# Report of the Twenty-eighth SPREP Meeting of Officials

19 – 21 September 2017

Apia, Samoa


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PROTECT PACIFIC WHALES – OCEAN VOYAGERS

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# Introduction

1. The Twenty-eighth SPREP Meeting of Officials (28SM) was held from 19-21 September, 2017 in Apia, Samoa.

2. Present at the Meeting were representatives from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States and Wallis and Futuna. A full list of participants, including observers, is available in Annex I.

### Agenda Item 1: Opening

3. The official opening ceremony was held on 18 September at Tanoa Tusitala Hotel in Apia, Samoa. The welcoming remarks from the Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Mr Kosi Latu is attached as Annex II.

4. The Meeting was officially opened by the Acting Prime Minister of Samoa Hon. Tialavea Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt. The opening address of the Hon. Acting Prime Minister is attached as Annex III.

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

5. In accordance with the *Rules of Procedure of the SPREP Meeting,* the Meeting appointed Palau as Chair and Fiji was appointed as Vice Chair.

6. The outgoing Chair, Niue's Dr Josie Tamate, expressed her appreciation to the Members and the Secretariat for the privilege of serving as Chair, noting that the previous year had been a busy one, with a key highlight being the endorsement of the new SPREP Strategic Plan.

7. Hon. Umiich Sengebau, representing Palau, thanked the Chair of the 27SM for her leadership and took the Chair.

8. The Meeting:

   - **confirmed** the Representative of **Palau** as **Chair**; and
   - **confirmed** the Representative of **Fiji** as **Vice Chair**.

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

9. The Meeting reviewed the Provisional Agenda and the suggested hours of work.

10. At the request of Republic of Marshall Islands Agenda item 6.1 was moved to the first order of business on day two.

11. The Meeting:

    - **considered** and **adopted** the Provisional Agenda (attached as Annex IV);
    - **agreed** on hours of work; and
    - **appointed** an open-ended Report Drafting Committee to work with the Vice Chair of the 28SM comprising Republic of Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, French Polynesia, France, Federated States of Micronesia, Cook Islands, Australia, American Samoa, United States, and Tuvalu.

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

12. The Secretariat reported, by way of a Working Paper, on actions taken against the decisions and directives from the Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting (27SM).

13. The Meeting:

    - **noted actions taken** against the decisions and directives of the 27SM.

**AGENDA ITEM 5: 2016 OVERVIEW**

**Agenda Item 5.1: Presentation of Annual Report for 2016 and Director General's Overview of Progress since the Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting**

14. The Director General presented the *2016 SPREP Annual Report* to Members and provided an overview report on progress since the 27SM.

15. The Meeting:

    - **noted** the report.

**Agenda Item 5.2: Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER) on the 2016 Work Programme and Budget**

16. The Secretariat presented its Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER) on the 2016 Work Programme and Budget, noting that this would be the last time performance would be reported against the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, and that as a consequence the PMER would report on work over the last five years.

17. The Secretariat drew attention to key activities achieved in Climate Change, Biodiversity, Waste Management, Environmental Monitoring and Governance and Corporate Services. The Secretariat acknowledged the various donors that contributed to its work over this period, and outlined the disbursements to members.

18. The Meeting:

    - **noted** achievements and progress as presented in the 2016 PMER.

**Agenda Item 5.3: Audited Annual Accounts for 2016**

19. In accordance with Financial Regulation 27(e), the Secretariat presented its Audited Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 December, 2016, noting that the Audited Annual Accounts for 2016 had been prepared in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), and advised that the auditors had provided an unqualified opinion of the Secretariat's financial operations for 2016.

20. The Meeting:

    - **reviewed** and **adopted** the audited Financial Statements and Auditors' Report for 2016.

**AGENDA ITEM 6: INSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND STRATEGIC ISSUES**

**Agenda Item 6.1: Strengthening Regional Linkages update**

21. The Secretariat updated Members on the progress of SPREP strengthening regional linkages pilot as agreed to by members in the SPREP Meeting of 2010 and 2012 respectively by presenting the

results of the desk top survey requested by the 27th SPREP Meeting.

22. Republic of Marshall Islands commended the many benefits of the placement of a Technical Officer in Majuro, listing these to the Meeting, further proposing to host the SPREP Sub-Regional Office in Republic of Marshall Islands as agreed to by the Micronesian Forum Leaders Meeting in 2017. In highlighting the financial challenges experienced by the current SPREP Desk officer based in Majuro, Republic of Marshall Islands announced that upcoming funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) would be considered for supporting the establishment and operation of the Northern regional office.

23. The Director General noted that funding of the sub-regional officers is from two sources, core funding and project funding. Both pilot offices are supported by core funding, which is unable to provide all costs. SPREP is now requested to establish a new office in Palau as well as the Northern regional office. The Director-General commented that offices established by Host Country Agreements may be approached to provide further support, noting that Samoa makes a contribution as host country of the Secretariat.

24. The Meeting supported the initiative to strengthen regional linkages. Samoa and New Zealand recommended the development of a regional linkages strategy to guide Members consideration of this issue, noting resources required for a successful sub-regional presence and lessons learnt to date.

25. Federated States of Micronesia sought clarification on the support required by the governments that have host country agreements with SPREP and asked if a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) was undertaken, to which the Secretariat advised that the type of support required has not been finalised but may not be solely financial and that a CBA has been completed.

26. United States supported by Papua New Guinea and Kiribati was unwilling to support sub-regional offices funded by the core budget, but will support if other funding sources outside the core budget with Kiribati also seeking assurance that any core budget support would not impact on support provided to other Members.

27. New Caledonia proposed that multi-CROP country officers share salary costs with other agencies facing the same issues to avoid overburdening field officers for specific projects with country mission work,.

28. A Friends of the Chair (FoC) Committee was formed comprising United States, Republic of Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, New Caledonia, Kiribati, Australia, France, New Zealand, Cook Islands and Federated States of Micronesia.

29. The FoC reported back to the Meeting with a set of recommendations which were endorsed by the Meeting.

30. The Meeting:

- **noted** the Secretariat's report;
- **welcomed** the decision of the Micronesian Islands Forum of May 2017 in which the Presidents of

Palau, Federated States of Micronesia and Republic of the Marshall Islands, all agreed and supported the Republic of the Marshall Islands bid to host the SPREP sub-regional office in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands;

- **agreed** that the following actions are to be successfully completed by the Secretariat before establishing a sub-regional office in Majuro;
  a) Undertake a detailed assessment of the operational costs and other requirements for establishing a sub-regional office in Majuro**;**
  b) Identify a funding source by assessing all resource modalities available, including financial and in-kind support from the host government, cost sharing mechanisms with other organizations, sources of relevant programmatic funding and approved funds under projects that can be applied;
- **invited** the Director General of SPREP to brief the Micronesian Islands Forum on the actions taken towards establishing the SPREP sub-regional office in Majuro.

**Agenda Item 6.2: Access to Climate Finance – Adaptation Fund (AF), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) Accreditation Updates**

31. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on SPREP's delivery as a Regional Implementing Entity (RIE) for the Adaptation Fund (AF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as well as Global Environment Facility (GEF) Accreditation updates.

32. New Zealand noted its support to SPREP Project Coordination Unit of NZ$1.5m over three years.

33. The Meeting:

- **noted** the progress made, and pipeline initiatives, towards securing climate finance as an accredited entity to the GCF and AF resources;
- **noted** the establishment of the Project Coordination Unit and its role in supporting the development and management of the SPREP project pipeline, including for AF and GCF projects;
- **noted** completion of the GEF 'MSP' project, and ongoing focus on supporting GEF 7 replenishment and access to Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency; and
- **provided** advice on Members' priorities for enhanced and/or additional Secretariat support for access to climate finance.

**Agenda Item 6.3: Pacific Climate Change Centre**

34. The Secretariat updated Members on the progress of the establishment of the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC).

35. The Meeting:

- **noted** the progress in the work of establishing the Pacific Climate Change Centre;
- **directed** the Secretariat to continue working with the Steering Committee, and in close consultation with members and partners work to define the roles of the PCCC , ensuring that the function and roles of the PCCC complement those of other relevant regional mechanisms and organisations;

- **instructed** the Secretariat to develop for review, a governance structure and business plan, including engagement with private agencies, which address budget considerations for the operation of the PCCC;
- **agreed** to work together to encourage the Government of Japan in preparation for the upcoming PALM 8 meeting in 2018 to provide a fitting showcase of climate-friendly LEED certified building, and 100% solar design for the PCCC; and
- **encouraged** development partners and the international community to support the establishment of programmes and partnerships at the PCCC**.**

**Agenda Item 6.4: Sustainable Development Goals**

36. The Secretariat provided an update on progress made towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the work undertaken by the Pacific SDG's Taskforce (PST). The update highlighted the recent Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Samoa in which the leader's communique endorsed the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development (PRSD). The PST was established in 2016 as a response to the commitment made by the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in 2015 to the full implementation of the SDG's.

37. The Meeting:

- **noted** progress in the implementation of the SDGs; and
- **noted** the Secretariat's contribution in assisting with the monitoring and reporting on SDGs.

**Agenda Item 6.5: UN Oceans Conference: Outcomes and Next Steps**

38. The Secretariat informed the Meeting of the outcomes of the UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, SPREP's support to Members leading up to, and during the Conference as well as the next steps.

39. The Meeting:

- **acknowledged** the leadership and effort put forth by Fiji in co-hosting the UN Ocean Conference with Sweden;
- **noted** with appreciation the support received from Sweden which allowed the Secretariat to support Members throughout the UN Ocean Conference process;
- **acknowledged** the logistical support provided by the UN Missions of Fiji and Samoa to SPREP for the UN Ocean Conference**;**
- **reaffirmed** our commitment as SPREP Members to achieving SDG 14; and
- **requested** that the Secretariat work with Members to ensure that we achieve the commitments made during the Conference

**Agenda Item 6.6: EDF11**

40. The Secretariat updated Members on the progress of Round 11 of the European Union Development Fund (EDF-11). The presentation on upcoming activities under the EDF11, in particular regarding Objective 2.1 on sustainable use of marine resources (the Pacific-European Union Marine Project, PEUMP), and Objective 2.2 on waste management (PacWaste Plus), also

included preparations with partners and members in developing activities under the EDF11 Overseas Countries and Territories package.

41. The Meeting:

- **noted** that SPREP is a significant beneficiary of the EDF-11 funding round which will be implemented in Member countries, although implementation will only take off in early 2018;
- **noted** that for Objective 2.1 of EDF-11, SPREP's main engagement will be to develop ways to mitigate the by-catch of threatened species and to improve the state of the biodiversity and the management of coastal ecosystems;
- **noted** that for Objective 2.2 of EDF-11, SPREP engagement will be to implement priority components of the Cleaner Pacific 2025 programme, with partners, to improve management of waste and pollution in the Pacific;
- **noted** that while there will be an OCT component to EDF-11 details of the programme are still in development, and the Secretariat will continue to provide advice and support to the OCTs on development of the programme, in particular the objectives with an environmental focus;
- **noted** that the EDF-11 programme will be implemented in accordance with PREP's cost-recovery policy and the rules of the European Union, and that future reports will reflect this; and
- **agreed** to collaborate with SPREP in the implementation of projects to be initiated under EDF-11.

**Agenda Item 6.7: Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP)**

42. The Secretariat provided an update on the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP).

43. The Meeting:

- **noted** the progress in the work of implementing the FRDP and establishing governance arrangements; and
- **directed** the Secretariat to play an active role in the PRP implementation and report to Members on progress.

**Agenda Item 6.8.1: SPREP and UNEP Partnership**

44. The United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) Sub-regional Office in the Pacific provided an update on the implementation of the revised strategic priorities for the UN Environment Pacific Office and the UN Environment-SPREP partnership. The UN Environment Sub-regional Office in the Pacific also informed the Meeting about the 3rd session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3) and its preparatory process.

45. The Meeting:

- **noted** the progress and planned activities for the implementation of the strategic priorities for the UN Environment Pacific Office and the new MOU being negotiated between UN Environment and SPREP; and
- **urged** member countries to send ministerial delegations to the 3rd session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

**Agenda Item 6.8.2 SPREP and University of Newcastle**

46. The Secretariat provided a short summary on the developing partnership between SPREP and the University of Newcastle (UON), Australia and other regional partners including the University of the South Pacific (USP). The partnership will include five PhD scholarships for Pacific Island applicants and a Postdoctoral Research Coordinator, to be posted at the SPREP Campus.

47. The UON was thanked and commended for this initiative and partnership with SPREP. Responding to a query from Tuvalu the Secretariat advised that the UON approach centered on targeted capacity building based on the needs and priorities of the region as identified in a competitive selection process.

48. The Meeting:

    - **noted** the summary on the developing partnership between SPREP and the University of Newcastle, Australia

**Agenda Item 6.9: Update on preparations for the 23rd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP23)**

49. The Secretariat informed the meeting of progress in supporting Pacific Island Countries and Fiji in particular in the preparations for, and activities at, COP23.

50. Cook Islands sought clarification on the role of SPREP as lead coordinating agency in light of the Forum Leaders Communique highlighting the Forum Secretariat as lead coordinating agency. The Secretariat advised that SPREP has the CROP mandate for COP coordination, recently confirmed by the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), and has fulfilled this role since COP1. The Secretariat will work with PIFS under the One CROP approach.

51. The Meeting congratulated and thanked Fiji in its role as President of the UNFCCC COP23 and the work currently underway, commending the support from SPREP, in this New Zealand acknowledged the work of Fiji in priority setting and encouraged Members to join the NDC Partnership.

52. United Kingdom, Samoa, Australia, and United States informed the Meeting on their support for Fiji and the COP23 work:

    - United Kingdom noted their pledge of USD 22 Million for the pre-COP event and to support Fiji's Presidency in 2018 and development of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs),
    - Australia noted their support of the Pacific island women negotiators training and funding of 15 Pacific island women to COP23,
    - United States noted their support of USD 700,000 for Fiji in its role as COP President.
    - France noted support to Fiji's presidency by sharing their experience and contributing EUR 3.3 Million support for COP23.
    - The Secretariat acknowledged the support provided to Fiji and the Pacific islands noting the positive

impact of this upon the region, and welcomed further support, highlighting the requests from Member countries to seek additional funding for delegates to attend the COP23.

53. Samoa requested the Secretariat for assistance as they undertake their national stock-take as part of the finalised rulebook for the Paris Agreement for which the Secretariat noted discussions at the Pacific regional level still need to reach consensus from all Parties at the UNFCCC COP.

54. Fiji thanked Members for their support noting Fiji's aim of COP23 to be a Pacific COP.

55. The Meeting:

- **welcomed** and **congratulated** Fiji on becoming President of COP 23;
- **noted** the progress in the preparations for COP 23;
- **provided** the Secretariat with views or suggestions on how to further support the COP 23 preparations, including Fiji's Presidency role; and
- **encouraged** development partners and the international community to support the participation of Pacific island countries in COP 23.

**AGENDA ITEM 7: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW SPREP STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 – 2026**

**Agenda Item 7.1: Draft Performance Implementation Plan (PIP)**

56. The Secretariat presented the draft Performance Implementation Plan (PIP) for the endorsement of the Meeting. The Secretariat outlined the purpose and the content of the PIP noting that this was the first of five PIPs to implement the Strategic Plan 2017-2026. Although the PIP was developed in-house the Secretariat acknowledged the assistance received by Friends of the Chair as well as Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded Regional Advisory Services Advisors.

57. The Meeting congratulated the Secretariat on preparing the PIP, noted its open, transparent process, the inclusion of SMART indicators and the input of Friends of the Chair and other Members. The Meeting acknowledged that the PIP would contribute to outcomes for the Strategic Plan 2017-2026. Australia flagged related issues of prioritisation to be addressed in later agenda items.

58. In response to a request from the Cook Islands, the Secretariat agreed to clarify the relationship between organisational and strategic goals in Figure 2 in order to, strengthen the link to results throughout the ten-year plan arising from the structural reforms to come.

59. Noting that the PIP acts as a monitoring mechanism for tangible outcomes against the objectives, New Caledonia suggested that the PIP may be too detailed and encouraged a simpler format to help make clearer the actions to be undertaken.

60. Fiji noted with appreciation the inclusion of sustainable financing mechanisms to support the PIP implementation.

61. The Meeting:

- **discussed** and **endorsed** the draft Performance Implementation Plan.

**Agenda Item 7.2: SPREP Country and Territory Action Plans**

62. The Secretariat sought interest from Members in the scope, focus and process for determining SPREP Country and Territory Action Plans. These will be annexed to the Performance Implementation Plan as directed by Members at the Twenty-Seventh SPREP Meeting.

63. United States, Samoa, New Caledonia and France expressed concern over the ambitious proposal and recommend tabling it to revisit later. Samoa noted the regional scope of the Performance Implementation Plan (PIP) in supporting country priorities, and recommended that countries should be engaged in the PIP reporting.

64. New Caledonia expressed concern that publishing country specific action plans risks losing sight of the regional interest, proposing that the Secretariat develop a matrix of national strategies that are linked to each regional objective and outcome, or alternatively adding a column to the PIP. It cited joint-country strategies implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC) and lessons learnt from these, in particular that such plans cannot be implemented unless proactively approached by countries.

65. Niue noted the inability of small islands with competing priorities to receive updated information and expressed the need for further support from the Secretariat ensuring regional outcomes reach national level, adding that the new biennial arrangements may result in missed opportunities.

66. The Secretariat noted concern by Members that this is a complicated undertaking and that countries should be developing the country action plan rather than the Secretariat. The Secretariat provided amended the recommendations for consideration by the Meeting which were endorsed.

67. The Meeting:

- **noted** the responsibility of Pacific Members to drive country and territory plans;
- **agreed** to greater involvement of Members in reporting to the SPREP Meeting; and
- **agreed** that the scope and content of the action plans will be further developed in the 2020-21 PIP.

**Agenda Item 7.3: Revised organisation structure**

68. The Secretariat sought endorsement from Members of the revised organisation structure. It was proposed that the revised structure will improve integration, strengthen efficiency and cost effectiveness for implementation of the 2017-2026 Strategic Plan and provide more effective service delivery to Members.

69. Samoa, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Cook Islands, Australia, United States, Wallis and Futuna, and France congratulated the Secretariat on the new organisational structure and, Samoa, New Caledonia, French

Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and France endorsed the proposed organisational structure while New Zealand, Cook Islands, Australia and United States advised that they are not in a position to endorse it at this stage and sought further information regarding prioritisation and financial sustainability.

70. Unable to reach consensus the Meeting formed a Friends of the Chair (FoC) comprising Cook Islands, United States, New Zealand, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, France, and Australia, which provided text endorsed by the Meeting.

71. The Meeting:

- **acknowledged** that the functional logic driving the revision of the organisational structure is broadly aligned with the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017 – 2026;
- **directed** the Secretariat to regularly update Members via the Friends of the Chair on execution of the plan;
- **noted** that implementation of the plan is subject to availability of resources; and
- **further noted** that financial support is not immediately available in the 2018 – 19 budget.

## AGENDA ITEM 8: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND MECHANISMS

### Agenda Item 8.1: Governance arrangements for Biennial SPREP Meetings

72. The twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting in 2015 agreed that the governing council of the SPREP Meeting would convene every two years hosted by the Secretariat in Samoa, commencing directly after the SPREP Meeting in 2017. The same Meeting also approved the SPREP Troika Terms of Reference.

73. The twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting agreed the Executive Board would be the decision-making body in the alternate years of the biennial SPREP Meetings, comprising Troika as well as four additional Members representing Melanesian, Micronesian, Polynesian and Metropolitan Members, each selected within their constituencies. The twenty-eighth SPREP Meeting (28SM) was presented with a draft Terms of Reference for the Executive Board developed with the Friends of the Chair appointed at the 27th SPREP Meeting.

74. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that America Samoa had sought to defer its membership of the first Executive Board, with Cook Islands agreeing to take up the position.

75. United States requested the Secretariat provide all papers for the Executive Board meeting at least 30 days in advance and recommended that decisions of the Executive Board should be circulated by the Secretariat to all Members.

76. The Meeting discussed the terms of both the TROIKA and the Director-General. There was consensus on the term of the Director-General being extended to 4 years to better align with the biennial SPREP Meetings and the term of the PIPs, and to not extend the term of the TROIKA beyond its current 3 years to ensure no countries will be disadvantaged.

77. Cook Islands noted that the rotation of the Polynesian and Micronesian regions needs to be reviewed due to equity issues because of the size of these constituencies, requesting further clarification on the decisions by the Executive Board and the consultative and approval process for decisions made, in the Terms of Reference. New Caledonia agreed with Cook Islands on the need for fairness to the Polynesian sub-region, further proposing the Deputy Director General be represented on the Executive Board. Tonga also requested there be clear guidance on the decision making powers of the Executive Board. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands agreed with the rotation proposal, but requested that Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands follow Nauru in the rotational listing.

78. The Secretariat acknowledged an error in Attachment 1 of the paper and advised that Kiribati would be included as an eligible Small Island State.

79. France sought clarification on the apparent lack of a French speaking Member in the rotation for the Executive Board, The Secretariat clarified there will always be a French speaking Member, and where no French speaking Member was represented in the Troika or by the sub-regions, an additional Member would be selected from amongst the French speaking Members.

80. The Chair asked the existing Friends of the Chair (FoC) meet to revise text to and come back to the Meeting. The FoC comprised Australia, Cook Islands, France, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, New Zealand, Niue, and Tokelau, to be joined by Federated States of Micronesia.

81. The Meeting considered the FoC revisions to the draft Terms of Reference for the Executive Board, which included distributing the decisions of the board to Members for endorsement and a revised attachment 3 with a rotation model providing for more equitable membership of the board in future years. France noted 2028 still did not feature a French speaking Member. Cook Islands suggested available spaces within the revised matrix to insert a French speaking country to address French concerns.

82. The Meeting:

- **considered and approved** the revised draft terms of reference for the Executive Board;
- **noted** the SPREP Troika term to remain as three years;
- **considered** the term of the Director General to be in alignment with the biennial arrangements of the SPREP Meeting under

**Agenda Item 8.2: Audit Committee Report**

83. The Chairman of the Audit Committee, reported on activities performed by the Audit Committee during the period 1 July, 2016 – 30 June, 2017 with updates up to the end of July, 2017. The report is in accordance with the Governance Policy core requirements and the Audit Committee Charter.

84. The Audit Committee Chair noted the progress of the Secretariat in working to reduce the deficit, and strongly reaffirmed earlier Audit Committee

recommendations on the importance of eliminating the reserve deficit.

85. The Meeting commended the independent audit committee for its excellent work in preparing a thorough report, and congratulated the Secretariat on the positive progress towards actively reducing the reserve deficit.

86. New Caledonia and Samoa congratulated SPREP for improvements to internal controls. New Caledonia commended the Secretariat for passing the seven pillar assessment of the European Union.

87. The Meeting:

- **noted** the activities performed by the IA and the AC and **approved** the report and recommendations provided by the Audit Committee for the period as from July 2016-June 2017.

**Agenda Item 8.3: Innovation in the Secretariat**

87. The Secretariat updated Members on a number of innovations in its operations. The implementation of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2016-2026 requires a strategic transformation in the organisation an example of which is the establishment of the Project Information System (PMIS), an on-line project management tool linked to the Financial Management System (FMIS), to enable staff to manage all aspects of projects for more effective delivery.

88. The Secretariat presented the Project Information System it developed to support the management of projects.

89. The Meeting:

- **noted** the innovations in place to enhance the Secretariat's service delivery to Members.

**AGENDA ITEM 9: STRATEGIC FINANCIAL ISSUES**

**Agenda Item 9.1: Report on Members' Contributions**

90. The Secretariat reported to the Meeting on the status of Member contributions as at 31 December, 2016 and provided an update on the status of Member contributions as at the time of the Meeting.

91. The Secretariat noted that total contributions received from Members as at 31 December 2016 amounted to USD 1,005,105. This was a decrease of USD 422,349 in comparison to contributions received in 2015 of USD 1,427,454.

92. Australia, New Zealand, Samoa and Cook Islands noted the common responsibility to pay outstanding member contributions. New Zealand further acknowledged Samoa's contribution under the host country agreement, as well as Nauru for their commitment in clearing their outstanding contributions.

93. Supporting the recommendation, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, and Cook Islands proposed that the Secretariat establish a policy on Member contributions. The Secretariat acknowledged the suggestion yet also noted that it was an issue of commitment and ownership by its Members as these are voluntary contributions. The Secretariat urged

Members to collectively address the issue in a timely manner to assist the Secretariat to address the deficit issue.

94. The Meeting:

- **considered** the report
- **committed** to addressing the problem of outstanding member contributions; and
- **committed** itself collectively and individually to paying current and outstanding contributions in full in 2017.

**Agenda Item 9.2: Sustainable Financing**

95. The Secretariat presented a report to Members on actions undertaken by SPREP to address core budget pressures and thus ensure long-term sustainable financing for the organisation, including a range of options for increasing membership contributions, noting the unique position of SPREP, which unlike all other CROP agencies, has had no increase in membership contributions for 13 years, while the cost of doing business in the region has increased markedly. The Secretariat pointed out that the core budget is disproportionately dependent on membership contributions, and that had Members paid all their fees on time in 2016, SPREP would not have been in deficit in the reserves.

96. Members debated the issues, especially the proposal for an increase in membership contributions, The Meeting acknowledged the difficulties faced by the Secretariat because of the static level of member contributions. Despite noting that increases in contributions would be symbolic at best (being a minor contribution to the core budget), and emphasising the need for a greater focus on cost recovery. Discussion favoured support in principle, but could not agree on a way forward to agree to an increase in fees.

97. United States and France reconfirmed that their contributions to SPREP are unlikely to increase because of their Governments' on-going policies on financial support to regional and international organisations. Furthermore they advised that to recommend any increase to their Governments could well be counterproductive. Other Members also expressed doubt about their ability to increase fees citing either budget or political barriers.

98. Noting that SPREP has had no increase in membership contributions since 2004, created a risk that there will be insufficient funds to deliver services in the longer term, Members agreed it is critical that Members support the Secretariat to succeed in meeting the needs of the region, noting that needs are increasing while resources are staying the same. The Meeting suggested that the Secretariat should focus on developing a strong business development plan in close consultation with Members, and that Members should prioritise meeting their current commitments.

99. New Caledonia noted the distinction between voluntary and compulsory contributions, suggesting that voluntary commitments cannot be considered overdue as they are voluntary.

100. New Zealand advised that its preferred increase is 20% noting that for the majority of members this would

represent an increase of only $2,037, with an additional 3% for inflation. Cook Islands noted that they could support a 10% increase.

101. The Secretariat noted that while the proposed increases in Member contributions are minor, the issue is one of commitment and ownership, and reminded Members that SPREP is the only CROP agency that has not had an increase in Member contributions in the past 13 years. While the Secretariat is actively looking at cost recovery options and increasing project management fees, there is a widening gap between projects and core funds, and that this situation is not sustainable. A strong core is essential if SPREP is to effectively support its members.

102. The Chair formed a Friends of the Chair committee to discuss this issue further. The FoC consisted of Wallis and Futuna, Australia, United States, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, New Caledonia, France, New Zealand, Tuvalu, Samoa, and Papua New Guinea. The FoC presented their revised recommendations to the Meeting, these were adopted after revisions by the Meeting.

103. The Meeting:

- **considered** the options for membership fee increases presented in WP 9.2/Att.5a-5c:
  - 5(a) - Implications of the options for a 10% or 20% or 30% increases in Membership Contributions
  - 5(b) - Implications of the options for a 10% or 20% or 30% increases in Membership Contributions excluding Metropolitan Members
  - 5(c) - Increase in Membership Contribution annually to take into account inflation (3%)
- **recognised** the need for an increase in core contributions in order for the Secretariat to deliver the outcomes agreed to in the Strategic Plan 2017-2026 and the Performance Implementation Plan, including the progressive restructure;
- **recommended** a 20% increase in contributions by Members, subject to confirmation by capitals, commencing in time for the SPREP 2018 financial year. This does not include United States and France, noting that France prefers an 'up to 20%' recommendation. Tonga will consider the matter after its general election;
- **removed** the 2015 5% voluntary contributions; subject to approval of the previous recommendation;
- **agreed** to review Member contributions as a standing agenda item at each SPREP Meeting;
- **noted** the attribution of outstanding contributions from Members to the negative reserves balance accumulated over past years (refer to WP 9.2/Att.6);
- **directed** the Secretariat to continue to work with Member countries with outstanding contributions including development of payments plans;
- **encouraged** Members to commit to making membership contributions payments in a timely manner;
- **noted** the implementation of the cost recovery policy and programme fee;

- **noted** efforts by the Secretariat to improve the financial position of SPREP including the reduction of the overall deficit, reduction in foreign exchange losses in 2016, and cost reduction measures (refer to WP 9.2/Att.7 & 8);
- **noted** the efforts of the Secretariat to engage non-traditional donors/partners; and
- **noted** the efforts of the Secretariat to complete the review of the Reserves Policy by December 2017.

## AGENDA ITEM 10: CORPORATE SERVICES

### Agenda Item 10.1: SPREP Director General's Performance Assessment

104. This was a closed session.

105. The Meeting:

- **noted** and **endorsed** the review completed by the Troika of the DG's PDP for the period Sept 2016 – Sept 2017;
- **endorsed** the proposed annual PDP for the DG for the period Sept 2017 – Sept 2018, noting that the DG's PDP will be approved by the executive board in 2018;
- **approved** the extension of the Director General's existing contract for one year to align with the new governance arrangements for the Secretariat, this means the extended contract will end in December 2019;
- **requested that the Troika advise on the timing** realigning the DG's PDP to the rest of the Secretariat's staffs PDP cycle and financial year and timing of the SPREP Meeting; and
- **noted** the valuable contribution that Members of the Troika provide in the work of the Secretariat through active participation and regular constructive feedback.

### Agenda Item 10.2: CROP Harmonisation

106. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the progress with the Secretariat's work on Council of the Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) harmonisation.

107. The Meeting:

- **noted** the intention for CROP Heads to resolve the issues behind the lack of progress with remuneration harmonisation by 3 November; and
- **noted** the progress by the Secretariat in pursuing greater CROP harmonisation on a wide range of issues.

### Agenda Item 10.3: Appointment of External Auditors

108. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the appointment of external auditors, noting the term of office of the Secretariat's current external auditor will expire on 31 October 2017.

109. The Secretariat advised that a tender had been advertised for the audit of its 2017 and 2018 accounts, but that after extensive advertising over a four week period, only one tender proposal was received. A further two-week re-advertisement of the tender failed to attract any additional bids. The panel therefore assessed the proposal received from KPMG – Fiji, and concluded that it met the evaluation criteria and is technically capable of carrying out the work required. KPMG-Fiji is therefore recommended for the Meeting's endorsement.

110. Samoa noted the efforts of the Secretariat in conducting the Procurement process and supported KPMG-Fiji to be the external auditor for the Secretariat in 2017 and 2018. This was supported by United States, with United States noting that in the previous appointment of auditors, five bids were received, and urged SPREP to take action to ensure a more competitive and transparent process such as directly approaching auditing companies, however the Secretariat advised that in order to maintain objectivity, it was unable to do so.

111. The Director General advised that the value of the bid may limit the offers and an increase in this may increase the number of responsive offers.

112. The Meeting:

- **considered** the paper and **endorsed** the appointment of KPMG Fiji to audit SPREP's financial accounts for the financial years ending 31 December 2017 and 2018.

## AGENDA ITEM 11: REGIONAL CONVENTIONS

### Agenda Item 11.1: Report of the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and the Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (the Waigani Convention)

113. Cook Islands, the Chair of the Waigani Convention (COP8), presented the report of the 8th Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention.

114. New Caledonia queried as to how many MARPOL Convention infringements there had been, in response the Secretariat clarified there were no infringements however there were over 10,000 MARPOL violations which have been reported to countries for compliance and enforcement.

115. The Meeting:

- **noted** the Report of the Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention.

### Agenda Item 11.2: Report on the Fourteenth ordinary meeting of the contracting parties to the convention for the protection of the natural resources and environment of the South Pacific Region and related protocols (Noumea Convention)

116. Samoa, the Chair of the 14th Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention presented the report to the Meeting.

117. The Meeting:

- **noted** the Report of the Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention.

## AGENDA ITEM 12: 2018 AND 2019 WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET

### Agenda Item 12.1: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division – 2018-19 Overview

118. The Secretariat presented an overview of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Division work programme activities for 2018 - 19 consistent with the SPREP Strategic Plan

119. The Meeting supported the Secretariat's recommendations and gave particular emphasis to the regional invasive species work, noting several up-coming project funding agreements to advance this priority.

120. The Meeting:

- **noted** the 2018 - 19 highlights for the Biodiversity Ecosystem Management Work Programme.

**Agenda Item 12.1.1: Year of the Whale: Whales in a Changing Ocean Conference: Outcomes and Next Steps**

121. The Secretariat updated Members on activities conducted as part of the Year of the Whale, in particular, the Whales in a Changing Ocean conference hosted by the Government of Nuku'alofa from 4 – 6 April 2017, outlining the outcomes and next steps following on from the conference.

122. The Meeting thanked the Secretariat for their hard work in the Whales in a Changing Ocean Conference and supported the development of the new Whales and Dolphin Action Plan, with France noting its on-going support for marine mammal research, and the Tjibaou Cultural Centre exhibition, and Tonga noting the economic and conservation benefits gained from hosting the conference, including support to whale based tourism and the establishment of the whale sanctuary.

123. The Meeting:

- **noted** the report of the Whales in a Changing Ocean conference;
- **noted** the contents of the Pacific Islands Year of the Whale Declaration and **considered** signing the Declaration if not already a signatory;
- **noted** the undertakings given by some Members in Voluntary Commitment #16006 made to the UN Ocean Conference;
- **considered** how best to provide support; and
- **agreed** to contribute through the Whale and Dolphin Action Plan 2018-2022 and other mechanisms towards the effective conservation of whales in the Pacific islands region.

**Agenda Item 12.1.2: Draft Marine Species Action Plans 2018 – 2022**

124. The Secretariat reported to Members on progress towards reviewing the Marine Species Programme 2013 – 2017, and the development of a new Marine Species Programme 2018 – 2022.

125. The Meeting welcomed the more targeted approach for the review of the Draft Marine Species Action Plan 2018-2022, noted the release of the Marine Species Action Plan and committed to review the document by the deadline of 31st October 2017, with Cook Islands noting the establishment of its marine sanctuary and legislative requirements as part of implementation. Drawing on lessons learned through experience with the Turtle Monitoring and Eco-Cultural Tourism Project, New Zealand noted that it would be useful to further streamline the objectives of the draft Marine Species Action Plan to set out targeted, high –priority objectives that can reasonably be achieved in their five-year timeframe, and that consulting with Member states and translating the objectives into national plans could further support implementation

126. The Meeting:

- **noted** that the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Species Programme is revised every five years and is now due for revision to cover the five-year period 2018-2022; and
- **agreed** to review the draft Programme provided and to give feedback in writing to the Secretariat by 31 October 2017.

**Agenda Item 12.1.3: Pacific Islands Coastal Resilience Framework – Implementing a Paradigm Shift**

127. The Secretariat presented to Members a paper on the development of the Pacific Islands Coastal Resilience Framework (PIECoR) and the important role that it can play in strengthening the capacity of Pacific island governments and communities to design and implement effective responses to climate change adaptation and other environmental stressors. The Secretariat advised that the Framework was developed based on the new SPREP Strategic Plan, in partnership with IUCN and SPC, and in consultation with Green Climate Fund (GCF), noting the Framework is aligned with the GCF pillar on coastal resilience and with processes and policies already endorsed by SPREP Meetings.

128. United States noted that they are undergoing a review of strategic priorities including that of climate change policy and in that regard was not in a position to endorse the Framework on Pacific Islands Coastal Resilience, recommending to replace "endorsed" with "noted.

129. Samoa and New Caledonia reaffirmed the importance of the Framework with Samoa proposing it be endorsed whilst noting the position of the United States, and New Caledonia noting it would enable the region to seek funding support.

130. France reiterated its support for the Framework, noting the Secretariat had obtained the full consensus of the Pacific countries and it will allow the Secretariat the means to implement its strategic priorities in this regard.

131. The Meeting recognised the position of United States and agreed to endorse the recommendation whilst noting the United States position.

132. The Meeting:

- **noted** the development and importance of the Pacific Islands Coastal Resilience Framework as a basis for strengthening national responses to climate change;
- **endorsed** the framework as an important mechanism to support implementation of the Strategic Plan;
- **endorsed** the framework as an important mechanism to secure funding through the GCF and other relevant funding facilities; and
- **noted** that United States reserves its position on the last two points

**Agenda Item 12.2: Climate Change Division – 2018 - 19 Overview**

133. The Secretariat provided an overview of the Climate Change Division's work programme activities for 2018-19 consistent with the new SPREP Strategic Plan.

134. The Meeting:

- **noted** the overview of the 2018 - 2019 work programme of the Climate Change Division

**Agenda Item 12.2.1: RTSM**

135. The Secretariat reported on the work achieved under the Strategic Program on Climate Resilience: Pacific Regional Track (SPCR-PR). Members were also invited to provide strategic guidance to ensure the sustainability of the mainstreaming work delivered under the program and the continuation of the Regional Technical Backstopping Mechanism (RTSM).

136. Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu commended the Secretariat for the technical support provided by the RTSM and encouraged donors to consider further funding of the RTSM.

137. The Meeting:

- **noted** the *Outcome Statement* attached as Annex V ;
- **noted also** that the technical assistance provided under the SPCR-PR was considered by participating members to be targeted support needed by Pacific island countries to build their resilience to climate change and disaster related risk, to scale up their climate change investments in support of their development aspirations, and to better enable access to climate change finance;
- **requested** that development partners support countries in incorporating climate change and disaster related risks into their development planning processes, policies and plans by adopting the methodological approach and the generic tools trialled under this program;
- **recommended** that the Secretariat prioritise the sustainability of the mainstreaming work and the RTSM; and
- **invited** development partners to lend technical and financial support to ensure that the mainstreaming tools and RTSM assistance are continued, as requested by those Member countries which have benefited from the programme to date.

**Agenda Item 12.2.2: Update from the 4th Pacific Meteorological Council and 2nd Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology**

138. The Secretariat reported on the outcomes of the 4th meeting of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC-4) and the 2nd Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology (PMMM-2) supporting sustainable weather and climate services for a resilient Pacific and thanked the Government of Solomon Islands for their hosting arrangements.

139. The Secretariat outlined the historical and evolution of the PMC and acknowledged the contribution of development partners and donors. The Secretariat also highlighted the media training of journalists preceding the PMC funded by Climate and Oceans Support Programme in the Pacific (COSPPac) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), facilitated by SPREP. The PMC-4 outcomes included, amongst many others, the *Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy 2012-2021*

(PIMS) mid-term review and the revised *Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy 2017-2026* as well as the new *Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services 2017-2026 (PRSCS)*.

140. Samoa acknowledged the efforts of the Government of Solomon Islands, SPREP, UNDP, and development partners and donors and welcomed with appreciation the opportunity to host the next PMC and PMMM Meetings in 2019.

141. United States noted that although they were present in Honiara they were not part of the Ministerial Statement and requested the Meeting to note their reservation regarding reference to this in the recommendations. United States reaffirmed their full support as members of the Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy 2017-2026 (PIMS), the Road Map for Climate Services, PMC and the PMMM.

142. The Meeting:

- **noted** the outcomes of PMC-4 and PMMM 2;
- **noted** the Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy 2012-2021 mid-term review and the revised Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy 2017-2026;
- **noted** the new Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services 2017-2026;
- **acknowledged** with thanks the support provided by the World Meteorological Organization, the Government of Solomon Islands, University of Hawai'i, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Government of Australia through the COSPPac, and Pacific-Australia Climate Change Science and Adaptation Planning (**PACCSAP**) Program, Government of Finland, Government of Korea, Meteo France and UNDP for PMC-4 and PMMM-2;
- **requested** the PMDP to continue work with regional National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and partners to implement the action items from PMC-4, the priorities highlighted in the Honiara Ministerial Statement, the revised PIMS and the PRSCS. The United States reserves its position on this statement; and
- **noted the support and commitment** of Members and development partners for the outcomes of the PMC-4 and PMMM-2

**Agenda Item 12.2.3: Update from the current Pacific Meteorological Council/Pacific Meteorological Desk Partnership projects supporting Pacific National Meteorological and Hydrological Services**

143. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on progress made by SPREP and partners in meteorology, hydrology and climatology activities that are contributing to building the capacity of Member's National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs).

144. New Caledonia requested they be included in the Panel on Climate Services in the Pacific (PICS), noting that they have requested support from France on access to climate carbon markets, and that Meteo France, which represented New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna at the PMC-4 meeting, would like to engage more broadly in the region, including

working with Pacific countries to minimise the economic impacts of climate variability. The Secretariat noted that it is already working with Meteo France to strengthen their relationship via a Memorandum of Understanding, and that the membership of the PICS panel has been amended to include New Caledonia.

145. A number of Members expressed appreciation from their engagement in this work, with Wallis and Futuna noting that their recently adopted climate change strategy had relied upon the support of their SPREP trained meteorological services officers.

146. The Meeting:

- **acknowledged** the generous support and commitment of regional and international partners for the past, ongoing and upcoming work to support National Meteorological and Hydrological Services in the region, including the Government of Finland, Government of the Republic of Korea, Korea Meteorological Agency, Government of Australia, Government of Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Government of Japan, Japan Meteorological Agency, United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Meteo France, World Meteorological Organization and Green Climate Fund; and
- **encouraged** Members to **support** the on-going development of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and SPREP's efforts to support them.

**Agenda Item 12.3: Waste Management and Pollution Control Division Overview – 2018-19**

147. The Secretariat provided an overview of major work programme activities in 2018 – 19 to improve management of solid and hazardous waste and marine pollution for the region.

148. The Meeting commended the Secretariat's work on Waste Management and Pollution Control, with appreciation expressed for both the European Union funded PacWaste Project, and Japanese Technical Cooperation for Promotion of Regional Initiative on Solid Waste Management in Pacific Island Countries (J-PRISM) Projects.

149. Republic of Marshall Islands sought a response from the Secretariat on its request for assistance on the nuclear waste issue, in response the Secretariat clarified a regional working group which included SPREP, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Pacific Community (SPC) was formed to address the nuclear waste issue, noting that a mission to Republic of Marshall Islands will soon be undertaken.

150. The Secretariat was urged to ensure collaboration with all Pacific island countries and territories, to support Pacific islands with national recycling responses and to include private sector partners including in development of the waste database.

151. The Meeting:

- **noted** the work programme for the Waste Management and Pollution Control Division.

**Agenda Item 12.3.1: European Union/SPREP Pacific Hazardous Waste Management Project (PacWaste) Achievements, Evaluation and Legacy**

152. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the achievements, evaluation and legacy of the EDF 10 Pacific Hazardous Waste Management project, known as PacWaste.

153. Several Members made specific requests for assistance from PacWaste+, including:

- Tuvalu requested technical assistance from the Secretariat for rehabilitation of the Funafuti dump site. In response, the Secretariat stated a baseline study has been conducted to address remediation of the Funafuti waste site and it will continue on this path.
- Samoa noted the need for regional coordination of chemical waste management and tracking systems for chemicals throughout their lives, including between stakeholders.
- Fiji requested the Secretariat to articulate an e-waste strategy going forward, with Samoa enquiring whether e-waste was a hazardous or chemical waste.
- Kiribati acknowledged the training provided by the Secretariat on healthcare waste, but noted that the duration of the training was short, and urged the Secretariat to extend the duration of training in the future. In response to Kiribati, the Secretariat observed the PacWaste training reflected the limited resources available, it was recognised that countries want more training and this will be built into the project design for PacWaste+.

154. In response the Secretariat noted the intention to utilise a range of technical working groups, including on Ridge to Reef projects, and acknowledged that while e-waste has been a minor component of PacWaste this is to be expanded in PacWaste+. Noting that e-waste contains some solid waste and some hazardous waste, the Secretariat explained that although the export markets from the stripping of e-waste can be valuable, the Waigani and Basel Conventions inhibit export to key Asian markets, and advised that putting e-waste into landfills should be a last resort.

155. The Meeting:

- **noted** the achievements of the PacWaste project in improving the management of hazardous waste management in the Pacific, fostering regional collaboration and a Pacific to Pacific approach in line with Cleaner Pacific 2025;
- **noted** the results of the European Union Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) exercise and Final Evaluation and the end date of 31 December 2017; and
- **noted** the legacy that the PacWaste project leaves, by way of the EDF 11 funded PacWaste+ project.

**Agenda Item 12.3.2: Cleaner Oceans for a Cleaner Pacific**

156. The Secretariat informed the Meeting of the importance of best practice in waste management and pollution control as an effective mechanism for addressing marine pollution, and sought the commitment of Members to actively participate in these initiatives to sustain

the long-term health of the Pacific Ocean and its people.

157. Noting that marine debris by definition is a trans-boundary issue requiring a coordinated response through partnership across the globe, United States highlighted work with stakeholders on marine debris issue including the Group of Seven (G7), Group of Twenty (G20) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) groupings, further acknowledging the role of the Our Ocean Conference in addressing marine pollution, and encouraged the Secretariat to engage the private sector to combat marine pollution, and proposed an amendment to text to strengthen language by adding the word "act". The Secretariat noted that private sector engagement and innovation including on plastic pollution, is reflected in PacWaste+ and EDF 11 proposals.

158. Republic of Marshall Islands, sought clarification on support from the Secretariat for countries with high violation incidents reported through the observer programme. The Secretariat advised it is working with countries to increase understanding of the Cape Town Agreement for ratification, and conducting reviews of national laws to strengthen compliance and enforcement with MARPOL.

159. Members identified national actions to combat marine pollution:
    - Kiribati noted its voluntary commitment to ban the use of single use plastic bags, requesting support from the Secretariat and partners to implement this commitment
    - Wallis and Futuna noted it has banned plastic bags since July this year with the intention to ban all plastics completely by 2020.
    - France introduced a new legislation last year to ban the single use of plastics with the next step being to prohibit the use of microplastics, and sought the support from the Secretariat in this area.
    - United Kingdom has committed to several actions to combat plastic pollution, recently introducing legislation to ban the manufacturing of plastics. United Kingdom further noted work in Fiji and Solomon Islands under the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme (CMEP) for plastic analysis and highlights the need for regional partnerships to support the work of the Secretariat in this area

160. Australia also supported previous comments on the importance of taking actions in the countries, at the regional and global level, requesting clarification on whether MARPOL violations of abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) have been raised with IMO MEPC (Marine Environment Protection Committee) and if it hasn't, is there merit for the secretariat to do so. In response the Secretariat advised that it has committed to submit a proposal to the IMO to raise the classification of (ALDFG) in MARPOL.

161. The Meeting:

- **noted** the progress made in waste management and pollution control, a productive collaboration between SPREP, Member Countries and other partners;
- **noted** that the success of such activities has been based on strong commitment from participating countries; and
- **committed** as SPREP Member countries to participate and act fully in waste management and pollution control interventions to stop marine pollution at its source.

**Agenda Item 12.3.3: Sustainable Regional Capacity Building for Improved Decision Making**

162. The Secretariat informed the Meeting of the planned implementation of sustainable mechanisms for strengthened institutional and human capacity, and sought the commitment of Members to participate and actively engage in the proposed capacity building initiatives and the collection and submission of data on waste, chemicals and pollutants.

163. Kiribati requested that while the Secretariat is working at the regional level on monitoring waste, that a similar system be established at the national level, and in recognising the efforts made by the Secretariat for training on waste management, called for this training to be sustained over time and be institutionalised.

164. United States requested that the recommendations three and four be amended from commit to engage. After some discussion this was agreed to.

165. The Meeting:

- **noted** the development of sustainable capacity building activities and a Regional Waste Monitoring System;
- **noted** that the success of such activities requires strong commitment from participating countries;
- **agreed to engage** as SPREP Member countries to participate fully in the capacity building initiatives; and
- **agreed to engage** as SPREP Member countries to designate country counterparts who will be charged with the task of regularly collecting data and submitting them to SPREP for inclusion in a database as appropriate.

**Agenda Item 12.4: Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division Overview 2018/19**

166. The Secretariat provided an overview of the outcomes of the Pacific Environment Forum (PEF) and the major 2018/19 work programme activities for the division to contribute to the Environmental Monitoring and Governance and related Strategic Priorities of the SPREP Strategic Plan.

167. The Meeting recognised the importance of data, stressing that good policies are based on good and accurate data linked to the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level, and noted the value of tools such as GIS to support this effort.

168. The Meeting:

- **noted** the outcomes of the 2017 Pacific Environment Forum
- **noted** the 2018 – 19 Work Programme for the SPREP Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division.

**Agenda Item 12.4.1: Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development in the Pacific Region**

169. The Secretariat presented the Members with a draft copy of the Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development in the Pacific Region (EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development)

170. The Secretariat advised that this EIA is aligned with objective 4.1 of the Secretariats new Strategic Plan and was developed in consultation with a number of Member countries and the South Pacific Trade Organisation (SPTO) who will both actively promote the document for use by Government, developers. The Secretariat further advised that this is one of a number of EIA guidelines that are being developed on subjects including landfill guidelines and sand mining.

171. The Chair acknowledged the important work by the Secretariat in producing such a relevant EIA document but further noted that much more work needs to be done in developing and applying EIA guidelines to help prevent inappropriate development.

172. The Meeting acknowledged the importance of tourism to many Members' national accounts and commended the EIA guideline as an important mechanism to help minimise the impacts of tourism development, with New Caledonia appreciating the translation of the EIA guideline into French, and requesting to have national EIA workshops on use of the guidelines.

173. The Meeting:

- **endorsed** the publication of the EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development.

**Agenda Item 12.4.2: Programme to support strengthening environmental monitoring and collection of environmental data in the Pacific for national reporting processes and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).**

174. The Secretariat presented achievements made under the ACPMEA2 Programme and sought endorsement of the ACPMEA Phase III priorities and scope. The Secretariat highlighted the Capacity Building Programme related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACPMEA) has been ongoing since 2009, acknowledging the funding support by the European Commission, through the ACP Secretariat, and the UN Environment. The Secretariat reported the significant results have been successfully achieved to raise the environmental agenda and the effective implementation of MEAs in SPREP Member countries.

175. The Meeting:

- **noted** achievements under the ACPMEA2 Programme; and
- **endorsed** the ACPMEA III broad priorities and scope.

**Agenda Item 12.5: Consideration and Approval of Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2018 - 19**

176. The Secretariat presented its proposed annual Work Programme and Budget for 2018 – 2019.

177. The Director General further added that the balanced budget was a direct response to the request of members, also noting the increase in partner confidence was reflected in balanced budget and projected increases. The Director General noted the successful passing of the EU 7 pillar assessment helped contribute to the increased donor confidence.

178. Australia commended the secretariat on the comprehensive budget which was well received and requested the Secretariat, in light of the potential additional core funding from an increase in membership contributions, to consider its strategy in the allocation of these additional funds. Australia suggested to put as part of priority the positions currently remaining unfunded in the organisational structure.

179. The Meeting:

- **considered** and **approved** the proposed Work Programme and Budget for **USD$28,998,044** for 2018 and the provisional Work Programme and Budget of **US$29,721,842** for 2019**.**

**AGENDA ITEM 13: ITEMS PROPOSED BY MEMBERS**

**Agenda Item 13.1: The need for a Pacific wide ban on Asbestos**

180. Cook Islands presented a paper on the need for a Pacific wide ban on asbestos, seeking endorsement and commitment from Members to develop and implement a Pacific wide ban on the importation, re-sale and re-use of products containing asbestos.

181. In 2013 - 14 the PacWaste project conducted the first Pacific Regional Asbestos Baseline Survey across 26 islands in 13 Pacific island countries. The results from the Regional Asbestos Baseline Survey concluded that over USD 150 million would be needed to remove and replace all the asbestos identified in the locations surveyed, and that new asbestos materials are now being imported into the Pacific region, primarily from Asia.

182. Tonga, France, New Zealand, Australia, Tuvalu, Samoa, French Polynesia and Republic of the Marshall Islands fully supported the proposal. United States and America Samoa noted that they share the concerns with other Members but are unable to support the recommendation a Pacific-wide ban as the use of asbestos does remain legal in their countries for certain purposes. United Kingdom noted that they have not received guidance on this recommendation but are supportive in principle.

183. France, New Zealand, Australia, and French Polynesia noted that they have banned asbestos in their countries. New Zealand further offered to share their experiences and work with the Secretariat in drafting a ban.

184. Tuvalu noted the importance of data collected during the PacWaste baseline study, further requesting the Secretariat to expand PacWaste & PacWaste+ to include all 8 outer islands of Tuvalu in the removal and disposal of asbestos.

185. The Meeting:

- **noted** the information provided in this paper;
- **noted** letters of support in favour of a Pacific wide asbestos ban provided by the Tongan and Australian Government representatives;
- **noted** the work conducted by the EU-funded PacWaste project that has contributed significant resources to asbestos remediation, monitoring and awareness across 13 Pacific island countries;
- **noted** the threat posed by new asbestos to Pacific island communities;
- **endorsed** initiatives by countries to ban or restrict the importation, re-use and re-sale of products and wastes containing asbestos with the exception of importation for the purpose of safe disposal; and
- **directed** the Secretariat to work with countries and territories to ban or restrict the importation, re-use and re-sale of products and wastes containing asbestos; to be resourced through Cleaner Pacific 2025 and PacWaste+.

**Agenda Item 13.2: Call for Action for SPREP Members on plastic microbeads**

186. France presented a paper seeking the endorsement of the Meeting for a Call for Action for SPREP Members on plastic microbeads.

187. Micro plastics, such as microbeads are contributing to the fragments of plastics and fibres contaminating our seas, turning them into an unhealthy plastic soup. When used as directed, microbeads are washed down drains and into waste water systems where they are known to pass through these treatment facilities and consequently flushed out to sea.

188. Micro plastics in the marine environment are known to bio-accumulate. New scientific research is continuing to find more and more examples of plastic inside all kinds of sea life. A recent study showed that 90 per cent of birds have plastic in their stomachs too. Microbeads end up in humans through toothpaste and through eating seafood that has ingested micro plastics and the toxins that come with them.

189. Samoa commended France for the initiative, noting that the issue was also discussed by Leaders, outlining the importance of this initiative for this to be driven through the Secretariat to allow for guidance with development of domestic policies. New Caledonia fully supported the Call for Action.

190. United States shares the concerns over micro beads noting it has passed legislation at the national level to address this. United States proposed

modifications to the Call for Action as microbeads are still used in some medical products for which there are currently few alternatives. The modifications were submitted for consideration.

191. United Kingdom, French Polynesia, America Samoa, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands endorsed the modification proposed by United States. French Polynesia further noted it does not have industries that use microbeads. New Zealand noted that a national ban has been announced on the manufacture and sale of 'wash-off' products containing microbeads, which will enter into force by May 2018.

192. United States further elaborated on their comments, and requested that the Meeting consider the amendments to the Call for Action: *'We resolve to take measures to reduce the use of plastic micro beads in our countries'* to replace *'We commit to take measures to ban the use of plastic microbeads in our countries'* as well as replace *'We also commit to advocate with other States for such bans'* with *'We also resolve to advocate with other States for such measures'*.

193. Samoa sought clarification on the phrase "other States". The Chair suggested removing the phrase so that the amendment would read: *"We also resolve to advocate for such measures"*

194. The Call for Action with amendments as proposed by United States and Fiji was agreed to by the Meeting.

195. The Meeting:

- **endorsed** the Call for Action from SPREP Members on plastic microbeads, as amended.

## AGENDA ITEM 14: REGIONAL COOPERATION

### Agenda Item 14.1: Framework for Pacific Regionalism – Governance and Financing update

196. The Secretariat presented an update on the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

197. Australia proposed revising the second recommendation to reflect the outcomes from the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting held 4th-8th September 2017, in particular to 'confirm its understanding of the Leaders' decisions on the Framework for Pacific Regionalisation, and express its support for their effective implementation'.

198. New Caledonia advised that New Caledonia and French Polynesia are now full Members of the Pacific Island Forum and the importance of SPREP Members, as well as non-Members, to be fully aware of the decisions made at the Leaders Meeting.

199. Cook Islands sought clarification on the process undertaken by the Secretariat in addressing the challenges of implementing and involving Members in the decisions made by the leaders. In response the Secretariat advised it is firmly committed to the CROP effort to align SPREP's work and agenda with the Leaders' decisions and priorities, and

will continue to engage the Members in this process. The Leaders' decisions also are implemented through the work plans of the Secretariat.

200. The Meeting:

- **noted** the process followed in developing recommendations to Leaders on the Framework for Pacific Regionalism; and
- **confirmed** its understanding of the leaders decisions on the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and express its support for their effective implementation.

**Agenda Item 14.2: Review of CROP Charter**

201. The Meeting was updated on the Review of the Draft CROP Charter and possible implications for SPREP. The Secretariat noted that the CROP Charter was not endorsed by the Leaders Forum Meeting in September 2017.

202. Cook Islands advised that at the Leaders Forum Meeting, the issue was not put to Leaders since there were some agencies that had not yet reviewed the CROP Charter, noting that at the time the Secretariat had not yet agreed to the Charter.

203. The Meeting:

- **endorsed** the revised CROP Charter;
- **confirmed** the inclusion of SPREP as a current member of CROP;
- **approved** cross-CROP agency meetings of governing council Chairs, to strengthen whole-of-CROP governance, and appropriate meeting frequency; and
- **directed** the Secretariat to confer with the other CROP (chairs) on what level of resources are required to be deployed towards the implementation of the Leaders priorities.

**Agenda Item 14.3: CROP Executives Meeting Report**

204. The Meeting was updated on the outcomes of CROP CEO Meetings in 2017, in particular the areas of Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP), Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR), CROP Resourcing, CROP Charter, EDF-11, UNOC, COP23, preparations for the 48th PIF and its Blue Pacific theme, SIS Aviation priority, RMI legacy issues and CROP working groups.

205. The Meeting:

- **noted** the update by the SPREP Director General on CROP CEOs Meetings in 2017

**Agenda Item 15: Statements by Observers**

206. The 28SM was attended by a range of observers which included CROP agencies, NGOs and other conservation and environment groups. Observers made statements outlining their areas of work and potential partnerships with Members and the Secretariat. The list of observers and the observer statements are attached as Annex VI.

**Agenda Item 16: Other Business**

207. New Zealand presented each SPREP Member with the book – "*New Zealand's Great White Sharks"* written by Award winning natural history writer and broadcaster Alison Balance. The book, dedicated to Michael Manning, is also gifted to schools in New Zealand and the South Pacific. In response the Secretariat and Members expressed appreciation to New Zealand for the book.

208. The Secretariat noted the Executive Board Meeting in September 2018, further information will be sent out to Members. It was also noted the next official SPREP Meeting, including the Ministerial Meeting, will be in 2019. The exact timing is to be confirmed.

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

209. The Meeting:

- **adopted** the recommendations and decisions from the outcomes report of the Twenty-eighth SPREP Meeting.

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## OPENING REMARKS FROM MR. KOSI LATU, SPREP DIRECTOR GENERAL

It is my pleasure to welcome you all for the 28th SPREP Meeting. This meeting is symbolic as we progress the new governance arrangements laid out by our Members in 2015 with the approval of biennial arrangements for the SPREP Meeting and in 2016 the approval of an Executive Board to convene in the alternate years of our governing council. The next SPREP Meeting, the 29th SPREP Meeting will convene here in Samoa in 2019.

These measures as guided by our Members were to ensure that SPREP remains a robust, agile and responsive organisation focused on efficient and effective service delivery with impact on the ground in our 21 Pacific island country and territory Members' – the focus of our mandate, our purpose is '*To promote cooperation in the Pacific region, provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment, and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations'.*

To achieve this - we must focus our efforts on the work we do, to ensure SPREP is able to allocate and direct technical and financial resources accordingly to make a difference where it has greatest impact. Our new Strategic Plan 2017-2026 approved by our Members in Niue of last year, articulates a vision that ensures *'A resilient Pacific environment sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures'.*

Our mandate, our vision and our values as the *premier regional organisation for the environment and climate action* - ensures that SPREP works in partnership with all of our members including our metropolitan members and development partners – to address the many challenges in our region. Our strategic priorities of Climate Change Resilience; Ecosystem and Biodiversity Protection; Waste Management and Pollution Control; and Environmental Governance are all environmental challenges for our Pacific region which has a direct impact on the sustainable development of present and future generations.

Our new Strategic Plan recognises these challenges as articulated on the global and regional stage by our Pacific Leaders, where climate change is our principal concern and oceans a cross cutting theme across all of the work we do. SPREP serves 'Large Island Ocean States' where our Pacific region is 98% ocean and the very real impacts of climate change a matter of survival in the lead up to COP23.

The Government of Fiji will take up the COP23 Presidency role in Bonn this year, an important and prestigious role which places our Pacific region at the centre of the global stage, once more -- building upon the successes earlier this year where the Government of Fiji jointly hosted with the Government of Sweden the UN Ocean Conference on implementation of SDG14 in New York. The important leadership role of Fiji in both of these critical regional and global agenda items further strengthens the *'ocean-climate change nexus'* and raises the voice of the Pacific to the highest levels.

To complement the work of our Pacific Leaders on the global, regional and national stages, the role of SPREP is to work with Pacific members and help address the challenges on the ground. Our role as an RIE (Regional Implementing Entity) for the Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund has ensured that SPREP provides tangible and practical support to members through our respective technical staff and newly established PCU (Programme Coordinating Unit). To date we have two full sized projects that have been approved for the 'Climate Information Services for Resilient Development for Vanuatu' with the GCF and the 'Climate Change Resilience of Vulnerable Island Communities in the Federated States of Micronesia' for the Adaptation Fund.

A critical aspect of our RIE role is helping members' access climate finance, working closely alongside members and with partners, to develop projects according to national and regional priorities. Other pipeline initiatives include the development of a 'Coastal and Marine Ecosystem Resilience Programme' with seven Pacific island countries in partnership with IUCN and GCF Readiness Proposals to support Members capacity to access and manage GCF resources for adaptation projects on the ground. The challenges of climate change are vast and growing in our Pacific region, as are the demands on the work and role of SPREP.

The work we do with members in countries and in partnership with other agencies ensures a resilient Pacific as espoused in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. We acknowledge our role as a member of the CROP (Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific) and the stewardship provided by our Pacific Leaders, who only a few weeks ago were here in Apia hosted by the Government of Samoa for the 48th Forum Leaders Meeting.

With the high level discussions focused on the 'Blue Pacific' and our Pacific as the 'Blue Continent' the Leaders Communique notes there is much more work for SPREP to do alongside our peer CROP agencies on the preparation for COP23; the Framework for Resilient Development and the elaboration of the Paris Agreement; supporting the Pacific on the negotiations for COP23 and the new Implementing Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction; the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development; and the commitment to action on marine pollution and marine debris; to name but a few key issues that fall within the domain and technical expertise of SPREP.

Our new Strategic Plan recognises the voyage of SPREP and ensures like our members we are resilient to change and adept to the changing world we are part of as a young, agile and dynamic organisation of 24 years. We have strengthened our internal processes through the GEF funded 'Enhancing Capacity to Develop Global and Regional Environmental Projects in the Pacific (MSP)' project. This ensures we are compliant to the vast donor requirements of the GEF, the GCF and the EU and able to leverage additional funding for the benefit of our members. As part of this institutional strengthening we acknowledge the importance of partnerships and the growth in our project portfolio for our Members. SPREP is appreciative of the multiyear funding from the Governments of Australia and New Zealand who have consistently

supported the environmental aspirations of our region with direct support to our core budget and we welcome other members and development partners to follow the precedence set.

We also acknowledge with sincere appreciation the European Union as an important development partner for SPREP and our region, as well as the Governments of Sweden, Germany and Finland and the multilateral agencies of the GEF and UNDP and all other partners who have contributed to the work of SPREP that has benefitted our members.

The Government of Japan and the Government of Samoa as the host of SPREP, have generously laid the foundations for the Pacific Climate Change Centre which will commence construction in 2018 with the proposed hand over to SPREP in 2019. The PCCC is a journey led by our members that was first discussed on the SPREP Meeting agenda in 2011. The PCCC will be a regional resource and a Centre of Excellence for climate action and a tool for implementation of the Framework for Resilient Development.

It will also be a focal point for the Pacific Met Services in support of the recently approved Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services (PRSC) 2017-2026 and the Pacific Island Meteorological Strategy (PIMS) 2017-2026. As we look forward in our voyage to our 29$^{th}$ SPREP Meeting in 2019 we will bear the collective fruits of the work of our members and our partners come to fruition in the form of the PCCC. The foundation of partnerships laid down by the Governments of Japan and Samoa will be the very essence of the PCCC in that addressing the many challenges of climate change and the environment cannot be done alone and must be collaborative, inclusive and responsive to the needs of our Pacific members.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF REVENUE, HON. TIALAVEA FEA TIONISIO HUNT

SPREP has been an important partner for my government since its establishment here in Apia in 1993. When the government invited SPREP to be based in Apia, it was hoped that not only would SPREP grow and prosper in friendly Samoa, but also that Samoa would benefit from the presence of the regional environment programme for the Pacific islands through capacity-building for the Samoan public service and a shared agenda for addressing environmental issues, to strengthen that vital connection between sustainable development and conservation.

I am pleased to say that these things have come to pass. The staff, influence and budget of SPREP has grown steadily and the Samoan government, especially the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, has benefited from our close relationship. It is notable that in its recent Strategic Plan, SPREP identified climate change and oceans as its two most important cross-cutting themes. It is abundantly clear that the Pacific is now a leading global voice on both of these issues.

I am also very pleased to note that thanks to a close collaboration between the Governments of Japan and Samoa and SPREP, the Pacific Climate Change Centre will be built on the SPREP campus within the next two years. The Centre will be a shared regional resource, acting as a catalyst for climate action in our region, which is on the front line of climate change impacts.

Two years ago, it was the Pacific island countries that successfully promoted a target for a maximum temperature rise of 1.5 degrees in the Paris Agreement, when many other delegations were willing to settle for 2 degrees. The reason for pressing for such a threshold was to provide protection for the coral reefs that are so vital to our food security and tourism industries. SPREP played a major role in preparing and supporting Pacific island delegations to achieve this.

I also acknowledge and welcome SPREP's continuing support and technical guidance to the region during the lead-up to COP23 of the UN Framework for Climate Change Convention, which will be held in Bonn in November.

Fiji, of course, will be the co-chair of the UNFCCC meeting, which is a global recognition of the leadership role that the Pacific Islands has played in recent years in raising global awareness of the need for urgent action on climate change. The region's role as stewards of the world's largest ocean was also acknowledged this year with Fiji's co-chairing of the UN Ocean Conference in New York in June, where SPREP again provided support for Pacific island leaders who were at the forefront of promoting a number of vital issues such as the addressing the impacts of marine debris and plastics in the ocean. The Pacific voice was also prominent in advocating for marine protected areas and sanctuaries, sustainable fisheries, and ecotourism to benefit both our coastal communities and our threatened species. As in Paris, the voices of Pacific leaders were united in their messages, and gained considerable attention from the global media.

One critical issue which was missing from the Paris Agreement is the nexus between climate change and oceans. For the Pacific region, this is important given the impact of warmer oceans on the severity of cyclones and storm events and the distribution of tuna stocks, which is a major resource for Pacific people.

At the UN Ocean Conference, and again last week as the Chair of the Pacific Islands Leaders Forum meeting in Apia, Samoa had the privilege of launching and promoting the concept of The Blue Pacific – Our Sea of Islands in a Blue Continent. This envisages the Blue Pacific as one continent with the Pacific people as custodians of the natural resources of the Pacific Ocean. The concept of the Blue Pacific also enables us to achieve our collective security through Sustainable Development, Management and Conservation. The adoption of this theme will strengthen and give renewed impetus to a growing Pacific Regionalism. It is a tangible reflection of the strong relationship that has been built over the years between SPREP and its Members, and in particular the Government of Samoa.

The Blue Pacific initiative seeks to recapture the collective potential for our shared stewardship of the Pacific islands region and to reclaim control of our shared heritage. For too long, we have failed to take adequate action to protect our marine resources from unsustainable levels of exploitation, mainly by countries from outside the region. International law confers particular rights on Pacific island communities to sustainably manage, conserve and protect our ocean environment and its biodiversity.

And we are also walking the talk. Most of the world's large Marine Protected Areas are in our region, and we are at the forefront of mitigating climate change impacts through the recognition of Blue Carbon initiatives such as the protection of mangroves, saltmarshes and seagrass meadows, all of which sequester carbon at impressive rates and can also protect coastal communities from storm damage.

Like many other Pacific island countries, Samoa made a number of Voluntary Commitments at the UN Ocean Conference – as an explicit acknowledgment that we intend to fully play our part in achieving the aims of the Blue Pacific. We are not afraid to be held accountable for our commitments. Samoa will extend the protection it already affords to many marine species, and we will establish a sanctuary for sharks within our Exclusive Economic Zone. Furthermore, we shall be proposing the listing of blue sharks, which constitute some 40% of the global trade in shark fins, on Appendix II of the Convention for Migratory Species at its Conference of Parties in Manila next month.

I apologise if I have focused heavily this morning on marine issues. Of course, the islands of our Blue Pacific also have their problems in a changing climate, which not only has implications for people, but also for terrestrial animals and plants. These problems are frequently compounded by the impacts of invasive species. I know that SPREP provides vital technical assistance to all its Members to help countries and territories cope with the wide range of issues that they face on land as well as in the ocean. I applaud the efforts of all the government representatives and supporters of SPREP who are assembled here for this final annual meeting before you move to a biennial cycle. But for this week, I wish you a very blue meeting:

Blue carbon – blue sharks – and most of all protecting our precious Blue Pacific.

Faafetai. Soifua

## Provisional 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-Seventh SPREP Meeting**

**Agenda Item 5: 2016 Overview**

5.1 Presentation of Annual Report for 2016 and Director General's Overview of Progress since the Twenty-Seventh SPREP Meeting
5.2 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the 2016 Annual Work Programme and Budget
5.3 Audited Annual Accounts for 2016

**Agenda Item 6: Strategic Partnership Issues**

6.1 Strengthening Regional Linkages update
6.2 Access to Climate Finance - Adaptation Fund (AF) Green Climate Fund (GCF) and GEF Accreditation Updates
6.3 Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC)
6.4 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
6.5 UN Oceans Conference: Outcomes and Next Steps
6.6 EDF 11
6.7 FRDP
6.8 Partnership Update:
*6.8.1 SPREP and UNEP Partnership*
*6.8.2 SPREP and University of Newcastle*
6.9 COP23

**Agenda Item 7: Implementation of the new SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026**

7.1 Draft Performance Implementation Plan
7.2 SPREP Country and Territory Action Plans
7.3 Revised Organisation Structure

**Agenda Item 8: Governance Arrangements and Mechanisms**

8.1 Governance Arrangements for Biennial SPREP Meetings
8.2 Audit Committee Report
8.3 Innovation in the Secretariat

**Agenda Item 9: Strategic Financial Issues**

9.1 Report on Members' Contributions
9.2 Sustainable Financing

**Agenda Item 10: Corporate Services**

10.1 SPREP Director General's Performance Assessment – **closed session**
10.2 CROP Harmonisation

10.3 Appointment of External Auditors

**Agenda Item 11: Regional Conventions**

11.1 Report on the Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention
11.2 Report on the Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention

**Agenda Item 12: 2018&2019 Work Programme and Budget**

12.1 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management (Overview)
- *12.1.1 Year of the Whale: Whales in a Changing Ocean Conference: Outcomes and Next Steps*
- *12.1.2 Draft Marine Species Action Plans 2018-2022*
- *12.1.3 Pacific Islands Coastal Resilience Framework*

12.2 Climate Change - (Overview)
- *12.2.1 RTSM*
- *12.2.2 Update from the 4th Pacific Meteorological Council and 2nd Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology*
- *12.2.3 Update from the current SPREP projects supporting Pacific National Meteorological and Hydrological Services*

12.3 Waste Management and Pollution Control - (Overview)
- *12.3.1 PACWASTE*
- *12.3.2 Cleaner Oceans for a Cleaner Pacific*
- *12.3.3 Sustainable Regional Capacity*

12.4 Environmental Monitoring & Governance - (Overview)
- *12.4.1 Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development in the Pacific Region*
- *12.4.2 Strengthening environmental monitoring and reporting in the Pacific for national processes and MEAs*

12.5 Consideration and Approval of Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2018&2019

**Agenda Item 13: Items Proposed by Members**

13.1 The need for a Pacific wide ban on asbestos (Cook Islands)
13.2 Draft Call for action for SPREP countries on plastic microbeads (France)

**Agenda Item 14: Regional Cooperation**

14.1 Framework for Pacific Regionalism – Governance and Financing update
14.2 Review of CROP Charter
14.3 CROP Executives Meeting Report

**Agenda Item 15: Statements by Observers**

**Agenda Item 16: Other Business**

**Agenda Item 17: Date and time of the Twenty Ninth SPREP Meeting**

**Agenda Item 18: Adoption of Report of the Twenty-Eighth SPREP Meeting**

**Agenda Item 19: Close**

**OUTCOME STATEMENT**

**OF THE FINAL WORKSHOP**

**STRATEGIC PROGRAM ON CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

**PACIFIC REGIONAL TRACK TA-8360**

*SPREP Technical Education Centre*
17 May 2017

Senior Government Officials representing Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu met in Apia 16-17 May, 2017 for the final meeting of *the Strategic Program on Climate Resilience –Pacific Regional Track* (Component 1 and 3). The representatives decided to issue an outcomes statement in recognition of the highly satisfactory work progressed under the ADB/SPREP, in particular the technical assistance that had been invaluable to support national climate change adaptation and disaster related risk priorities. The representatives wished to express disappointment that the 'program' was about to end and their collective desire that this type of assistance that responded directly to members needs, continue. Accordingly the representatives decided to promote the continuation of the work through an *Outcomes Statement* directed at meetings such as the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, Forum Economic Leaders Meeting, the 28th SPREP Meeting as well as meetings involving the development partner community.

**OUTCOME STATEMENT**

***Recalling*** the *20th Smaller Island States Meeting in 2011 (SIS)* where "…[ Pacific] leaders recognised the value in developing a regional technical support mechanism to provide the necessary support in preparing SIS to effectively access and manage increased flows of climate change resources …";

***Appreciative*** of the funding provided under the *Climate Investment Funds - Pilot Program for Climate Resilience* to initiate this work as well as piloting mainstreaming under the *Strategic Program on Climate Resilience –Pacific Regional Track*; (SPCR-PR).

***Grateful*** for the groundwork done by the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WBG) to develop and secure the resources under the above programme;

***Congratulating*** *ADB and SPREP for* the successful implementation of the program;

***Reaffirming*** the *Paris Agreement on Aid Effectiveness* where donor countries and organisations should bring their support in line with national development strategies and use local systems, co-ordinate their actions to avoid duplication;

***Recognising*** that Pacific governments have an important role to ensure assistance is directed through national approved processes and institutions especially in area of climate change governance where coordination and absorptive capacity is a challenge;

***Noting*** that the approach and mainstreaming tools piloted under the SPCR-PR's mainstreaming component had been invaluable to the pilot countries- Federated States of Micronesia and

Tuvalu and the need to build on and replicate the methodology and tools to other sectors within the pilot countries and throughout the Pacific islands region generally;

***Pleased*** that Tuvalu has requested the US Institutional Programme on Strengthening in Pacific island countries (ISAAC) to use the guidelines, tools and approach implemented under the SPCR-PR, and were encouraged that the World Bank Pacific Resilience Program (PREP) is also interested in the same;

***Noting*** that the RTSM roster of experts and financing facility had been critical to provide the experts to produce essential technical studies and documentation required to access funds from the Green Climate Fund for Nauru $US300,000.00, the Adaptation Fund for Federated States of Micronesia ($US9m) and Vanuatu (US$23m) and that Tonga's GCF proposal for US$50 million with RTSM support is being considered;

***Further noting*** that the RTSM had also assisted Fiji, Samoa and Tuvalu address immediate priority needs contained in their national strategic and sector plans that would build resilience to climate change and related disaster risk in the area of infrastructure and food security, and further enhance their opportunities for climate change investments;

***Highly Appreciative*** of the fact that the mainstreaming and RTSM work addressed an urgent (often time-bound) need that countries had, was fully funded and where the burden of administration procurement, contract and finances was taken off the countries and managed under the regional SPCR-PR Project Management Unit;

***Concerned*** that the RTSM model that was developed, established and made operational to assist Pacific island countries will not be sustained when the project ends 1 June 2017 as additional funds are needed to continue its operation, and while there have been expressions of interest from development partners, no firm commitments have been made for its replenishment;

**Agreed to:**

**Convey** to the CROP Agencies and the general development partner community, that the technical assistance provided under the SPCR-PR represented the very kind of targeted support Pacific island countries were in need of to build their resilience to climate change and disaster related risk and to scale up their climate change investments in support of their development aspirations, as well as to enable access to climate change finance.

**Request** that development partners support countries in incorporating climate change and disaster related risks into their development planning processes, policies and plans by adopting the methodological approach and the generic tools trialled under this program.

**Recommend** that CROP prioritize, especially in the *Working Arm of the CROP Chief Executive Officers on Climate Change and Resilient Development* (WARD), the sustainability of the mainstreaming work and the RTSM.

**Invite** development partners to lend technical and financial support to ensure that the mainstreaming tools and RTSM assistance is continued, as countries have found these to be very useful for the benefit of the Pacific region and of great value in enabling access to climate change finance through targeted and specialised assistance to comply with funding agencies requirements and regulations.

## STATEMENTS BY OBSERVERS

### CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC ISLANDS PROGRAMME (CI)

Honorable Chair of the 26th SPREP Meeting,
Government Representatives from SPREP member countries
Representatives from CROP Agencies, IGOs and fellow NGOs
Director General of SPREP
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First off I would like to apologize on behalf of Sue Taei, Conservation International's Pacific Islands Program Executive Director who was unable to a participate at this meeting due to family reasons. I know she values our close collaboration with SPREP and all other partners in this room, and was disappointed to not to be able to attend this week.

Conservation International congratulates SPREP on another successful year in delivering environmental programs and technical support to member countries. As seen during the week, SPREP have had an extensive program of work and we feel that they have delivered in all areas extremely well.

We applaud SPREP for leading the regional environmental agenda for the Pacific Islands region and enhancing its engagement in the Leaders' Pacific Oceanscape for effective focus on regional and national marine and terrestrial management efforts in an integrated approach. CI is a founding NGO partner to the Pacific Oceanscape and we are pleased that member countries have endorsed SPREP to continue to use the Pacific Oceanscape Framework as an over-arching regional integrated management strategy. The momentum under the Oceanscape continues to build well with the increasing number of country commitments to the Oceanscape, particularly in the form of large-scale ocean and island protected areas, and we are pleased to work with these countries and SPREP to support these initiatives, including Kiribati's PIPA, the Cook Islands Marine Park, New Caledonia Coral Sea MPA and the Palau National Marine Sanctuary.

We congratulate these countries on their vision, leadership, and commitment, and are heartened by the fact that Pacific Island states are leading innovation in EEZ spatial planning, a new era of integrated ocean management has begun. In this the potential of large-scale marine protected areas as a core business tool in EEZ management is being developed and importantly learning shared under the auspices of the Oceanscape and networks such as the Big Ocean. Quite simply in a common sense, pacific-way states are applying a 'use some-save some' approach. The exact formula of use and conservation naturally varies but the core rationale to manage what you own, your EEZ, as a Large Ocean State, has firmly taken hold.

As highlighted time and again during the week, we are in full agreement of the cross cutting theme for the need of strong, meaningful, effective partnerships. As stated by the Director General, SPREP are engaging in strategic, durable and genuine partnerships to achieve the SPREP strategic

plan implementation and delivery of services and CI is proud to be such a partner to SPREP, to SPREP member countries and other partners here in the room today and further abroad.

We are heartened to see more and more partners coming on board for the Pacific as we believe such an approach is not only necessary to achieve effective natural resource management in the Pacific, but fundamental to any long term sustainable success. On this note, we agree with the sentiment of the week that we need to improve on the implementation of the array of policies, projects, and strategies and this needs to be prioritized. We understand that this is not sometimes easy given limited resources but we need to truly focus on this aspect of our frameworks, and work hard to engage from the ground up. I would like to note the important need to more effectively engage and build capacity and partnerships with locally based civil societies or NGOs, where their operating core and strengths is at community level engagement. Although not big in nature, we feel these ground level organizations are key to implementation and sustainability.

Like CI, SPREP is engaging with civil societies such as the Samoan Conservation Society and Samoan Voyaging Society as an example of this, and we further encourage SPREP, SPREP member governments, and other partners here today to look at amplifying and scaling up such approaches across the region for more implementation impact.

We will continue to work with SPREP in areas where we can be useful and helpful to Pacific Island states and we will draw on our global network of expertise and fundraising to assist well.

On that note, I thank you Chair, the Director General Mr.Kosi Latu, and all SPREP member countries and our host the Samoan government and we look forward to when we next meet again at the 2019 SPREP meeting.

Faafetai tele lava,

Soifua

**EUROPEAN UNION (EU)**

First of all, allow me to thank SPREP for the invitation to participate in this conference and to the Government and people of Samoa for hosting us on this wonderful island.

On behalf of the EU Delegation, I am pleased to reiterate our commitment in working hand in hand with the Pacific countries and Territories, the regional organisations and the other development partners. The EU has long standing relations with the Pacific and is engaged in addressing key challenges such as climate change, disaster risk management and the environmental issues discussed this week - sustainable use of marine resources, biodiversity, coastal protection and waste management.

Some more general remarks first:
On the change management process and performance of SPREP so far, we commend SPREP for the progress made in the past years.

Our cooperation with SPREP has been strengthened over the years and has taken place through a number of EU funded programmes such as the support to the implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements in the Pacific or in biodiversity and protected area management.

Our flagship programme with SPREP, however, is the "Pacific Hazardous Waste Management Programme" or PACWASTE which has been the subject of presentations and fruitful discussions this week. We can affirm that the programme is well on track and has achieved significant and tangible results at both country and regional levels, allowing for synergies with other initiatives, in particular the JICA J -PRISM project.

The EU commends SPREP for going through the audit process, the so called "'7-pillar assessment", under which it obtained a positive assessment under four pillars. This allows the European Union to sign future contracts with SPREP to be implemented by using its own procedures and modalities in areas of climate change, waste management, biodiversity and integrated coastal management. While the amounts still need to be determined, they will be significant and could reach well above EUR 50 million. At the institutional level, this will require proper planning of the right organization structure for SPREP. At the project level, it will require the need for in-built flexibility and an exit strategy which is factored into the project design.

On the cost recovery policy and the EU rules on management fees: let's be clear about this: all costs which can be directly attributed to the project can also be covered by the project. The 7 percent are in addition and should only cover overhead costs which are not directly attributable such as the contribution of the DG or DDG or possibly overall IT costs which are not directly project related.

A few words on some of the key topics which were discussed this week:

On climate change: The EU reiterates its full commitment to helping Pacific island countries and territories cope with adverse impacts of climate change. The EU will continue to provide substantial funding to address climate change in the Pacific through its bilateral, regional and thematic programmes such as GCCA + which are currently being planned or formulated.

On asbestos, the EU welcomes the recommendation to endorse initiatives to restrict or ban the importation, re-sale and re-use of products containing asbestos in the Pacific.

On the EDF 11, good progress has been made: about 70% of the funds under the Regional Indicative Programme will be committed by the end of this year. Also, most of the Pacific Countries have committed, signed Financing Agreements or have started implementation of their respective bilateral programmes. We hereby invite the Pacific countries to be actively involved and take the lead in the implementation of the programmes.

A final point: we would highlight the need to increase the countries' ownership of the different actions and projects implemented by the CROP agencies. This is essential for sustaining the benefits achieved.

Thank you very much for your attention.

**TE IPUKAREA SOCIETY**

Te Ipukarea Society would like to express our sincere appreciation at being allowed to attend the 28th SPREP meeting as an observer, and also to thank the Government of Samoa for hosting the meeting. We would like to congratulate SPREP on the achievements they have reported on over the past 12 months. From the annual report it is obvious that significant progress has been made across the member countries in the environment sector with the support of the Secretariat and their funding partners.

It is also encouraging to see the pipeline projects that are focusing on such important issues to us all, such as waste management and protection of our oceans, including those planned under EDF 11.

We do however note that there appears to be very little in the way of partnerships with local Pacific Island environmental NGOs such as Te Ipukarea Society, Samoa Conservation Society, Palau Conservation Society, as examples. Speaking from our own particular position, we believe partnering with national NGOs can be very cost effective in delivering results on the ground amongst our Pacific Island communities. This could facilitate the trickle down impacts of projects as was highlighted during the meeting by the delegation from Niue. If you take a look at our Newsletters on our website, http://www.tiscookislands.org/ you will see small NGOs such as ours can and do deliver significant outcomes on a comparatively modest budget.

We humbly request that SPREP members encourage the Secretariat to include pro-active NGOs working on the ground in

Pacific Island countries, as partners in project implementation. This can be a very cost-effective way of achieving project objectives and also help to build the capacity of these NGOs, increasing the potential for sustainability of project outcomes beyond the life of the funding cycle for these projects.

On a separate issue, Te Ipukarea Society applauds the development of the EIA guidelines for Coastal Tourism Developments. However, we are concerned that these do not appear to have been widely distributed for comment. Te Ipukarea Society works closely with both the Tourism Industry Council and the Cook Islands Tourism Authority to promote sustainable tourism and mitigate negative tourism impacts on the environment. We were not aware that this document was being developed and that it was on the agenda for endorsement at this meeting. We would have liked to have had an opportunity to comment on the draft before endorsement.

That being said, we do believe that the development of these guidelines is a very positive step in the right direction, and something that is much needed here in the Pacific, so once again, we would like to convey our appreciation to the Secretariat and the SPTO for being proactive in this regard. In closing, we would just like to reiterate our gratitude for the opportunity to attend the 28th SPREP Meeting – a job well done to the Secretariat for pulling this together, and to all the member countries for bringing passion and commitment to the meeting in our collective effort towards caring for our environment.

Thank you.

**THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES (IFRC)**

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, representing 14 national Red Cross societies and 4 overseas branches of Red Cross societies in the Pacific, in addition to the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre welcome the opportunity to give a statement at the SPREP Meeting. IFRC would like to thank SPREP for the invitation to observe the SPREP Meeting in 2017. The following are points that we would like to convey, focusing on climate change and FRDP.

**Climate Change**

IFRC supports the key outcomes of the fourth PMC and were pleased to have had the opportunity to participate substantially in the PMC. As auxiliary to public authorities in the humanitarian field, NMHS are a crucial partner for the Red Cross and we particularly commend the efforts of SPREP and the Pacific Met Desk Partnership for facilitating the PMC and associated events in a way that maximized interaction between Members and partners.

In particular, we congratulate SPREP on progress in consolidating and aligning work towards strengthened climate services that are linked to sectors and end users in the Pacific, especially noting progress towards the revised Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy and Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services. We commend the efforts to ensure these two regional guiding frameworks are cohesive and well aligned. IFRC would like to thank SPREP members for the opportunity to

actively provide inputs into these frameworks over the last couple of years, and thereby elevating voice from the 'last mile'.

Partnerships at all levels are critical in this region for effective climate risk management at a range of timescales and in particular for risk management to work effectively for communities at the coalface of climate impacts. We look forward to strengthening our partnership with SPREP in this regard, as formalised in our MoU signed in may 2017, and continuing to work together to access climate financing to support community level resilience actions.

We recognise the efforts made to forge implementation partnerships and efforts to establish internal structures to enable management of multiple, multi-partner projects.

In particular, we were happy with the outcomes of the FINPAC program that we implemented in partnership with SPREP and NMHS, NDMOS and national red cross societies. Many lessons were learned including how to effectively support community early action based on early warning information.

Building on this, we're committed to responding to the challenge identified by the acting Climate Change Director, to support countries with following on from successful programs – we're interested to scale up successes of FINPAC by building a phase 2 project in collaboration with SPREP and the WMO, and also strengthening early warning early action by piloting a new approach called forecast-based financing.

**FRDP**

We would like to congratulate SPREP members on progress towards implementing the FRDP and establishing solid governance arrangements through the work of the PRP working group, which IFRC was happy to contribute to and strongly supports. We look forward to continuing to join with SPREP, SPC and PIFS in leading this important partnership through the approved governance mechanisms, and representing our key stakeholder group of red cross members in the Pacific.

Going forward, we particularly support the intention to consult with the climate change community of practice at the upcoming Pacific Climate Change Roundtable as to the structure of the future PRP technical working groups - to ensure that these technical working groups enhance and build on existing mechanisms rather than duplicate. We look forward to these discussions in October.

Faafetai tele lava.

**INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION (IWC)**

The International Whaling Commission is the inter-governmental organisation (IGO) charged with the conservation of whales and the management of whaling. The IWC consists of 88 Contracting Governments who are signatories to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling.

The work programme of the IWC continues to grow and diversify. Along with its on-going, globally respected Science, the IWC's

current, active work strands include whale watching, conservation management plans, entanglement and bycatch, ship strikes, marine debris, climate change and cetacean strandings. Collaboration with other IGOs and regional organisations like SPREP is key to the success of these projects, and the IWC welcomes the leadership demonstrated by SPREP in advancing cetacean conservation in the Pacific Islands region. In particular the IWC was pleased to participate in two key initiatives of SPREP's Year of the Whale, the Important Marine Mammal Areas workshop (Apia, 2017) and the Whales in a Changing Ocean Conference (Tonga, 2017). We hope that the IWC's participation in these events provided an example of how it can be a valuable partner for marine mammal conservation and management in the region, as follows.

**Science**

The IWC curates an unprecedented archive of historical data on the distribution of large whales. These data were very helpful to the SPREP hosted, IUCN convened workshop on determining Important Marine Mammal Areas in the SPREP region. The IWC also provided a technical expert, with marine mammal research experience in the region, and who is also a member of the IUCN Task Force for Marine Mammal Protected Areas, the convener of the workshop.

**Entanglement**

At WICO, the IWC was invited to present on its global programme to mitigate the impacts of whale entanglement in manmade materials. This highlighted the work of its Scientific Committee with regard to understanding the issue through estimating its scope and impact, and through reviewing the efficacy of mitigation measures. In addition, the presentation highlighted the IWC's work to build capacity to respond to entangled whales, including the training of over 1,000 trainees from approximately 40 countries. The presentation stimulated inquires for potential capacity building for several SPREP member countries, which are currently being followed up by the IWC. This IWC initiative has been supported over the years by several SPREP member countries.

**Whalewatching**

At WICO, the chair of the IWC's subcommittee on whale watching was invited to provide an update on the IWC's work in this area. Recognizing and learning from the pioneering work on this issue in the region, the IWC has developed a five year strategic plan for whale watching (see: Whale watching 5 year plan http://iwc.int/index.php?cID=3102&cType=document&download=1). This plan includes the contracting of an expert to develop an online whale watching "handbook" with information for (and from) those involved in whale watching around the World. With support from the USA, this contract has been awarded and is currently in progress.

**New information of potential interest to SPREP members**

The IWC would also like to mention several new work streams that may be of interest to SPREP members. Following on the success of its large whale entanglement initiative, the IWC is currently establishing two new initiatives that will follow a similar structure and operating protocol. These include the

establishment of expert panels and work plans for improving responses to the strandings of cetaceans around the World, and for the mitigation of cetacean bycatch. Both of these initiatives will seek to identify a coordinator who will carry out and/or facilitate the work stream, which will include advice and capacity building for interested Nations.

Finally, the IWC Secretariat is pleased to announce the Dr. Rebecca Lent has accepted the IWC's offer to become the IWC's new Executive Secretary. The post is pending a vote of the member countries.

Faafetai tele lava.

**PACIFIC ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT FORUM SECRETARIAT (PIDF)**

Chair, Honourable delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my Secretary General, Mr François Martel, I would like to thank the Government and the people of Samoa for their hospitality and congratulate you all for the dynamics and rich discussions over the past three days.

I would further like to thank SPREP for annually extending an invitation to the PIDF to participate in the SPREP meetings. This demonstrates its spirit of collaboration and strong willingness to maintain an open dialogue. **This is especially important considering that PIDF is a regional organisation that is not part of the CROP grouping**, nor it is of regional thematic taskforce, so its is even more relevant to participate here to maintain our good relationship, exchange on our mutual progress, and as such, avoid duplication and competition.

I have been very interested in the strategic issues presented to the SPREP Members. **We will be looking forward engaging with SPREP on**: the Pacific Climate Change Centre, the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre (MTCC), the Framework for a resilient Development in the Pacific, the Cleaner Pacific 2025, access to climate finance, and of course Climate Action and SDGs.

The last two, drive PIDF work. After COP 21, the Paris Agreement, and *true* to the Suva Declaration, PIDF has been very pro active in maintaining momentum and **advocating in climate action**, emphasising *steadily* on the urgency for change in practices if we want to collectively achieve the 1.5 ° degree global warming target.

PIDF will be at **COP 23** participating in different side-events, voicing the concerns of Pacific Islands, focusing on 1. the link between Ocean and Climate, 2. deep decarbonisation with the urgency of a fossil fuel phase-out, and 3. island resilience.

But the climate challenge is huge! It requires different sectors and actors working together in an integrated manner by pooling financial resources, knowledge and expertise. Cross sectorial and innovative multi-stakeholder interventions will play a crucial role for getting us to where we need to be.

This is why **PIDF has a multi-stakeholder constituency**, and we have been giving consideration to the private sector.

Distinguish delegates, consider the time constraint, I want to highlight one recent initiative for your information. We have just launched the **Pacific Green Business Centre**, in partnership with UNDP and PIPSO. It is **the first digital platform dedicated to support businesses and the private sector in engaging in green growth, blue economy and implementation of the SDGs**, building a low-carbon, climate-resilient future**.**

http://greenbusiness.solutions
**The website provides easy access to:** existing green initiatives, best-practices, manuals, incentives… and tools to "*Green*" business models. The content of the website is building up and you are all invited to contribute to the GBC with your experience or expertise.

One of the tools I think it is important I highlight further here is the **Pacific Climate and exchange Platform, shortly called PEXC**. http://greenbusiness.solutions/pecx/ It is a **project matching service**, **promoting and funding a wide range of conservation, adaptation, community-based projects in the region through private sector investment**. It is a way to position companies and corporate in the environment sector. PEXC will help the private sector to find the right project and will further market it.

PIDF is capitalising on the private sector potential for driving change and innovation. We are further developing ways of supporting blue/green entrepreneurship, as a follow up to the Pacific Blue Economy Conference held in August in Fiji. **The Pacific Blue Economy Conference** was very successful because driven with islanders' passion for Ocean, and we were grateful for the technical input and contributions from SPREP during the conference and in the working committee.

SPREP is cornerstone in the region. Dialogue should enable us to pursue a privilege relationship. Despite the global march of globalisation, genuine partnerships are not only possible, but necessary to reach our common goal: environmental and climate sustainability.

I thank you very much for your attention.

**PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM (PIFS)**

Thank you Chair for this opportunity to make a few remarks on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum's Secretary General and Permanent Chair of the CROP, Dame Meg Taylor. It is good to see many of you again and so soon after Samoa's hosting of a very successful 48th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting.

Pacific unity and solidarity are at the heart of the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism,* and it is the foundation upon which our shared achievements in the past year are based – whether at COP22, the UN Oceans Conference or our continued collaboration in the lead up to COP23.

SPREP and PIFS have enjoyed a close, collaborative relationship over the years, - both at an institutional level, as well as through the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) - combining our different areas of

comparative advantage to help member governments and people of the region address their regional concerns and priorities.

**Framework for Pacific Regionalism**

PIFS would like to commend SPREP and its Governing Council for its continued collaboration in relation to its support to implementing the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*.

The Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP), and its respective member agencies and governing councils play a central role in delivering on the objectives and the principles of the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*, and in driving the collaboration, cooperation and coordination that is essential for effective regionalism to be realised.

In the past few years, in support of Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' regional priorities under the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism, SPREP* has provided technical advice and support for issues relating to climate change and disaster resilience – particularly through its support to finalise the *Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific* and the governance arrangements for the *Pacific Resilience Partnership* that will enable its effective implementation, as well as SPREP's support for preparations towards COP 21 and COP22.

The resource allocation frameworks and processes across CROP agencies must incorporate regional priorities as determined by Forum Leaders – of course, in addition to agency level priorities – and so SPREP and the SPREP Governing Council's efforts to embed these particular priorities under the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* are to be commended.

**48th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting & *The Blue Pacific***

Let me also recall the theme of the 48th Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, *The Blue Pacific*: Our Sea of Islands – Our Security through Sustainable Development, Management and Conservation – a theme chosen by the Government of Samoa, and introduced to the world by Samoa's Prime Minister at the UN Oceans Conference during a high-level Pacific Leaders side-event facilitated by the Pacific Ocean Commissioner.

The Forum Chair's remarks throughout the Leaders Meeting on the theme were extensive but its essence is and I quote – "*The Blue Pacific* seeks to recapture the collective potential of our shared stewardship of the Pacific Ocean based on an explicit recognition of our shared ocean identity, ocean geography, and ocean resources." End of quote.

Clearly, *The Blue Pacific* is more than a theme for this year's Forum Leaders meeting – it is a new narrative that calls for us to work collectively to deliver on our potential And SPREP along with other CROP agencies plays and will continue to play a key and crucial role in delivering on this potential of and in our region. We look forward to collaborating on new areas of Pacific regionalism through *The Blue Pacific* lens.

**Smaller Island States Strategy (2016-2020)**

SPREP is also to be commended for its ongoing support in implementing regional Smaller Island States' priorities based on issues identified by them under the SIS Regional Strategy 2016-2020.

SPREP has shown leadership by embedding the SIS Regional Strategy and Implementation Plan into relevant parts of its work programme, based on it's areas of comparative advantage.

As a priority for SIS, we need to do more on climate change financing to support national efforts of members of the SIS related to adaptation, mitigation, ensuring food security, sustainable livelihoods and wellbeing.

We look forward to working with SPREP along with other accredited entities in the coming months to assist in the acceleration of joint SIS proposals to the Green Climate Fund under three thematic priority areas of infrastructure resilience; sustainable transport; and a climate change insurance facility – which were approved by SIS Leaders at their recent meeting here in Apia.

In addition to the SIS Strategy, SIS Leaders also called for a review of CROP agencies work on climate change, to identify the United States' funded activities that may be affected by the United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and to report back to Leaders before COP23. SPREP's contribution to this task is vital and we look forward to working closely with yourselves in order to deliver on this Leaders' directive in time for COP23 in Bonn.

**CROP Cohesion and Coordination**

With respect to CROP cohesion and coordination - we continue to make positive strides in fostering a 'one CROP' approach in support of Pacific regionalism, through incorporating regular review to ensure CROP remains effective.

Since October 2016, a joint CROP Review Team – inclusive of SPREP – has been reviewing the CROP Charter which guides regional institutional coordination, cooperation and collaboration.

We welcome the SPREP Governing Council's consideration of the Review report, noting the importance of CROP membership-wide consultation of proposed revisions to the 2012 CROP Charter, including through the respective governing bodies of CROP agencies.
We would also like to thank SPREP for being a valued partner in the PIFS-led analysis of regional governance and financing arrangements - both in terms of data validation as well as active contributions into the analysis, including consultation with the SPREP Chair.

The analysis of regional governance and financing was discussed and its recommendations endorsed by Forum Leaders at their meeting a few weeks ago – *and Director General Latu has referenced this several times already during this meeting*.

In considering the recommendations, Leaders confirmed their role as the driver of regional priority setting and resource allocation, and committed to ensuring a whole-of-government engagement with the regionalism agenda and to embedding the

Forum agenda across the CROP and its member agencies - at ministerial and at institutional governance levels.

In addition, Forum Leaders instructed CROP and its member agencies to ensure that meetings and their agendas are rationalised to take forward the Forum agenda in a synchronised way, and directed the CROP Chair to work closely with the Heads of CROP agencies and their respective Governing Boards to develop an implementation plan of their recommendations related to regional governance and financing, and to report to Leaders on progress.

In addition to this, Leaders also **committed** to fast track the development of policies to ban the use of single-use plastic bags, plastic and styrofoam packaging and **called** on Pacific Rim partners to join and commit to action on addressing marine pollution and marine debris, to maintain the environmental integrity of the Pacific Ocean for people, planet and prosperity.

There are implications in these decisions for SPREP and the SPREP council, as well as for CROP more broadly; we therefore look forward to working with SPREP and other 'CROP colleagues' to deliver on these decisions in a way that is productive and beneficial for our region.

**Closing Remarks**

In closing, allow me to on behalf of the Secretary General and CROP Chair thank the Director-General and the staff of SPREP's Secretariat for a productive 2016/2017 period and for the continued collaboration and commitment to working with the Forum Secretariat and other members of the CROP family, as we seek to serve our members as best we can.

Let me also thank the Government and people of Samoa and SPREP for hosting this meeting.

Thank you

**STATEMENT BY THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC)**

**Chair,**
On behalf of the SPC Director General, Dr Colin Tukuitonga, let me first join others in thanking Samoa for the hospitality in hosting this meeting, and extending appreciation to the SPREP Secretariat for an excellent organisation and for attending to our various needs.

The Pacific Community is grateful to SPREP for the opportunity to attend this meeting. I would like to convey the apologies of SPC Director General, Dr. Colin Tukuitonga, who is unable to attend but who extends his best wishes.

As you know, SPC's strategic plan is embedded in supporting member countries achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals**, as these represent a formidable opportunity for a more prosperous and sustainable development path. As per the interlinkages and indivisibility of the 2030 Agenda, we at SPC are keen to promote an **integrated programming approach** across sectors, but also calling for greater integration of regional organisations' work, each with their own competence but together towards the same objectives. As

such we are committed to the 'one CROP team' approach.

Meanwhile, the world is experiencing **global changes** which affect prospects for achieving the SDGs. SPC is committed to ensuring that environmental and climate issues are fully factored into our work. Our **partnership with SPREP**, that we renewed last July at CRGA and that we hope to exercise through a greater number of joint projects and initiatives, will help ensure that we are facilitating a development for societies that does not compromise the environmental foundations. In that context, we look forward to our first ever joint strategic planning session with SPREP later this year.

As SPC, just like SPREP, embark on a process of prioritisation and restructuring, we are mindful that our goal must be a system that is more focused on results and less on process; more on providing integrated support across silos and less on battles and competition; more on efficient delivery and less on piling up projects; and, more on people and less on numbers.

SPC is faced with the same challenges as SPREP in terms of financial sustainability, efficiency in operations, and higher standards of accountability. As such, we welcome the opportunity to share lessons and options on aspects of organisational management, and to study how we can mutualize areas of work to more effectively serve our membership.

I thank you for your attention.

**SOUTH PACIFIC TOURISM ORGANISATION (SPTO)**

Mr. Chairman,
On behalf of the South Pacific Tourism Organiation (SPTO), I would like to thank the Government of Samoa for hosting us in Apia this week. SPTO also congratulates the SPREP Members and the Secretariat for convening a productive and successful 28 SPREP Meeting.

As a member of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) family, SPTO recognises the numerous environmental and developmental challenges facing the Pacific region today. Accordingly, SPTO appreciates the need for greater commitment and collaboration amongst development partners, donors, regional organisations, civil society and private sector to work with the Secretariat and Pacific Island countries and in addressing these issues smartly with the limited resources available.

Sustainable tourism can be a tool to support these efforts in sustaining the economic benefits and livelihoods of our Pacific people.

SPTO acknowledges existing partnerships with SPREP and remains committed to supporting these and future efforts including in the areas:

- Environmental Monitoring and Governance in particular through the promotion of the uptake by Pacific Island Countries and Territories of the Coastal Tourism Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines for the Pacific Region. These will be submitted to the SPTO Board of Directors Meeting in Port Vila Vanuatu in October and will be a joint-contribution from SPREP and SPTO for submission to the United Nations 2017 International Year of Sustaianble Tourism for Development.
- Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management in particular through the United Nations Oceans Conference Voluntary Commitment #16006, to protect and conserve whales as well as active participation in the development and implementation of the Whales and Dolphins Action Plan
- Climate Change through potential collaboration in building a Climate and Disaster Resilient Tourism Sector supported by improved weather, climate and early warning systems through the Pacific Meteorological Desk Partnership and the reduction
- Waste Management and Pollution Control through future collaboration in addressing waste management and pollution issues from tourism developments

SPTO will continue to encourage its National Tourism Offices to strengthen partnerships with the environmental sector at national level to support these efforts.

Faafetai tele lava.

**UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC (USP)**

On behalf of the Vice Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, I would like to thank SPREP for the invitation to attend this 28th SPREP Council meeting and host Government of Samoa for the hospitality.

USP continued attendance at the council meetings is manifestation of partnership and collaboration between USP and SPREP and as members the CROP. USP and SPREP continue to collaborate and partner in a number of areas:

1. One CROP + Team to support PICs for UNFCC COPs and especially COP23 under Fiji Presidency
2. Climate change Round table ( last roundtable first week on October 2017)
3. Member of the Steering Committee on the Pacific Climate Change Centre

USP will continue to collaborate and partner with SPREP in future opportunities such as :

1. Waste management under the EDF11 programming
2. Climate Change Projects under EU-GCCA Intra - ACP

USP under its Capacity Building mandate for the region, USP has extensive Learning and Teaching as well as Research programmes. With this, USP is pleased to say that relevant data and information generated through SPREPs programs are considered in our academic programmes to keep our courses current to situations in the region. USP looks forward to the establishment of the Pacific Climate Change Centre and is ready to collaborate on research and capacity building to support climate change resilience, and the delivery of climate services, and ensure that the strengths of all organizations contribute to building climate and disaster resilience in the region.

With this, I wish to congratulate Director General Mr Kosi Latu and your team at the secretariat for successfully hosting the meeting and the SPREP council members and partners for interaction over the three days meeting.

Thank you