land Use Policy, Ozone Layer Protection Regulations, and National Waste Management Act 2010, to name a few. A whole-of-sector approach comprising key actors from both the public and private sectors, are involved with the implementation of these policies. Three of the implementing agencies, namely the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE), Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa (SROS) and Samoa Trust Estate Corporation (STEC), come under my Ministerial leadership and responsibilities. Linked to the abovementioned policies are various projects and programmes on greenhouse gas abatement and renewable energy, which are currently in progress and jointly funded by our government, key development partners and other donor agencies, as part of our efforts in addressing key issues and achieving our targets, in climate change and renewable energy. Examples include the UNDP/SPREP-funded Energy Awareness and PIGGAREP-funded Wind Assessment programmes, Government of Japan-funded/PIFS-coordinated Solar Thermal – Grid System, EU-funded Biogas Digester for Waste Management, and FAO-funded Biogas Digester as source of Organic Fertilizers for Crop Production. The expected outcomes from these projects and programmes in broader terms include: the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; sustainable and affordable energy supply; linked to this outcome is the reduction of imports of fossil fuel as the result of improved, sustainable and reliable renewable energy sources and technologies, to generate electricity and motorized transports; increased sequestration of carbon dioxide with energy conservation, reforestation and planting of energy plantations; improved overall energy efficiency; enhanced livelihoods through the creation of job opportunities for local communities in project locations, and; improved living standards and social welfare for all our people.

Our Government has also invested heavily in biofuel technology, with the desired outcome of providing an enabling environment for rural employment, and economic and social development for our people. SROS has as one of its research mandates, is to undertake technological research and development, into alternative and renewable sources of energy for our country. In early 2009, SROS with funding from the Governments of Austria and Italy through IUCN, commenced with preliminary laboratory-scale studies on the production of biodiesel, using the plentiful and underutilized coconuts as feedstock. Later on in the same year,

the biodiesel research was up-scaled to pilot-scale via the acquisition of a 200-litre plant. This plant is able to produce in less than an hour, about 200 litres of biodiesel and a small volume of a by-product known as glycerol. The process and feedstock parameters for the plant have been optimized by SROS, and the plant has demonstrated to be very efficient and effective, in producing high quality biodiesel from coconut oil, as evidenced from the continued high performance of SROS's three vehicles and a stand-by generator, that have been running on biodiesel for over three years now. At this juncture, let me acknowledge with much appreciation the Director General of SPREP for his initiative in joining forces with SROS, to promote environmentally-friendly and clean renewable fuel alternatives, as part of SPREP's 'green campus' concept. A few weeks ago, SPREP and SROS signed a Letter of Agreement to fuel two SPREP vehicles, with the environmentally-clean biodiesel produced by SROS, as part of our joint public awareness campaign, to curb greenhouse gas emissions and protect our environment for our future generations.

We are now in the process of up-scaling our biodiesel production to commercial realities, and we have developed a concept paper for large-scale implementation of biodiesel production in conjunction with biomass gasification, valued at USD\$5.8 million, which could reduce the level of diesel imported into our country for electricity generation by over 50%. This proposed commercial venture is expected to be located at our STEC coconut plantations which will provide the necessary quantity of coconut feedstock, in addition to coconut supply from our rural farmers, to sustain production in the long term. This concept paper will be submitted to the IRENA Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, once modalities and guidelines for accessing the Fund are finalized. We will also solicit funding considerations from our key development partners and other donor agencies. In parallel with our on-going efforts in biodiesel production from coconut oil, our Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), has initiated a coconut tree replanting programme, to replace some of our old coconut trees, and ensure long term stable supply of coconuts for this venture, in consideration of other competing interests and uses of coconuts in Samoa. Furthermore, with additional funding from the Governments of Austria and Italy via IUCN, the three government agencies under my Ministerial responsibilities (MNRE, STEC and SROS), are collaborating in the assessment of the yielding potential, of the oil-rich non-food crop *Jatropha Curcas*, inter-cropped with coconut trees, as an alternate to the coconuts for the production of biodiesel. This project will also be used as a demonstration block, for the rural farmers to observe and encourage them to increase the growing of these relevant feedstocks for their intended purposes. Moreover, with funding from the Government of Turkey, SROS has been conducting lab-scale studies, to assess various processes and technologies, to produce bioethanol from locally available breadfruit, cassava and nonu crops. Bioethanol can be utilized as a blend with the imported unleaded petrol, or as a conversion ingredient in biodiesel production.

In closing, let me commend the efforts of Mr. David Sheppard and his SPREP staff, and what they have accomplished over the last year. I join my other Ministerial colleagues in this meeting, to assure you of our confidence in the outcomes generated from this 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting, which will certainly strengthen the delivery of your mandated services to all SPREP member countries. I would also like to acknowledge with much gratitude, the continued tremendous contributions by our development partners and SPREP members, who are in a strong position, to assist the Pacific Island Countries and Territories, with their collective efforts, to address climate change challenges through renewable energy initiatives, that are realistic, practical and affordable.

Thank you for your attention, God bless, Soifua!

## 6. TUVALU

### **Remarks by Hon. Apisai Ieremia on *Innovative financing for climate change and biodiversity***

Honourable Chairperson,  
Director General of SPREP,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished representatives from different CROPS and international organizations  
SPREP Officials,  
Ladies & Gentlemen,

Talofa,

As I am the first Minister to take the floor in making this presentation at this very crucial opportunity and meeting, I wish to congratulate the People and the Government of New Caledonia for hosting the 23<sup>rd</sup> SPREP Meeting and I also wished to share my gratitude to the excellent and comfortable hospitality that has been rendered to me and my delegation whilst our short stay here in your beautiful paradise.

Honourable Chair, I am honoured to share with you all Tuvalu's experience, challenges and possible way forward to secure innovative finance for climate change and biodiversity.

Tuvalu is no doubt one of the countries most affected by climate change with the most significant negative impact to be felt by the coastal communities. Increases in average temperatures and changes in seasonal rainfall have already been measured and scientists believe that increasingly severe climatic disasters are occurring, especially coastal erosion, cyclones, sea level rise and droughts, just to name a few.

The agriculture sector and coastal sector are highly vulnerable to climate change, while coastal fisheries and marine biodiversity are highly sensitive. Most vulnerable to climate change are poorer communities, and especially children and the elderly, especially, are most vulnerable to climate change as they have less capacity to adapt. The government and Falekaupule (local governance) recognise the significance of climate change and how this will affect their coastal communities and recognise the need to implement proper adaptation measures to build

resilience of communities. However there has been lack of finance readily available to explore the options needed that may help these communities to adapt in the face of climate change.

Allow me distinguished Ministers to present to you this topic from a global level, regional level and what can be done at the national level.

Globally, there are two United Nation conventions that deal directly with Climate change and Biodiversity, which are the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. There are number of Fund established under the UNFCCC, mostly comes from pledges from developed countries with the unique Adaptation Fund that comes from proceeds of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). In recent Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC, Parties agreed to establish new financial arrangements such as the Fast Start Finance under the Copenhagen Accord and the Green Climate Fund under the Cancun Agreement. These new funds promised to bring billions of dollars to address adaptation and mitigation needs of developing countries. Unfortunately we are yet to see these funds materialise in a comprehensive and effective manner. On a similar note, there are traditional financial mechanisms established under the UNFCCC that is the LDCF, SCCF and the AF, and are serviced by GEF as the operating entity. The GEF, serving as the operating entity for these Funds, also has its own financial mechanism from its Trust Fund that allows developing countries to access. The GEF Trust Fund is in its 5<sup>th</sup> Replenishment and has distributed its resources under a STAR allocation.

To access these resources from the GEF, there are accredited Implementing Agencies (IAs) of the GEF that countries can work with to develop project proposals for submission to GEF. These IAs include UNDP, UNEP, ADB, World Bank and others. Operational procedures for accessing resources have been complex and cumbersome thus making it more difficult to many countries in particular SIDS and LDCs to access funds for projects. Hence, we need to seek innovative ways not only to secure finance but to ensure that access to these finance are flexible and straight forward. However, I would like to acknowledge the support from our Implementing Agencies in the region whom have done significant role in supporting countries, including Tuvalu to access resources from these Funds.

According to standard guidelines and operational procedures of the GEF a country needs to provide close to 1:4 ratio of amount requested from GEF to co-finance the project. This is a large amount required from countries, which in some instance force countries to change the focal area of projects in order to meet the co-finance requirement. It changes to other area where the co-finance can be sort from. This is an issue that SPREP is well aware of given its experience with the SCCF funded PACC project. Therefore we need to seek ways to reduce the ratio required by GEF and/or seek innovative ways to secure co-finance money from either regional support and/or national assets.

At the regional level, I congratulate the SPREP for submitting its application to GEF to become an Implementing Agency. This is a positive step forward to assist the region in accessing resources from the GEF and Tuvalu fully supports this. In addition, I believed a number of our member countries have commenced and others may be in a planning stage, to apply for National Implementing Entity (NIE) to the Adaptation Fund Board. This is an initiative to get direct access of individual countries to resources under the Adaptation Fund. I recognised that other CROP agencies are taking this role in supporting member countries in paving the ground work required for NIE accreditation. I therefore urge these agencies and SPREP to provide the utmost support to ensure member countries are successful in this initiative.

At the national level, Tuvalu wishes to thank SPREP for the tremendous support in providing the technical and financial assistance in continuingly building capacities of our national experts. In 2011, with support of SPREP, SPC and other external partners, Tuvalu has successfully developed its National Climate Change Policy and National Strategic Action Plan. Nonetheless, we learned that our priorities as set out in our Policy and Plan require a significant amount of resources to finance these priorities.

Apart from that, Tuvalu recognised that at PIFS 2011 there was a paper developed to examine different options for National Trust Funds. Perhaps as one option, this could be expanded to include Climate Change and Biodiversity Trust Funds, noting the pros and cons of different options. Tuvalu has successfully established a national trust fund and would like to investigate the technical views on establishing a national climate change and biodiversity trust fund. Such a fund could appoint people actively involved in climate change and biodiversity policy and action including non-state actors to participate on Boards or Management Committees. Such a specific fund would also allow for transparency of funding received from various donors for climate change and biodiversity. It will also reduce reporting and administrative burdens and contributes to predictability of funding. Such a fund would also allow for effective cooperation between government, community, private sector and donors. Therefore Tuvalu maybe seeks SRPEP support in identifying possible sources that can support this Trust Fund once established.

In conclusion, Tuvalu still seek the support of SPREP in identifying innovative finance and to inform member countries of such opportunity to get financial support for climate change and biodiversity work in our region.

Fakafetai lasi.

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## PACIFIC ENVIRONMENT MINISTERIAL COMMUNIQUÉ

The 23rd Meeting of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme convened in Noumea, New Caledonia, 4-7 September 2012. The high-level segment was attended by Ministers, Ministerial Representatives and Heads of Delegation from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Fiji, France, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States of America and Wallis and Futuna.

Ministers, Ministerial Representatives and Heads of Delegation thanked the Administration of New Caledonia for the kind hospitality extended to them during their stay in Noumea.

The Ministers, Ministerial Representatives and Heads of Delegation of the Pacific region responsible for the environment, having met in Noumea, New Caledonia:

1. **NOTED** the importance of the commitments to the environment made by Leaders at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Pacific Islands Forum and Post-Forum Dialogue in Rarotonga, Cook Islands and, in particular in relation to Rio+20 and the need to merge with the post-2015 development agenda, climate change efforts, and to increase work in relation to invasive species.
2. **WARMLY** welcomed the Government of the United Kingdom as a Member of SPREP.
3. **RECOGNISING** the vital link between the people of the Pacific and the Ocean environment and the inextricable link between the survival of the people and ocean conservation and management, expressed **STRONG SUPPORT** for implementing the Oceanscape Framework and commended the visionary commitments of the governments of the Cook Islands and New Caledonia to establish marine protected areas (MPAs) in their Exclusive Economic Zones with a potentially combined area of 2.5 million km<sup>2</sup>; including the plans of SPREP Members to collaborate and mutually support the development and management of their respective MPAs; and **DIRECTED** SPREP to facilitate this collaboration.
4. **ENCOURAGED** the Secretariat to intensify its work with Members and partners and donors to identify innovative financing mechanisms to support conservation and management of biodiversity, commending the innovative approach taken by the government of Kiribati in establishing an endowment fund for the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA).
5. **WELCOMED** preparations towards the 9<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in November 2013, co-hosted by Fiji and SPREP, and urged full participation and support by SPREP Members.
6. **CALLED** on international and regional donors and development partners to support national initiatives and programmes to reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts and related disasters through innovative financing mechanisms.

7. **REAFFIRMED** the vital coordinating role of SPREP in the Pacific region in the area of Pacific Islands' climate change adaptation and mitigation, and tasked the Secretariat to work in partnership and collaborate with all international and regional organisations, partners and donors that wish to invest in adaptation to climate change to enable timely, effective and efficient response to Members' climate change priorities as well as timely monitoring and reporting to the SPREP meeting.
8. **RECOGNISED** that renewable energy and alternative energy sources, ranging from waste to biofuels, contribute to energy and economic security and the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions and that access to renewable energy sources is vital to the region; and welcomed the announcement by New Zealand to co-host a Renewable Energy Summit with the European Union in April 2013.
9. **ENDORSED** a regional E-waste strategy that will help improve the management of end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment in the Pacific. This strategy includes a comprehensive Action Plan that provides a framework for assessment, funding and community based action to manage the future disposal of E-waste in the region.
10. **ENDORSED** the Secretariat's review of the marine spill contingency plan (PacPLAN) which will improve regional marine pollution preparedness, and acknowledged the assistance of Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States to complete this.
11. **NOTED** the outcomes of the Rio+ 20 meeting; **ENDORSED** the coordination of post-Rio+20 activities; and **WELCOMED** the proposal made by New Caledonia to host a meeting in November 2012 dedicated to implementing these recommendations in the Pacific.
12. **DIRECTED** the Secretariat to develop national and regional frameworks for the production of State of the Environment reports in accordance with the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan and noted the contributions of Pacific island members that are already engaging in the process.
13. **ENDORSED** Phase 2 of the EU-funded UNEP African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements Capacity Building Project, and the development of a GEF proposal to build national and regional capacity for state of environment assessment and reporting.
14. **NOTED** the offer by French Polynesia to host a workshop on the environmental consequences of nuclear testing and nuclear pollution in the Pacific to be held in 2013.

7 September 2012