



South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Report of the Fourteenth SPREP Meeting of Officials

8 – 11 September 2003
Apia, Samoa

Agenda Item 1: Official Opening

1. The Fourteenth SPREP Meeting of Officials (14SM) was convened in Apia, Samoa from 8 to 11 September 2003. Representatives of the following SPREP countries and territories attended: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America and Vanuatu. Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) partners, namely: Forum Secretariat, South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and the University of the South Pacific (USP) were also represented. Observers from a range of regional, international and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were also present. A list of participants is attached as Annex I.

2. The Chair of the Thirteenth SPREP Meeting (13SM), Mr John Bungitak, General Manager, Environment Protection Authority, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, invited the Reverend Uele Lotu Uele to lead the Meeting in a prayer, which was followed by a hymn sung by the SPREP choir.

3. The Chair then invited the Director of SPREP, Mr Asterio Takesy, to make his welcoming remarks.

4. In his welcoming remarks, the Director greeted all delegates to Samoa, noting the distance and time that was required in travelling to Samoa. He thanked the Reverend Uele Lotu Uele for his enlightening prayer and extended his sincere appreciation to the Honorable Tagaloa Tuala Sale Tagaloa, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Samoa, for taking the time to attend and open the Meeting.

5. The Director mentioned that this was the first occasion on which he had the opportunity of addressing an opening ceremony of a SPREP Meeting. He thanked the governments and members for their confidence in electing him as Director. He valued the opportunity and assured the Meeting he would be making his best efforts for countries and the region.

6. The Director said that SPREP could not achieve its objectives alone. He felt that it was essential to work in partnership, especially in strengthening collaborative efforts with the CROP organisations, development assistance agencies and NGOs.

7. The Director extended his thanks to the Government and people of Samoa for their warm welcome that he and his family had received. The Director acknowledged the contribution that his predecessor Mr Tamari'i Tutangata had made to developing the organisation. The Director also thanked the staff of SPREP for their commitment to the organisation.

8. In closing, the Director highlighted several issues of significance to the SPREP work programme and budget, noting that these would be discussed during separate agenda items over the week. He added that delegates had much work ahead of them over the next three days and he wished them well in their deliberations. The Director's speech is attached as Annex II.

9. Mr Bungitak then invited the Honourable Tagaloa Tuala Sale Tagaloa, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, to make his opening remarks.

10. The Minister welcomed all the delegates and representatives to Samoa, and extended a special welcome to the new Director, assuring him of the full support of the Government of Samoa. He said that since its founding in 1993, SPREP had been able to assist Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs) to strengthen their infrastructure and activities in the area of the environment and sustainable development, as well as increase the recognition of the unique needs and views of PICTs in the international arena.

11. The Minister noted that the Secretariat had grown over the years and that it needed the support in terms of direction and resources from the Members to enable it to provide the services the Members required of it. He noted that the SPREP Action Plan needed to be reviewed and updated, and that the Secretariat was seeking support for a revised programming strategy to make its operations more efficient.

12. The Minister highlighted the preparations that SPREP was coordinating for the 10th anniversary meeting of the Barbados Plan of Action (BPoA+10), to be held in Mauritius in 2004. He called on the Meeting to support these activities, as they were essential to allow the PICTs to participate actively and effectively in the Mauritius meeting.

13. The Minister further urged the Meeting to give serious consideration to the proposals of the Secretariat for increased financial contribution, to allow the new Director and staff to have reasonable resources to carry out the work that was required of them. The Minister's speech is attached as Annex III.

14. The Honourable Tagaloa Tuala Sale Tagaloa then declared the 14th SPREP Meeting of Officials open.

Agenda Item 2: Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

15. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the SPREP Meeting, where a Meeting was hosted by the Secretariat, the Chair was drawn alphabetically, so the representative of Fiji assumed the Chair after being nominated by Kiribati and seconded by Tonga.

16. The outgoing Chair made a brief statement, expressing his profound gratitude to his Vice-Chair, the SPREP Secretariat and those Members who served on the working committees in the 13th Meeting. He thanked Samoa for their hospitality in hosting the two meetings and called on the Meeting to extend their support to the new Chair.

17. The representative of Fiji noted that he, Mr Epeli Nasome, Director of Environment, Fiji, was representing Fiji as Chair of the 14SM until the arrival of the Head of Delegation, Mr Bhaskaran Nair, Permanent Secretary for Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlements and Environment.

18. The Chair thanked the outgoing Chair for the effective leadership and the guiding role he had played in the last 12 months, especially in supporting the work of the Secretariat. He said that the Meeting has been discussing in the last 2 years the new leadership of SPREP and there had been a rigorous selection procedure. He took the opportunity to officially welcome the new Director of SPREP to the 14SM.

19. The Chair noted that Rule 8.3 provided that the Vice-Chair rotate alphabetically whether or not the Meeting was hosted by the Secretariat, and called for nominations.

20. The Representative of the Cook Islands nominated the Marshall Islands as Vice Chair.

21. The Representative of Tuvalu seconded the nomination.

22. The Representative of Marshall Islands was accordingly appointed as Vice-Chair.

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of Agenda and Working Procedures

23. The Chair invited the Secretariat to comment on the latest issues of the working papers and documents, then invited the Meeting to consider the Provisional Agenda for adoption.

24. The Secretariat advised the Meeting that Fiji was withdrawing its item under Agenda Item 10 on the effects of the Brain Drain in the Fiji Meteorological Service.

25. The Representative of American Samoa congratulated the Chair on his election and moved to endorse the Provisional Agenda.

26. There were no other changes and the Provisional Agenda was adopted as the Official Agenda and is attached as Annex IV.

27. The Chair invited comments from the Meeting on the working hours of the Meeting.

28. The Representative of American Samoa requested clarification on the 7.00-8.00 a.m. sessions noted in the Agenda.

29. The Secretariat noted that these sessions were informal and reconfirmed the working hours that were noted in the working documents.

30. The Chair noted that the working hours were agreed upon as proposed by the Secretariat.

31. The Chair invited the Meeting to appoint an open-ended Report Drafting Sub-committee to assist with the report of the Meeting.

32. This open ended Sub-committee comprised a core group of representatives of the Cook Islands, France, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Kiribati, Niue, Samoa and the United States.

33. The Vice-Chair of the 14SM, Marshall Islands, was to Chair the Report Drafting Sub-committee.

Agenda Item 4: Action Taken on Matters Arising from the Thirteenth SPREP Meeting

34. The Secretariat reported on implementation of matters arising from the 13SM as outlined in the Secretariat's working paper and under ensuing agenda items. The Meeting was advised that a planned working group session of technical officials on the SPREP Convention that had been planned for 2003 had now been moved to early 2004.

35. The Meeting noted the status of action undertaken by the Secretariat on matters arising from the Thirteenth SPREP Meeting.

Agenda Item 5: Presentation of Annual Report for 2002 and Director's Overview of Progress since the Thirteenth SPREP Meeting

36. The Director tabled the Annual Report of SPREP for the year 2002 entitled 'Sustaining Pacific Resources and Development' and highlighted a number of successes during the year. He stressed that all of the achievements undertaken in 2002 had been carried out under the guidance of the previous Director of SPREP and acknowledged with appreciation the work that had placed SPREP in its current position.

37. Looking to the future direction of SPREP, the Director advised the Meeting that the Secretariat had started to address a longer-term strategic approach that is directly linked to SPREP's mandate. He noted that this approach started with an assessment of the existing corporate planning process in SPREP and that it had been undertaken with Member needs in mind. He stated that from a partner perspective, the Strategic Programme would provide a clear framework for collaborative action. The Director then provided an overview of the proposed draft Strategic Programme.

38. On the issue of funding, the Director advised the Meeting of the Secretariat's long-term funding strategy and urged Members to consider the stability of SPREP when discussing the issue of core funding during the Meeting. The Director's statement is attached as Annex V.

39. The representative of Papua New Guinea thanked the Director for his presentation and noted that not enough work was currently being done in the area of terrestrial ecosystem conservation. He observed that while marine ecosystems were very important, particularly to smaller islands, it was equally important to focus on terrestrial ecosystems.

40. The representative of Vanuatu gave his support to the proposed programmatic approach and noted that this approach would assist SPREP and donor agencies to better coordinate their activities and achieve a more sustainable approach to projects.

41. The representative of American Samoa commended the Secretariat for its achievements and service to the island communities. He asked that terrestrial ecosystem conservation be given more consideration in future work. The representative supported the Strategic Programme approach and noted that it would be an important mechanism for gaining funding.

42. The Director advised that SPREP currently did not have expertise in terrestrial conservation due to lack of funding. However, this had been identified in the Strategic Programme as an area of priority and the Secretariat would be actively seeking funding for this purpose.

43. The Meeting endorsed the 2002 Annual Report.

Agenda Item 6: Performance Review

6.1. Action Plan Review

6.1.1 Programme for Review of the Implementation of the 2001 – 2004 and Production of 2005 – 2009 Action Plans

44. The Secretariat briefly outlined the principal objective of the Review, which is to assess the status of the implementation of the 2001-2004 Action Plan and how far it has been able to achieve its expected outcomes. The draft terms of reference are included in Annex VI. The Secretariat noted that the estimated budget for the Action Plan Review and drafting is US\$209,300. The findings of the Review would be used to produce a new Action Plan to guide the work of SPREP in the next 5 years, taking effect in January 2005.

45. The Secretariat's plan is to send a standard questionnaire to members and collaborating agencies, with visits by a senior management member and the consultant to a suggested nine Pacific island countries and territories; the Cook Islands, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and the Solomon Islands, in addition to Samoa and Tokelau based in Samoa.

46. The representative of Tonga agreed in principle with the consultation process and asked the Secretariat to allocate enough time for in-country consultation to accommodate the views of the various stakeholders. The representative suggested that the consultancy be advertised widely in the Pacific media to give countries sufficient opportunity to take part in this process.

47. The representative of Guam suggested that the Secretariat identify the countries with low participation in SPREP activities and find ways to involve them in the consultation process.

48. The representative of French Polynesia called on the Secretariat to consider French Polynesia as one of the countries to be visited and consulted during the review process, noting that it had the third largest exclusive economic zone in the Pacific after New Zealand and Australia.

49. The representative of Niue affirmed the wish of her country to also be included in the review process. Niue had recently established a Department of Environment and such participation would assist in raising the profile of this new Department.

50. The representative of Papua New Guinea noted the problem of funding the consultation that was referred to by the Secretariat. He suggested that some countries review their own needs in developing the new Action Plan and communicate them to the Secretariat. He acknowledged that this action would depend on the capacity available in each country but called on the Secretariat to consider engaging countries to conduct their own review.

51. The representative of Australia indicated a particular interest in understanding the impact of the work of SPREP as an outcome of the review.

52. The representative of New Zealand noted the funding needed for the Action Plan Review and suggested that the review should be part of the Secretariat's core budget.

53. The representative of the United States noted the interest expressed by members in developing the Action Plan and called for clarification on how the Action Plan process would contribute to the development of the Strategic Programmes. There was also the issue of whether the process will allow member countries to contribute to the transition from Key Result Areas to Strategic Programming.

54. The representative of Kiribati supported the review process but commented that questionnaires are not usually effective. She supported the suggestions of Papua New Guinea of involving countries in the review of the Action Plan. She also suggested that the timeframe for country visits and consultation be extended, and further suggested the option of subregional workshops. She also stressed to the Secretariat the need for consultation in the review, and requested the Secretariat to provide further justification for engagement of a consultant.

55. The representative of Australia supported the comments of Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and Niue on countries contributing themselves to the review of the Action Plan. She commented that the Secretariat had endeavoured to keep costs to a minimum but suggested that further efficiencies could be achieved by using SPREP staff in collaborating with countries on the review in the course of their working visits to the countries, instead of employing a consultant. This would have the additional benefit of building links between SPREP and the countries in keeping the knowledge in the organization. She further commented that while Australia was not in a position to provide funding, some technical assistance to assist with the review process could be provided, for example in the matter of designing the review process and in preparing the final report.

56. The Director noted the interest of Members in participating in the Review. He said that funding would be a major factor in determining the number of countries to be visited, that the Secretariat does not have all the expertise required for the review and that the Action Plan would dictate the overall direction of the Strategic Programmes, with priority or focal areas identified by member countries.

57. The Secretariat noted that the current timeframe envisaged for a country consultation was three days and offered to work with respective countries to adequately prepare and facilitate the in-country visit, to optimize time spent in-country. The Secretariat also agreed that the Action Plan Review is a core budget activity. This is how the Secretariat had treated the Review in the proposed 2004 Work Programme and Budget, except for the funding, because of its implication for contributions.

58. The representative of Niue commented that consultation is necessary in the interest of objectivity and transparency and requested that elements of the terms of reference be revisited.

59. The representative of Kiribati requested clarification from the Secretariat of the revised figures in the estimates for the Action Plan Review and Drafting and especially the budget for the in-country consultations.

60. The representative of American Samoa noted that all member countries would want to participate in the exercise but could not. He sought clarification on how countries other than the ones selected would participate in the process.

61. The Secretariat requested guidance from the Meeting on the coverage of the visit and the terms of reference.

62. The representative of French Polynesia reaffirmed the interest of his government in participating in the review.

63. The representative of Guam commented that his territory would be willing to carry out its own assessment, predicated on two matters; that the Secretariat found it to be cost effective, and that another country in Micronesia would be visited instead.

64. The representative of Papua New Guinea also commented that his country could carry out their own assessment.

65. The representative of Vanuatu observed that Vanuatu shared the concerns raised by the other countries in relation to the content of the proposal and suggested that the Secretariat submit a revised proposal to the Meeting

66. The representative of Samoa commented that more time was needed for countries to read through the content of the paper, particularly in relation to coverage, country involvement and costing.

67. The Chair informed the Meeting that from what had been expressed by delegates, there was general agreement on the process once the useful suggestions of the delegates had been incorporated. The more difficult issue that remained was the coverage, with at least two island members wanting to be included. This had financial implications and if this were to be generally agreed by the Meeting, then he would request the Secretariat to prepare a revised costing of the review, based on the addition of Niue and French Polynesia, before the Meeting took a decision, later in the Agenda on the scope and funding of the review.

68. The Secretariat reported back to the Meeting as requested on costings for a review that included French Polynesia and Niue, as well as rechecking the figures. The Secretariat reported that the revised figure was \$204,300; adding French Polynesia and Niue to the countries to be visited would bring the amount to \$230,800. If French Polynesia were to withdraw as indicated, the approximate cost would be \$222,000.

69. The representative of Kiribati thanked the Secretariat for the revised figures and requested a more detailed breakdown of the amounts.

70. The Secretariat referred the Meeting to p.3 of Working Paper 6.1.1 for approximate costs.

71. The Director noted that the proposal represented a large amount of money, and reminded the Meeting that the review was not a proposal from the Secretariat; rather it was an obligation under the Convention. The figures were estimates and the questions remained as to how many countries constituted a valid sample and the real need for a consultant. He suggested that the review process could avoid the need for a consultant by greater utilisation of the capacities of Secretariat staff and Members.

72. The representative of New Zealand observed that some suggestions had already been made in the previous discussion, especially on the matter of self assessment. She proposed a "buddy system", where countries that had already completed an assessment would assist countries that felt they needed assistance.

73. The representative of Marshall Islands proposed a single meeting in Pohnpei for representatives of all the countries in Micronesia, to avoid the need for individual visits to the countries.

74. The representative of Niue recalled that on Monday she did support the recruitment of a consultant and requested that Niue be included in those countries that would be visited. However, after listening to the discussion, she suggested that if the Secretariat staff were in a position to absorb this work, then Niue would support this approach. Furthermore, given the revised proposed budget provided by the Secretariat and the increase to the proposed budget (\$18,000), should Niue be included, she withdrew her request. She did state however, that without the visit, Niue would definitely need Secretariat support in this work.

75. The representative of French Polynesia thanked the Chair for remembering the proposal he made about a country visit to his country, but to reach consensus he officially withdrew the request for a country visit to French Polynesia.

76. The Chair noted that the Secretariat had not obtained funding for the review and requested the Meeting to suggest possible avenues of funding.

77. The representative of Australia recalled her offer to contribute technical assistance in preparing and finalizing the review. She commented that the Action Plan was a very important process and felt it important that all countries should contribute to the best of their abilities. She encouraged Secretariat staff to provide support wherever possible in their normal visits to Member countries, which would also reduce consultancy costs.

78. The representative of Samoa suggested that Member countries could reduce the cost of the consultancy by doing their own reviews. This approach would have the added advantage of allowing individual countries to focus clearly on their own situation and concerns. These individual reports could then be considered together at a larger meeting.

79. The representative of Fiji agreed with the proposal of Samoa, suggesting that some actions of the review could be accommodated within the budgets of the many SPREP projects being run in the Pacific area.

80. The representative of American Samoa supported Samoa's proposal and encouraged the Secretariat to facilitate the review process, inviting the Secretariat to outline a process that could be followed.

81. The representative of Vanuatu noted there were two issues, costs and consultation. He agreed with Samoa and Fiji that in-country consultations could be done as a priority by the individual country, as part of their national programme activities, with assistance from the Secretariat in relevant areas.

82. The Chair observed that there were now indeed a substantial number of suggestions for the Secretariat to consider.

83. The Secretariat, to avoid any possible misunderstanding, summarized the proposals. The Secretariat understood that there was no longer a need for in-country consultations because the Member countries would prepare their own assessments, to a standard format that would be provided by the Secretariat. Australia had offered to provide technical assistance in lieu of an independent consultant. However, there was still need for a regional workshop to discuss the priorities and direction of the organization for the next 5 years. This was estimated at \$85,500. The costs of translation, report production and miscellaneous items would bring the required total to \$105,500 and the Secretariat sought guidance on sourcing this sum.

84. The representative of New Zealand noted that she had already observed that Item 6.1.2 in the 2004 Work Programme and Budget specified \$53,620 as secured funding for the review, leaving \$51,880 unsecured. She suggested that discussion on sourcing this sum be deferred to Agenda item 8.5, "Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2004 ...".

85. The representative of Australia suggested that the review meeting might be arranged to complement the dates of another convenient regional meeting, so that the overlap would help defray some costs, such as travel, of the review meeting.

86. The Meeting:

- **endorsed** the scope and process for the review; taking into account the views of the Meeting; and
- **approved** in principle the terms of reference and revised budget figures, subject to further discussion under Agenda item 8.5.

6.2. Work Programme Evaluation

6.2.1 Secretariat's Evaluation of the 2002 Work Programme

87. The Secretariat tabled its 2002 Work Programme and Budget Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report. It advised that this was a useful management tool for monitoring the performance of the Secretariat. The Secretariat noted that the Report was a work in progress and encouraged Member countries to provide feedback how the reporting can be improved.

88. The Secretariat guided Members through the document, briefly highlighting major issues under each Key Result Area (KRA) and noting that where expenditure was low against a specific output, this did not necessarily reflect underachievement in terms of work planned for 2002. The Secretariat also advised that the Report integrated the work carried out under the International Waters Programme (IWP) across key result areas.

89. Representatives commented on issues within each KRA. Under KRA 1, the representative of Fiji noted that it had already agreed to establish a whale sanctuary with its waters. The representative of Samoa added that his country had discussed and set up marine sanctuaries (as opposed to whale sanctuaries).

90. In response to a request from the representative of Tonga, the Secretariat advised the Meeting that the delay in recruiting a climate change coordinator had occurred because the individual who had been originally selected for the position had withdrawn after initially accepting the position.

91. The representative of Fiji highlighted the current shortage of expertise in meteorology advisory services and asked if KRA 3 could potentially address this problem. The Secretariat advised that efforts to address this are being incorporated into the Programme Strategy.

92. Responding to a query from Fiji on preparatory work for the 10-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action (BpoA+10), the Secretariat advised the Meeting that work was being carried out by SPREP, in coordination with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and other CROP agencies. This was to be discussed in a subsequent agenda item.

93. The Secretariat also advised that model legislation on ecological and traditional knowledge and practice had been initially developed by the PIF and SPC. The Secretariat advised that the SPC model legislation was understood to focus on cultural issues. The PIF had approached SPREP to progress the other aspect of this collaborative activity, which related to intellectual property rights. It was a country prerogative to decide how to apply any model legislation to accommodate country needs in relation to these two issues. Further, the Meeting was advised that the position responsible for this work had been vacant for some time and that best efforts were being made to fill the post.

94. The representative of the Cook Islands requested advice on any progress relating to the development of draft environmental impact assessment guidelines that have been with the Secretariat for two years. The Secretariat advised that it was yet to obtain funding for this project.

95. The Meeting commented on the format of the Report. The representative of Australia expressed concern at the number of unfunded activities under KRA 4 and asked that the Secretariat be more realistic in the budgets it develops. She also noted that 32% of the 2004 budget was unsecured. She suggested that Members provide feedback to the Meeting on the impact of SPREP activities.

96. The representative of the United States also requested that future Reports include the source of funding and provide greater clarity in respect of which activities had received funding and from what sources.

97. The representative of Kiribati noted with concern how non-work programme activities secured support and that the majority of member funds was being spent on personnel costs.

98. The representative of the Cook Islands gave the example of the work currently being carried out under the AusAID-funded HRD project implemented by SPREP in response to a comment by Australia about the impact of Secretariat projects. She congratulated the Secretariat and AusAID for their flexibility in terms of allowing the Cook Islands to address its immediate needs in this respect.

99. The representative of the United States queried the use of different terms to categorise SPREP Member groupings (PICs, PICTs, etc.). In response the Secretariat advised that, while there was no set rule in relation to this, the use of different terminology was often determined by the eligibility of different membership groups to different funding sources.

100. In response to several queries concerning differences between the Report circulated in July and amendments presented by the Secretariat to the Meeting, the Secretariat provided background on the work programme and budget preparation process. It explained that, due to SPREP Meeting requirements, the Work Programme and Budget documents are prepared during the first quarter of the previous year and as a result, altered funding circumstances are not reflected in those reports. Updates are usually provided to the subsequent SPREP Meeting.

101. The representative of Niue sought clarification on a series of issues throughout the report relating to Secretariat reports, information exchange for conservation areas, technical backstopping for country involvement in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the need for policy advice in relation to access and benefit sharing for genetic resource.

102. The representative of Australia requested that future monitoring and evaluation reports should be modified to focus on higher level achievements of the Organization. She hoped that the Strategic Programme would provide a vehicle for this to occur.

103. The Director commented that a clearer and more complete picture of the Organisation's work would be provided in the future and that comments of the Members would be taken on board.

6.3 Financial reports

6.3.1. Report on Members' Contributions

104. In accordance with Financial Regulation 13, the Secretariat reported to the Meeting on the receipt of Members' contributions in the year 2002, as well as giving an update on the status of Members' contributions received in 2003, up to 12 June, and the unpaid balances of contributions as at 12 June 2003.

105. The Secretariat advised that a total of USD\$706,374 had been received by the Secretariat in 2002 leaving a balance of contributions outstanding of USD\$320,468 as at 31 December 2002.

106. Total contributions outstanding as at 12 June 2003 were USD\$669,894, made up of USD\$320,468 unpaid for 2002 and prior years and USD\$349,426 for 2003 contributions.

107. The contributions due for the year 2003 were \$717,850 and so far this year, (as at 12 June 2003), the Secretariat had received US\$368,424 in lieu of 2003 and prior years contribution in arrears. The state of 2003 contributions were encouraging but arrears still stood at US\$351,000 dollars, and Members were urged to pay their contributions by the end of the year.

108. The representative of the United States recognised the work that had been carried out and congratulated the Secretariat on its work. She expressed several concerns, however, with the characterization of the United States' contributions and the overall representation of Member contributions to Members and for public use. She reiterated that the United States is a strong supporter of SPREP and provides it substantial annual support. She further noted that this support is not correctly recorded in the Secretariat report. The United States' contribution to core was \$200,000 in 2002 and \$175,000 to core plus \$75,000 for coral reef initiatives in 2003. She reminded the Secretariat that the United States has objected to an increase in member contributions each time it has been proposed at annual Meetings, and that the documents do not accurately reflect this lack of consensus. She called attention to similar discrepancies in the Annual Report both in terms of member contributions and donor contributions. She requested that these be corrected and that the 2002 Annual Report reflect the actual member's contributions.

109. The Secretariat apologised for any misunderstanding, noting the position of the United States and agreeing to carry out the requests.

110. The Meeting:

- **noted** the status of unpaid contributions relating to member contributions.
- **committed** itself to paying current contributions and arrears in full in 2003

111. The representative of Fiji, Mr Bhaskaran Nair, Permanent Secretary for Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment, Fiji, introduced himself to the Meeting and assumed the Chair, as noted in Para 19 of the Meeting Report.

6.3.2. Proposed Revised Members' Contributions Formula

112. The Secretariat outlined a new formula for membership contributions to take account of the proposal of the New Zealand Government to increase the dollar value of its contribution to SPREP as from 2004 to the same level as France. At the 13th SPREP Meeting, the representative of New Zealand made a proposal that his Government increase its annual membership contribution in the future to similar levels as that provided by France. France's current contribution is USD110,847 (which is 15.441% of total membership contributions). The nett effect of the proposal would result in the total SPREP membership contributions being increased by the difference in New Zealand's current contribution and that of France. No other member's contribution is affected in dollar terms. The effect however to other members would be in small reductions in percentage shares of membership contributions. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that New Zealand's 2003 increase was utilised to offset Pitcairn's arrears as agreed at the 13 SM.

113. The Secretariat noted that by taking this bold action, New Zealand was also making a positive and powerful statement to the organization and its international supporters of its faith and support of the organisation's goals and work.

114. The representative of the United States stated that she did not support the proposal for reasons she had stated previously. She further noted that contributions to SPREP are voluntary and should not be used as a baseline to project future levels of contribution. She also pointed out an error in the working paper in the figure attributed to the contribution of the United States, in common with the discussions under Agenda Item 6.3.1.

115. The representative of Tonga thanked New Zealand for its willingness to increase its contributions but stressed that this should not be taken as a precedent for increases in other member contributions.

116. The representative of Guam expressed his appreciation to New Zealand for its increase in contributions.

117. The Meeting:

- **approved** New Zealand's proposal and the resulting new percentage share of contributions, which is attached to this report as Annex VII.

6.3.3: Audited Annual Accounts for 2002

118. The Secretariat tabled the Audited Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2002, in accordance with SPREP Financial Regulations. The responses of SPREP Management to the audit were included in the tabled copy of the Auditor's Report.

119. The auditor introduced the financial report and audit report papers briefly and invited questions from the floor.

120. The Secretariat explained that the report is made up of two parts, Financial Statements and a Management Letter, with the financial report made up of the Balance Sheet and Income Statement, as well as explanatory notes for the above-mentioned schedules.

121. The Chair highlighted the audit opinion and invited Members to discuss the audit report.

122. The representative of Samoa thanked the auditor for the report. He then sought clarification for an issue that was briefly mentioned in yesterday's Meeting, asking whether the Secretariat had achieved a surplus or deficit in 2002.

123. The auditor explained that the Secretariat actually achieved a surplus of \$99,453. Further, he explained that the *prima facie* nett result was a deficit of \$42,579 but coupled with adjustments/transfers from Medical Evacuations (\$12,706), Staff Development Funds (\$60,392) and Prior Year Fundamental Errors (\$68,934), resulted in an overall surplus of \$99,453. He pointed out that the details were in Notes 16 and 17 of the Notes to Accounts. He explained that the Prior Year Fundamental Errors related to trade creditors of prior years. These entries were reversed or adjusted down because the initial entries were merely estimates of costs, because liabilities were not paid as work was not completed, and because of adjustments being made for discounts received.

124. The Secretariat added that in the 2001 Meeting that approved the 2002 budget, the SPREP Meeting agreed to use \$140,633 of the reserve fund to balance the budget. This amount however was not required; rather the Secretariat's operations in 2002 had resulted in adding \$99,453 to reserves.

125. The Chairman then asked the Meeting to move on to the Management letter because this would give Members a better understanding of the issues the auditors wanted to raise.

126. The auditor commented that this Management letter was standard practice after an audit is carried out. He briefly explained each point as follows:

- Point 1 – Manual of Procedures. This manual does not exist but since the matter had been brought to the Secretariat's attention, work had begun on collating material for a manual, and was subsequently completed.
- Point 2 – Linkages between Budget and the General Ledger Chart of Accounts. The auditor acknowledged that the method of budgeting into KRAs by the Secretariat and the software used by the Secretariat are both complicated. He had witnessed in the Meeting yesterday some discussion on the impact of the work performed by SPREP. Unfortunately, the format of presentation did not allow this to be done and he noted that he had urged the Secretariat to further improve the presentation format and provide better linkage between the budget and the general ledger.
- Point 3 – Financial Statement presentation. The auditor strongly recommended the Members and Secretariat to review the presentation format categorising expenses into functions. He saw no clear definition to indicate which items are to be posted to Primary Function and Project Management. Project Implementation is clear because it relates solely to projects, but there seemed to be an arbitrary decision on splitting costs between Project Management and Primary Function. He hoped during the Meeting that the Members and the Secretariat could agree on a definition to distinguish between these two items.
- Point 4 – Project Administration Fees. The auditor explained that there was no set Fee. It was negotiated separately with each donor or project. He suggested that the Fee should be standardised, because the Secretariat was not being remunerated for a lot of the work it performed on projects.
- Point 5 – Credit Cards. The auditor believed that steps have been taken care to address their concerns on this matter.
- Point 6 – Per diems for Overseas Conferences/Workshops. The auditor raised a security concern where per diems are hand carried for delegates to overseas meetings, and noted the lack of signatures in meeting documentations confirming pick up of per diems.

- Point 6 – Fixed Assets. The auditor commented that a fixed asset count and schedule was now complete.
- Point 7 – Written Confirmation on Receipt of Funds. The auditor commented on the increasingly common practice of using email to acknowledge receipt of funds. This is not acceptable from an auditor's perspective, since emails do not contain signatures. An auditor would require signed confirmation from the recipient.
- Point 8 – Member's Contributions. The auditor commented on the inability of the Secretariat to forecast cash flow and manage their funds because there is no set date for payment of member's contributions.
- Point 9 – Consultancy Agreement. The auditor commented that extensions to these agreements are often done verbally or via email. As for point 7, signed authorisations are required for audit purposes.
- Point 10 – Depreciation Rates. The auditor had advised the Secretariat to review depreciation rates to establish more realistic figures.

127. The auditor noted that in a follow-up visit to the Secretariat he was satisfied that the points he had raised in the Management letter had been actioned or addressed.

128. The Chair acknowledged that the Secretariat seemed to have addressed all the issues, but he again referred to point 3 regarding the Income Statement and the fact that Functions are used for presentation. He reiterated the auditor's concerns on the weak definitions in the regulations. In the interest of transparency, he believed the Meeting should look at this matter and provide guidance to the Secretariat. Regarding the project management fee, he believed that not having a strong policy did not send the right message to donors. He also suggested a better structure for the presentation of Key Performance Indicator to better show achievements throughout the year.

129. The representative of Guam asked if the Secretariat was providing a paper to show how the Project Administration Fee charge will be calculated in the future.

130. The Chair supported Guam's view that the Secretariat should take this matter up.

131. The Secretariat responded that the SPREP Meeting in 1993 adopted a proposal from the Secretariat to charge a Project Management Fee of 10-15%. The Secretariat attempts to apply this fee but many donors were reluctant to accept this level of charging. The question the Secretariat was then faced with was whether to negotiate a lower fee or simply relinquish the project. In most cases, the Secretariat had chosen to negotiate and in some cases the Secretariat did not charge a management fee. The Secretariat suggested that it could prepare a paper for discussion at a subsequent Meeting for further guidance, if this situation did not improve.

132. The Chair recommended the Secretariat develop a paper and submit this to the next Meeting.

133. The representative of Samoa thanked the auditor for noting the matters raised and expressed surprised that they had not been mentioned by previous auditors. He was very surprised for example by the lack of documentation for the per diems for overseas meetings and wanted further clarification from auditor.

134. The auditor commented that in some cases, documentation existed and in others, not.

135. The Secretariat sought to clarify this matter by explaining that the auditor's point referred only to signatures from delegates when the per diem was received, not that there was no documentation of the calculation and disbursement of per diems. Full records existed on calculating and cashing per diems and the cashing of funds, and staff had been required to obtain signatures before disbursing per diems.

136. The Chair noted he understood this clarification, which calmed the initial alarm, but further emphasised the importance of signatures in this matter.

137. The representative of Australia expressed concern with the difficulties mentioned by the auditor in undertaking the audit and the movement of funds within the organisation. She was also concerned that the response from the Secretariat was that the income Statement presentation was solely dictated by the regulations. If the Regulations did not make sense, they should be changed and proposed revisions should be brought to the Meeting. Also, with the move to programme funding, she expected that the Secretariat would review how it manages its funds and apportions the costs amongst the programmes, particularly the cost of corporate functions. She noted that on page 12 of the auditor's statement, the Primary Function in 2001 was \$485,785 but had grown to \$1,382,221 in 2002, which was a considerable increase. She felt that considering this matter together with the other financial issues raised by Members, that the financial management of the organisation needed to be examined.

138. The representative of the Marshall Islands thanked the auditor for a good report. He noted that past Meetings had addressed how to improve the collection of Member's contributions. He encouraged Members to make their contributions on a timely basis and suggested that the Meeting determine a payment date.

139. The Chair noted the voluntary nature of contributions. He encouraged timely payment to improve the ability of the Secretariat to perform their work, but recognised that different countries had different budget years. He reiterated the point made by the representative of Australia requesting a review of financial procedures and regulations.

140. The Meeting:

- **adopted** the Financial Statements and Auditor's Report for the year ended 31 December 2002.
- **requested** that a paper be presented to the 15th SPREP Meeting, outlining changes to the Financial Regulations to address the concerns raised and to bring the document up to date with good practice.

Agenda Item 7: Strategic Programmes

7.1: Proposed SPREP Strategic Programmes for 2004-2013

7.2: Resourcing Strategy for SPREP

141. The Director of SPREP presented the Secretariat's proposed Strategic Programmes as requested at the 13SM. He advised the Meeting that rather than working with a project-based approach that was disruptive, unclear in direction and impact, the Secretariat had put together this draft strategic programmes and funding strategy for consideration. He said that the proposal would allow the organisation to take a strategic approach allowing long-term planning to deliver on the SPREP mandate. For partners, it would enable collaboration and allow increased collaboration with other agencies. For the Secretariat, it defined a clear way to do business, to measure progress

and to identify problems. The Strategy was flexible and could accommodate the specific interests of present and future donors.

142. The Director expressed his sincere gratitude to the governments of Australia and New Zealand in helping the Secretariat to develop the programmes.

143. With regard to implementing the programmes, the Director advised the Meeting that the Secretariat had looked at its strengths and weaknesses and that it had identified the need for improved management of donor funds to maximise impact. He noted that weaknesses in financial management had been identified and that he would be working with the SPREP Management to distinguish between project funds and management costs. He requested that the Meeting endorse the document to allow the Secretariat to begin implementing it as a living document, given that the Action Plan would be reviewed in 2004.

144. Regarding the funding of the programme strategy – the resourcing strategy – the Director stressed that the strategic programme approach would not cost any more or less to implement, rather that it would be a better way of doing business, increasing efficiency, impact and value for money. He noted that there was a need to agree on a clear definition of the core functions of the organisation, allowing the organisation to put these functions on a more secure basis. Since this was not the currently the case, the Director suggested that a task force be established to address this.

145. Referring to the proposed increase in membership contributions, the Director said that while this proposal had been made with caution, mindful of the economic situations of Members, there was an urgent need to find a way in which to put the core funding of the Secretariat on a more secure footing.

146. The Chair noted that the 13SM had called for the Secretariat to move to a programme-based approach and asked the Meeting to consider this as work in progress.

147. The representative of the United States supported this flexible and long-term approach and asked to be involved in the planning process, suggesting that the United States territories could also be involved. With regard to the resourcing strategy, she again asked that the term US assistance (rather than using US Aid) be used.

148. The representative of New Zealand fully supported the programme approach and encouraged support from other Members, but she requested clarification of the column on donors and partners.

149. The Secretariat advised the Meeting that the column referred to current and potential partners and donors.

150. The representative of Guam thanked the representative of the United States for her encouraging remarks regarding US territory participation. He also expressed his support for the programme for the Secretariat to explore the United States-based funding.

151. The representative of Australia advised the Meeting that his country was very supportive of the programmatic approach and had provided technical assistance in its development. He reiterated the advantages of the approach, noting that it would allow a more strategic direction for the organisation. He also noted that Australia had already changed the focus of its funding support for SPREP from a project basis to a broad programme basis, to allow the organisation greater flexibility and capacity to plan its work. This approach should allow the Secretariat and members to set the goals and undertake activity independent of the priorities of the donor. He encouraged

discussion by Members of the focus of the strategic programmes, given that this would be the Secretariat's long-term plan.

152. The representative of Tonga also expressed his support for the approach, but noted that in the last 20 years, SPREP had focussed on coordination. He suggested a need to broaden the role of SPREP to delivering concrete actions such as conducting environmental surveys and testing water quality. He noted that this would help the organisation improve its image to both its members and its donors.

153. The representative of PNG welcomed the approach, noting that longer-term programmes would allow countries to consider sustainable approaches to project delivery. He sought clarification on the role of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in the Pacific, and on progress on replacing Mr Miles.

154. The Director responded that UNDESA collaborates with SPREP, assisting in coordinating a number of activities. For example, it had been instrumental in organising preparatory meetings for the tenth Anniversary Meeting of the Barbados Plan of Action. Responding to further queries from PNG, the Secretariat advised that the post of Senior Policy Adviser would be filled by early October. The Director clarified the role of CROP agencies in relation to the proposed strategic approach. The CROP agencies have a working group that coordinates the common work of these agencies. He advised that he would personally find ways to increase the coordination of SPREP with other CROP agencies. He noted that if the strategic approach was put into place, the role of other CROP agencies would be easier to identify.

155. The representative of Fiji expressed his support for the Strategy. He commented that Fiji would benefit at the national level because the approach is forward looking and enables governments to identify the direction of funding and changes in national strategic development plans. In relation to the task force, Fiji proposed that more detail be added on what is needed to implement the strategic programme, for instance, in relation to costs, timelines and organisational restructuring.

156. With regard to the proposed joint task force, the Director suggested that to minimise costs, representatives residing in Samoa or close to Samoa should be a part of the task force. If the strategic programmes were adopted, the Secretariat would amend its budget process in a number of ways. For example, the accounting system will need to be changed to segregate funding and to be impact orientated.

157. The representative of Australia highlighted the inclusion of a separate Corporate Services programme area. Noting that corporate services are a means to achieving the outcomes of the other two strategic programmes, he proposed that this programme be removed from the document. Referring to the Pacific Futures programme, he expressed concern that the Apia Convention has been overtaken by subsequent events and only has six Parties. He queried the wisdom of focusing attention on the Convention particularly as no funding was currently available for it. He suggested that SPREP might better focus its activities in assisting countries to implement their obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

158. The representative of Niue echoed the comments of Australia regarding the Apia Convention, stating that most Pacific island countries were party to the CBD which in its application was more relevant today. She was also concerned about reporting requirements and whether there were any financial obligations.

159. Responding to the queries of Australia and Niue relating to the Apia Convention, the Secretariat advised the Meeting that for the Secretariat to cease working towards renegotiating the Apia Convention as already approved by the SPREP Meeting and the Conference of the Parties last year, these decisions would have to be revoked by both Meetings.

160. The Director of SOPAC noted the linkages between his organisation's programme strategies and that of SPREP. He requested clarification on whether the draft strategic approach had indeed been endorsed and if so, to what degree.

161. The Chair advised the Meeting that the Secretariat was requesting approval in principle and that specific comments from the Members be transmitted to the Secretariat. The Secretariat would then seek formal approval at the next Meeting.

162. The representative of Vanuatu supported the programme approach but raised the issue of membership of the task force, suggesting that other Members also be included in the development of the programmes.

163. The Secretariat responded that membership of the task force was constrained by costs and suggested that if Members wished to be present at meetings of the task force, they would need to cover these costs themselves. He suggested that other communication methods such as emails and fax could be used by Members to contribute effectively to programme development.

164. The representative of the United States suggested the possibility of a chat-room facility to enable Members to add comments to the strategic programmes.

165. The Meeting:

- **endorsed** the Strategic Programmes and the related funding strategy as work-in-progress for phased implementation by the Secretariat beginning in 2004 and the related resourcing strategy for SPREP.
- **requested** the Secretariat to submit a final draft at the next Meeting.

Agenda Item 8: Work Programme and Budget

8.1: Natural Resources Management

8.1.1 : Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region 2003 - 2007

166. The Secretariat provided an overview of the contents of the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region 2003-2007, which replaces the previous Action Strategy for Nature Conservation (1999-2002). The Action Strategy was drafted at the 7th Pacific Islands Conference for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas held in the Cook Islands in July 2002. The updated strategy included inputs from the conference as well as further consultations at the national and regional levels.

167. The strategy represented a consensus of the priority concerns for conservation and ways in which these can be addressed over a 30-year period. Its main focus was on mainstreaming nature conservation, built on three main pillars – economy, society and environment. It highlighted the need to develop innovative and sustainable financial mechanisms to support nature conservation work, develop and strengthen capacities of individuals, communities and institutions. The strategy

was to be coordinated by SPREP and involved a wide range of stakeholders. Monitoring mechanisms were being developed and a review planned for 2006.

168. A Nature Conservation Roundtable of various implementing agencies and donors continued to play an important role in supporting the implementation of the strategy. The Secretariat congratulated Andrew Bignell of New Zealand on his appointment as Chair of the Roundtable.

169. The representative of Vanuatu commended the Secretariat on facilitating the development of the strategy and noted that nature conservation objectives cannot be achieved by addressing social, economic and environmental matters independently but through an integrated and holistic approach. He thanked the donors and organisations that funded and supported the development of the strategy and called for better coordination by donors as they continued to assist with the implementation of the strategy.

170. The representative of Niue congratulated the Secretariat on facilitating and coordinating the development of the strategy, reiterated the importance of establishing and pursuing sustainable development objectives and noted that small island governments are trying to aspire to such a state of development. She looked forward with interest to building partnerships with other stakeholders throughout its implementation of the Strategy, observing that it gives ownership to the countries. She congratulated all those who were involved in its development.

171. The representative of the United States sought clarification from the Secretariat on the purpose of the strategy in relation to its links with other regional strategies and the SPREP Action Plan. She acknowledged that a lot of work has been put into it and asked if it was the product of the Nature Conservation Roundtable. Additionally, she sought background information on the conference and asked whether the Chair of the SPREP Meeting had signed the strategy on behalf of the Pacific island countries.

172. The Secretariat confirmed that the strategy was the work of the region, but acknowledged that there was an error in the background information provided to the Meeting. The information should have read that the Chair of the SPREP Meeting signed the strategy document on behalf of the SPREP Member countries. The Secretariat re-stated the purpose and role of the Roundtable in promoting the implementation of the strategy.

173. The representative of Australia recognised that the strategy had been developed in a long-term and inclusive process. Like the United States, Australia was unclear about the implications of the SPREP Meeting endorsing the strategy and suggested that the Secretariat and Members look at it in a way that informs the work of the organisation, including its Programme Strategy and Action Plan. He further proposed that additional wording be added to the recommendation to include: *“to inform the further development of the SPREP Strategic Programme Plan and Action Plan.”*

174. The representative of Samoa sought further clarification from the Secretariat on the recommendation.

175. The Chair restated the original recommendation and read out the proposed addition presented by Australia.

176. The representative of Australia suggested a revised wording that was included in the final recommendation.

177. The representative of New Zealand confirmed, as one of the authors of the strategy, that it originated from the Cook Island Conference and will be used to guide the work of SPREP into the future. He said that the recommendation is in line with the spirit of the Cook Island conference, the Pacific Island Roundtable for Nature Conservation and that the strategy will inform the work of the range of stakeholders who will be able to make specific contributions to it. He supported the recommendation and commended the Secretariat for their role in facilitating the Cook Island conference and the Roundtable Meeting. As the Chair of the Roundtable he commended the work of the Secretariat.

178. The representative of the United States supported New Zealand's observation that SPREP Members can look to the Strategy for guidance on future work and appreciated the work of the Roundtable in supporting the strategy.

179. The Chair proposed that the Meeting endorse the recommendation by the Secretariat, with the additional wording recommended by Australia. The recommendation read:

- "The Meeting is invited to consider and endorse the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region 2003-2007 as a document to inform the further development of the SPREP Programme Strategy and Action Plan".

180. The SPREP Meeting :

- **endorsed** the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region 2003 – 2007 as a document to inform the further development of the SPREP Programme Strategy and Action Plan.

8.1.2 International Waters Programme Review

181. The Secretariat informed the Meeting of the status of the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (the SAP) for the International Waters of the Pacific Small Island Developing States. The International Waters Programme (IWP) involves 14 participating Pacific island countries¹.

182. The Secretariat provided a brief report on the outcomes of the Oceanic Fisheries Management component, noting the development and implementation of a follow-up project for the management and conservation of tuna resources in the western central Pacific Ocean commencing in 2005 for 5 years. The Secretariat advised the Meeting that it would shortly be in a position to submit an application to Project Development Fund B of the GEF to support the design of that project and would be approaching national GEF contacts for endorsement of that application. The Secretariat noted that as a result of the executing arrangements for the IWP, the collaboration and coordination between SPREP, SPC and FFA had been excellent.

183. The Secretariat provided an overview of impacts and achievements to date of the Integrated Coastal Watershed Management component in relation to participating SPREP member countries, which included the existence of regional consultative networks across participating countries; selection of host communities for pilot projects in 12 of the 14 participating countries; capacity building initiatives; production and dissemination of programme and project strategies and reports; and UNDP and GEF approval to extend the ICWM component to December 2006. In addition, as a result of recommendations from the IWP Mid term Evaluation (MTE) and MultiPartite Review (MPR) meeting held in Tonga in June 2003, the Secretariat has commenced processes to consider higher level policy and institutional issues associated with project focal

¹ Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

areas. In respect of the ICWM component the Secretariat noted that priorities for the next 12 months included implementing recommendations of the Mid-term Evaluation.

184. In conclusion the Secretariat noted that information generated from the Programme is also being disseminated to non-participating countries, which are also invited to participate in IWP meetings.

185. The representative of FSM noted that implementation of the IWP had been slow but congratulated the Secretariat and UNDP for their flexibility in implementation arrangements. She noted that FSM looked forward to a better working relationship with the Secretariat in implementation of the IWP and supported the outcomes of the MPR.

186. The representative of Tonga noted his readiness to assist the Secretariats' attempts to follow up on recommendations from the MPR meeting. He noted that implementation of IWP in Tonga was proceeding well and he expected it to continue to do so in the future.

187. The Chair noted that general implementation was progressing well in all countries since the Midterm Evaluation.

188. The representative of Tokelau asked about the specific criteria for eligibility. The Chair noted that countries had to be members of the GEF in order to participate in the Programme. The Secretariat noted that although it was also their concern that Tokelau had not been eligible to participate in either components of the Programme to date, efforts have been made to include Tokelau in the follow up project for the Oceanic Component.

189. The representative of Fiji asked for clarification on whether countries would have to wait until the next SPREP Meeting before the Project Coordination Unit would be able to report on the implementation of recommendations from the MPR. The Secretariat noted that the best way to monitor and evaluate progress of action on recommendations from the Mid-term Evaluation was through quarterly narrative reports produced and widely circulated by the Project Coordination Unit.

190. The representative of Kiribati commended the Secretariat for its work on this project. She noted that the implementation of the project is slow due to certain issues that need to be addressed. She encouraged closer communication between the Secretariat and the country and advised the Meeting of its willingness to work closely with the Secretariat in ensuring the successful implementation of the project. She also requested that flexibility be given in how Kiribati administers and implements the project in the future, noting that certain conditions and procedures must be adhered to.

191. The Chair noted that the Secretariat was guided by UNDP rules and procedure, but requested maximum flexibility, where possible.

192. The representative of Vanuatu supported the recommendations of the MPR and indicated that they wanted to work in close association with SPREP.

193. The Meeting:

- **noted** the Status Report; and
- **noted** the recommendations adopted by the MultiPartite review, encouraging the Project Coordination Unit to report back to the next SPREP Meeting on progress with their implementation.

8.1.3 Assessment of Interaction of Whales and Fisheries in the Pacific

194. The Secretariat updated the members on the issue on “interactions of whales and fisheries in the South Pacific” and provided an overview of the three new marine species action plans. For many species of large whales, the impacts of commercial whaling during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by countries outside the region have reduced the breeding populations of South Pacific whales to extremely low levels, possibly to local extinction for some species.

195. At the 12th SPREP Meeting (2001) members were updated on the progress of the proposal for a South Pacific Whale Sanctuary (SPWS). The Meeting reaffirmed SPREP members support for the establishment of a South Pacific Whale Sanctuary and further noted the need for increased scientific knowledge concerning the benefits of a whale sanctuary. Queries on whale interaction with commercial fish species were first noted in the Regional Forum and SPREP Member Regional Workshop for a SPWS in April. Two issues emerged; “Do large whales eat fish?” and the interactions of toothed whales with longline fisheries.

196. A technical expert workshop on Interactions between Toothed Whales and Longline Fisheries was held in November 2002 in Apia to review available information on cetacean interactions with longlines and to consider potential approaches to mitigation. A Plan of Action and priorities for research to reduce depredation on longline by cetacean was formulated at the workshop. Priorities actions identified by the Plan for regional partners were:

- Consolidation and analysis of existing scientific and industry data or reports on cetacean and shark depredation
- Standardization of methodology, and selection of a standard index of depredation
- Priority data acquisition
- Predator identification workshop to be held
- Training to ensure quality control of data collected and to increase regional coverage by observer and other data-collection programs.
- Utilize existing opportunities to assess interactions in the initial phase of developing domestic longline fisheries

197. In light of the emerging issues on whales and other marine species in the South Pacific, SPREP held two regional meetings to review marine species programs in February 2003 to address these issues. Three new marine species action plans were developed; the regional Whales and Dolphin Action Plan 2003 – 2007, the Regional Marine Turtle Conservation Programme Action Plan 2003 – 2007 and the Dugong Action Plan 2003 – 2007, providing a comprehensive framework for future work.

198. The Chair reminded the Meeting that the paper presented by the Secretariat was for noting but questions and comments would be welcome.

199. The representative of the United States was pleased to be informed of the new programmes and especially the new whale and dolphin action plans, and was thankful to the Secretariat for the work done. She informed the Meeting that ways of improving collaboration on programmes with the United States have been discussed briefly with the SPREP officer concerned. She highlighted the opportunity to seek resources and expertise from members in addition to seeking funding from donors.

200. The representative of Tonga noted that Tonga continued to benefit from the marine mammal programme with regard to the development of whale watching tourism. He thanked the Secretariat for efforts in assisting this industry over the years and appreciated the study being undertaken.

201. The representative of Kiribati commended the efforts by SPREP, and called for the urgent implementation of the assessment. She urged donor countries to provide assistance to enable its early implementation.

202. The representative of Samoa noted that this initiative has been on the Forum agenda since 1998. He suggested that the scientific assessment be completed before August 2004. He also queried the types of expertise needed to conduct assessments.

203. The Secretariat provided a brief history of the “whales eat fish issue” and mentioned that after the Apia South Pacific Whale Sanctuary Meeting in April 2001, SPREP could not go ahead with the assessment, as there were no resources to conduct such assessments. SPC was approached but could not undertake the study, as there were basically no data available in the region at that time to use in producing a report. Following the 2001 workshop, fish and whales interactions were highlighted in various meetings.

204. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that it would take independent assessments into consideration and that it was currently linked up with two institutions, the South Pacific Whale Research Consortium and the Pacific Whale and Dolphin research project. The Secretariat noted that this particular subject is not restricted to whales and fisheries but extends to the tourism industry as well. Economic implications include revenue generated from access fees levied for access to fishing grounds. The issue currently faced by the Secretariat is due to lack of in-house expertise, which calls for the need to look outside the Secretariat to conduct scientific assessments. The Secretariat also recognised the general mandate of biodiversity, which is to understand interaction and take on conservation issues. The Secretariat assured the Meeting that it would do its best to conduct the study and re-iterated the plea for assistance both in terms of funding and technical and expertise.

205. The representative of Australia thanked the Secretariat for the clarification, and further thanked the Pacific island countries that had declared whale sanctuaries. He reminded the Meeting of Australia’s offer of technical assistance to SPREP Members who wish to draft legislation to declare whale sanctuaries.

206. The representative of Australia then urged caution on whether there was a need for elaborate and expensive further scientific work. He referred the Meeting to the decision of the recently held Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting in Auckland which had noted the need for increased scientific knowledge concerning the benefits of marine mammal sanctuaries; and requested SPREP to complete a comprehensive scientific assessment of the interaction of whales and fisheries in the South Pacific. He highlighted the fact that substantial further scientific work may not be necessary as there is substantial material already in existence.

207. As an example, the representative of Australia then referred the Meeting to the recent report of the International Workshop on Interactions between Cetaceans and Longline Fisheries, held in Apia in November 2002. He suggested that SPREP should forward this report to the Forum Secretariat as a progress report on work already undertaken and relevant to the Forum Leaders’ decision. He then drew the attention of the Meeting to the fact that in December 2003 SPREP would host a convention on Migratory Species Marine Mammal Workshop, to be funded by the Convention on Migratory Species, SPREP and donors, which will further contribute to knowledge on this issue.

208. The representative of Kiribati requested further clarification on the interaction between whales and tuna, recalling that the assessment requested should be based on the two opposing views on the matter and not on whether whales feed on tuna.

209. The Secretariat noted that it was aware of the mandate given by the Pacific Islands Forum to look at whales and their interaction with fisheries, and scientific knowledge on mammals. This would include knowledge of the feeding habits of whales. The Secretariat acknowledged that this was a comprehensive mandate, but one that needs to be completed.

210. The representative of New Zealand acknowledged the work of the Secretariat in this area and offered their assistance in any dialogue pertaining to this area. He expressed his willingness to provide technical expertise instead of funding.

211. The Meeting:

- **noted** that SPREP will coordinate a comprehensive scientific assessment of the interaction of whales and fisheries in the South Pacific under its marine species programme, and urged donors to provide funding support for such assessment.
- **noted** the three new marine species action plans that will guide SPREP marine species programme work for the next 4 years

8.2.1: Pollution Prevention

8.2.1: Year of Waste and Regional Waste Clean-up (2005)

212. The Secretariat presented to the Meeting, for its consideration and endorsement, a proposed Year of Waste and Regional Waste Clean-up Plan. At the 13th SPREP Meeting in 2002 an Outline Paper was presented to members. This paper attracted a great deal of debate that led to the endorsement of the proposed Year of Waste and Regional Waste Clean-up (2004) programme in principle. The Meeting invited the Secretariat to further strengthen the proposal in light of the comments and suggestions made by countries. This programme of work aimed to identify, demonstrate and then set in place realistic and effective solutions to many of the key solid waste issues faced by Pacific island countries.

213. The primary focus of the programme will be on national activities to be determined at the national level. While it was initially scheduled for 2004 the Year of Waste will now be scheduled for 2005 with a workshop for all National Coordinators to be held in advance to facilitate exchange of ideas between the countries, and to identify resource materials that could be effectively produced and distributed on a regional basis.

214. The Secretariat acknowledged the need to develop a different name for the programme.

215. The Representative of Tonga supported and endorsed the proposed programme, expressing their sincere appreciation for the Secretariat's assistance with drafting a litter regulation.

216. The Representative of Guam supported the proposed programme and thanked the Secretariat for considering an alternative name for the programme. He further encouraged the inclusion of activities that strengthened waste reduction at the source as well as the problems of litter and illegal dumping. Demonstration projects were also encouraged as part of the programme as well as intergovernmental cooperation initiatives, especially in the area of recycling.

217. The Representative of Niue queried the extent to which the regional plan was based on national plans and asked that planned national activities be integrated in the Year of Waste also be considered, such as legislative requirements. She also referred to the lack of resources for the plan of implementation that they had developed. The Secretariat clarified the matter of funding in the budget for national workshops.

218. The Representative of FSM indicated his preference for more of the costs to be focused on national level activities as this was where implementation took place.

219. The Secretariat referred to the cost of consultancies and its efforts to accommodate national requests to identify national consultants and coordinators as well as the need to have national rather than regional workshops. In addition the staffing and coordination costs of the Secretariat had also been reduced.

220. The representative of New Zealand endorsed the final proposal but sought clarification on costs.

221. The Secretariat responded that the budget had been revised to reflect the costs of the regional management strategy.

222. The representative of Kiribati highlighted the pressing waste issue in her country that needed to be addressed urgently. She supported the programme and called for its urgent implementation. She supported FSM's intervention to concentrate on national capacity building and clean-up activities, especially in relation to activities to address the long-term reduction of waste. In relation to the proposed programme, she questioned the need for country visitations to assess waste issues as countries are aware of their situations and suggested that instead the Secretariat could draw up a document for the countries to use in their assessment.

223. The representative of Vanuatu supported the Secretariat's efforts and noted the importance of mainstreaming the regional plan into national development plans to ensure sustainability and sought technical assistance to do this.

224. The representative of Papua New Guinea endorsed the paper and commented on the problems of making inventories as well as the issue of funding.

225. In response to the issue of what type of waste was envisaged under the plan, the Secretariat advised the Meeting that a regional workshop to re-visit this issue was planned.

226. The representative of Samoa endorsed the proposal and noted the severity of the waste and dumping problem in Pacific island countries. He asked that priority be given to smaller countries where waste was a pressing issue and which needed the most assistance under the budget.

227. The Meeting:

- **considered** the Outline Paper; and
- **endorsed** the proposed programme of work.

8.2.2 Regional Waste Management Strategy

228. The Secretariat presented to the Meeting, for its consideration and endorsement, a Regional Waste Management Strategy that would serve as an umbrella document for pursuing waste management strategies and actions at the national and regional levels. This Strategy will address a wide range of issues that have been at the centre of the region's difficulties in managing waste in a sound and effective manner.

229. The SPREP Secretariat introduced the Strategy and described the steps taken and the broad components of the Strategy and its relationship with the Year of Waste. The Secretariat indicated that the actions of the Year of Waste will be the basis for the Regional Waste Management Strategy and that funds for the initial meeting for the Year of Waste and for the Regional Cleanup have come from New Zealand.

230. The representative of Niue requested clarification as to whether the initial forum will develop the strategy or whether it will consider all the other participatory processes necessary to develop the Strategy.

231. The SPREP Secretariat indicated that the initial meeting will consider all the concerns of the stakeholders and will lead to the development of the Strategy.

232. The representative of Cook Islands expressed confusion with elements of the previous paper and this one, in that she understood from the discussion in 8.2.1 that the agreed budget in 8.2.1 was for the Year of Waste and that the budget given in 8.2.2 was for the Strategy.

233. The Chair explained that the one budget applies to both projects in WP.8.2.1.

234. The representative of the Cook Islands following the explanation by the Secretariat requested the Secretariat to provide a clearer indication of the components for the Year of the Waste and for the Strategy as this would ease the discussion on the two papers. She supported the views expressed by Federated States of Micronesia and Kiribati under Agenda Item 8.2.1 for a clear indication of the support for national implementation and support for the indicative costs given. She noted that more funding be given to the countries to undertake activities at the national level.

235. The representative of Cook Islands commended the work done to date on this topic. Despite being late in delivery, the work is very important and she thanked the Secretariat for their efforts. She said that her country endorsed the proposal, but stressed the need for priorities arising from national strategies to be reflected in the regional strategy. For some waste materials it may not be feasible to remove them as a country individually – collaboration at the regional level with the advantages of economies of scale may produce a feasible solution.

236. The representative of the Cook Islands also commended SPREP and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) for the assistance in-country with the project on persistent organic pollutants in Pacific island countries (POPS in PICS), especially Phase 2, and urged stronger collaboration with national focal points to ensure that collaboration and advice is timely. She also noted the short timeframes given by consultants in relation to recent visits.

237. The SPREP Secretariat referred Members to the public awareness and consultation components of the Outline Paper. It was noted that project consultants would be working in conjunction with National Coordinators – about \$US4,700 would be provided for each country. The Secretariat also noted the inter-island component and that outer island participants as part of the stakeholder consultations are also provided for under this component. The Secretariat further

noted that the awareness programme is also either to be held in-country or for developing materials for use in the country. The Secretariat further commented that Phase 2 of the POPS in PICS project was being implemented by an Australia firm, GHD, and that the Secretariat role is to monitor and audit the work carried out by the firm and not coordinate the project. The Secretariat had also experienced instances of late advice by the firm.

238. The representative of Fiji supported and endorsed the proposal. He commented that disposal poses a problem for most countries. This project is as effective as the International Waters Programme in that the communities are being involved and made to understand the work being done. He further noted that the Project Team had visited Fiji sites and said that Fiji is pleased to hear that cleanup and shipment to Australia will be done next year. Fiji also suggested that determination of a disposable and recycling centre for the region should be made and emphasised the importance of a follow-up process for the strategy to be put into place.

239. The delegation from Niue supported the proposal but drew attention to the timetable given showing proposed dates and activities. She sought flexibility on some areas of this proposal, indicating that it would be more fruitful for Niue if some planning activities already undertaken, but without financial resources to implement, could be undertaken in this project. Niue had an existing Waste Management Plan but lacked resources to implement it. She also mentioned that Niue also would like to express thanks to the Japanese government for assistance in implementing some elements of their plan.

240. The representative of Australia thanked the delegates who had made supportive remarks about the POPS in PICS project and indicated support for the proposal. He further suggested that the Regional Waste Management Strategy should be a key document to be considered in further development of the strategic programmes and developing the new Action Plan for the Secretariat.

241. The representative of Tonga supported the proposal and thanked Australia for its financial assistance and welcomed information from the SPREP Secretariat on POPS and PICs.

242. The delegate from Guam expressed support for the programme and the concept of a regional approach to waste management. He further encouraged the development of pilot projects. He also queried the role of National Coordinators.

243. The Secretariat indicated that the National Coordinators would be involved in all the activities in relation to the Year of Waste, the National Cleanup and the development of the Regional Strategy.

244. The delegate from the Marshall Islands supported the proposal and expressed appreciation to the implementers.

245. The Meeting

- **endorsed** the proposed programme.

8.2.3 Progress on Implementation of Regional Strategy to Address Marine Pollution from World War II Wrecks

246. The Secretariat informed the Meeting of progress in implementing the Regional Strategy. The Secretariat had essentially completed implementation of the first three steps of the Regional Strategy as approved by the 13th SPREP Meeting. It recommended that the next two steps of the strategy be undertaken bilaterally between the relevant SPREP member as the coastal state and the wreck owners as the flag state.

247. The Secretariat outlined the history behind the presentation of this agenda item. The SPREP 13th Meeting decided on the need to address World War II (WWII) shipwrecks, the outline of a regional strategy was endorsed and approval given for the first three of five steps. The Secretariat noted that Step 1 of the Strategy involved the compilation of data on WWII wrecks in the region. This compilation has now been completed and incorporated within a geographical information system. Step 2 of the Strategy involved the development of a generic risk assessment framework for wrecks. While not completed for every shipwreck in the region, this task has nevertheless been completed for clusters of wrecks. Vessels have been classed according to the risk by size. Step 3 of Strategy implementation involved the determination of appropriate risk strategies for managing wreck-related pollution. The Secretariat had identified low, medium and high level interventions to address risks.

248. The Secretariat noted that the 13th SPREP Meeting had requested that the USS Mississinewa be evaluated. This evaluation was completed in February 2003 and involved the pumping out and removal of polluting materials. This was a costly exercise estimated at between US\$4 and 6 million, which had since been accomplished by the United States Navy. Awareness of the WWII wreck issue had been addressed in a number of ways; it had been raised in international conferences, in the media and in professional meetings.

249. With the first three steps of the Strategy now essentially completed, the Secretariat was requesting further guidance from Members on what assistance member countries required in the future.

250. The Chair noted that the Secretariat had recommended that Members note progress in implementing the strategy. He noted that the Secretariat had also recommended that steps 4 and 5 of the Strategy now be implemented.

251. The representative of FSM congratulated the Secretariat on its work in addressing pollution from WWII wrecks. It also thanked the United States for its work on the USS Mississinewa.

252. The representative of the United States concurred with the Agenda's recommendation that any further steps be taken bilaterally. She stated that US policy on future oil clean-up of WWII sunken vessels would be conducted on a case by case basis. The representative stated that the United States did not support the necessity of SPREP undertaking further work on items 3,4 and 5 of the Regional Strategy.

253. The Meeting:

- **noted** progress on the implementation of the strategy;
- **agreed** that future steps for the Strategy be undertaken bilaterally between the relevant SPREP Member and the wreck owners.
- **agreed** that the Secretariat would take no further action on the strategy.

8.3: Economic Development

8.3.1: Pacific Preparations for BPOA+10

254. The Secretariat reported to the Meeting on the background and preparations for the 10-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA+10) and the implications for SPREP.

255. The representative of Tonga asked if there were funding available to assist countries in the development of their respective national assessment reports (NARs).

256. The Secretariat said that funding was available for all Pacific island countries (PICs) from UNDP, except for Fiji, which gets funding from Commonwealth Secretariat.

257. The representative of Fiji enquired about funding assistance comparisons. He wanted to know how the coordination for accessing funds was being done for the Members. He further added that Fiji had already received funding assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat through SOPAC and was progressing in the preparation of its National Assessment Report. This was being coordinated by the Ministry of National Planning, a central government authority.

258. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that the funds could be accessed through respective National UNDP offices.

259. The representative of Guam informed the Secretariat that his territory would like to participate in the national assessment process. He also requested that Guam together with the other territories should be included in preparations for BPoA+10, and that the Secretariat should facilitate, to the extent possible, participation of the territories in the Inter-regional and International Meetings.

260. The representative of Niue commended the fine work by the Secretariat in the preparatory process leading up to the World Summit and the assistance for such meetings. Given the momentum of the work as well as the time constraints placed upon PICs, she requested that the same urgency be used to disseminate awareness information so that PICs can fulfil their requirements from a national level.

261. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that this issue was raised a month ago at the preparatory meeting in Apia. The work on the Communication Strategy was almost completed and would assist with communication. The Secretariat added that it had recently received awareness raising tools such as videos and pamphlets and these would be circulated to countries in the very near future. With regards to Guam's intervention, the Secretariat stated that it would like to involve territories as well and would investigate inviting the PICs as well as the territories well before time in future.

262. The representative of Samoa stated that his country did not have any problems with the paper. He then enquired whether anyone in the region had undertaken a stocktake or review of developments on the issues relating to Barbados meeting since 1994. He acknowledged that there were numerous resources floating around but wonders if any Report had been compiled during these years.

263. The Secretariat responded that the Secretary General of the UN had been requested by the CSD 11 SIDS Resolution to prepare such a report. A similar report was also done for the 5 year review of BPoA. The Secretariat also noted that it was preparing a Regional Synthesis Report based on National Assessment Reports for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and

relevant regional reports, documents and projects relevant to BpoA+10. This draft Regional Synthesis is currently available on the SPREP web site, and will be finalised in the lead up to the international meeting in Mauritius.

264. The representative of Niue informed the Meeting that her country was not privy to the process of the Convention on Sustainable Development (CSD) because it did not have a diplomatic post in New York. She asked if the Secretariat would assist member countries in the same predicament to keep them informed about the latest developments in the CSD. She also asked if the Secretariat would assist in facilitating the process of highlighting their issues.

265. The Secretariat responded that this was possible.

266. The Chairman then sought clarification on how many meetings were to be held in preparation for the BPoA+10 meeting in Mauritius.

267. The Secretariat responded that there was an interregional meeting to be held in January, CSD 12 in April, and a final international meeting in Mauritius.

268. The delegate from Niue then enquired whether the Secretariat would assist countries that are not party to CSD to participate in April meeting.

269. The Chair replied by stating that the request was noted and would advise the country later.

270. The representative of Tonga acknowledged the need to have funding available in Tonga and sought clarification on how Tonga can access the funds for the development of the NAR. He also acknowledged the Secretariat in including issues raised by Tonga in the recent paper.

271. The UNDP representative informed the Meeting that Tonga's request was noted and that UNDP would directly contact Tonga on how to go about accessing the funds.

272. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that there were some funds left over amounting to about US\$40,000 and if possible UNDP could be approached to make this available for assisting countries in their preparation for the Mauritius meeting. The Secretariat reiterated that UNDP had agreed to fund National Assessment Reports except for Fiji who were getting their funding from the Commonwealth Secretariat. It stated that UNDP had circulated criteria for accessing funding for 2 months. It further added that copies of these criteria could be made available to the delegates.

273. The representative of PNG informed the Meeting that part of the reason for the lateness in responding to requests was that official communication usually had to go through the Department of Foreign Affairs, who did not forward messages to the appropriate Department on time, so he encouraged the Secretariat to keep the appropriate level of the Department in the loop.

274. The representative of Australia informed the Meeting that his country had agreed to donate A\$250,000 to the Secretariat to assist in carrying out its duties. He also congratulated the participants on the good progress that was being made. He then suggested an amendment be made to the recommendation. The addition to the recommendation would read: "*Note the work to be undertaken by the CROP Sustainable Development working group on the further development of the draft Pacific regional position and encourage CROP to consult broadly including with major donors in finalising that position*".

275. The representative of New Zealand stated that her country was a strong supporter of the BPoA+10 review process and requested that an amendment be made to the second recommendation, which would read: *“Commit to the development of national sustainable development strategies and work towards the integration of these strategies with national planning and budgeting frameworks”*.

276. The representative of Samoa stated that his country had no difficulty with New Zealand’s proposal but requested clarification from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS).

277. The Chair stated that there was no harm in emphasizing what New Zealand had put forward on the commitment and integration of financial planning and suggested that the Meeting accepted it and move on.

278. The representative of Samoa requested clarification on Australia’s amendment on the draft working group. He stated that he was not sure whether the working group would do all the work or whether the CROP agencies would do this on their own.

279. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that as discussed at the preparatory meeting in Apia last month the draft Pacific position would be circulated to countries and submitted to the UN as a draft position. The Secretariat further added that it was working as co-chair to PIFS and encouraged countries to contact the Secretariat, as the first point of contact with regard to the development of their reports. The Secretariat would then liaise with other CROP working groups.

280. The representative of Niue stated that the support given by UNDESA to the Pacific submission should be tailored to suit national needs. She said that there was a lot of information for the group to synthesize.

281. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that the amendment suggested for recommendation 5 would also apply to both recommendations 4 and 6 since they were agreed to in the Forum Leaders Meeting.

282. The representative of the Cook Islands informed the Meeting that the Cook Islands is committed to the development of National Sustainable Development Strategies and understood that this will include strategies for the development of National Plans and Budgetary Frameworks.

283. She also informed the Meeting that Cook Islands have sought assistance to develop these.

284. With regards to the proposed amendments by Australia, Cook Islands understood that the Regional position to the UN will only be a draft and supported the proposal for a wider consultation on developing this position. She further stressed though that in the process of the wider consultation, including donor countries, that the regional position must be truly reflective of SIDS priorities for sustainable development.

285. The Meeting:

- **noted** the Report on preparations for the BPoA+10;
- **committed** itself to the development of National Sustainable Development Strategies by 2005 and work towards the integration of these strategies with national planning processes;
- **committed** to the completion of draft National Assessment Reports for the BPoA+10;
- **encouraged** member country participation at the highest level in the BPoA+10 review to be held in Mauritius;

- **agreed** that CROP through the Sustainable Development Working Group provide full support to member countries in the preparation towards, and during the International Meeting on the 10 year review of the BPoA;
- **endorsed** the outcomes of the Pacific Regional Meeting held on 4-8 August 2003 in Apia, Samoa, as the basis for preparations for an International Meeting on the Sustainable Development of SIDs in Mauritius in 2004; and
- **noted** the work to be undertaken by the CROP Sustainable Development Working Group on the further development of the Draft Pacific Regional Position and encouraged CROP to consult broadly, including with major regional donors, in finalising that position.

8.4: Processes

8.4.1: Capacity Building, Education and Awareness Action Strategy Review

286. The Secretariat advised the Meeting of the results of the review process for the Action Strategy for Environmental Education and Training in the Pacific Region, 1999-2003. The Secretariat stated that the review showed the current Action Strategy for Environmental Education and Training was still relevant to the needs of member countries but that the focus must now be on how to coordinate better and to identify success indicators rather than developing outputs. In this regard the review proposed a series of actions and recommendations:

- Focussing on implementation of the goals of the current strategy (1999-2003)
- Expertise in environmental education in the region is minimal and therefore a small expert group to develop a draft plan of implementation for the strategy is needed.
- An official in country focal point for environmental education is needed to enable more effective coordination and timely action.
- National action plans or strategies should be developed (education/sustainable development and environment education) as a coordinating mechanism to enable synergies with other sustainable development/environmental management plans and strategies.
- Greater use should be made of non-governmental organizations and civil society groups.

287. The Secretariat also highlighted opportunities available through the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development to start in 2005. The Secretariat believed this UN initiative would provide an opportunity for environmental and sustainable development within the region, and that the implementation of the Action Strategy should be aligned with this.

288. The representative of Guam recognised and commended the Secretariat for the large amount of work that the organization has carried out in environmental education. He noted that Guam had made use of the SPREP Action Strategy for Environmental Education and recognised its usefulness as a tool to guide actions and implementation at the national level.

289. The representative of Guam also emphasised the importance of this type of strategic impact-oriented approach to environmental education with an emphasis on sustainable development, not only in the formal education sector but also for community outreach and awareness activities. He acknowledged that this strategic approach must also take place at the national level in the form of national strategies using SPREP's Action Strategy as a framework and requested that if necessary the Secretariat provide assistance to member governments in preparing national strategies.

290. The representative of Guam continued that the territory had initiated the process of developing an environmental education and awareness strategy and hoped to complete it early next year. Guam was prepared to identify a contact point for environmental education and awareness and it supported SPREP's approach to facilitating increased communication among SPREP's Education and Awareness Officer and environmental educators in the region.

291. The representative of Guam affirmed his territory's commitment to the Action Strategy and encouraged the Secretariat to refine the strategy as necessary but to adhere to its key goals and principles while focussing on improving implementation. In this regard, Guam supported the Secretariat's proposal to establish a consultative group of regional environmental education experts to refine and develop an implementation program for the strategy.

292. Given that Members have previously fully endorsed an Action Strategy and that the Secretariat is not proposing major revisions at this time, the representative of Guam encouraged the Secretariat to proceed with this process and to seek approval of the refinements and implementation programme from members in the form of a circular or other appropriate method so as not to delay progress on this important issue by waiting until the 15th SPREP Meeting to seek approval.

293. The Meeting:

- **noted** the findings of the review process for the Action Strategy for Environmental Education and Training, 1999-2003 as highlighted in paragraph 6;
- **agreed** on the need to focus on implementation of the current goals and outputs of the Action Strategy;
- **endorsed** the Secretariat's proposition to select an expert group of environmental educators to develop a draft programme of implementation for the Strategy;
- **agreed** to identify and support at the national level, an EEA Contact Point that will be recognised as the official SPREP liaison for EEA related activities.

8.5: Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2004 and Indicative budgets for 2005 and 2006

294. The Director of SPREP tabled the Proposed 2004 Work Programme and Budget (WP&B) along with indicative budgets for 2005 and 2006, introduced the WP&B and made some observations on the experience of the Secretariat to date. He noted that the document before the Meeting was a policy statement from the new Management of SPREP. He asked that the WP&B be considered in terms of the newly approved way of working (the programmatic approach). He advised the Meeting that this was the Secretariat's best estimate of what was required to move the organisation forward under the programmatic approach. It would have been presumptuous to develop and table a budget and work programme based on the non-approved programmatic structure. He asked that the proposed increase in Member contributions be considered in light of the total budget. This, he noted, was a small amount in relative terms. The Director drew the attention of the Meeting to the fact that that the \$9.3 million budget figure included the proposed 21% member contribution increase.

295. The Secretariat advised the Meeting of some revisions to the Meeting documentation, then noted that the budget being sought would allow a balanced budget for 2004. The Secretariat noted that the Members had maintained a cap on contributions for 9 years since 1992 of \$500,000. It also advised the Meeting of the growth of the organisation over the past 10 years in terms of personnel as well as the completion of its new headquarters, buildings and facilities, with the associated costs of maintenance, insurance, security, etc. These costs needed to be met from core sources within any organization. In the past, the Secretariat observed that such costs had often been met by donor funds, along with the costs of translation and meetings. The Secretariat further noted that compared to the ratio of Member contributions to the total income of other CROP organizations, SPREP had the lowest ratio.

296. The Secretariat explained to the Meeting that unsecured funding only referred to those projects that had already been developed and submitted to an interested donor who had made some positive indication of support (and thus had a significant chance of being funded). This meant that although other initiatives were under development, unless funding were reasonably assured they had not been included in the 2004 WP&B.

297. At the suggestion of the Chair, the Meeting elected to consider first the proposed increase in member contributions.

298. The representative of Samoa suggested that the Meeting consider some of the 2004 work programme items first, to determine possible savings in the core costs. This would assist members in their discussion of the proposed 21% increase in contributions.

299. The representative of Marshall Islands referred to the auditor's report regarding the uncertainty of the receipt of Member contributions and the voluntary nature of contributions.

300. The Chair acknowledged that this was the case and that any increase would be on a voluntary basis.

301. The representative of Samoa observed that capacity building and training described in Outputs 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 were also an output presented in KRAs 1 to 4.

302. The representative of the United States clarified that her country did not recognise mandatory contributions; rather it only recognised voluntary contributions. Hence it opposed an increase in contributions.

303. The representative of Fiji suggested that the issue of loss of expertise from countries be addressed under the Focus Area on Capacity Building and Training, and could be included in the Secretariat's work programme.

304. The Secretariat advised the Meeting that the total provision to support the proposed review of the Action Plan was divided between two outputs (6.1.2 and 6.1.4) under Secretariat Functions and Corporate Services. The Secretariat advised that, as a result of the decision of this Meeting in relation to the Action Plan Review, the costs for that exercise would now be reduced, but \$105,500 remain to be secured.

305. The representative of Australia referred to the point made by Samoa and noted that there was a significant amount of work to be undertaken by the Secretariat and the Task Force in the transition to the programme approach. She said that a number of costs in the Provisional Work Programme would no longer appear under Corporate Services and Implementation General, as they were costs directly related to the delivery of programmes. Australia expected a different process for apportioning corporate costs in future budgets. In relation to this, Australia had made a

commitment of approximately \$800,000 each year for 3 years to the Secretariat, and that an increase in membership contributions would not involve additional funding from Australia, just a move from programme funding to support for core activities.

306. The representative of Guam noted that it might be necessary to agree to core budget targets that will serve as the basis for the transition from project to programme – based management.

307. While recognising the implications on the budgets of other Members, the representative of Guam also advised the Meeting that it could accept the proposed increase and noted that the actual dollar figure was reasonable.

308. The representative of Kiribati stressed the importance of SPREP to Kiribati and, whilst her country is small and has limited resources, said that Kiribati is willing to offer the support that it can provide to SPREP to enable SPREP to carry out its work for the members. She expressed her appreciation to the Secretariat in providing the document showing the value of services that members have received from SPREP. She further requested the Secretariat to provide more details on the types of services that Members have received as early as possible to assist in justifying the increase.

309. The representative of Australia reiterated the difficulties the organization faced as it entered the transition period and advised that her country was not opposed to the increase. However, given the work before the Secretariat and the Task Force in rationalising corporate services and the financial management that needs to be completed, Australia proposed that the discussion on increasing Member contributions be deferred to the next Meeting.

310. The Secretariat responded that over the last 2 years, it had made considerable efforts to improve efficiencies. The increase was necessary to maintaining the existing level of Secretariat services, particularly in relation to achieving further improvements in the efficient delivery of Secretariat services and implementation of new directions from the Meeting.

311. The representative of Niue stated her government's appreciation for the Secretariat's work and the new direction it was proposing. She observed that the Secretariat was under increasing pressure to service Member needs and stated that Niue supported the proposed increase.

312. The representative of Papua New Guinea noted the deteriorating economic conditions his country faced at the present time. He also noted that, as is common for similar organizations, the costs for supporting SPREP tended to increase. He said that Papua New Guinea appreciated the services provided by SPREP and, as a result, supported the proposed voluntary increase.

313. The representative of French Polynesia recalled that when SPREP was established, it was accepted that it would require considerable resources to support the organization. As the call for SPREP services to Members had gradually increased, so had costs. As a result French Polynesia would do everything possible to support the increase.

314. The representative of France underlined that the Government of France is particularly appreciative of the services rendered by SPREP and in the area of environmental protection in the Pacific. He added that the Government was not opposed in principle to the increase and was in a position to approve it.

315. The representative of the United States said that her country recognised the work of SPREP as important and had been providing increased contributions over the years, above the level of SPREP's expected contribution. She stated that while the United States could not, as a matter of principle, agree to any increases, it would continue to support the work of the organization. She added that it would be useful to start showing the actual contributions of Members rather than expected contributions in future budget presentations.

316. The representative of New Zealand recalled that the new organizational structure adopted at the 11th SPREP Meeting in Guam was on the basis that its impact would be cost neutral.

317. In response, the Secretariat referred the Meeting to WP 8.5/Add.1 page 2, which explained the financial impact of the new structure, noting that the change had effectively reduced costs for Management positions in the organization.

318. The representative of FSM observed that the Meeting had discussed this issue in previous years. He said that his country supported the increase in core contributions. However he also noted that several Members were in arrears and asked how this would be addressed.

319. The Director responded that he would be approaching the Members concerned individually in a delicate and appropriate manner as a matter of priority.

320. The representative of Cook Islands advised that internal discussions had been undertaken on this issue in Rarotonga prior to this Meeting and requested information on the type of assistance received by the Cook Islands to inform the consideration of the increase. She noted that the information provided by the Secretariat regarding assistance to her country will be helpful in supporting the decision of her Government to agree to the increase. She further noted that assistance to the Cook Islands is significant and thanked the Secretariat for the good work that had been done. She urged other countries to be proactive in utilising the assistance offered by the Secretariat.

321. The representative of Fiji noted that he was confident the Secretariat had already taken steps to streamline its activities and minimise costs. He said that the proposed increase would need to be justified to his government and he asked the Secretariat to prepare an explanatory letter outlining the justifications for the increase. He noted that while Fiji's national budget for 2004 had been finalised, the letter would improve the prospects for securing the increase.

322. The representative of New Zealand supported the comments of Niue in respect of the logic of backing up approval of the new strategic direction for SPREP, with the resources needed to put this into place. 2004 will be a very busy year for the Secretariat in carrying out the review of the Action Plan and the development of the new strategic programmes and resourcing strategy. New Zealand was in a similar position to Australia regarding its budget. Although New Zealand had already increased its core contribution by almost 100%, it could approve a further increase if there were consensus amongst the Members to do so. In this vein she echoed the statement in the excellent paper prepared by the Secretariat on the proposed resourcing strategy that the ability to increase or even just maintain the support of existing donors will be significantly enhanced if it can be demonstrated that SPREP Members are increasing their support for the initiatives facilitated through the Secretariat.

323. The representative of Samoa stated that his country was in a difficult position in terms of budgetary restrictions. He sympathised with the Secretariat, noting that this was the only regional organisation that did not have an assessed contribution and had had a cap on contributions for several years. He observed that there was a considerable volume of work ahead of the Secretariat and that while understanding the comments of various Members relating to the need for improved definition of core services, Samoa would support the proposed increase.
324. The representative of the Republic of Marshall Islands added his support for the proposed increase.
325. The representative of American Samoa noted the importance of SPREP as a regional organization in its role as a model for regional collaboration on environmental initiatives. She also offered American Samoan assistance to other SPREP Members for services that are currently being developed in various areas of environmental governance in American Samoa.
326. The representative of Tokelau noted that, as SPREP's smallest Member, it valued SPREP's services and would support the increase. She noted that Tokelau had received a relatively low level of support from the Secretariat in recent years and hoped that, as far as practical, services would be spread evenly across all Members.
327. The representative of Australia acknowledged the support of the Meeting for the increase and reiterated Australia's support for the critical work of the organisation. She asked that in supporting the membership increase that Members note the importance of the Secretariat's work in the subsequent few months in rationalising core functions, streamlining costs and reviewing financial management with the introduction of a programmatic approach.
328. The representative of Vanuatu supported the proposed increase but requested that, in future, more information be provided for actual support provided by the Secretariat to individual Members each year.
329. The representative of Tuvalu supported this view.
330. On the basis of the widespread support of other Members, the representative of Tonga also supported the proposed increase.
331. Most Members agreed to increase total member contributions by 21%, noting the reservations of the representative of the United States to any increase.
332. The Director of SPREP expressed appreciation for the support shown by the Members. He committed the Secretariat to improving the delivery of services and to assisting countries to justify the increase to their governments. He added that the coming 12 months would be busy ones for the Secretariat to achieve the goal of a better way of doing business for the Secretariat.
333. The Chair recalled that as a result of previous discussions, a budget of \$105,500 was required to support the review of the Action Plan. He invited Members to suggest ways in which funding may be obtained for the Review. The Meeting proposed that the Secretariat approach donors and others to support this activity.
334. The representative of New Zealand sought clarification as to whether Output 6.1.1 included provisions for the Ministerial Meeting.

335. The Secretariat advised in the affirmative. In response to a query from Samoa concerning the costs for hosting next year's SPREP Meeting, the Secretariat advised that normal practice is for host countries to assume the additional costs incurred over the costs of hosting the SPREP Meeting in Samoa as a result of holding the Meeting outside Samoa.

336. The Chair invited Member's participation in the Task Force that this Meeting had established. Fiji, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia and American Samoa volunteered to be included in the Task Force, in addition to Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Samoa and Tokelau, which have resident representatives in Samoa.. While recognising that the onus would be on participating countries to seek their own funding, the Meeting requested the Secretariat to make best efforts to secure funding to assist with participation in the work of the Task Force.

337. The Secretariat proceeded with a presentation of the 2004 Work Programme and Budget. It noted that some figures would be revised as a result of decisions taken by this Meeting.

338. The representative of Australia observed that at this stage, approximately \$400,000 of Australia's contribution had not been allocated in the draft Work Programme and Budget.

339. The Secretariat responded that provision for the Australian support was currently presented as unsecured funding. It would be adjusted accordingly when Australia and the Secretariat agree on the allocation.

340. The representative of Kiribati requested inclusion, under KRA1, of an activity to address the whales and fisheries interaction issue discussed earlier in the Meeting. She sought clarification with regard to KRA 1, and also other KRAs, on how the pilot project sites and countries to be visited are to be selected, and requested that Kiribati be considered as one of these countries.

341. The representative of Papua New Guinea sought clarification relating to the inclusion of marine invasive species under KRA2.

342. The Secretariat advised that marine and terrestrial invasive species should be included in the same programme. The proposed Programme Strategy addressed this concern.

343. In relation to Output 2.4.1 relating to the regional waste management strategy, the representative of Kiribati requested the inclusion of support for the development of national waste management strategies. She also requested that inventory surveys and training be included in POPs activities supported by the Secretariat.

344. The Secretariat noted that it would make best efforts to accommodate this subject to funding availability,

345. The representative of Cook Islands referred to Output 3.3.2 and the relevance of environmental impact assessment (EIA) training to Canadian standards. The Secretariat responded that the project supporting this activity was funded by Canadian sources and that a condition of funding was the need to have EIAs that were consistent with Canadian Standards.

346. Responding to queries from Fiji and Kiribati, regarding the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funded community vulnerability and assessment pilot projects, the Secretariat advised that many Pacific island countries had expressed an interest in becoming involved in this project and that it was developing a concept paper as well as a full project proposal to expand the coverage to additional SPREP Members.

347. The representative of Papua New Guinea suggested that the support of the Government of Japan be acknowledged for the resource book in the Output 3.4.1. He also recommended that the regional meeting proposed in support of this activity in 2004 would also require Japanese support. He noted that the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) was of particular interest to his country where an initiative to establish a national CDM facility did not go forward. The Secretariat advised that Japan had offered in principle to fund a regional workshop in 2004 and that approval of the 2004 Work Programme and Budget by this Meeting would effectively result in those funds being secured. The Meeting acknowledged the offer of Japan with gratitude.

348. The representative of Tonga referred to the finalisation of guidelines for the second national communications under the Climate Change Convention and asked that the Secretariat work with UNDP to develop a proposal for GEF funding especially for those countries in need of assistance.

349. The representative of Cook Islands referred to Output 3.4.1 recalling a successful capacity Building workshop on negotiations for CBD and climate change noting the assistance provided by the Secretariat. She also sought clarification from the Secretariat as to whether the follow up preparatory work called for by the countries for climate change (COP 9) and CBD SBSTTA 9 has secured funding. She further noted that inter linkages between CBD and climate change are not reflected in the whole programme. She urged the Secretariat to include it in its work programme. This is important as there are some issues that the countries has been lobbying at these forums that need to be followed up such as the CBD COP Bureau Member, the CBD COP 8 theme of Island Ecosystem and the GEF small grant extension to more Pacific island countries. The Secretariat's inclusion of Island Ecosystem in its programmatic approach is welcome, but work needs to be done now in preparation for these events so that the international work is reflected in the regional programme and then at the national level.

350. The Secretariat advised that it had been seeking funds for this purpose.

351. The representative of Tonga referred the Meeting to Output 3.5.1 and 3.5.2. He noted that Tonga was one of eight countries participating in the Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) programme. He expressed support to UNEP and Australia for funding that makes Tonga's participation possible and urged all participating countries to make every effort to ensure the success of the project, and requested assistance from the Secretariat.

352. Also referring to the ODS programme, the representative of Kiribati advised that the funds it currently had were not sufficient to enable personnel to travel to remote islands to collect data, and sought assistance in this work.

353. The Chair noted the request and requested the Secretariat to assist in this.

354. The representative of Papua New Guinea advised that his country had a stand-alone project that was funded by GTZ. However, he expressed gratitude to the regional network and to SPREP for providing additional assistance in this area. He noted however that there were some misunderstandings between SPREP and the GTZ and he asked that this problem be dealt with soon.

355. The representative of Tuvalu acknowledged that his country had benefited from the ODS programme. However, he noted that one workshop remained to be conducted in Tuvalu and requested that this be given consideration in the near future.

356. The representative of Cook Islands expressed gratitude to the Secretariat and stated that it looked forward to further action on EIA guidelines.

357. The representative of Marshall Islands also requested that his country be included in activities under Output 4.2.1 relating to EIA.

358. The representative of FSM referred to Output 2.4.1 relating to threats posed by World War II wrecks. While noting that this matter had been discussed and resolved under a separate agenda item, he requested that SPREP continue to respond to requests for assistance including independent assessment advice, as countries did not possess this expertise.

359. The representative of PNG requested that the Meeting consider a name change for the KRA called Economic Development.

360. The Chair advised the Meeting that this was a valid point and could be considered during the transition to the Programme Strategy in 2004.

361. The Meeting:

- **adopted** the 2004 Work Programme and Budget as revised.

Agenda item 9: Institutional matters

9.1. Staff regulations

362. The Secretariat proposed to the Meeting a minor amendment to the current Staff Regulations section on Higher and Extra Duties Allowances, that Paragraph (b) of Regulation 21 should be amended by deleting the words “minimum salary for” and substituting the phrase “actual salary of the incumbent of”.

363. The Secretariat advised that the difference in cost imposed by this change is very small and that the change would make a difference to the morale of staff.

364. The representative of New Zealand asked whether CROP has a policy on higher duties allowance.

365. The Secretariat was not certain what policy was used by other CROP agencies on this issue. It stated that the decision was taken from the Secretariat’s own experience in implementing the staff regulations against the new salary scale and that staff doing higher or extra duties were unable to be remunerated appropriately. The Secretariat stated that it would make more sense to take the actual level of salary rather than the bottom of the scale of higher level officers.

366. The representative of Australia sought the support of the Meeting to amend staff regulation 11, which gives the Director discretion to appoint staff and that the amendment should reflect that staff selection be done in a transparent manner based on merit selection. She also stated that Regulation 11 as it stands alone does not reflect the following regulation (12).

367. The Meeting:

- **approved** the amendment to Staff Regulation 21(b); and
- **agreed** that regulation 11(d) be amended and considered at the next Meeting.

9.2: Proposed Name Change for SPREP

368. The Secretariat tabled a paper that proposed some alternative names for the Organisation and the Secretariat for the SPREP Meeting, as requested by the 13th SPREP Meeting, consequent on the paper of the Government of Guam seeking the Meeting's agreement to change the name of the organization to one that would be more reflective of the spread of the Pacific island countries and territories over both the south and north Pacific ocean.

369. The Secretariat highlighted two important aspects of the working paper 9.3; firstly that the acronym SPREP would remain and secondly that the names suggested distinguish between the SPREP Secretariat and the SPREP Meeting.

370. The representative of Guam apologised for not being present at the 13th SPREP Meeting due to typhoon recovery efforts, but thanked the Secretariat for the work they had put into the paper. He went on to state that their primary objective was to promote further discussion on the name of the organisation, as discussion had not yet reached the table formally despite informal discussions since the 9th SPREP Meeting. He reiterated his interest in hearing discussion from others around the table. He noted that Guam preferred "Pacific Regional Environment Organization". Similarly he suggested for the Secretariat that the name be "Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Organisation".

371. The representative of France stated that they fully appreciated the concerns Members in the north had to the reference to "South" in the organization's name. He further stated that he would prefer a name using Programme in English so a strong concordance between the English and the French versions.

372. The representative of Samoa stated that he recalled that there was a request for the Secretariat to assess how much it would cost for a name change at the last SPREP Meeting.

373. The Secretariat indicated that there would be no significant cost incurred with any name change. In reference to the changes of the treaty, once the Meeting adopted a change, the legal changes could be taken in due course. The SPREP Agreement had not been fully ratified as yet so amending the agreement at this stage is not advisable. Other regional organizations had changed names and it had taken several years to obtain full ratification.

374. The representative of the United States fully supported the name change, not having a real preference but liking the word Regional. She did however have some concern that it should be done legally before it was done informally.

375. The Chairman noted that these were valid points and urged Members to bear this in mind when deliberating on this issue.

376. The Director of SPREP called the attention of the Meeting to recommendation 2 of the Working Paper to the effect a new name be brought into effect by resolution of the SPREP Meeting and that any necessary amendment to SPREP's legal instruments be postponed until an appropriate time in the future.

377. The representative of Fiji suggested something that was not on the list, a small modification of 3a to "Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programmes". Regional should still be included for international recognition of the region, for the Secretariat and Members; and programmes should be retained to ensure that the focus is still on environmental programmes.

378. The representative of Niue sought clarification from the Secretariat on the whether one or two names were being sought. She then suggested “Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Organisation” (SPREP).

379. The representative of Samoa suggested that the Meeting should not deviate too far from the current name and that their preference would be the “Pacific Regional Environmental Programme”, and for the Secretariat the “Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme. He cited the example of UNEP which used Programme and which is much larger than SPREP.

380. The Chair stated that the reference to Programme is in line with the Programme reporting to a higher body. He used UNEP reporting to the UN as an example of this.

381. The representative of American Samoa supported retaining the word “Programme”, and therefore to agreed with Samoa’s suggestion of “Pacific Regional Environment Programme”, and for the Secretariat to be called “Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme”.

382. The representative of Kiribati also supported the proposal from Samoa because of the need to keep the name as close to the acronym as possible, and that of France to retain similarity between the English and French versions.

383. The Chair reiterated that this had a satisfactory ring to it and put to the Meeting if this could be considered.

384. The representative of Fiji withdrew their suggestion for the sake of consensus.

385. The representative of the United States asked that if it were to use the current acronym, would that mean that SPREP referred to both the Secretariat and the organization itself, or would different acronyms be required.

386. The representative of FSM stated that the word “South” was the only contentious issue so as long as that changed this would be acceptable.

387. The Chairperson reiterated that it was agreed at the last Meeting to keep the acronym as this is the well-established trademark of the organization. So only the name would be changed.

388. The representative of Niue noted that in the spirit of consensus and support from plenary for Samoa’s suggestion she withdrew their earlier tabled suggestion

389. The representative of the United States suggested that changes to the legal instruments be addressed before bringing the new name into effect.

390. The Director of SPREP suggested that if the name were to be changed the Secretariat would implement it, but this would also mean that the ratification of the name change would have to be done by the Member countries, which would require a considerable length of time to be completed.

391. The representative of the United States suggested changes to the second recommendation to: “*agreed* to bring a new name into effect by resolution of the SPREP Meeting when necessary amendments to SPREP’s legal instruments had been accomplished”.

392. The Chair suggested that the Meeting agree to the name change and submit it to the Ministers to decide on the second recommendation, encompassing the above suggestion as tabled by the United States.

393. The Meeting:

- **decided** that the appropriate name for the organization would be “Pacific Regional Environment Programme” and the Secretariat would be called the “Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme”, retaining the acronym SPREP for both; and
- **resolved** that the agreed names be submitted to the Ministers to decide on the Secretariat’s recommendation to bring the new names into effect by resolution and that the necessary amendments to the SPREP instruments be off to a future date as well as the United States’ proposal in paragraph 392 above.

9.3: Staff appointments – Matters for Noting

394. The Secretariat introduced this item by noting that Staff Regulation 13 (g): **Appointment Procedure** provides that “When an aggregate period of six years has been served by professional contract staff it shall be mandatory for that position to be re-advertised. The incumbent is eligible to apply and should the Director decide to reappoint the incumbent on merit he may do so provided a report is made to the next SPREP Meeting”.

395. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that the following two incumbent position holders were reappointed on merit to their existing positions following re-advertisement of their positions and their re-application for such positions:

- Mr Herve Dropsy, Information Technology Manager
- Ms Satui Bentin, Information Resource Centre Manager

396. The Secretariat noted that both positions were advertised regionally, on the SPREP web site. The vacancy notice was also circulated to all Member governments and Administrations, as is customary with all SPREP positions. Both candidates were subsequently reappointed on merit following assessment of all applications received.

397. The Meeting:

- **noted** the re-appointments.

Agenda item 10: Items Proposed by Members

398. The representative of Niue requested that the Secretariat consider a similar approach to SOPAC in developing country profiles. She displayed the Niue Draft Country Profile and highlighted the usefulness of the profile as an informational tool for all stakeholders including politicians and donors.

399. The representative of PNG reiterated the call made by Australia and the Cook Islands on the need to better assess the impacts of SPREP’s work in the member countries. The delegate brought to the attention of the Secretariat the initiative on inter-linkages that was introduced and carried out through a joint effort of SPREP, United Nations University and respective departments in PNG. The objective was to strengthen PNG’s capacity, including the better use of their limited financial and human resources to manage Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) as an

integral part of sustainable development. PNG sees this initiative as extremely helpful not only to assess their own efforts to manage MEAs but also for future policy development and coordination.

400. The representative of PNG acknowledged that policy coordination at the national level was the key to developing long-term strategies. The project demonstrated to PNG that the better they are to linking national policies on environmental management to regional efforts, the bigger the impact will be in the region. Joining national and regional approaches has therefore mutual benefits for individual countries and the region as a whole. In future, PNG would like to see the Secretariat further enhance its work in the area of inter-linkages and synergies, as an approach to address capacity needs for MEA management. This required linking with other international organizations, which will also help to avoid potential duplication of efforts. PNG appreciated that this issue was being dealt with in the SPREP 10-year strategic programme. PNG saw a direct link between the GEF National Capacity Needs Self Assessment (NCSA) and the inter-linkages and synergies initiative, as the latter will greatly facilitate PNG's efforts in carrying out the assessment.

401. The representative of PNG clearly saw that SPREP was ideally positioned to coordinate such joint national/regional efforts to add value to national programmes, while linking with other international organizations. PNG suggests to convene a regional workshop as early as possible as one step to start addressing the challenges encountered by the countries in managing MEAs, already outlined in yesterday's excellent side event. The main objective of such a regional workshop should be to outline concrete implementation activities that can then be taken up by the inter-linkages initiative, and possibly by the NCSA and other regional and international programmes.

Agenda item 11: Statements by Observers

402. Statements were made by a series of observers, which are attached as Annex VIII.

Agenda item 12. Other Business

403. The Secretariat made a presentation on the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Forum.

404. The Secretariat advised the members that the purpose of the item was to update members on the progress towards the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Forum and of the work underway in relation to the development of a Framework on Action for the Policy – first through a Regional Ocean Forum scheduled for February 2004.

405. The Secretariat reminded the Meeting that last year's Meeting was updated on the status of the development of the Ocean's Policy. As noted in the record of the last year's Meeting, several SPREP members provided valuable comments on the draft presented at that Meeting.

406. These were subsequently taken up by the Marine Sector Working Group, as the CROP agency collaborative arrangement tasked with overseeing the development of the Policy.

407. As advised at the 13th SPREP Meeting, a revised version of the Policy, taking into account a broad range of formal and informal comments received, was discussed at the 33rd South Pacific Forum in August 2002 in Fiji. The 33rd Forum had endorsed the Policy.

408. To accommodate the broader regional interests, particularly those of metropolitan countries and associated territories, the Policy was tabled and discussed at last year's CRGA. It is understood a status report will be presented to the forthcoming CRGA later in 2003.

409. Following the 33rd Forum the Regional Ocean Policy was taken to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It has since been developed as a basis for a Type II initiative – in the form of the development of an implementation framework for follow-up action.

410. The Policy has now been widely distributed internationally. It is on the Forum website at www.piocean.org It was discussed with Forum country missions in New York at the recent UNICPOLOS Meeting (United Nations Informal Consultation Process on Oceans and Law of the Sea) where it received widespread positive feedback. The feedback was related to the global precedent for regional collaboration on ocean governance issues that the Policy provides for.

411. The follow-up action is to include a Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Forum (PIROF) for a broad range of stakeholders (governments, international and regional organisations, development assistance partners, civil society and the private sector). The PIROF will be held at the University of the South Pacific in Suva 2 – 7 February 2004.

412. The primary objective of the PIROF will be to develop an Integrated Framework for Action for ocean initiatives of high priority in the Pacific islands region. The Framework will be guided by the five Principles summarized in the Policy.

413. Suva-based CROP agencies, through the MSWG, were currently meeting almost weekly to flesh out options for the detail that may form the basis of the Framework. That would form the basis for discussion and elaboration during the PIROF. SPREP was actively participating in this Core Group mainly through email exchanges.

414. A considerable proportion of the required funding had been secured through various CROP agencies, particularly SPC and SOPAC. CROP, through the Forum Secretariat, has written to Forum Dialogue partners for funding support and we anticipate feedback in the near future. SPREP is already actively engaged and other CROP organisations are involved. Reference was made to encouraging indications of support of this topic expressed by a number of the Observer representatives in the previous item.

415. The Secretariat requested Members to take this issue back to their countries and to promote it nationally, and referred Members to the information paper circulated to Members and to the web site which contains additional information.

416. The representative of Australia, in commenting on the above intervention, indicated that his country was already working with Pacific islands countries and territories and regional organisations to implement the Pacific Regional Ocean Policy, endorsed at the Forum Leaders Meeting in 2002. The representative pointed out that this collaboration comprises a key partnership initiative from the WSSD and reinforces Australia's commitment to sustainable oceans management and to assisting their regional neighbours.

417. The representative of Australia expressed the wish that the upcoming Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Forum (February 2004) would deliver a practical plan to implement an integrated oceans management approach in the region, striking a balance between sustainable use and conservation.

418. A pre-forum workshop proposal was made to focus the region on national level priorities as preparation for the meeting. The Australian National Oceans Office offered to fund the meeting but it is understood that a recent decision has been made to cancel the meeting and that discussions for an alternative approach were underway. The Meeting:

- **noted** the report and encouraged broad, multisectoral consultation in preparation for active national participation in the Pacific Islands Ocean Forum.

419. There was no other business.

Agenda item 13. Date and Venue of Fifteenth SPREP Meeting

420. The Minister for Environment of French Polynesia kindly offered to host the 15th SPREP Meeting.

421. The representative of Tonga expressed his appreciation for the offer from French Polynesia and took the opportunity to thank the country for the generous and invaluable assistance it had provided after the recent hurricane.

422. The representative of the United States expressed her delegation's appreciation of the offer from French Polynesia.

423. The representative of the Cook Islands expressed support for offer from French Polynesia.

424. The Members:

- **accepted** with appreciation the offer of the Government of French Polynesia to host the Fifteenth SPREP Meeting in September 2004. The exact dates for the Meeting would be announced by the Secretariat in due course, after consultation with the Chair and French Polynesia.

Agenda item 14. Adoption of Report

425. The draft report of the Meeting was presented by the Secretariat and was reviewed and adopted by the Meeting with amendments and corrections as reflected in this Report.

426. The Meeting further considered the draft Letter of Transmittal to the 4th Environment Ministers' Forum and endorsed this with agreed amendments.

Agenda Item 15: Close

427. In closing the Director expressed his appreciation to the Chair for his able steerage of the Meeting. He thanked the Members for their enthusiastic participation at the Meeting.

428. The Director reiterated his commitment to do his best to meet SPREP Members expectations to make a greater impact on the environment in the region. He thanked the staff of the Secretariat for their hard work and dedication and the team of translators and interpreters. On behalf of staff of the Secretariat he wished those leaving Samoa a safe journey.

429. The Chair thanked the Meeting for the honour of the function of Chair, as well as the cooperation of members throughout the proceedings. He requested the Secretariat to take note of all comments raised during the Meeting and to work towards making environmental programmes more effective and meaningful for Members.

430. The Chair thanked the Secretariat, the interpreters and translators, and staff of the Hotel Kitano Tusitala for their commitment and hard work and wished the Director of SPREP the best for his remaining term of office.

431. The Chair noted the challenges to implementing the outcomes of the Meeting between now and the next SPREP Meeting. He noted that as Chair he fully committed himself to working with the Secretariat over the coming year. Finally the Chair thanked the government and people of Samoa for hosting the Meeting and declared the 14th SPREP Meeting closed.



South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

14th SPREP Meeting

Environment Ministers' Forum

Apia, Samoa
12 September 2003

Introduction

1. The Fourteenth SPREP Meeting at the Ministerial Level was convened in Apia, Samoa on 12 September 2003. Ministers, Ambassadors and Ministerial representatives of the following SPREP countries and territories attended: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America and Vanuatu. The following Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) and collaborating institutions were represented: South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the University of the South Pacific (USP). Also attending as observers were the representative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), AMSAT, Asia Pacific Network (APN), and Greenpeace. A full list of participants is attached as Annex I to this Report.

Agenda Item 1: Official Opening

2. The official opening of the Environment Ministers' Forum – was held on the evening of 11 September 2003, at the Hotel Kitano Tusitala, Apia, Samoa.

3. The Reverend Oka Fauolo offered prayers and a sermon, with a hymn from the SPREP choir.

4. The current Chair of the Environment Ministers' Forum, the Honorable Tadashi Lometo, Minister in Assistance to the President, Republic of the Marshall Islands, extended a warm welcome to all Ministers and delegates to the Environment Ministers' Forum. A copy of his address is attached as Annex II.

5. In his address, the Chair extended a warm welcome to all Ministers and delegates to the Environment Ministers' Forum. He expressed his sincere appreciation to the Government of Samoa for hosting the Forum and its continued support for the SPREP Secretariat. He offered his congratulations to Mr Asterio Takesy on his appointment as Director of the SPREP Secretariat, noting his pleasure in having a fellow Micronesian occupying that important position. He went on to observe that resourcing programmes and projects continued to be a challenge to the Pacific islands and territories, and offered thanks for the continued support made available by various donors and coordinated by the SPREP Secretariat. These allowed the Pacific to continue to address pressing environmental concern. In closing, the Chair encouraged all SPREP Members and development partners to strengthen their collaboration and build on existing initiatives to face the challenges of sustainable development in our region, for this generation and generations to come.

6. The Director of SPREP, Mr Asterio Takesy, welcomed the delegates and expressed his gratitude for his appointment, then highlighted some of the outcomes of the Meeting of Officials. He noted that the strategic programming approach would allow the Secretariat to accomplish its objectives more effectively, and highlighted the broad range of initiatives, such as nature conservation, waste and climate change strategies that had been brought before the Meeting for discussion and endorsement. Carrying on, he observed that the review of the current action plan would allow countries to have their own priorities clearly addressed. He hoped that a voluntary increase in the contribution of Members would stabilise the operations of the Secretariat and that the proposed name change for the organisation would more accurately reflect the geographical spread of the membership.

7. In addressing the 10-year review of the Barbados Plan of Action (BPoA+10), the Director noted the importance of having the needs of the Pacific reflected in that meeting, with the 14 Type II initiatives that the Pacific promoted providing a framework for practical and realistic solutions to generate action in the Pacific's progress towards sustainable development. A copy of his Opening Address is attached as Annex III.

8. The Honorable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of the Government of Samoa, welcomed the delegates and noted that SPREP was established 10 years ago as an international organisation, coinciding with the Rio Summit and the launching of Agenda 21. He noted such global and regional environmental achievements such as the Kyoto Protocol, the Waigani Convention, and the development of National Environment Management Strategies. The formation of the Alliance of Small Island States to promote island causes was a direct result of island cooperation on issues like climate change and sustainable development. Nevertheless, evidence pointed to a significant decline in environmental quality, and the shared concerns of the Pacific were identified under the Barbados Plan of Action, including declining fish stocks, rising sea levels, land degradation and growing populations. BPoA+10 would serve as a timely reminder to the international community that the Pacific islands remain amongst the most vulnerable states in the world. The Prime Minister stressed the importance that Samoa placed on BPoA+10, noting that the recent Forum Leaders' Meeting in Auckland had specifically highlighted the Mauritius meeting. However, the Meeting might fall short if it failed to properly document the actual state of the Action Plan, increasing the importance of completing National Assessment Reports. This was an opportune time to review the performance of SPREP and the extent to which its strategies reflected current and future priorities. He called for the Ministers responsible for the environment to give SPREP the political and financial backing it needed to carry out its work. In closing, the Prime Minister wished the Director success in his leadership of SPREP, then declared the Environment Minister's Forum open. A copy of his welcoming address is attached as Annex IV.

Agenda Item 2: Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

9. The Director advised the Meeting that the Rules of Procedure for the SPREP Meeting, provided that when a Meeting is hosted by the Secretariat, the Chair shall rotate alphabetically. As the Ministerial Meeting is part of the SPREP Meeting itself, which is the governing body of SPREP, the same Rules of Procedure applied. Accordingly, Fiji was elected by acclamation to Chair the Forum.

10. The Rules also provided that the Vice-Chair shall rotate alphabetically whether or not the Meeting was hosted by the Secretariat. The Vice-Chair of the last Ministerial Meeting was Kiribati and accordingly, the Marshall Islands was also elected by acclamation to provide the Vice-Chair for the Ministers' Forum.

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of Agenda and Working Procedures

11. The Meeting considered and:

- **adopted** the Provisional Agenda;
- **appointed** the Drafting Sub-committee to the Officials Meeting to assist with the report of the Meeting to be prepared initially by the Secretariat.

12. The Provisional Agenda is attached as Annex V.

Agenda item 4: Opening Statements by Ministers and Heads of Delegations

13. The Chair of the Forum, the Honorable Mataiasi Ragigia, Minister for Local Government, Housing, Squatter Settlement and Environment, Fiji, welcomed the distinguished delegates and officials and other participants and observers to the Forum. The Minister welcomed the new Director of SPREP, Mr Asterio Takesy and committed the full support of the Ministerial Forum to Mr Takesy in his leadership role in SPREP during his term as Chair. The Minister also thanked the officials for their hard work in producing the resolutions to be considered. He pointed out the importance of the decisions to the conservation and protection of the natural environment of the region, and that the decisions would give directions that SPREP should follow to further achieve its vision and mission. He affirmed that the Member countries had already benefited from the work of SPREP and listed a range of key issues that had been addressed and recognised the contributions of SPREP and the other CROP agencies. He concluded by drawing attention to the value of the partnerships in promoting the interests of the Pacific island countries and territories. A copy of his opening statement is attached as Annex VI.

14. The representative of French Polynesia agreed with the recommendations of the Officials' Meeting, commended the proposed programme approach and recognised that the organisation was more important than ever, in the face of immense threats to the fragile island ecosystems. The control of growing amounts of waste, the proper management of water resources and the protection of biodiversity make close collaboration amongst members essential, because they would not succeed individually.. The government of French Polynesia has made environmental protection its top high priority for 2003. During the France-Pacific meeting held in Tahiti on 28 July 2003, President Chirac had identified the environment as a top priority in the region. The representative of French Polynesia went on to note that he was happy to welcome the SPREP Meeting and Ministers' Forum to French Polynesia in 2004 and had been touched by the warmth with which the Officials' meeting had unanimously accepted his government's offer.

15. The French representative also conveyed to the Forum his Minister's regret at not being able to stay and join his colleagues for the Meeting. He nevertheless follows SPREP's work and achievements with interest.

16. The representative of France expressed the commitment of his Government to addressing environment and sustainable development issues which were two of the three themes addressed on 28th July at the informal France-Pacific Meeting. Those issues are closely correlated to globalisation. During the annual ambassadors' conference held recently in Paris, President Chirac referred to the lack of a global authority entrusted with making a global environmental assessment guaranteeing adherence to the principles and treaties of environment protection and assisting governments to promote globalisation that is more sympathetic to the environment. President Chirac proposed entrusting such a mission to a United Nations environment organisation.

17. The representative for France went on to inform the Forum that France will launch over the next three months a public awareness initiative aimed at bringing together those states that wish to take this idea forward and translate it into practical measures.

Agenda Item 5: Director's overview

18. The Director thanked the Forum for the expressions of welcome and thanked the staff and former Director for their accomplishments. Looking ahead, he was flattered by the support of the Officials for him and his staff in their attempts to support the Members. The Director welcomed this support and sought further support in the need for increased contributions. He pledged to improve working relationships with like-minded organisations and to reach out to new partners, to allow SPREP to operate more efficiently, and to improve communications with the Members. Turning to the Agenda, he requested the Ministers to especially focus on preparations for the BPoA+10 in Mauritius in 2004, which would stand at the forefront of the attack on climate change, and waste management as one of the special needs of small island states. He thanked the Ministers for their confidence in him and thanked the Chair of the Officials Meeting for the great skill and diplomacy with which he had guided the deliberations, resulting the Report of the Meeting that was before the Ministers.

Agenda item 6: Matters for Decision

19. The Chair of the 14th SPREP Meeting of Officials submitted to the Ministers' Forum his letter outlining items that the Officials' Meeting wished to bring to the attention of the Ministers for their endorsement. A copy of the letter is attached as Annex VII.

20. The Officials' Chair spoke to the letter, conveying the key items for decision including the Action Plan review and production of a successor Plan, the new SPREP Draft Strategic Programmes, financial and budgetary matters including increase in membership contributions and unpaid contributions, Pacific preparations for the Review of the Barbados Plan of Action, and the proposed name change for SPREP.

21. The Minister from the Marshall Islands expressed concern about the level of existing support being provided to SPREP from the Members, commenting that it is difficult for the Secretariat to undertake important tasks without sufficient support. The Minister expressed thanks to New Zealand for increasing its voluntary contribution to the level of France and recommended that countries should strive as far as possible to meeting their assessed contributions.

22. The representative of Australia welcomed the new strategic programming approach and said this would help to deliver concrete outcomes to the member countries. This approach would help SPREP do its work more effectively and it should help engage donors more directly. He was keen to see it carried through as soon as possible. The representative said that Australia looks forward to working with the Secretariat and other SPREP countries to finalise the strategic programmes.

23. The Minister from New Zealand expressed strong support for the programmatic approach and encouraged full participation in the year of consultation. She stressed the need for indicators to be as quantitative as possible, rather than qualitative to be able to measure effectiveness. The Minister commented on the need to balance economic development with protection of the environment. Community support would be needed in this, as it is the community that actually controls those resources – sustainable development relies on the community owning these strategies rather than just the governments.

24. The Minister from Tonga endorsed the Action Plan review and the new programmatic approach. He indicated that his country placed great importance on the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) and requested that it be put on the agenda. He commented that the Pacific does not fit well into existing world UN groupings. He acknowledged the 14 Type II umbrella initiatives launched by leaders at the WSSD. However, he also expressed concerns about the number of initiatives and questioned the effectiveness of this type of shopping list approach. He suggested that BPoA+10 represented an opportunity for the region to refine this process to more effectively represent the Pacific region within the global context and thereby provide a link to WSSD. He went on to highlight the need to collaborate on a regional basis but within the global context of UN meetings, which are reviewed on a 10-year basis.

25. The Minister from Tonga joined with other Ministers in the need to make a financial commitment to SPREP and endorsed the Minister from Marshall Island's position that members should also be contributing as much as possible to SPREP, not just seeking donor support.

26. The Minister from Niue requested that the meeting adopt the programme strategy as it provided a guideline to the provisions listed in the WSSD. He then requested further clarification of the unsecured funding shown in the documents in relation to the review of the Action Plan.

27. The Chair explained that member countries had expressed their wish for the review of the Action Plan and that the work will require approximately USD\$105,500 to conduct.

28. The Secretariat explained that the original total cost of the Action Plan review and formulation of a new Plan was \$204,300. This comprised of \$79,550 for in-country consultations, \$85,500 for a regional meeting to validate the report from in-country consultations \$19,250 for a consultant and \$20,000 for report production, translation and miscellaneous items. To reduce the costs of the exercise the Officials Meeting agreed that the allocation for a consultant was redundant with the offer by Australia to provide technical help to the exercise at its start and end. The Officials also agreed that it would also save the costs for the in-country consultations by having island countries provide their respective national assessments in lieu of country visits. These measures brought the costs down to \$105,500.

29. The representative from Australia congratulated member countries and the Secretariat in working in partnership to find alternative ways to share resources, which had produced significant efficiencies.

30. The Minister from New Zealand highlighted the importance of wide community consultation. She requested the Secretariat to provide a revised figure to the donor countries so that they could deliberate on the proposal.

31. The Minister from Samoa welcomed the review of the Action Plan by the country themselves as it will ensure the proper coverage of national priorities and will provide leadership and ownership by members.

32. The Director stated that given the short timeframe available during the Meeting, that the Secretariat will not be able to provide a revised schedule complete with figures to the Meeting but was totally supportive of the suggestion by New Zealand.

33. The Ministerial Forum agreed that the Secretariat would provide a detailed costing of the review and production of an Action Plan to the government of New Zealand and other donors so that it would be possible to assess where and how they could assist with funding the costs of the exercise. The Ministers also agreed that those members that wish to, or that do not receive a country visit, could provide their own national assessment to the Secretariat on the Action Plan.

Financial and Budgetary Matters

34. The Minister from the Marshall Islands noted the importance of the attendance of the Ministers of Finances at these meetings as they are the ones that would decide when to make country contributions. He suggested that perhaps SPREP should consider inviting Ministers of Finance to future SPREP Meetings.

35. The representative from Australia noted that there is a separate Ministers of Finance meeting. He was happy to see that the Director and Secretariat had initiated discussion of the review of the organisation's corporate functions. He also commended the Secretariat on the Resourcing Strategy paper presented at the Officials Meeting. He noted that sound financial management is important for engaging additional donors.

36. The representative of the United States stated her country's voluntary contributions to SPREP had increased throughout the years and wished to express her appreciation of the Members' understanding of her Government's difficulties in having US contributions accurately reflected in SPREP documents. She looked forward to working on the new task force on budget and finance.

Pacific Preparations for BPoA+10

37. Samoa stressed the importance of the BPoA in relation to progress of small island developing states since 1994 and stressed the importance of articulating issues and constraints experienced over the past 10 years to be presented at the BPoA review. Samoa stated that their constraints fell mainly on the implementation level and stated also that the majority of activities conducted over the past 10 years had been largely funded by countries themselves. He then acknowledge and thanked the UNDP-GEF programme in assisting member countries in the implementation of the existing programmes for the benefit of the people and communities.

Name Change for SPREP

38. The representative of the United States supported the idea of a name change but expressed her delegation's concern over the process. She pointed out that organisations must follow the treaties that established them and pointed to Article 11 of the Agreement Establishing SPREP. The Ministerial Meeting should instruct the Secretariat to circulate an amendment submitted by a Party and take whatever steps were required to initiate changes in related documents. She pointed to Article 11(2) of the Agreement to make the point that the name change could not be official until all Parties had ratified or approved it, but she suggested that SPREP might use the new name unofficially after the next Meeting had officially endorsed the new name.

39. The Minister from Samoa pointed out that the last Ministerial Meeting had instructed the Secretariat to suggest a new name and suggested that the Ministers endorse the name change and leave the legal instruments for the Secretariat to sort out later.

40. The Australian representative stated that they had no concerns with the name change but stated that they would have to go through the formal legal process in Australia to adopt any amendment. He pointed to the importance of following proper legal procedures to protect the integrity of the legal instrument. He suggested that the Ministers note that there is general support for changing the name to Pacific Regional Environment Programme. The next step would be for a Party to initiate the legal procedures set out in the SPREP Agreement to change the name.

41. The Chair of the Ministerial Meeting requested clarification from the Chair of the Officials Meeting if there would be any problems faced by Secretariat in relation to period of 1-3 years required for the name change to become effective.

42. The Chair of the Officials' Meeting stated that there should not be any problems but agreed with the suggestions put by Australia and the United States. He pointed out that the proposed name change should not be a problem with governments to endorse.

43. The Meeting supported the proposed name change of "Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)" for the Organisation and the Secretariat to "Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)" providing that the Secretariat followed through with the suggestions made by the governments of Australia and United States of America

44. The Minister for Samoa made the following statement:

"It is with much satisfaction that the Government of Samoa took note of the consensus that was reached at the 14th SPREP Meeting of Officials to change the name of the organization to "Pacific Regional Environment Programme" and the Secretariat to "Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme". We would like to initiate the legal implementation of such a change of name by formally submitting to the Secretariat a proposed amendment text, which will be circulated to the Members in the very near future, to be considered at the next SPREP Meeting for adoption." The Forum took note of this statement.

World Summit on Sustainable Development

45. The Minister from Tonga reiterated his country's main concern that when dealing with major issues such as the WSSD, the views of the Pacific should be represented as a region rather than from national points of views.

USA Oceans Initiatives "White Water to Blue Water"

46. The representative of the United States informed the Forum about an initiative her government announced last September called the "White Water to Blue Water (WW2BW) Initiative". First announced at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, this initiative was well underway in the wider Caribbean Region. Its aim was to stimulate and facilitate partnerships that would promote the practice of integrated watershed and marine ecosystem-based management in support of sustainable development.

47. She added that the White Water to Blue Water was co-chaired by the Caribbean Community, the United Nations Environment Programme's Caribbean Environment Programme, and the United States Government. A key element of the initiative was the development of country teams. These teams were comprised of representatives from a variety of disciplines and promote cross-sectoral dialogue and creative approaches to project challenges. A highlight of the initiative would be the week-long conference and training institute that would facilitate partnerships and projects to address the priority issues of the region. Inherent in the Initiative was carrying it out in other regions, specifically the Pacific and Africa, should the initial phase in the Wider Caribbean prove successful. Representatives from those regions will be invited to the Miami conference and to participate in related activities.

48. The Forum took note of the initiative by the United States.

Agenda Item 7: Focus Issue – Integrating Environment and Economic Development

49. The Secretariat presented an information paper entitled ‘Partnerships and Sustainable Development,’ giving an overview of the current progress of partnering in sustainable development policy coordination and financing (see Annex VIII for the full text of the paper). The paper highlighted the need for a regional vision for sustainable development; and promoted the use of guiding principles to provide better coordination and integrity for initiatives and partnerships to achieve sustainable development.

50. The paper was intended to promote discussion, seek direction and confirm recommendations to progress partnership arrangements at various levels of governance in communities for integrated policy development and leveraging of resources for sustainable development. It also proposed some starting points for partnering mechanisms that could be instrumental in paving the way for integrated decision-making and coordinated approaches in environment and economic development planning.

51. Partnering mechanisms at the national level could include: coordination committees; community awareness and knowledge transfer; strategic programming for long-term financing; and multi-use information and databases. Institution of many of these mechanisms might require regional level technical, policy and advisory backstopping.

52. The Minister of NZ suggested that besides focusing on partnership opportunities between nations and between NGOs there was also scope to promote partnership at local government level. She spoke specifically on local governments in New Zealand and their interest in establishing partnerships with Pacific island countries in areas such as water, sanitation, working with Iwi and decision-making. The Minister invited the Meeting to consider taking up this offer.

53. The Minister of Niue made reference to the Pacific Type II Umbrella Initiatives requesting information on the number of initiatives for which there were regional benefits. He asked when implementation would begin at the national level. He further noted that a significant amount of work had already been done in terms of planning and identification of priorities at the national level and recognised that implementation was the immediate priority.

54. The Secretariat provided an overview of initiatives that were being actioned, making specific reference to the Waste, Community Lifestyles, Energy and Oceans initiatives. Further explanation was given by the Secretariat on the process since the WSSD and on the progression of the Type II Umbrella Initiatives, noting refinement would continue until BPoA+10.

55. The delegate of Australia said that it was important to aim for actions that would result in significant concrete outcomes and to set pragmatic and attainable goals. He asked that Members not simply repeat the efforts made for the WSSD and suggested that where sufficient data existed on country priorities, these should be built on. He added that, for Small Islands Developing States, it was important to identify how additional donor assistance might be attracted and encouraged the Secretariat to consult widely in continuing to develop the Pacific regional submission with countries as well as potential donors who might be able to help with addressing real solutions. He further suggested that there was opportunity to also partner with business and gave an example of recent

partnership in his country where business had agreed to work with government to reduce packaging.

56. The delegate of Cook Islands referred to the guiding principles for sustainable development and requested that elements of the social pillar of sustainable development needed to be reflected as well. She suggested that Principle 5 on prudent management of natural resources should also include reference to the importance of using traditional knowledge as a means to achieve this. Further, Principle 6 should include reference to the access to traditional knowledge and intellectual property rights.

57. The Chair advised the Meeting that Fiji had begun partnership action by linking environment and development initiatives between local governments and his Ministry in the area of land development and housing programmes. He stated that it was important to make a start on partnerships from the national level.

58. The Meeting:

- **considered** the guiding vision and principles of sustainable development;
- **provided** guidance and direction on the ways forward for partnerships to strengthen coordination and implementation of sustainable development.

Agenda Item 8: Other business

59. The Minister from New Zealand reminded the meeting that this is the International Year of Freshwater, and highlighted the issue of what priority was being given to freshwater and its relationship with the issue of waste management.

60. The representative for the Cook Islands, noting that one of the environmental priorities is climate change, recalled the request made at the last SPREP Ministerial meeting requesting that the region investigate the financing of adaptation activities. She indicated that the Cook Islands indicated its support for the initiative at that meeting because of the important consequences of issues such as climate variability, and the importance of the availability of the financing facility for implementation of climate-related adaptation measures.

61. The Secretariat, when asked to respond, reported that two high level meetings had considered this issue. The first, in Nadi in 2002, requested that a feasibility study into regional financing facility be undertaken by SPREP. This was presented to a second high-level meeting in May 2003, which took note of the report and proposed elements relating to structures and design of the facility. The Secretariat produced a summary that was made available to the Officials Meeting as Information Paper Number 7. This summary had also been presented to the recent Forum leaders meeting, where broad support was given to the idea of a regional financing facility. However it was noted that there was little discussion of climate change issues during the Forum, and as SPREP has finished the tasks asked of it, the Secretariat needed advice as to what further action is needed.

62. The representative from Australia noted that Australia thought this was an important subject and encouraged the Secretariat to move the issues forward expeditiously.

63. The representative of the Marshall Islands requested the Forum to note the presentation that morning on the Regional Strategy to Implement the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. He requested that the Meeting Report note the support of the Forum for the Strategy and the Meeting concurred.

Agenda Item 9: Timing of Next Ministerial Meeting

64. The representative of French Polynesia reminded the Ministerial Meeting of the offer of his Minister made at the Officials' Meeting to host the 15th SPREP Meeting and Environment Ministerial Forum in Tahiti in September 2004 and hoped the Ministers would endorse this. The Forum unanimously accepted this kind offer.

Agenda Item 10: Adoption of Report

65. The draft report of the Meeting was presented by the Secretariat and was reviewed and adopted by the Meeting with amendments and corrections as reflected in this Report. The Meeting further considered the draft Fourth Environment Ministers' Forum Statement and endorsed this with amendments. A copy of the statement is attached as Annex IX.
