

Developing co-operation to prevent marine pollution in the Pacific islands.

*From co-ordination to co-operation:*

## The SPREP Convention

### 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 transmitting 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.