

Joint responsibility for preserving our natural heritage:

The Apia Convention

Encouraging the creation of protected areas in the Pacific islands.

Environmental Law Fact Sheet

What is it ?

The purpose of the *Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific* - or **Apia Convention** - is to encourage the creation of **protected areas**. This was the first Convention to demonstrate tangible concern for environmental matters in the South Pacific region.

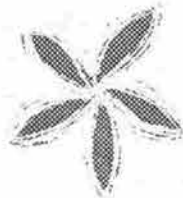
When did the Convention come into force?

This Convention was opened for signature on 12 June 1976. It came into force on 26 June 1990, after it was ratified by the fourth country.

Objectives of the Convention

The aims of the Apia Convention are to safeguard representative samples of:

- ⊕ natural ecosystems of the South Pacific region;
- ⊕ superlative scenery;
- ⊕ striking geological formations; and,
- ⊕ regions and objects of aesthetic interest or historic, cultural or scientific value.



Responsibilities of Parties

Within protected areas

Parties to the Convention are encouraged to create **appropriate national parks and national reserves**, and manage them in a way that is consistent with the objectives of the Convention. This also applies to existing protected areas.

Outside protected areas

Each Party should endeavour to protect fauna and flora and safeguard them from unwise exploitation and other threats that may lead to their extinction.

Definitions

National Parks are areas established to protect and conserve ecosystems. They are controlled by an appropriate public authority, and open to visits by the public.

National Reserves are areas established to protect and conserve nature. They are controlled by an appropriate public authority, and encompass various degrees of protection, according to their purpose.

The categories for these areas are:

- ⊗ strict nature reserve,
- ⊗ managed nature reserve,
- ⊗ wilderness reserve,
- ⊗ fauna or flora reserve,
- ⊗ game reserve,
- ⊗ bird sanctuary,
- ⊗ geological or forest reserve,
- ⊗ archeological reserve; and,
- ⊗ historical reserve.

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What are the commitments?

Each Party decides its **own definition for protected area**, and their own management procedures. While doing this, each Party shall carefully consider the consequence of introducing new species.

The **traditional use** of areas and species is also acknowledged in the Convention.

Parties will **co-operate**, especially in promoting the objectives of the Convention, exchanging and training personnel for conserving nature, harmonise objectives in conserving nature, research activities, exchanging information on research results, and managing protected areas and protected species.

They should also consider developing **education and public awareness programmes** on nature conservation.

Parties to the Convention

There are currently **five Parties** to the Apia Convention:

Australia

Cook Islands

Fiji

France

Western Samoa

Other SPREP Member countries are encouraged to become Parties to the Apia Convention.

For more information on the **Apia Convention and how to become a Party to the Convention**, contact:

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