From co-ordination to co-operation:

The SPREP Convention

Developing cooperation to prevent marine pollution in the

Pacific islands.

What is it?

The Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region and related Protocols - or SPREP Convention - provides a broad framework for co-operation in preventing pollution of the marine and coastal environments.

Each Party is committed to endeavour to conclude bilateral or multilateral agreements that protect, develop and manage the marine and coastal environments of the Convention Area.

When did the Convention come into force?

The Convention was open for signature at **Noumea**, New Caledonia, on 24 November 1986. It came into force on 22 August 1990. As of November 1994, there were 11 Parties to the Convention.

Scope

The Convention Area encompasses:

- All the marine environment enclosed by 200 nautical-mile zone (the exclusive economic zone or EEZ) of the 22 Pacific Island countries and territories, including New Zealand and Australia's East Coast and Islands.
- ☑ Areas of high seas which are enclosed on all sides by these zones.
- Other nominated areas of the Pacific Ocean under the jurisdiction of any Party.

It is important to note that this does not include internal waters, archipelagic waters or land area. Internal waters include all areas of freshwater and areas of sea water within national territory, such as estuaries, lagoons and mangroves.

How does the Convention work?

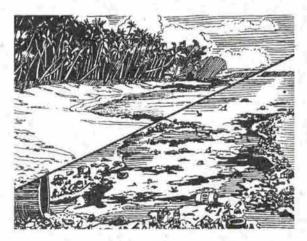
SPREP is the Secretariat for this convention. It carries out **institutional arrangements**, **calls meetings** of Parties, and act as an **information clearing-house**.

General Obligations

The Parties should endeavour, either individually or jointly, to take all appropriate actions within the Convention and its Protocols to prevent, reduce and control pollution in the Convention Area from any source.

In doing so, they should:

- ☑ endeavour to harmonise their policies regionally;
- ensure that by implementing the Convention they shall not increase pollution in the marine environment outside the Convention Area;
- co-operate in formulating and adopting other relevant Protocols;
- co-operate with competent global, regional and sub-regional organisations;
- promote sustainable resource management and ensure the sound development of natural resources; and,
- endeavour to establish laws and regulations to enact the prescribed obligations



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Specific Obligations

The Parties should take appropriate measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution that might come from vessels, land-based sources, sea-bed activities, waste disposal, toxic and hazardous waste storage, nuclear testing or atmospheric pollution.

The dumping of wastes is prohibited on the continental shelf areas of all Parties outside of the Convention Area.

The Parties should take all appropriate measures to:

- prevent, reduce and control environmental damage in the Convention Area, especially due to mining and coastal erosion.
- protect rare or fragile ecosystems, endangered species of flora and fauna as well as their habitats.
- ensure that major development projects will not deteriorate natural resources in their marine environment.

Parties are encouraged to develop procedures for environmental impact assessment.

The Parties co-operate in combating emergency pollution cases, exchanging scientific and technical information, (including research), monitoring the environment and exchanging monitoring data, and in establishing research programmes. The Parties are committed to transmiting information relevant to implementing this Convention.

The Parties should set appropriate rules for liability and compensation for damage resulting from pollution.

Adoption of Protocols

The Parties may adopt **Protocols**. At present, there are two Protocols on:

- ☑ Setting rules for preventing pollution from dumping, and,
- ☑ Co-operation in combating pollution emergencies in the region.

Parties to the Convention

There are currently nine (9) Pacific island countries that are Parties to the Convention:

Australia
Cook Islands
Federated States of Micronesia
Fiji
New Zealand
Papua New Guinea
Republic of Marshall Islands
Solomon Islands
Western Samoa

France and United States of America are also Parties to this Convention.

Other Pacific island countries have signed the Convention but are yet to ratify it are:

For more information....

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

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Note: This Convention is commonly named the SPREP Convention. It should not be mistaken with another document with a similar common title - the SPREP Treaty. The Treaty is the legal instrument establishing SPREP as an autonomous regional body.