

*NOT FOR CIRCULATION*

**IUCN – The World Conservation Union**

**A STRATEGY FOR IUCN IN OCEANIA**

**Concept Paper**

**Prepared by the Oceania Regional Committee of IUCN**

**May 2003**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	3
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	4
<b>2. SITUATION ANALYSIS</b> .....	5
<b>3. ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL CAPACITIES AND STAKEHOLDERS</b> .....	8
<b>3.1 Pacific Island Governments</b> .....	8
<b>3.2 International Organisations and Donors</b> .....	9
<b>3.3 Regional Organisations</b> .....	10
<b>3.4 NGOs – International and National</b> .....	10
<b>3.5 Improving Donor and NGO Coordination</b> .....	11
<b>4. SETTING ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES</b> .....	11
<b>5. IUCN IN OCEANIA</b> .....	12
<b>5.1 Membership</b> .....	12
<b>5.2 Commissions</b> .....	13
<b>5.3 Regional and National Committees</b> .....	13
<b>5.4 IUCN Programme in Oceania</b> .....	15
<b>5.5 IUCN-SPREP Memorandum of Understanding</b> .....	15
<b>5.6 Gap Analysis for IUCN in Oceania</b> .....	15
<i>5.6.1 Internal Organisational Needs</i> .....	15
<i>5.6.2 Programme Delivery Issues</i> .....	16
<b>6. IUCN’S NICHE AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE</b> .....	17
<b>7. PROPOSED ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE</b> .....	18
<b>7.1 Key Functions for IUCN in Oceania</b> .....	18
<b>7.2 Proposed roles for ORC</b> .....	19
<b>7.3 Proposed roles for IUCN Oceania Secretariat</b> .....	20
<b>8. A WAY FORWARD</b> .....	20
<b>8.1 Initial requirements and priorities</b> .....	20
<b>8.2 Location</b> .....	21
<b>8.3 Review of Oceania Secretariat</b> .....	22
<b>9. CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	22
<b>9.1 The Three Bears Test</b> .....	22
<i>9.1.1 Too Small</i> .....	22
<i>9.1.2 Too Big</i> .....	22
<i>9.1.3 Just Right</i> .....	23
<b>9.2 Next phase</b> .....	23
<b>ANNEX 1 WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS RESOLUTION, 2000</b> .....	25
<b>ANNEX 2 ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY ISSUES</b> .....	27
<b>ANNEX 3 REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE PACIFIC</b> .....	29
<b>ANNEX 4 IUCN-SPREP MoU</b> .....	30
<b>ANNEX 5 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS</b> .....	36

## **SUMMARY**

This paper contributes to the current review of regionalisation and decentralisation that aims to improve the performance of the Secretariat and the governance of the Union. The current distribution of Secretariat presence is uneven throughout the world, and appears to be based more on historical accidents than a matching of resources with needs to achieve the goals of the IUCN Programme. The absence of any Secretariat presence in Oceania may be part of this accident of history, or does it reflect instead the absence of need?

To answer that question we analyse the situation in the region, comment on regional capacities to address conservation needs, describe the current status of IUCN components in Oceania, identify where IUCN input would be most effective, and conclude that there is a strong case for establishing an IUCN Secretariat presence based in the Pacific islands sub-region.

This is a large oceanic region of extremes – geographically, culturally and economically. What is common is the globally significant biodiversity values, both marine and terrestrial, and the reality that in too many places they are under threat. Whether the threats are human (logging, land clearance, pollution, overfishing) or natural (invasives, hurricanes, sea level rise) the reality is that Oceania contains some of the highest proportions of endemism as well as threatened species (and their ecosystems) in the world.

As a sub-region, Australia and New Zealand have the national capacities to respond to their conservation problems. The Pacific island countries, despite the presence of competent regional organisations and various donor programmes, are in a much worse situation. Building capacity for effective conservation management at all levels, community to government, has been identified by these countries as a top priority. IUCN has a competitive advantage that could help considerably in the Pacific.

At the same time, there are problems within the components of the Union that need addressing. A declining membership is concentrated in Australia and New Zealand (90%), commission representation is similarly skewed and there is a poor connection between Oceania and the development of the global Programme. The regional and national committees are committed to addressing these problems and assisting the Pacific countries, but have to rely too much on voluntary input to achieve their objectives. Consequently good ideas do not get implemented and achievements do not reflect the potential that exists here.

There is strong support in Oceania for the creation of an IUCN Secretariat to help resolve these problems and advance the opportunities, working closely with the members and established committees. The paper outlines the proposed roles of this Secretariat, and the complementary roles for the Oceania Regional Committee, within a framework of the key functions for IUCN in Oceania. Advancing the Union's Mission in this region would benefit immeasurably from a modest initial investment. Any subsequent growth would need to reflect increased demands, matched by the development of additional funding. Further work on details will be required once the concept is approved in principle.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines a strategy and the justification for establishing an IUCN Secretariat presence in the Oceania region. It is based on a consultation process among IUCN Regional Councillors and members. It reflects a growing recognition that the current efforts by IUCN members, and the regional structures they have established such as the Oceania Regional Committee, are not sufficient to address the growing urgency and severity of threats to the globally significant conservation values of this region. Subject to approval by the Director General with the broad principles it outlines, further consultation and refinement of the strategy will be undertaken to develop it to the operational stage.

In summary, the priority environmental problems that are placing unsustainable pressures on natural resources, lifestyles and economic development of this region have been identified over the last eight years from numerous comprehensive studies<sup>1</sup> as:

- Loss of biological diversity
- Threats to freshwater resources
- Degradation of coastal environments and coral reefs
- Climate change and sea level rise
- Land- and sea-based pollution

*These problems are particularly acute in the island countries of Oceania where the institutional capacity to address them is much weaker than in Australia and New Zealand. Accordingly, this strategy defines IUCN's regional priority as improving the capacity for effective environmental governance in Pacific island countries. This programmatic focus is consistent with the niche advantages that are identified for IUCN in Oceania (see Section 6).*

In October 2000 the World Conservation Congress (WCC) adopted Resolution 2.8 - IUCN's Work in Oceania (see Annex 1) which included a request for the Director General to identify those areas or issues that could substantially benefit from the input of Union expertise. This included identifying areas that were an urgent priority for funding and appointment of regional coordinators, as a minimum. In June 2001, the Programme and Policy Committee of Council ranked global resolutions in terms of their priority. Resolution 2.8 was ranked as highest priority for implementation along with 10 others.

During 2002, the Director General announced a review of regionalisation and decentralisation to help improve the performance of the Secretariat and the governance of the Union through the delivery of an effective Programme. Given the absence of any Secretariat in Oceania, combined with the concerns expressed by members regarding the situation in Oceania, it became a top priority to consider how the delivery of the IUCN Programme can be improved in the region.

Therefore in June 2002, the IUCN Oceania Regional Committee (ORC) was commissioned by IUCN Headquarters, through the Director Global Programme, *"to develop an organisational strategy for Oceania that would be delivered to the Director General in late 2002. The strategy would aim to provide a proposal for more effectively and efficiently operationalising the agreed IUCN programme in the region. This may include a membership recruitment and*

---

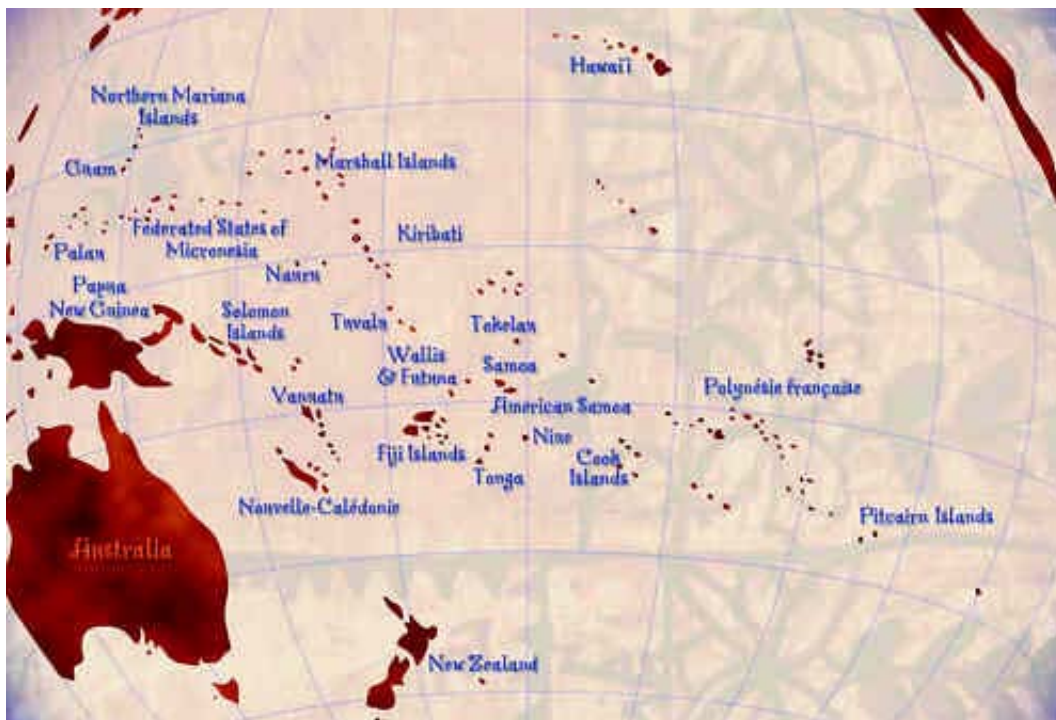
<sup>1</sup> For example: Pacific Island Environmental Outlook. 1999. Compiled by Gerald Miles, SPREP. United Nations Environment Programme. This review was based on 12 National Environmental Management Strategies (NEMS) produced between 1990 and 1994, input from several regional agencies, consultants, and input from national focal points of SPREP member governments.

*retention strategy, a fundraising strategy and an organisational strategy (including whether you wish to have a secretariat presence). The strategy would take into account and contribute to the ongoing regionalisation and decentralisation review.”*

This concept paper sets out a strategic approach for IUCN operations in Oceania. Once approved, a detailed implementation plan will be prepared by December 2003 (see Section 9.2). We anticipate that an Oceania programme would then be developed for inclusion in the overall IUCN programme to be submitted to the next WCC in Bangkok, November 2004.

## 2. SITUATION ANALYSIS

### *The Oceania Region*



*(Source: Secretariat of the Pacific Community)*

From the continent of Australia, the landmasses of Papua New Guinea, and the rest of Melanesia and New Zealand, across the volcanic islands and atolls of Micronesia and Polynesia, the region of Oceania covers over 15 per cent of the world's surface.

Oceania is one of eight statutory regions of IUCN. As specified in the IUCN Regulations (29 May 2002), the States (\* = IUCN State Member) constituting Oceania are:

Australia*	Niue
Cook Islands	Palau
Fiji	Papua New Guinea
Kiribati	Samoa*
Marshall Islands	Solomon Islands
Micronesia, Federated States of	Tonga
Nauru	Tuvalu
New Zealand*	Vanuatu

This list omits the eight territories under the jurisdiction of France, the United States, New Zealand or Great Britain, which are integral to the region. These are: American Samoa; French Polynesia; Guam; New Caledonia; Northern Mariana Islands; Pitcairn Island; Tokelau; and Wallis and Futuna. Operationally, IUCN works within the full Pacific islands region and has effective links with conservation interests in Hawaii on specific issues such as invasive species.

Unlike other regions of IUCN, and as its name suggests, the Oceania region is overwhelmingly an oceanic realm. In a development context, it can be portrayed as two sub-regions: developed Australia and New Zealand and the developing Pacific islands sub-region, where five countries are classified as least developed countries (LDCs) – Kiribati, Tuvalu, Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

The Pacific islands region consists of many thousands of islands totaling approximately 550,000 square kilometres of land in a vast 30 million square kilometres of the Pacific Ocean with 7.5 million inhabitants. People living outside the region find it hard to appreciate the distances between island countries. The west-east stretch from Palau to Pitcairn Islands is the equivalent of travelling from London to Calcutta; the distance from the Northern Mariana Islands to southern New Zealand is similar to the distance between Leningrad and Nairobi on the Equator.

Generally, the Pacific islands region is characterised by:

- a high degree of ecosystem and species diversity;
- an extraordinary level of endemism (often over 90% for particular groups);
- a high degree of economic and cultural dependence on the natural environment;
- vulnerability to a wide range of natural and human-induced disasters;
- a diversity of cultures and languages (over 2000 are spoken); and
- traditional practices and customs focused on the marine and coastal environment.

How does the region rank globally with regard to its biodiversity values? A 1999 listing of the top 24 global biodiversity 'hotspots' identified four in Oceania (southwestern Australia; Polynesia/Micronesia; New Caledonia; New Zealand)<sup>2</sup>. Forty percent of Pacific birds are endemic and 15 percent are threatened or endangered (the highest percentage in the world) - threatened by habitat loss and invasive species.

One feature of the Pacific is the widespread system of customary law and tenure. A high percentage of land is community-owned, and thus the ownership of natural resources lies with kinship groups or clans. Membership of a clan carries with it the right to use clan resources. Community decision-making has been the basis of regulating individual and communal resource use rights for centuries.

The *Pacific Islands Environment Outlook* (see footnote 1) provides a policy-relevant assessment of the region's environment and it has been used for the environmental points in the following summary. Although the region is extremely diverse in terms of the size and features of its countries and territories, there are some common characteristic features:

---

<sup>2</sup> Biodiversity hotspots and major tropical wilderness areas: approaches to setting conservation priorities. R.A. Mittermeier, N. Myers, J.B. Thomsen, G.A.B. Da Fonseca, S. Olivieri. 1998. *Conservation Biology* 12(3): 516-520.

- *Geographical isolation*: The large volumes of water and small areas of land create an environment that is relatively isolated on a global scale. Whilst in the past this has had benefits from an ecological perspective, it also provides challenges; for example, travel both within member countries and on a regional level is difficult and expensive.
- *Fragility of the environment*: Geographical and ecological isolation has led to the evolution of unique species and communities of plants and animals, many of which are indigenous to only one island or island group within the region. Changes to land use, invasive species, population, consumption and other determinants of environmental well-being make the Pacific islands habitats particularly vulnerable to destruction or damage.
- *Rapid population growth and urbanisation*: In the past century most Pacific island countries (PICs) have experienced rapid population growth. This population growth, along with the increasing commercialisation of subsistence-based economies, has been associated with rapid increases in rates of natural resource exploitation, especially of land, forests, and fisheries.
- *Limited land resources*: Many of the smaller Pacific islands have extremely limited land resources such as soil and forest. Limited land makes many terrestrial and near-shore resources very vulnerable to overexploitation and to pollution from poorly planned waste disposal.
- *Dependence on marine resources*: For the majority there is a traditional dependence on marine resources for daily needs, foods, tools, transport and waste disposal. This dependence remains in spite of new technologies and lifestyles. The region's ocean resources contain the highest marine diversity in the world and represent almost the sole opportunity for substantial economic development for nations such as the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu.
- *Vulnerability*: The Pacific is often exposed to extremely damaging natural disasters. Climate change is likely to increase the frequency and severity of hurricanes while sea level rise may inundate the low-lying atoll countries.
- *Political instability*: In the past 15 years, there has been an unfortunate rise of political instability and corruption. Melanesia, which accounts for 85 percent of the region's population, has experienced political violence and instability in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea. This has diminished the ability of these countries to deal with their rising populations, declining economic activity and unsustainable pressure on natural resources.
- *Globalisation and economic reform*: Globalisation and liberalised trade will have a profound effect on island economies. Agriculture remains the main income source and export earner. Off-shore fisheries has been an important growth sector.
- *Civil society*: Many civil society organisations (women, youth and environment groups) have emerged and joined with more progressive churches and trade unions to promote social justice and environmental sustainability.

The *Pacific Islands Environment Outlook* concluded that the region will continue to face a steady – and sometimes serious – decline in environmental quality. This decline will vary across and within PICs. It will be most marked in the rapidly growing urban areas, but cumulative impacts in the coastal zone are also likely to become dramatic. The common environmental problems of priority for the region are:

- loss of biological diversity – in both marine and terrestrial environments;
- threats to fresh water resources – further complicated by the potential of climate change and increasing pressure from growing populations and tourism development;

- degradation of coastal environments – in particular coral reefs and inshore fisheries – from land clearance, sedimentation and destructive fishing practices;
- climate change and sea level rise – expected to require adaptive responses even if the Kyoto Protocol targets are met;
- land and sea-based pollution – continuing from a wide range of sources.

Many Pacific island countries are still struggling with inadequate environmental policies and legal systems, that coupled with significant shortfalls in skilled personnel and lack of capacity, make it difficult to address many of their development-environment tensions. This applies equally to their efforts to implement key, multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). These problems are expanded in Annex 2.

However, a positive and important recent development has been the completion by Pacific island states of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) as required under the Convention on Biological Diversity. These define the biodiversity needs of each country and identify a number of priority areas where IUCN expertise could assist (see Section 4).

In summary, the environmental challenges facing governments in the Oceania region are considerable, as illustrated in this section. This applies as much to Australia and New Zealand as it does to other Pacific island countries. Australia and New Zealand, however, generally have the knowledge (or access to it), resources, infrastructure and capacity to address the challenges they each face. Indeed, both countries have been seen as world leaders in best practice for environmental management. Both countries also have active environmental NGO communities that provide strong advocacy and a generally high level of expertise.

*Any substantive new investment by IUCN in Oceania should therefore be focused in that part of the region identified as having the greatest need but the least capacity to address environmental problems - the Pacific islands region. It is here that IUCN can most make impact, by drawing on its unique strengths to complement and value add to the existing work of regional bodies, NGOs and development agencies already active in the region.*

### **3. ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL CAPACITIES AND STAKEHOLDERS**

#### **3.1 Pacific Island Governments**

The governments of most island countries have serious capacity issues with respect to environmental and conservation management requirements. These range from inadequate legislation, often drafted by overseas consultants, to few staff that may lack the training and information to do their jobs. The region has identified capacity building from community to government levels as a top priority (see Section 4).

The *Pacific Islands Environment Outlook* (1999) found that:

- Most PICs (Pacific island countries) still have small environment and conservation agencies, and generally few staff, often with limited training and experience. (Many small island countries have around 6 total professional staff for all environment and conservation functions – from policy development, licensing resource users, enforcement, to management responsibilities, impact assessments, advising Ministers, etc.) For the small island states, the training and retaining of environmental specialists is a particular concern.



- Compliance with global MEAs in the region varies. Most PIC states do not have the capacity, using their own resources, to implement the many convention provisions. Progress has been made in capacity building and monitoring for the CBD, FCCC and UNCLOS, largely because of access to external funding, especially from the GEF, UNEP and EU under the Lome Convention. However, as a general rule, in the absence of expert personnel and external funding for implementation and compliance, there has been little activity on the part of the PICs themselves.
- The lack of human, technical and financial resources is a fundamental constraint to the integration of environment and development in decision-making in most PICs.

Environmental and conservation issues are often a low political priority for island governments, just as they can be in developed countries. In recent decades, some key Pacific island countries have suffered from political instability and corruption which has seriously weakened their capacity to balance development demands with outside and internal pressures on natural resources.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, they are a key element in the quest for sustainable development and improved environmental management. Given the dominance of customary land tenure systems, governments have the potential to play pivotal roles as facilitators and information providers to help communities to better manage their local resources on which most depend.

### 3.2 International Organisations and Donors

Many United Nations agencies (e.g. UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, FAO, WHO), international development banks (World Bank, Asian Development Bank), and bilateral assistance programmes (e.g. European Union, AusAID and NZAID) are active in the Pacific. The region has also applied for and received some large GEF grants such as for the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Program and a current IUCN marine protected areas project in Samoa. Only Papua New Guinea is currently eligible for the GEF small grants scheme, although that may soon change. There are also a number of small grant schemes that target local environmental activities run by the EU and as bilateral initiatives. UNESCO runs a small World Heritage operation out of its Samoan office. The interests and influence of previous colonial powers has waxed and waned over the decades. At present, there is a significant rise in interest by Japan and China, along with other Asian countries, in Pacific matters, be they resource use or political.<sup>4</sup>

Collectively, the international donor and development community has long been active in the Pacific, with mixed results, particularly for the environment. Only a low proportion of aid money in the Pacific goes into conservation and tends to be piecemeal. Bilateral donors concentrate on mainstream concerns – economic development, health, education, security and more recently, on governance and poverty alleviation. Large projects have often been inappropriate for the scale of the target communities or Pacific countries and more innovative mechanisms to fund conservation in the Pacific have been proposed.<sup>5</sup> Regional organisations, such as SPREP, have been important conduits for large environmental initiatives ranging from pollution and waste management, to climate change and biodiversity projects.

<sup>3</sup> *The South Pacific*. Ron Crocombe, 2001. University of the South Pacific. 790 pp. This is a most comprehensive description and review of the "...past, present and possible futures of the diverse and stimulating societies of the world's most scattered region." (Preface quote)

<sup>4</sup> Crocombe, 2001. pp 627-655.

<sup>5</sup> Pacific Islands Conservation Trust. Long-term support for community-based conservation in the Pacific island countries. A proposal to the South Pacific Regional Environment Program. Wren Green and Peter Hunnam, November 2001.

Duplication of effort and lack of cooperation or coordination between donors led to the establishment of the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation in 1998 (see below). Documents such as the SPREP Action Plan and the Action Strategy (with both governmental and NGO backing) should be key devices for identifying regional priorities that *should* attract regional and international support (see Section 4).

### 3.3 Regional Organisations

A number of regional, inter-governmental organisations operate in the Pacific. Key organisations with direct or indirect interests in the environment include:

- South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP);
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC);
- Pacific Islands Forum and Secretariat;
- University of the South Pacific (USP);
- South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC).

Details of the functions of these organisations are summarised in Annex 3. The formal coordination mechanism for regional organisations is the Council of Regional Organisations (CROP). Political leverage is most obviously gained for conservation objectives through the Forum, whose members are Heads of Governments. The Forum was instrumental, for example, in successfully pushing for a UN ban on driftnets over 2.5 km long in 1992.

SPREP started life as a small programme within the SPC (then called the South Pacific Commission), but is now an independent inter-governmental organisation with the principle role to promote cooperation and assist its members with issues of environmental management and conservation. It has over 60 staff and is based in Samoa. Of all the regional organisations, it has the closest operational ties with IUCN, although the USP is actually an international NGO member of IUCN. While SPREP implements major regional projects, it has been less focused on improving the national capacity of environment agencies to better manage their own responsibilities.

### 3.4 NGOs – International and National

International NGOs active in the Pacific islands region include:

*Conservation International (CI)* – Within the Oceania region CI has been most active in Melanesia - Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and New Caledonia - where it has field operations in all but Vanuatu. Its focus is on community-based resource management and conservation. It has recently looked to expand its operations beyond Melanesia.

*The Nature Conservancy (TNC)* – Within the Pacific islands region TNC has programmes in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Australia. TNC has been most active at the community level, but has worked in PNG to promote sustainable logging and helped to establish the Papua New Guinea Trust Fund in 1999. This Fund supports conservation-oriented projects and activities in PNG.

*World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)* – WWF's South Pacific Programme, headquartered in Suva, Fiji, operates projects in Papua New Guinea, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, and Fiji.

Again, like CI and TNC, it has tended to focus on raising capacity at the community level as well as providing assistance for specific conservation needs.

Rapid growth in the last 50 years means that over 1,000 NGOs now operate in the region.<sup>6</sup> It is important to note however, that most of the NGOs do not have an environmental focus. Promotion of human development is the core objective, including education and health, as well as media, scientific (Pacific Science Association), and women's affairs. Advocacy on environmental concerns is often just part of the broader social agenda of community-based NGOs. The major churches which play an important role in Pacific island life also can include environmental issues. Many national level NGOs have limited capacity and they often operate in antagonistic cultural and political climates.

Most countries have a national umbrella NGO association. At the regional level, the *Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations* (PIANGO) is a regional network of NGO focal points or coordinating bodies based in 22 Pacific Island countries and territories. PIANGO's primary role is to be a catalyst for collective action, to facilitate and support coalitions and alliances on issues of common concern, and to strengthen the influence and impact of NGO efforts in the region.

Also within the region, the *Pacific Concerns Resource Centre* (PCRC), based in Suva, Fiji, serves as the secretariat for the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) movement, and acts for over 100 affiliated non-government and community organisations from around the Pacific. It has five campaign areas: demilitarisation; decolonisation; environment; human rights and good governance; and sustainable human development. PCRC has ECOSOC status with the United Nations – the only NGO in the Pacific to hold this status - and has been a consistent voice in international environment and trade negotiations.

### **3.5 Improving Donor and NGO Coordination**

The lack of coordination, cooperation and information sharing between development agencies and international NGOs in the Pacific has long been recognised as an impediment to effective assistance. As an effort to overcome this problem the 6<sup>th</sup> South Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, held in 1997, established the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation. Launched in 1998, the Roundtable is the only forum where major regional players (donor agencies and over 15 regional and international NGOs) meet to exchange information on projects, identify gaps and develop new ways to address the main regional conservation issues. This includes developing indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Action Strategy. The Roundtable meets once or twice per year and IUCN, through its Oceania Regional Committee, is an active and regular participant.

## **4. SETTING ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES**

One common criticism of well-meaning donors and large international conservation NGOs that work in the Pacific is that they impose their agendas and projects over national and regional priorities. IUCN can learn from these mistakes by developing its future work plans in the region from the key regional and national documents that set out the aspirations that have been discussed and formulated from within. At the regional level, there are two such documents that are revised roughly every 4 years. These are:

---

<sup>6</sup> Crocombe, 2001. Page 11.

*SPREP Action Plan.* Developed by the SPREP Secretariat for the SPREP government members, it is meant to be the main tool by which the SPREP programme is planned, broad priorities proposed and agreed, activities determined and results monitored. Unfortunately it has not lived up to these expectations in the past,<sup>7</sup> although improvements should help to make it more closely aligned with regional needs and the priorities of overseas aid donors.

*Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region.* The Action Strategies are largely shaped at each Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. The 7<sup>th</sup> such conference, held in the Cook Islands, July 2002, developed a new Action Strategy to cover the period 2003-2007. This Action Strategy is the most useful expression of perceived current priorities for nature conservation for the region as a whole, in view of the fact that it is probably the most widely discussed, agreed and “owned” plan by NGOs, conservation practitioners and governments in the region. The Strategy specifies five sub-strategies by which it aims to achieve its principal objective of biodiversity protection: policy, planning and legal frameworks; local communities and customs; capacity building; education, awareness and information; financial sustainability.

At the national level, the most recent documents that identify national priorities are the *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans* (NBSAPs). They have particular importance given that they are the major mechanism to date for Parties to the CBD to plan how it will implement the Convention in its territory.

The priorities set out in these, and earlier, major planning documents define the following goals for PICs:

- Conservation of biodiversity and protection of significant species and places by;
  - Tackling specific threats and managing wastes;
  - Sustainable use of natural resources.

The priority means of reaching these goals are clearly identified as:

- Capacity building, from community to government levels;
- Policy, planning and legal frameworks;
- Community participation in nature conservation;
- Education, awareness and provision of information;
- Financial sustainability for biodiversity.

*IUCN has the relevant expertise to assist countries to achieve these objectives. The challenge is to make it available and effective in the context of other regional players (see Section 6).*

## **5. IUCN IN OCEANIA**

### **5.1 Membership**

At 1 January 2003, IUCN had 46 members in the region which represented 5 percent of the overall membership. Membership is very uneven, however, throughout the region: 34 of the 46

---

<sup>7</sup> SPREP 2000. Review of the South Pacific Regional Environment Program. Peter Hunnam and Epa Tuioti, May 2000. A report for the Australian Agency for International Development.

members are based in Australia, and there are only five members in three Pacific island countries. Of the 16 states included in Oceania, there are no IUCN members in 11 of them and none from the eight territories. In addition, Oceania was identified in the membership report given at the 2000 Amman World Conservation Congress as one of two regions where overall membership had decreased.

One international non-governmental organisation member – the University of the South Pacific – has its country headquarters located within the region, in Fiji. Other IUCN international non-governmental organisation members, such as Conservation International and the World Wide Fund for Nature are active within the region and maintain offices there.

The following table shows IUCN membership status in Oceania as at 1 January 2003:

	ST	GA	INT (HQ)	NGO	AF	Total
Australia	x	8		23	2	34
Fiji			1	2		3
New Zealand	x	1		5		7
Papua New Guinea				1		1
Samoa	x					1
<b>REGION</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>46</b>

Whilst membership numbers are static in most of the region, there has been a continuing decline in numbers within Australia in recent years. This has been partly due to a consolidation of government agencies, combined with cost considerations.

## 5.2 Commissions

In general, membership of Commissions throughout the Oceania Region reflects the pattern with institutional membership: a concentration of numbers in Australia and New Zealand, with a patchy presence in the Pacific islands region. Within Oceania, the Commissions with the strongest regional networks are WCPA and CEL. CEC does have a regional structure, but focuses its contribution at the global level. SSC is active (e.g. the Invasive Species Specialist Group is based in New Zealand), but traditionally operates at the individual species and/or thematic programme level while CEM and CEESP have a relatively poor presence and networks within the Oceania Region.

## 5.3 Regional and National Committees

The IUCN Oceania Regional Committee (ORC), founded in early 1998, was set up in response to a recommendation to establish and maintain a mechanism for regional coordination adopted at the First IUCN Oceania Regional Members' Meeting held in June 1996. Its objective is "To advance the interest and activities of IUCN, its members, and its components in Oceania".

Its functions are to:

- i) *Provide coordination and networking services* for all components of IUCN in Oceania, including institutional members and Commission members. To this end ORC seeks to:
  - Convene regular meetings of Oceania members
  - Bring synergy to specific IUCN Commission activities in Oceania

- Oversee a process which identifies programme issues, project proposals and member initiatives for Oceania
  - Assist networking through information exchange for members and commissions.
- ii) *Develop and undertake a targeted programme of specific ORC activities in Oceania.* ORC does not necessarily undertake these activities itself, but facilitates actions by members and commissions.
- iii) *Be the voice for Oceania to global IUCN interests.* This includes bringing regional concerns to the attention of Council and ensuring that appropriate information flows are developed between the Secretariat and ORC for the benefit of members.

All IUCN members in the region participate in the regional committee on equal terms and the membership of the Committee reflects the representation of members across the region. The Oceania Regional Committee consists of:

- The three elected, Oceania-based Regional Councillors, plus any other members of IUCN Council resident in the region;
- One representative from the Australian Committee for IUCN;
- One representative from the New Zealand Committee of IUCN; and
- One representative from the IUCN Pacific Island members.

In addition, each of the IUCN Commissions with an active presence in Oceania is invited to nominate a representative as an observer member. This currently includes SSC, WCPA, CEL, and CEC. Further, to help build a stronger working relationship between the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and IUCN, SPREP has observer status on ORC.

The Oceania Regional Committee is chaired by one of the three elected Regional Councillors. It contracts the Australian Committee for IUCN to provide secretariat and financial management services.

Located within the Oceania region are two of IUCN's oldest national committees: the New Zealand and the Australian national members' committees. Both committees are formally recognised by IUCN Council and are actively engaged with their members. Historically, both committees have provided a focus for their members' membership of IUCN, particularly given the relative remoteness from IUCN Headquarters and lack of external involvement in the region.

The Australian Committee for IUCN (ACIUCN) was founded in 1979. Its mission is *“to provide a forum to bring together in a cooperative and constructive partnership Australian government agency and non-government organisation members of IUCN to promote and implement within Australia and the Oceania Region the IUCN mission”*. Historically, ACIUCN's focus has been in areas of policy development, particularly with respect to world heritage; biodiversity conservation, marine conservation and ecologically sustainable development. It meets twice a year.

The New Zealand Committee for IUCN (NZIUCN) is currently chaired by the Director General of the Department of Conservation, which also provides the Secretariat for the Committee. It meets four times a year.

## 5.4 IUCN Programme in Oceania

There is currently no distinct IUCN Oceania regional programme. Today, implementation and delivery of the Global Programme within Oceania is largely dependent on the efforts of members and Commission members within the region, with some support from Headquarters Secretariat staff. Mention should also be made of TRAFFIC Oceania. TRAFFIC Oceania was founded in 1984 (as TRAFFIC Australia) and much of its work in the region is focused on marine species and fisheries, and forestry. In April 2002 TRAFFIC Oceania assisted the CITES Secretariat in organising the first regional workshop for small island developing states in the Oceania region, *Integrating CITES into Regional and National Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resource Management*. In 2002, TRAFFIC Oceania received funding from the British Government to assist Fiji and Vanuatu in the implementation of CITES.

## 5.5 IUCN-SPREP Memorandum of Understanding

SPREP and IUCN have a long history of collaboration in the Pacific, particularly through their joint involvement in the Conferences on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, usually held every 4 years. These conferences have become the premier opportunities in the Pacific for governments, conservation managers and NGOs to discuss and debate conservation issues and define priorities through the development of the regional Action Strategy. In July 2002 a new Memorandum of Understanding (previous MoUs had been signed in 1992 and 1985, the latter with the South Pacific Commission) was signed between the two organisations with the main objective of providing a framework of cooperation between the two organisations (see Annex 4). Under the MoU, IUCN and SPREP “*will endeavour to prepare, within six months of signing this MoU, a two-year joint workplan for activities of mutual interest and concern*”.<sup>8</sup> Operationally, individual areas of collaboration will be selected and, when agreed, attached as annexes to the MoU.

## 5.6 Gap Analysis for IUCN in Oceania

Two broad areas of concern emerged from our consultations that need to be addressed if IUCN is to develop an effective operational and delivery capacity in Oceania. These are: the relationship and delivery of services between the Secretariat and the membership; and the implementation of a specific programme of work in the region. The former is a concern for all members in Oceania and is discussed below as “Internal Organisational Needs”, while the latter is largely focused on proposed Pacific island activities and is discussed under “Programme Issues”

### 5.6.1 Internal Organisational Needs

In discussions, members identified the following issues:

#### Membership

In the absence of a membership recruitment and retention strategy and a concerted effort to improve a deteriorating situation we have:

- poor membership presence in the Pacific;
- uneven spread of institutional and Commission membership within region;
- declining overall membership (Australia/Pacific; NZ static).

---

<sup>8</sup> This has not been done yet. Some activities are proceeding under the MoU Annex relating to cooperation in environmental law.

Increasing membership, particularly in the Pacific, will need to be linked to the development of an Oceania programme and an active presence of IUCN in the region.

### **Underdeveloped relationships**

Given the absence of Secretariat staff in the region the outcome has been:

- poor connection with the development and delivery of the IUCN Programme;
- inadequate communication protocols between HQ and membership structures (national committees; ORC);
- inappropriate use of regional contact people (usually out of date/not connected);
- little coordination between members and Commissions; and
- low level of activity with partnership organisations such as SPREP.

### **Low IUCN profile in region**

This situation has meant a low profile for IUCN in the region. It is highest in Australia, particularly over World Heritage issues, and lowest in the Pacific. There is no strategic approach to promoting IUCN through particular media opportunities. A communications strategy is needed.

## *5.6.2 Programme Delivery Issues*

Members and Commissions are keen to play a more substantive role than they do at present in helping to develop and deliver the IUCN Programme in Oceania and advancing the Union's Mission. They have identified the following difficulties in achieving substantial gains in the region.

### **Lack of a regional strategy and Oceania Programme**

To date, there has been no clearly defined strategic niche for IUCN expertise in the region (with some exceptions such as invasive species). Without a strategy, with goals and objectives that are consistent with the global IUCN Programme, the Union has not had a regional vision to ignite enthusiasm and gather support.

### **Programme input mechanisms**

Members seek equal opportunities with other regions to fully participate in the work of the Union, including participation in programme development and delivery. These are ineffective at present, because of the underdeveloped relationships, poor coordination and lack of capacity to engage.

### **Importance of a Secretariat presence**

Members believe that Programme development and delivery issues will remain until there is an IUCN Secretariat presence, based in the Pacific islands region, where the comparative advantages and needs are greatest (see next section).

### **Donor relationships**

These are poorly developed at present, although there are regional opportunities once a clear work programme is in place that is relevant to donor interests. This has already happened with an invasive species initiative focused on Pacific island countries, and with TRAFFIC Oceania's initiative in Fiji and Vanuatu with CITES capacity building.

In summary, whilst at present there is no formal IUCN Oceania Programme, there is a body of IUCN activities being undertaken in the region, particularly by the national committees,



regional committee and the Commissions. What is lacking is a mechanism to coordinate the individual activities of the components of IUCN and to present them in a strategic framework. Whilst ORC has attempted to provide this coordination, it has been constrained in its ability to do this. Members are seeking a cost effective structure, focused on delivering outcomes, that coordinates and enhances the latent potential that exists in the region.

## 6. IUCN'S NICHE AND COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

This section identifies IUCN's comparative advantage and a niche for its activities by first comparing IUCN's strengths with the region's problems, goals and priority needs for conservation. These were described in Sections 2 and 4. It then identifies a niche by considering which of these needs other players are meeting and where IUCN has a comparative advantage in the regional context.

**IUCN's strengths** are well known – its extensive knowledge networks represented by the Commissions and Secretariat; unique membership structure of government and non-government organisations; broad skills base (legal, protected areas, species, social policy, etc); ability to engage in multi-stakeholder approaches; global reach; UN observer status; and long experience at working across the spectrum of: knowledge ⇒ empowerment ⇒ governance.

How relevant are these to the needs of Oceania in addressing its environmental and conservation challenges? While there are conservation issues for New Zealand and Australia that can, and do, benefit from IUCN expertise from time to time, we concentrate here on the Pacific island countries.

Section 2 identified the environmental problems and barriers to effective action facing island countries. These are well known within the countries and efforts to address them have most recently been consolidated in their various National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans. Issues and solutions are covered more generically in the 2003-2007 Action Strategy (section 4). To repeat, the region's goals are:

- Conservation of biodiversity and protection of significant species and places by;
- Tackling specific threats and managing wastes;
- Sustainable use of natural resources

Priority means of reaching these goals are summarised from a number of sources as:

- Capacity building, from community to government levels;
- Policy, planning and legal frameworks;
- Community participation in nature conservation;
- Education, awareness and provision of information;
- Financial sustainability for biodiversity.

How are other players, aside from governments, assisting with respect to this list? The international NGOs tend to concentrate on field projects at the community level where they have made significant contributions to building capacity and with NGOs. They have also assisted with community participation in nature conservation. This level of operation requires field staff, finance for projects and donor linkages that IUCN presently lacks in the region.

SPREP have well established education programmes as well as involvement with policy, planning and legislation.

Where considerable effort is still required, despite the assistance and progress made by SPREP, is building capacity at government levels, along with further improvements in policy, planning and legal frameworks. **IUCN has comparative advantage** in the region through its structures, access to governments, and knowledge base to make a significant contribution in these specific capacity-building areas. Another advantage is that this can be started without having to rely on large projects to do so. In the post-WSSD climate, IUCN also has much to offer in helping governments to bring conservation issues into the mainstream of sustainable development and to advance the Millenium Development Goals. Island countries (like many others around the world) have much still to do before environmental concerns are integrated with national economic planning.

Some of the IUCN Commissions currently have programme activities in the region. It is hoped that the Commissions will also expand their work in Oceania since they provide an important element of the comparative advantage. We anticipate that a Secretariat presence will assist in facilitating and coordinating the work of the Commissions, particularly in developing synergies, identifying needs, working up concepts, and identifying and securing funding. Whilst all of IUCN's Commissions have expertise relevant to the region and the following list is illustrative only, key areas of expertise that correspond to the identified priority needs include:

- development of national environmental legislation and implementing MEAs (CEL);
- filling gaps in knowledge concerning species, ecosystems and their status and disseminating this information (SSC);
- traditional knowledge and customary law (CEL);
- building on existing regional work on invasive species (SSC);
- marine conservation initiatives and marine protected areas (WCPA);
- approaches and mechanisms for sharing knowledge (CEC).

## **7. PROPOSED ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

To deliver effective outputs in the Pacific based on these comparative advantages and to meet the internal needs of members (Section 5.7) the region will require a direct, but modest IUCN Secretariat presence. The proposed organisational structure also gives an enhanced role to the regional committee. It utilises that committee, and to some extent existing national committees, as the delivery mechanism for some IUCN services and functions. Secretariat functions would be focused on the Pacific islands sub-region, with an emphasis on programme development and implementation.

### **7.1 Key Functions for IUCN in Oceania**

Key functions for IUCN in Oceania include:

#### *Programme related*

- Providing regional input to development and adoption of the global Programme;
- Implementation of global Programme activities within Oceania region including a component IUCN Oceania Programme;

- Identification of potential donors and develop a fundraising strategy, linked to Programme implementation;
- Improved engagement with Commission members for Programme delivery, including matching experts to country needs for short term activities;

#### *Relationships*

- Providing coordination and networking services for all IUCN components in Oceania;
- Oceania expertise and concerns brought to Council and the Secretariat;
- Improve links with members, and potential members, including development of a membership recruitment and retention strategy;
- Development of links with key regional institutions, in particular operationalise the MoU with SPREP;

#### *Promoting IUCN*

- Development and implementation of a Communication Strategy including communication between IUCN Global Secretariat and members in the region and within the region for publicising the work of IUCN (including position statements), responding to current critical issues or events, and identifying opportunities for member involvement.

This Strategy proposes that these functions are delivered by better use of existing regional components (ORC, national committees, commissions) and the addition of an IUCN Secretariat presence, each operating with clearly defined functions and roles. Proposed roles for ORC and an IUCN Oceania Secretariat are as follows.

### **7.2 Proposed roles for ORC**

The primary role of the Oceania Regional Committee is to provide a strategic focus and direction in the region including oversight of the preparation and delivery of the IUCN Programme in Oceania.

To this end, ORC will:

- Set regional programme priorities and provide guidance to the Secretariat programme development;
- Provide input to the annual work plan, fundraising strategy and membership strategy for the region;
- Give structured guidance to the members on priorities for the development of subsequent IUCN programmes;
- Act as a “filter” between members and global Union on development of resolutions and IUCN programme;
- Act to, or provide advice on, the resolution of regional issues;
- Facilitate synergies between Commission activity and programme delivery and encourage coordination between Commissions;
- Assist the DG with Secretariat appointments for the region;
- Provide a management board for Secretariat staff in region;
- Convene regional members’ meetings;
- Share representational role for IUCN with Secretariat staff at relevant meetings.

Achieving these outcomes will probably require ORC to move beyond its current voluntary structure and provide remuneration for some of these services.

### **7.3 Proposed roles for IUCN Oceania Secretariat**

The Secretariat's primary focus will be operational, working closely to ORC, and focusing on programme delivery in the region. This reflects the view that the greatest priority in terms of concerted conservation action facilitated by IUCN is in the Pacific islands region.

To this end, the Secretariat will:

- Comply with standard IUCN reporting/administration requirements common to all its offices;
- Manage the logistics of preparing regional input to the development of the IUCN Programme;
- Work with ORC, members and Commission representatives, as needed, in preparing input to the IUCN Programme;
- Develop an annual work plan for implementing the Oceania components of the IUCN Programme, for approval by ORC, subject to formal approval by the Council;
- Develop the work programme between IUCN and SPREP;
- Collaborate with members and Commission members to implement the Oceania component Programme;
- Provide outreach for IUCN throughout the Pacific islands region, identifying opportunities and needs consistent with the Work Plan and Oceania Programme;
- Develop a fundraising strategy in collaboration with ORC;
- Identify potential funding sources for the region and develop specific programme activity proposals to obtain funds for implementation of the Work Plan;
- In collaboration with ORC and existing members, to develop a Membership recruitment and retention strategy;
- Providing a contact point and information service for Pacific Island members and identify and recruit new members in line with the Membership Strategy.

Achievement of these functions will require a substantial travel budget. Travel within Oceania is often difficult, time consuming and expensive, but in order to develop credibility and deliver on its objectives, IUCN must consult, participate and be seen out in the region.

## **8. A WAY FORWARD**

### **8.1 Initial requirements and priorities**

Whilst there is unanimous and unequivocal support within the region for an IUCN Secretariat presence in Oceania, there has been much discussion as to what form this should take. Much of this discussion has revolved around the issue of whether the focus should be on the opening of an IUCN office, or whether some other arrangement might be preferable. There is a strong view that infrastructure and administration costs should be kept to a minimum, and concern that a fully-fledged office could be costly. Therefore it is proposed that resources should initially be concentrated in creating a position more akin to IUCN regional representative, rather than creating a regional office per se. Any need to increase the 'presence' will depend on how the roles develop.

While the first tasks for an Oceania Secretariat have not been widely discussed in the region the following are provided as suggestions.

*Member-focused*

- a. Clarify the nature of the relationships with ORC and develop needed protocols.
- b. Develop a membership recruitment and retention strategy with targets.
- c. Develop a communications strategy consistent with the membership strategy and programme.
- d. Actively build the membership base<sup>9</sup> and partnerships.

*Programme-focused*

- a. Develop the MOU with SPREP into a workplan in conjunction with ORC.
- b. Identify opportunities for capacity building with key environmental agencies.
- c. Identify areas of policy work where IUCN might assist particular countries. This could be through assistance from Australian and New Zealand members.
- d. Explore how Commissions might assist in these areas, for example, in providing assistance with respect to meeting MEA obligations.

In due course, it could be appropriate to apply, for example, for medium sized GEF grants to specifically boost the capacity of environment department officers by establishing a peer learning network, or other initiatives.

## 8.2 Location

A focus on Pacific countries for the Oceania Programme logically suggests an IUCN Secretariat presence should be located in that part of the region. The actual location would be subject to future discussions with potential partners once this Strategy has been approved. This is based on the presumption that there are significant cost savings and relationship advantages in co-location, rather than in establishing a stand-alone office with all of the attendant infrastructural and administrative costs. Initial co-location also provides flexibility, should other locations, or a stand-alone office become more appropriate as the Oceania Programme develops in future years.

That said, three possible co-locations have been suggested so far. These are:

**SPREP, Samoa.** There are close linkages in work programmes and advantages in attachment to the region's environmental organisation.

**University of the South Pacific, Fiji.** USP is already an IUCN member and the centre of Pacific research with good connections to island countries. Fiji is a regional transport hub and key Pacific regional organisations are based there.

**Forum Secretariat, Fiji.** As the region's political secretariat this location could provide closer linkages to the governments and opportunities to influence sustainable development initiatives.

---

<sup>9</sup> One suggestion is to actively recruit the environmental officers who work in the Pacific countries environment and conservation ministries for potential Commission membership. These people have key roles in the region and would benefit from being networked into IUCN. Likewise, their agencies would be the logical government agency members to bring Pacific interests to the Union.

### 8.3 Review of Oceania Secretariat

It would be appropriate to build in a review of any Secretariat structures that are established after a few years of operation. If a Secretariat presence was established reasonably quickly, then one suitable review period could be prior to the Fourth World Conservation Congress in 2008.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has developed a case for the establishment of an IUCN Secretariat in Oceania based on the following factors:

- high biodiversity values of the region based on global criteria;
- high levels of threat that these values face from human and natural factors and therefore the urgent need to take action;
- relevance of IUCN's knowledge networks and areas of expertise to address these threats;
- particular need for capacity building in conservation management in the Pacific islands sub-region of Oceania;
- IUCN's comparative advantage and an identified niche to assist Pacific island countries;
- pressing need to strengthen IUCN's presence in Oceania by improving its membership base, strengthening its relationships (regionally and with Headquarters), and raising its regional profile; and the
- inability of the current voluntary input of members, committees and Commissions to fully advance these goals in support of the Mission and the Union without additional resources.

Using as an analogy the children's tale "Goldilocks and The Three Bears" we suggest IUCN has the following three choices.

### 9.1 The Three Bears Test

#### 9.1.1 *Too Small*

The first option is to 'do nothing' and continue the status quo. Even presuming an ongoing engagement by dedicated individuals who currently act in a largely voluntary capacity, the likely outcome would be: further decline in membership; alienation of members from the Programme development process; growing imbalances between the developed and developing sub-regions; and marginalisation in national sustainable development debates. Most importantly, it would mean a failure to deliver on the Mission in a way that could reverse the extinction crisis that is currently so real in Oceania.

#### 9.1.2 *Too Big*

The second option is to argue for a large regional Secretariat office, such as in Bangkok, or that runs major programmes as in Pakistan or East Africa. That would presume a regional acceptance (and funding sources) of a major IUCN presence that does not currently exist. It would also ignore the relevance of a modest scale for a presence in the Pacific islands and the identified niche advantage of working, at least initially, to raise the capacity of island country

governments in conservation management. That does not need a large office, but rather the capacity to initiate funding, develop smart ideas in collaboration with the Oceania Regional Committee, build relationships with governments and coordinate existing regional IUCN structures more effectively than is done at present. Finally, it is not appropriate to propose a large regional office when the workload and resources to justify and support it cannot be identified at this time.

### *9.1.3 Just Right*

If regionalisation within IUCN is to achieve a more rational basis for allocation of resources between regions and to improve effectiveness in delivering the IUCN Programme to areas of highest need, then a greater attention to Oceania is warranted. This applies much less in Programme delivery terms to Australia and New Zealand, but rather to the developing island countries of the Pacific. Organisations that achieve lasting results in those societies do so by starting small and growing organically as circumstance demands and resources permit. The needs of the Union in Australia and New Zealand are more strongly focused on strengthening existing structures (national and regional committees) and improving relationships between them, the members and Commissions in the delivery of IUCN activities. We do not need a large office for these reasonably modest functions.

However, the need for full-time paid Secretariat staff is clear. Current voluntary efforts are not meeting the needs that have been identified. Initially this might only require one or two people, co-located with an appropriate partner to reduce administrative overheads. Any expansion would then be dependent on needs that develop and the identification of funding sources to support expansion. This is the “Just Right” model that has the support of the region.

## **9.2 Next phase**

The more specific details of the location of an Oceania Secretariat, number of personnel required, establishment and operating costs, roles and relationships with other components of the Union would be addressed in the next phase of developing this proposal once the initial strategic approach as been agreed to. A proposal for how a phased development might proceed would also be developed. This next phase would be completed by December 2003 and we would hope that it could be implemented in 2004.

Members of ORC look forward to the opportunity to develop these details in a “Phase Two” project and to undertake the necessary consultations with members and Commissions in the region before reporting back to the Director General.





## **ANNEX 1 WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS RESOLUTION, 2000**

### **2.8 IUCN's work in Oceania**

RECOGNIZING that the natural values and cultural character of Oceania were shaped over time in many small islands in a vast expanse of ocean, remote from major population and economic centres;

ALSO RECOGNIZING that conserving these values poses particular challenges because of the remoteness, low population, and small economic base of Oceania;

CONCERNED that the small physical size and limited extent of island habitats make them extremely vulnerable to large-scale extractive industries, notably mining, forestry and plantation agriculture, that have expanded significantly in the past decade;

AWARE that the scattered archipelagoes include a wide range of island types which have very high levels of endemism in terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems and that these levels of endemism mean that the biological diversity of Oceania has global significance;

ALSO AWARE that Oceania's extensive marine environments include highly diverse tropical communities of coral reefs and associated ecosystems and a large number of seamounts which are, as yet, largely undescribed;

CONCERNED that a significant proportion of Oceania's terrestrial, coastal, and marine flora and fauna is threatened, especially by human overexploitation, habitat degradation, introduction of alien invasive species, and climate change;

ALSO CONCERNED that regional threats to marine biological diversity and small island ecosystems are of special significance as Oceania includes a significant proportion of the world's ocean area and small islands;

WELCOMING the specific identification in IUCN's Overall Programme, of efforts to manage invasive species, as these have a particularly serious impact on the ecosystems and endemic species of Oceania;

NOTING that IUCN does not have any regional office or country office presence in Oceania, and that previous IUCN programmes have overlooked the need for a specific focus in Oceania; and

FURTHER NOTING that a regional meeting of IUCN members held in Australia (10-12 March 2000) expressed concerns over the low level of involvement by the Secretariat with Oceania issues;

The World Conservation Congress at its 2<sup>nd</sup> Session in Amman, Jordan, 4-11 October 2000:

1. RECOGNIZES the significance of Oceania as an area of high biological diversity and low economic base, vulnerable therefore to a range of human-induced threats, which has not to date been adequately recognised in previous IUCN Programmes between General Assemblies and Congresses;
2. REQUESTS the Director General to:
  - (a) carry out a review of the regional balance of the Secretariat's Component Programmes in relation to IUCN's Overall Programme until the next Session of the World Conservation Congress, taking account of, among other issues:
    - (i) identification of areas with high biodiversity values;
    - (ii) assessment of the level of threats they face; and
    - (iii) identification of those areas or issues that could substantially benefit from the input of Union expertise;

- (b) include in the review the urgent priority of funding and appointing regional coordinators, as a minimum, in those areas that are identified as needing them;
- (c) as a priority, take the steps necessary to correct important gaps and imbalances that are identified; and
- (d) work with the IUCN Oceania Regional Committee to ensure that the work plan to implement the Secretariat's Component Programmes takes full account of the need to more fully integrate Oceania into the work of the Union

## ANNEX 2 ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY ISSUES

### Environmental Capacity Needs for Pacific Island Countries

The *Pacific Islands Environment Outlook* (1999) suggests that while significant progress has been made, there remains concern that current policy initiatives are not keeping pace with the rate of environmental degradation and related development imperatives in PICs. In general:

- there is a lack of enforcement or implementation of many policies and legislation;
- there are weaknesses with regard to the protection of indigenous property rights in the region; and
- implementation of small, focused policies is generally far more effective than large, comprehensive policies.

It identified areas where effort is clearly required to:

- Further increase capacity in the public sector to deal with environmental issues, in particular within departments involved in planning and resource use (e.g. agriculture, fisheries, tourism, finance);
- Provide basic infrastructure, in some cases in combination with appropriate regulatory and economic mechanisms and enforcement/implementation of existing legislation;
- Promote effective partnerships among all stakeholders, in particular local communities, NGOs and the private sector
- Further develop skills training, and basic and higher education opportunities for sustainable development;
- Build upon efforts to integrate environment and development within PICs;
- Gather basic information that establishes baselines or benchmarks and ongoing systems for monitoring and assessment of key indicators that can be used to assist decision-making and measure progress in implementing sustainable development. Also essential are effective communications and networking systems to share that information;
- Make explicit the links between health, population and the environment, including issues of gender; and
- Compile a composite vulnerability index of economic as well as ecological/environmental parameters

With respect to the implementation of global multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), it found that PICs face a number of barriers which include:

- Inability to participate fully in the heavy calendar of meetings because of a lack of finance and experienced personnel;
- Lack of funding mechanisms or personnel with the necessary expertise or understanding of new MEAs to enable the countries to implement fully national obligations under conventions;
- Outdated laws in need of reform;
- Little recognition of the newly emerging environment departments/units on the part of more powerful agencies;
- Legal and law enforcement personnel who do not have the time to deal effectively with environmental offences;

- Difficulties in the central management and enforcement of traditional/customarily owned land;
- An acute lack of reliable links and computer equipment to inform and update countries of environment developments;
- Difficulties in ascertaining which global MEAs apply to the respective Pacific island territories (there have been only a few instances when a metropolitan power declares that the MEA in question either extends or does not extend to its territory); and
- Lack of specific funding for the implementation of supportive regional agreements.

The *Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region 2003-2007* also observes that:

Lack of institutional capacity (especially at national level), limited infrastructure development, lack of coordination and integration of environment and conservation activities, limited economic alternatives, lack of political support and good governance, and limited funds pose major challenges to environment management and conservation in the region. Making the environment and conservation a national and regional priority is also a great challenge, because they have not traditionally been part of the economic equation in PIC's development plans.

### **ANNEX 3 REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE PACIFIC**

*South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)* – headquartered in Apia, Samoa. SPREP is the regional organisation established to serve the states and territories of the South Pacific region in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development. Its Mission Statement calls on the organisation “to promote cooperation in the South Pacific region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations”. SPREP’s members total 26, including all 22 Pacific island countries and territories, and Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States of America. As the leading environmental body for the region it provides a focus for environmental considerations in the Pacific and serves as a conduit for concerted action at the regional level.

*Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)* – Comprises 27 member countries including Australia, France, New Zealand, UK and USA. It is a leading technical agency for the region providing advice and programmes that include management of both terrestrial and marine resources. Mainstreaming environmental and biodiversity concerns into sustainable development will have to enlist the cooperation of SPC. Its main campus is in Noumea, New Caledonia with a number of programmes run from Fiji

*Pacific Islands Forum and Secretariat* – The 16 member Pacific Islands Forum represents Heads of Government of all the independent and self-governing Pacific island countries, Australia and New Zealand. It provides member nations with the opportunity to express their joint political views and to cooperate in areas of political and economic concern. The administrative arm of the Forum – the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat – is based in Suva, Fiji and undertakes programmes and activities under guidelines decided by the Forum leaders.

*University of the South Pacific (USP)* – Is the premier provider of tertiary education in the Pacific Region, and an international centre of excellence for teaching and research on all aspects of Pacific culture and environment. Established in 1968, it operates as an inter-governmental regional organisation. With 12 member countries – Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – the university’s three major campuses are in Fiji, Vanuatu and Samoa.

*South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC)* – Another regional technical body which amongst other areas also covers vulnerability analysis that include GSI mapping of resources. SOPAC been developing a Environmental Vulnerability Index for Pacific island countries.

## ANNEX 4 IUCN-SPREP MoU



### MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

*between*

**IUCN - THE WORLD CONSERVATION UNION**

and

**THE SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SPREP)**

---

#### **I. Background**

IUCN is a world-wide Union which brings together 79 states, 112 government agencies, 760 NGOs, 37 affiliates, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries. Its mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

SPREP is a regional inter-governmental organisation comprising 25 members consisting of all 21 Pacific island countries and territories and four developed countries with direct interests in the region, namely, Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States of America. Its mission consists of promoting co-operation in the South Pacific region and providing assistance in order to protect and improve its environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations.

The countries of the Pacific Islands Region share a unique geo-political context, characterised by many similarities. They also exhibit great diversity in ecological, social and economic terms. Within the region, biodiversity management demands urgent attention and in many cases transcends national boundaries.

IUCN has a long history of working with countries in the development of their conservation policies and helping to ensure that biodiversity conservation is fully integrated into other development plans.

#### **II. Preamble**

Recalling the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1985 between IUCN and the South Pacific Commission, and the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1992 between IUCN and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme;

Noting that SPREP is required, *inter alia*, by its guiding principles, to encourage co-operation both within the region and among other regions of the world in developing appropriate technology, policies, programmes and information to solve common problems;

Further noting that the World Conservation Congress, at its 2<sup>nd</sup> Session in Amman, Jordan, October 2000, adopted Resolution 2.8 entitled *IUCN's Work in Oceania*, which recognises the significance of Oceania as an area of high biological diversity and low economic base that is vulnerable to a range of human-induced threats;

Recognising the existence of an IUCN Oceania Regional Committee, which acts as a liaison for and facilitator of IUCN's activities in the region;

Further recognising that the above mentioned Resolution calls upon the Director General of IUCN to work with the IUCN Oceania Regional Committee to ensure that the work plan to implement the Secretariat's Component Programmes takes full account of the need to integrate Oceania into the work of the Union;

Taking into account the complementarity of their respective goals and missions and believing that mutual co-operation will benefit both organisations,

Now therefore IUCN and SPREP have reached the following understanding:

### **III. Objectives**

1. This Memorandum of Understanding has the main objective of providing a framework of co-operation between the two signing organisations.
2. Each organisation agrees to extend to the other a standing invitation to be represented by an observer at appropriate meetings and to co-sponsor relevant meetings such as the periodic Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas.
3. Within their respective mandates, IUCN and SPREP will endeavour to prepare, within six months of signing this MoU, a two-year joint workplan for activities of mutual interest and concern.
4. IUCN and SPREP will seek to strengthen and expand activities consistent with the two-year joint work programme, including collaboration as warranted in annual programme planning, meetings, workshops and in field projects.
5. IUCN and SPREP will, to the extent possible, consult each other on policy matters of mutual concern.
6. IUCN and SPREP will keep their respective memberships informed of co-operative activities undertaken pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **IV. Collaboration with other Organisations**

1. In seeking to attain these objectives, IUCN and SPREP may, where appropriate, agree to enlist the co-operation and collaboration of relevant regional and international institutions and non-governmental organisations with an interest in nature conservation issues in the South Pacific region and, if necessary, will amend this Memorandum of Understanding, or enter into complementary Memoranda in order to formalise such collaboration.

#### **V. Operational Provisions**

1. This Memorandum of Understanding shall constitute only an expression of a shared objective and vision and of the intention of the parties to exert efforts to develop a legal basis for achieving these shared objectives. Until such legal basis (contracts, internal agreements, country agreements, institutional development, etc.) is in place in binding form, each party's actions shall be considered to be that party's sole and separate action, for all purposes, including liability, and neither party shall claim to be acting on behalf of, or as agent for the other party or this Memorandum of Understanding.
2. Each Party will name and keep updated focal points to co-ordinate the co-operation called for in this Memorandum of Understanding. A specific focal point will be named for each of the annexes.
3. Progress towards the objectives and other matters in this Memorandum of Understanding shall be reviewed annually by the Parties through a process to be agreed between them.
4. As a result of their execution of this Memorandum of Understanding, neither Party will incur any financial obligations relating to activities carried out in relation to this Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **VI. Annexes**

1. Individual areas of collaboration will be selected and, when agreed, attached as annexes to this Memorandum of Understanding.
2. These annexes shall form an integral part of this Memorandum of Understanding and, unless expressly provided otherwise, a reference to this Memorandum of Understanding constitutes a reference to the Memorandum with any annexes thereto.
3. The following is a non-exhaustive list of areas of possible collaboration:
  - Biological diversity and natural resources conservation (including invasive alien species)
  - Community-based conservation
  - Indigenous/traditional knowledge issues
  - Marine and coastal conservation
  - Climate change and its impacts
  - World Heritage
  - Information and training



- Environmental law (an Annex on collaboration in this area is included in this Memorandum of Understanding)
- 4. Financial provisions relating to any co-operative activity between the Parties shall be included in the relevant annex, or in any complementary agreement relating to that activity.

**VII. Duration, entry into force, amendments and termination**

1. The duration of this Memorandum of Understanding will be five years, renewable for such further period and on such terms as may be agreed between the Parties.
2. This Memorandum of Understanding shall enter into force on the last date of signature of the Parties.
3. This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended by mutually agreed exchange of letters between the parties.
4. Either party may propose amendments to any Annex to this Memorandum of Understanding. These amendments will enter into force upon the understanding of the other party.
5. Any Party may terminate this Memorandum of Understanding by giving six months written notice to the other Party.

---

For and on behalf of the SOUTH  
PACIFIC REGIONAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME  
(SPREP)

For and on behalf of IUCN-THE  
WORLD CONSERVATION UNION

Signature

Signature

Date

Date

Tamari'i Tutangata  
Director  
South Pacific Regional Environment  
Programme

Achim Steiner  
Director General  
IUCN - The World Conservation Union

## **ANNEX I**

### **COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW**

The framework Memorandum of Understanding between IUCN and SPREP has identified environmental law as one of the initial areas of possible co-operation.

IUCN, through its Environmental Law Programme (ELP), and SPREP will foster greater collaboration in this field and explore means to jointly fulfil their common goals in this area.

The ELP is an integrated programme of activities delivered through the collective efforts of the Commission of Environmental Law (CEL), an extensive global volunteer network of over 750 environmental law specialists in 120 countries; the Environmental Law Centre (ELC), a professional international office established in Bonn, Germany, with 20 highly skilled legal and information specialists; and IUCN lawyers based in Regional and Country Offices around the world.

The following areas are those in which collaboration is likely to develop most quickly in the field of environmental law: development of international environmental law; technical assistance to developing countries in the South Pacific region; information, training and capacity building.

#### **A. Development of international and national environmental law**

The ELP and SPREP shall collaborate with each other in activities aimed at promoting further development of international environmental law, including studying further the concepts, requirements and implications of sustainable development and international law.

#### **B. Services to assist developing countries in the development of national environmental legislation**

The ELP and SPREP will co-operate with each other in providing technical legal assistance to the developing countries of the region through:

- Exchanging information on their respective programmes and
- providing expertise and experience

#### **C. Environmental law information**

The ELP and SPREP will explore the possibilities for close collaboration with a view to:

- Enhancing the capacity of both organisations to access and disseminate environmental law information

- Providing expeditious and inexpensive legal information services to governments of developing countries and members in the region

#### **D. Training and Capacity Building**

The ELP and SPREP will co-operate in organising and conducting training programmes in environmental law. In particular, they will organise joint events, contributing resource persons and teaching materials, and exchanging experiences in developing training programmes, as appropriate.

#### **Focal points**

The ELP through the ELC and SPREP will designate specific focal points for the implementation of this Annex.

The focal points will endeavour to prepare, six months after the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding, a two-year workplan for activities of mutual interest and concern.

**ANNEX 5 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS**

ACIUCN	Australian Committee for IUCN
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEC	Commission on Education and Communication (IUCN)
CEESP	Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (IUCN)
CEL	Commission on Environmental Law (IUCN)
CEM	Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)
CI	Conservation International
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (United Nations)
ELC	Environmental Law Centre
ELP	Environmental Law Programme (IUCN)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FCCC	Framework Convention on Climate Change
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (The World Conservation Union)
LDCs	Least developed countries
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NEMS	National Environmental Management Strategies
NFIP	Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific
NGOs	Non Government Organisations
NZIUCN	New Zealand Committee for IUCN
ORC	Oceania Regional Committee (IUCN)
PCRC	Pacific Concerns Resource Centre
PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
PICs	Pacific island countries
PIEO	<i>Pacific Islands Environment Outlook</i>
SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SSC	Species Survival Commission (IUCN)
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TRAFFIC	Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce

UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
USP	University of the South Pacific
WCC	World Conservation Congress (IUCN)
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas (IUCN)
WHO	World Health Organisation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature