

# Report of the 16th SPREP Meeting

13-16 September 2005  
Apia, Samoa

# Meeting Report

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Apia, Samoa



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## Introduction

1. The 16<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting was convened in Apia, Samoa from 13 to 16 September 2005. Representatives of the following SPREP countries and territories attended: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America (USA), Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna.

2. The Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) partners, namely: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), and the University of the South Pacific (USP) were also represented. In addition, observers from a range of regional, international and non-governmental organisations were present. A list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

## Agenda Item 1: Official Opening

3. The outgoing Chairperson, Mr Bruno Peaucellier (French Polynesia) welcomed the delegates and invited the Rev. Dr Featuna'i Ben Liua'ana to lead the Meeting with a prayer. The Chair thanked the Reverend for his inspirational words and acknowledged the SPREP choir for singing a hymn; then he invited the SPREP Director to present his welcoming remarks.

4. The Director, Mr Asterio Takesy, welcomed all delegates and again thanked the Government of French Polynesia for the way in which the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting had been hosted and successfully conducted in 2004. He referred to two important decisions reached at that meeting, namely:

- (i) The change of the organisation's name (by dropping the word "South") which reflects its true geographical coverage of the Pacific, and
- (ii) The transition from project activities to a programmatic approach which, it is to be hoped, will result in a more dynamic and successful organisation better able to perform its duties as an environmental body within the Pacific region.

5. He reiterated that the islands have finite resources and are heavily reliant on subsistence living; much of what is learnt is through the people's affinity with their natural surroundings. He thanked in particular Member countries for their continuous support, as well as other donors for their fiscal support; yet, he stated, the services offered by the Secretariat are still hampered by shortages encountered in relation to financial assistance.

6. A copy of the Director's speech is attached as Annex 2.

7. The Chair then addressed the Meeting and passed on salutations from President Oscar Temaru of French Polynesia. He stated that the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting represented the first time this type of meeting was held in a francophone country and hoped for the relationship to continue. He thanked the Secretariat for hosting the meeting with the Territories earlier in the year and expressed hope that this good initiative would happen on a regular basis because regardless of institutional, economical or linguistic differences, the environment is our common goal.

8. He mentioned the French Polynesian initiative to reduce the use of plastic bags, which fits in well with the *Pacific Year of Action Against Waste* campaign. This initiative has already resulted in an 80% drop in the use of plastic bags by replacing these with recyclable ones. He encouraged the Meeting to work in collaboration with all waste reduction programmes at a national, regional, or international level.

9. He summarised activities of the Chair since the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting and the changes the Secretariat had undergone since that meeting. He thanked all Member countries for their continuous financial support to the Secretariat, which has enabled it to conduct its affairs in a dynamic and successful manner. A copy of the outgoing Chair's speech is attached as Annex 3.

10. The Chair then invited the Hon. Tuisugaletau Sofara Aveau, Minister of Natural Resources, Environment and Meteorology of Samoa to deliver the opening address. The Minister welcomed all delegates and assured SPREP of Samoa's full support. He stated that the guidance of the Meeting is critical, given the importance of issues to be discussed during the week. He highlighted the role of the Secretariat in enhancing the capacity of the personnel and infrastructure of national environment departments and agencies. He noted with appreciation the role of the Secretariat in representing Pacific islands at international negotiations. He reiterated the importance of the Member countries keeping their financial commitments to the Secretariat up to date, in order for the Secretariat to conduct activities that are entrusted on it.

11. The Minister then asked that Member countries provide their own evaluations of the work of the Secretariat. He acknowledged with appreciation that the 2006 Work Programme and Budget is a balanced budget and noted the full complement of activities within the work programme that will require a lot of financial resources. The appointment of the Director was also a most important issue for the future of the organisation and something the Meeting should give serious consideration to. He acknowledged the financial constraints facing Pacific island countries and territories; and called on all Member countries for their full support and guidance to the Secretariat in the improvement and protection of the region's environment.

12. He then declared the Meeting officially open. The Minister's speech is attached as Annex 4.

## **Agenda Item 2: Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair**

13. The Meeting appointed the representative of France as Chair, and the representative of Niue as Vice-Chair in accordance with the SPREP Meeting Rules of Procedure.

14. On assuming the Chair, the representative of France made his opening remarks attached as Annex 5.

15. On behalf of the Meeting he expressed condolences to the USA for its recent experience with Cyclone Katrina.

## **Agenda Item 3: Adoption of Agenda and Working Procedures**

16. The Meeting adopted the Revised Provisional Agenda which is attached as Annex 6 and adopted a programme and hours of work.

17. The Meeting also appointed a Report Drafting Committee made up of France, French Polynesia, FSM, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, PNG, Samoa, Tonga, USA and Niue as Chair.

## **Agenda Item 4: Action Taken on Matters Arising from Fifteenth SPREP Meeting**

18. The Secretariat presented Working Paper 4 (WP.4) on action taken on decisions of the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting.

19. The representative of Australia congratulated the Secretariat on a much more streamlined report as requested at the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting.

20. The Meeting noted the paper and actions taken by the Secretariat.



## **Agenda Item 5: Performance Review/Overview of Developments in 2004**

### **5.1 Presentation of Annual Report for 2004 and Director's Overview of Progress since the Fifteenth SPREP Meeting**

21. The Director tabled his report for 2004, providing an overview of the Secretariat's progress since the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting. (The Annual Report for 2004 had been distributed immediately before his presentation.) He outlined that 2004 was a difficult year for the staff of the Secretariat. A temporary consultative management team had been formed as an interim measure, placing an additional burden on staff. He complimented all his staff on meeting this challenge in an excellent manner, and reported that the SPREP Executive Management Team is now fully constituted.

22. The Director stated that 2004 also represented a transitional year for the Secretariat with the move from Key Result Areas to Programme Strategies. New partnerships were formed and others strengthened along with an emphasis being placed on reaching out to local communities. He highlighted some important projects that are also presented in the Annual Report 2004 as distributed at the Meeting.

23. The Director also mentioned the new Memorandum of Understanding that was signed with the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), as a result of which a new UNEP position will be based at SPREP; and that the Secretariat was working towards an MOU with the World Council of Churches (Pacific) that would focus initially on climate change and conservation.

24. The new programmatic approach, the new management structure, and new staff recruits gave him much optimism that the Secretariat was moving closer to SPREP's vision.

25. The Chair welcomed the positive note of the report despite the many problems faced in 2004. He invited the meeting to comment on any issues raised by the Director. He then invited the meeting to endorse the Director's report.

26. The representative of France agreed that considerable work had been completed over the past months by the Secretariat. He requested that the Secretariat should provide the meeting not only with general impressions, but also with quantitative data, impact indicators, etc. to show the overall impact of the work of the Secretariat.

27. The representative of PNG asked on the status of the Coral Reef Initiative that was launched at the 2004 SPREP meeting. The Secretariat undertook to report on this in a later agenda item.

28. The representative of American Samoa requested further information on initiatives related to plastic bags, particularly in terms of possible economic impacts. He requested the Secretariat consider funding or partnerships with plastic bag manufacturers for possible compensation measures. The Secretariat responded that any initiative must certainly consider the economic impacts but that there may be trade-offs needed to protect the environment in the long term.

29. The Secretariat undertook to produce the 2005 Annual Report in sufficient time for Members to consider the content before attending the next SPREP meeting.

30. On behalf of the meeting, the Chair noted the Director's overview and proposed to defer the approval of the 2004 Annual Report until later in the week when delegates had considered it in greater detail.

31. In a later session, the Chair re-introduced the 2004 Annual Report item. He noted the lengthy discussion and adjustments already made to this document by the Secretariat as per the previous requests from various Members. While noting the suggestions made by the Members in improving this document, and in the absence of interventions, he moved to adopt this report.

32. The Meeting, after taking note of the comments made by several delegations, endorsed the 2004 SPREP Annual Report.

## **5.2 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the 2004 Annual Work Programme and Budget**

33. At the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting, Members had requested the Secretariat for an opportunity for programme staff to present more detail on programme outcomes, achievements, challenges and lessons learnt; as well as long-term objectives and vision for the future. Accordingly, the Secretariat gave presentations about the five main Key Result Areas (KRAs).

34. The Chair briefly introduced the background and rationale for the presentations, stating this would be the last time the work of the Secretariat will be presented as KRAs.

35. The Secretariat introduced the working paper and presentations by providing a broader background before each presentation, reiterating the requirements imposed by the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting. He noted that KRAs went out of existence in early 2004. The future format has changed in line with the Strategic Programmes.

36. The Secretariat noted discrepancies between projected and actual resources for 2004, as well as staff turn-over. These factors affected actual outcomes. For example, the approved budget was \$9.2 m (31% unsecured) but only \$8.5 m had been received. Of actual resources received, 93% had been spent.

37. Having proposed this new approach last year, the representative of Niue expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for having adopted and facilitated this methodology of presentations. It would assist countries in fully understanding the work the Secretariat is doing.

## **KRA1: Natural Resources Management**

38. Some particular challenges faced were:

- (i) Understaffing – too few people doing a lot of work.
- (ii) Delayed, and lack of, funding.
- (iii) Not much was available for baseline monitoring and evaluation of the International Waters Project (IWP).

Opportunities:

- (i) The Roundtable for Nature Conservation is now better focused.
- (ii) New partnerships have been formed.

39. The Chair reiterated the necessity to create synergies. He then opened the floor for questions and contributions to the debate.

40. The representative of the United States of America thanked the Chair for expressing sympathy for the loss incurred by Hurricane Katrina to the USA and its people. Noting that sustainable development begins at home, she called attention to the new US Oceans Action Plan, and noted that the economics of funding environmental issues is not an easy choice for any country, but it is a necessary one.

41. The USA announced the following new initiatives relevant to KRA1:

- (i) Invasives – an additional US\$100k grant to further the work of the Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN) to be administered by The Nature Conservancy in close collaboration with SPREP.
- (ii) Multilateral turtle agreements – The USA was privileged to be in a position to fund various global negotiations on these agreements and welcomed the opportunity to interact with SPREP Members on multilateral turtle conservation agreements.

42. She also announced that the USA has ratified the Agreement Establishing SPREP, and became a Party in August 2005.

43. She was looking forward to taking the synergies forward that the Secretariat had mentioned, and thanked the Secretariat for bringing together the meeting of the territories.

44. The Chair thanked the USA for the ratification announcement.

45. The representative of Niue asked, regarding invasive species, about the appropriate funding for this component. Actual spending did not really match budget and he requested an explanation why the budget was under-utilised.

46. The Secretariat explained that two outputs (1.2.1 and 1.3.1) should be read together as they represented joint activities; also there has been some delays due to approval from the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) project on invasive species.

47. Budget under-utilisation related to unsecured funding which had not yet come on-stream. This would be reflected in next year's report.

48. The representative of Guam thanked the USA for continuing to support Guam's membership. Guam has a long interest in invasive species. In response, the Secretariat stated the next step for the Pacific Invasives Learning Network was to finish consultations and identify countries for pilot projects; a peer learning network approach would be taken.

49. The representative of Kiribati sought clarification on Forest Ecosystems. He was interested in threatened species, in particular bird life and suggested that the Secretariat take the lead role and continue to seek assistance). Some of these birds were also invasive species. He asked there be further targeted support for Kiribati from the Secretariat. He thought the 2003–2007 Action Strategy for Nature Conservation needed to be more focused and meaningful.

50. Regarding Forest Ecosystems, this had been changed to Terrestrial and Coastal Ecosystems.

51. The Secretariat elaborated on a number of activities that were already happening in Kiribati and will continue in the future. One person was working on wildlife and there's new funding available for the Okiko bird threatened by rats. In the Line Islands, some initiatives will be taken too. Recently, a proposal was put to deal with Myna birds in Tarawa. Funding from GEF was anticipated but slow to come through.

52. The Secretariat referred to the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation on which a lot of work had been done. This was a mechanism for engaging donors who are interested to work in the region, enabling better impacts on the ground.

53. The representative of Samoa was glad to see a summary of the successful Type II initiatives and requested further elaboration on these. Natural Resources being one of the most important aspects of the region's work (whether talking about land, water, etc.) he wondered whether the move to the new programme will look at it in a more holistic way, e.g. are freshwater, invasive species, etc. part of it? He thanked the team for the assessment in the report and wondered if multi-year assessments had been done or planned. On invasive species, he wondered if these reports had been translated into meaningful actions.

54. The Secretariat replied that a monitoring and evaluation consultant has just been engaged for two years to review SPREP documents and develop indicators for nature conservation. The focus is on biodiversity, but work needs to be done with other stakeholders to improve the linkages with land, forests, etc. The Secretariat also referred to Pacific Type II partnerships which provided an effective regional coordination mechanism.

55. The representative of Fiji was particularly interested in the aspects of forests, such as hardwood harvesting. He suggested the Secretariat should work with the regional authorities on this.

56. He commended the Secretariat for the IWP project from which Fiji has benefited, especially at the community level, linking it together with Waste Management and Persistent Organic Pollutants; some of the pilot projects were being replicated in other parts of the country.

57. He also announced that Fiji had acceded to the Ramsar Wetlands Convention.

58. The Secretariat congratulated Fiji for acceding to the Ramsar Convention. Regarding Forest Ecosystems, this was a high priority under Terrestrial and Coastal Ecosystems and would get funding soon.

59. The representative of Tonga addressed the issue of equity and requested the Secretariat to advise the criteria on which it based its assistance to specific countries. For example, Tonga had not received any assistance for dealing with its invasive species.

60. The Secretariat responded that Tonga may not have asked for assistance. The Secretariat does not provide grants. Its assistance and services are provided through the services of its professional staff. Capacity building advisory services and technical assistance are provided on the basis of need and official requests from PICTs.

61. The representative of Tonga thanked the Secretariat for the information provided. He requested that his comments be taken as genuine and take this issue forward from here for the benefit of the region as a whole. This is a good opportunity to thrash out the issue of “equity”.

62. The representative of Australia expressed satisfaction with the work that had been done in producing this report. It was a substantial improvement on last year’s. He thanked his fellow Members for participating in the discussions, in particular Samoa and Tonga. SPREP can make a difference in the Programmatic approach.

63. The representative of Tokelau, after congratulating the Chair and thanking the Secretariat for its report, stated that invasive species are really important to Tokelau as raised in the Territories Meeting. He elaborated on invasive species and expressed concern with the problem they faced; and how they are chemically terminated, particularly in small countries with risks for water supplies and coral reefs. He asked if biological control mechanisms had been investigated.

64. He also thanked the Secretariat for the completion of the baseline assessment in the marine area and looked forward to working with the Secretariat in the future.

65. The representative of French Polynesia revisited the equity issue raised by Tonga. He recalled that it is of concern to all territories which, unlike countries, cannot access the full range of funding. This issue was raised at a meeting in Suva earlier this year. An Invasive Species workshop was to be organised in French Polynesia, which would be purely for French-speaking countries.

66. The representative of PNG stated that it has many problems with invasive species which were costly and time-consuming to deal with. Ships carrying ballast water bring in marine invasives. The issue of ballast water should be dealt with at national, regional and international levels.

67. The representative of American Samoa agreed that invasive species had become more and more a nuisance to his islands. His concerns: Are there any success stories on the methods being used by some of the island countries to combat invasive species such as Myna birds? Has any report been done that will enhance inter-agency collaboration in any country? He strongly recommended that SPREP add more funds into continuing studies to tackle invasive species.

68. The representative of the Marshall Islands congratulated the USA for ratifying the SPREP Agreement.



69. She noted a lot of improvements in recent work, and said she was looking forward to working with the Secretariat on the biodiversity area.

70. She stated the turtle issue is very important to the Marshall Islands and regarding the Turtle Strategy, asked with which countries SPREP was working and whether this was from unsecured funds. She supported the comment by Samoa on real outcomes.

71. The Secretariat responded that it was currently working with all Member countries that requested assistance. It had provided tags to PNG for leatherback turtles, with a small amount of funding; and to Vanuatu through Canadian funding. The Secretariat was working on the database and hoped to launch this in March 2006—the Year of Turtle. A new marine species officer would be joining SPREP the next week.

72. The representative of Niue stated that countries have high expectations and anticipation but will also need to have consideration for the staff. Countries need to play their part in providing the capacity, whilst the Secretariat can provide the expertise. SPREP needs to work more closely with agencies such as SPC/GTZ Land Resources, FAO, etc. and pay more attention to complementary roles which can improve the impacts on the ground. He suggested managers need to work together with other regional institutions.

73. The representative of New Caledonia said Territories are similarly affected by invasive species and he cited some new developments in support. She suggested there be stronger monitoring of invasive species *leaving* countries.

74. The representative of the USA built upon what the Territories had said with respect to funding, confirming the rule they are not eligible for GEF funding.

75. The Secretariat emphasised the importance of building partnerships, for example SPREP's partnership with SPC and Conservation International. Yet projects should be country-specific as a "one size fits all" approach did not always work.

76. The Chair thanked the contributors to the lively debate which concluded with a positive note on the future of SPREP. This session was precisely what SPREP Members had wanted.

77. He drew three conclusions:

- (i) The question of equity is important and it needs to be better addressed by the Secretariat.
- (ii) Regarding forestry, a lack of activities had been identified but one should not lose sight of other CROP agencies involved; duplication needs to be avoided.
- (iii) The example of yellow crazy ants shows that no-one could escape invasive species and SPREP should put more emphasis on this matter.

## **KRA 2: Pollution Prevention**

78. The Secretariat provided a summary of the three focus areas that are implemented within KRA2, namely hazardous waste pollution, marine pollution, and solid waste.

79. In respect of a query raised by the representative of Papua New Guinea under KRA1, relating to marine invasive species from ballast water, the Secretariat responded that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has already been approached to fund a regional strategy to address this issue. The reason behind the regional strategy is that the existing Ballast Water Convention is only a framework convention: actual national obligations are still being negotiated. The report has been done (Phase 1) and the next phase (Phase 2) will comprise consultations with Member countries on the implementation of the regional strategy.

80. The Secretariat referred to a query by Fiji during the KRA1 presentation in relation to the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) project. It stated that six Pacific island countries have already completed the collection of toxic chemicals for shipment to Australia for destruction. The latest report from Australia is that waste shipped from Samoa has been completely destroyed.

81. The representative of New Zealand reiterated points raised by Australia and commended the Secretariat for the improved reporting. She expressed hope that this kind of reporting will continue to improve under the Programme Strategy.

82. The representatives of Cook Islands, Niue, PNG, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Marshall Islands and FSM all commended the Secretariat for work well done in this area, most specifically under the POPs in Pacific island countries project. They also thanked the Government of Australia for their willingness not only to fund the project but also in actually agreeing to have the toxic waste dumped and destroyed there.

83. The representative of Cook Islands called on the assistance of other developed nations in assisting them in collecting and shipping or destroying asbestos that is currently found in the Cook Islands.

84. The representative of Samoa stated that solid waste and wastewater are two of the issues that his country puts a lot of importance on. He recommended that this be put as a top priority for implementation. He further stated that, although Member countries are tied to implementing work in collaboration with the Secretariat, the shipping and destruction of toxic waste is not something that any one country can hope to implement without assistance either from the Secretariat or other Member countries. The POPs in PICs project was a good example of regional cooperation and he acknowledged the support of the citizens of Brisbane in accepting the hazardous waste for destruction.

85. The representative of Niue asked if the Secretariat could assist them with the problem they have with asbestos exposed due to Cyclone Heta.

86. The representative of Fiji stated that these are the types of projects where countries can actually see the outputs and asked if the POPs in PICs project could be extended on the basis of the availability of funds. He mentioned in particular that Fiji will be opening a landfill in October 2005 and requested the Secretariat's assistance in relation to choosing between landfill or incineration. He thanked the Secretariat for its assistance in the compilation of their National Implementation Plan, which will be passed to Cabinet for formal approval.

87. The representative of Papua New Guinea commended the Secretariat on the community-based waste work that was implemented under the International Waters Project. He said that the preliminary results were very encouraging and he encouraged the Secretariat to continue such assistance. He looked forward to hearing about results and lessons learnt when the project ends next year.

88. The representative of Tokelau focused on the shipwrecks and stated he was very concerned that recent cyclones had pushed shipwrecks onto coastal areas of Tokelau.

89. The representative of Tonga said that the hazardous waste that was waiting for shipment from Tonga had already become a political issue in his country, and requested that this be dealt with urgently. He thanked the Government of Australia for funding the initiative and as well for funding a landfill in Tonga, which was due to open in October 2005.

90. The representative of Vanuatu noted the urgency in removing waste after collection from countries and reiterated the need to keep the project going until all the waste had been removed from the Pacific. He stated also that this project should not be seen as a standalone project. It should focus on strengthening country capacity and local personnel through national training courses on how to identify, collect and package the waste.

91. The representative of Australia acknowledged the commendation from Member countries and agreed with Samoa that this was a good example of regional cooperation and one programme where the work has been implemented very successfully.

92. The representative of Federated States of Micronesia expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for rendering its programme reports informative and educational, and to Meeting participants for useful comments. He wanted to know where, within the SPREP machinery, such positive and useful points raised by Members could be accommodated.

93. The representative of Marshall Islands acknowledged the improvement in reporting and commended the community-based work undertaken by IWP. She stated that many improvements have been made within the community, not only in community collaboration but also in supporting wider waste management issues and poverty reduction. She stated that there is a problem with the continuous micro-management of the IWP project and stated that the Secretariat should not be telling countries what to do. She also pointed to the financial distributions, especially in relation to the GEF funding. She stated that Marshall Islands should have approx. US\$200,000 remaining but according to recent emails from the Secretariat, only US\$145,000 remains. She asked the Secretariat for clarification on what the funding was used for and who had the mandate to make such a decision.

94. The Secretariat suggested preparing a paper based on the points raised by countries and it will forward this to each country that is a beneficiary. The Secretariat thanked the Government of Australia as well as the various donors who not only fund this particular KRA, but also work very closely with the Secretariat in the implementation of its activities.

95. The Chair then summarised the points raised by Member countries in relation to the improved monitoring and reporting by the Secretariat. He also reiterated the point raised by Marshall Islands and said that Oceania is the first place that is currently dealing with the problem encountered with ships. Like Australia does, he stated there needs to be a regional emphasis on these issues. Reinforcement of existing capacity is another issue that needs to be stressed. He pointed to the asbestos problem raised by Niue and Cook Islands and said that the treatment of solid waste should be a top priority in the Secretariat's next work programme.

### **KRA 3: Climate Change and Variability**

96. The Secretariat provided a summary of the focus areas that are implemented within KRA3, namely meteorology, improving understanding of climate change and climate change science, assistance to climate change negotiations and policy, vulnerability, adaptation and mitigation, and ozone depleting substances.

97. The representative of Tonga requested from the Secretariat information on the climate change adaptation project that was discussed at the 15th SPREP meeting.

98. The Secretariat replied that it was still negotiating on specific issues with AusAID in relation to this proposal.

99. The representative of Australia agreed that he would have liked to have seen more progress on that adaptation proposal. He hoped that by having the key players in discussion at the 16<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting, a favourable result may eventuate by the end of the week.

100. The representative of the USA requested that the meeting take special note of the Pacific Island Global Climate Observing System (PI-GCOS) programme which has been the most successful programme of its type to date, in relation to work undertaken under the GCOS programme at a global level. He attributed this success to the Secretariat's commitment, the regional meteorological services having a good understanding of the importance of this work, and also to bilateral arrangements such as those between the USA and New Zealand, and between the USA and Australia. He enquired as to the status of a proposal to NZAID in relation to the Climate Information and Products for the Pacific (CLIPAC).

101. The Secretariat responded that the proposal had been submitted to NZAID for funding. The Secretariat had received a response from NZAID asking clarification of some technical areas in the proposal; and the Secretariat was committed to progressing this proposal when the new PI-GCOS officer is on board.

102. The representative of Samoa requested more focus on adaptation as a priority, rather than on vulnerability assessment and mitigation in next year's programmes. He raised the issue that more donor funding was needed for community adaptation programmes.

103. The representative of the Marshall Islands agreed with these comments. She also expressed interest in looking into the clean development mechanism and recommended that a workshop be held in relation to this in 2006.

104. The Chair commended the Secretariat on the range of work it had done in KRA2; he stated that the Secretariat should devote more attention to adaptation to climate change and identified this as the priority area for the climate change area in the future.

#### **KRA 4: Economic Development**

105. The Secretariat explained the structure of its presentations as covering Focus Areas (Objectives and Achievements), Key Impacts, Challenges, and Medium- to long-term objectives.

106. The Secretariat acknowledged the financial support that had been provided by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand in allowing the PICs to prepare for and participate in the Mauritius meeting. Then some key impacts of the work in the regional context were highlighted.

107. The representative of Kiribati directed his comments to focus area 4.2, as Environmental impact assessments (IEAs) are an important tool. Low-lying nations like Kiribati and Tuvalu with limited and fragile resources need this and he urged SPREP to provide further assistance as well as to collaborate with other CROP agencies.

108. The representative of Australia noted that only one-third of the budgeted expenditure for 4.1 and 4.2 was used even though this is a crucial area for the Pacific. Admitting that resources at the national level had been limited, he noted that in 4.3 the Secretariat exceeded the budget. This suggests there is more emphasis in area 4.3. He urged the Secretariat to take a more balanced approach next year in doing its work in the region, rather than concentrating on international work. This would assist in seeking funding assistance for the Secretariat's work; and to also fill the positions so the work could be done.

109. The representative of Fiji commented on the medium- to long-term objectives, especially in the streamlining of EIAs into integrated planning. Fiji wanted to re-emphasise the importance of EIAs given the high rate of development in the Pacific against the slow-moving progress of environmental protection laws. EIAs can be a useful tool and basis for decision making – not only from an investment view but also for Ministry of Works, Forestry, etc. This is particularly important in fast-moving tourism in the Pacific island countries.

110. He said that, given their relatively small Environment Departments, countries can make the right decisions using fewer resources with assistance of EIAs. Fiji was also grateful that donors in the region required EIAs before releasing funding to countries – he specifically mentioned NZAID, AusAID, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). He further reiterated the importance of EIAs to the Secretariat given the vulnerability of PICs. Regarding trade and environment issues and the conventions relating to the same area, he suggested a more integrated work plan that took into account the various conventions. Thus the PICs would be better protected while also meeting their commitments under these conventions.

111. The representative of the Cook Islands then thanked the Secretariat, AusAID, NZAID and UNDP for the assistance provided to them in this area of work. He advised that Cook Islands has completed a National Environment Strategic Action Framework (NESAF) which has been endorsed by the Government. He brought a copy of the report which has also been submitted to UNDP. The report combines all the projects in Cook Islands and seeks more funds for further projects. He thanked the Secretariat for its assistance in the 2003 Forum, which has resulted in this report.

112. Regarding EIAs, the Cook Islands has secured an ADB grant to review different Ministries' Acts so they are integrated with the Environment Act. He thanked ADB in particular and hoped other PICs could tap into this same grant. In this same program, the Cook Islands had managed to look into regulations and standards, but not much guidance had been received from SPREP. He encouraged other countries to do the same work and either seek the Secretariat's assistance or go direct to ADB for assistance on the Environment Act.



113. The Chair endorsed the advice from the representative of Cook Islands.

114. The representative of Niue echoed comments made before and extended Niue's gratitude for assistance in the lead-up to and presence at the Mauritius meeting. On the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), the goal was to develop these by the end of 2005 but completion was not likely. She also recognised the overlap between the Forum Secretariat (ForSec) and SPREP in the development of the NSDS. She sought Secretariat's (i.e. SPREP's) support on this subject and its assistance to utilise workshop materials in Niue. She also sought the Secretariat's support for in-country training to strengthen this area, particularly for integration with the economic sector. She sought information from the Secretariat on its proposed approach for further implementing Chapter 7 from Mauritius. Given the constraints after cyclone Heta, Niue has tried to move on with Chapter 7 requirements but needs assistance. She then asked the Secretariat for information on how it plans to work with other CROP agencies to keep the Mauritius momentum going.

115. The representative of Tonga commented on the technical assistance received on the northern island groups. He sought clarification on what the Secretariat was doing to progress the work which had already been started, now that the relevant staff member had departed.

116. The representative of New Caledonia thanked the Secretariat for its efforts made in consideration of the Francophone delegations with regard to the translation of documents.

117. The representative of Samoa sought clarification on how the Secretariat prioritised its work, and further noted substantial funds expended under 4.2 for meetings and preparations – similar to other CROP agencies. He expressed the hope this would not continue and sought further information on which areas the Secretariat would focus on in future.

118. The representative of Vanuatu commented on national aspects on the list of KRA4 activities. He appreciated inputs from the Secretariat and other CROP agencies but advised that the nations themselves were already doing much of the work. It would seek the Secretariat's assistance whenever needed.

119. The Secretariat acknowledged the comments from Kiribati, Fiji and Australia. To address the Cook Islands' comments, a copy of the report was needed by the Secretariat. In response to Niue's NSDS comments, the Secretariat was still in the process of developing modality to better assist countries driven by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The Secretariat was working with PIFS through the Sustainable Development Working Group on this matter. The Working Group could provide assistance on Chapter 7; once the information had been received from UNDESA by the Secretariat, Niue would be contacted.

120. In response to the comments by Samoa and Tonga, the Secretariat's recruiting process was well under way in filling the vacancy. The closing date for applications was approaching and it was anticipated the position would be filled in the next few months. On resource allocation, none of the Secretariat's work programmes were core funded, but rather relied on donors projects and their conditions. On environment assessments, the assistance to Members depends on how much the staff concerned could implement in any given year and the operational funds available for travel and activities.

121. Further to Samoa's point on meetings, these are not ongoing but there was a need for preparatory work before Mauritius and the donors responded accordingly. These activities were time-specific and were not envisaged to continue into the immediate future. The EIA work would move on, subject to staff limitations and funding constraints.

122. The representative of the Marshall Islands referred to the Secretariat's comment on the donor that came forward during the Mauritius Meeting and wanted to assist PICs on NSDS. She just received an email from the national government indicating PIFS needed three consultants and wondered if this was related to CROP agencies working together.

123. The representative of New Zealand commented on the support for PICs to prepare and attend the Mauritius meeting. On the Secretariat's point about unsecured budget, she stated that this suggested that donors appeared to be ruling or driving the work by SPREP; the work should be driven by the priorities of the region. She further referred to the expressions of concern she had heard from Members around the table that the amount of resources spent on the preparation for the Environment Minister's meeting had worked to the detriment of other work areas in KRA4.

124. The representative of Samoa then asked what the priorities were of the Secretariat in moving forward. If prioritised, then donors could better provide assistance. Priorities should be based on Members' needs. Rather than spoon-feeding countries at all meetings, he suggested the priorities were in capacity building, EIAs, etc. at the national level.

125. The representative of PNG listed various priorities for PNG in relation to Millennium Goals. For PNG goal # 10 was included as goal # 7 in PNG's development strategy. He asked that the Secretariat take these into account when prioritising the work programme.

126. The Secretariat advised the Marshall Islands that the request for three national consultants was related to NSDS. It was a requirement by UNDESA to identify national consultants so the strategies are nationally owned by using local expertise. The Secretariat was also working with PIFS in this matter.

127. In response to Samoa's question, the Secretariat advised that various areas are priorities. As more of these are identified, the Secretariat would take these on board and try to resource these areas to better deal with them.

128. The representative of the USA then echoed New Zealand's earlier comments. She advised the Secretariat to toe the line on spending for international meetings since Mauritius consumed a significant amount of Government resources as well as the Secretariat's. She further added that national capacity building should be the focus so when these international meetings re-occur, countries would be better prepared rather than the Secretariat having to arrange last-minute assistance for everyone. She expressed hope that the results of Mauritius would not be shelved but would translate into benefits and actions on the ground.

129. The representative of American Samoa made comments on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) – he stated that he saw these as a tool with a large effect in PICs' interest. There are three GIS programmes in American Samoa. He enquired on how many countries have established GIS systems, and wondered whether it was a good idea for American Samoa to have three GIS systems set up. He did appreciate that the programmes were useful for information sharing. He also wanted to know whether the Secretariat foresaw political stumbling blocks regarding information sharing between countries.

130. The Secretariat responded by stating that this particular work plan was the aim of output 4.1 but was not completed. The work area had intended for a GIS setup in two countries, but given time and funding constraints this had not finished. On information sharing, the Secretariat noted that it was a challenge that the region faced but one that is encouraged to continue pursuing.

131. The representative of Solomon Islands wanted to know if there was consideration of integrating Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) into the work programme; and whether any components for SEAs have been considered in the future work programs of SPREP.

132. The Secretariat responded in the affirmative.

133. In drawing the discussion to a close, the Chair recognised that the international agenda had been busy and paid tribute to the efforts of Secretariat. He stressed the variation between actual spending and budgets. He summarised the KRA4 discussions as follows. The Secretariat must:

- (i) Increase its focus on EIAs.
- (ii) Improve its work on capacity building, and continue to find solutions for this.
- (iii) Avoid imbalance of focus on international needs (meetings) over the PICs needs.

#### **KRA 5: Implementation General**

134. The Secretariat made a presentation on the progress made under KRA5 (Implementation General) in 2004. The Chair then opened the floor for questions and comments.

135. The representative of FSM thanked the Secretariat for the national communications workshop held in his country with participation from Marshall Islands. He also thanked the Secretariat for extending Phase 2 of the PEIN project to his country.

136. The representative of Marshall Islands raised two issues:

- (i) Which countries are involved in the GEF ADS regional proposal?
- (ii) With regard to Human Resources Development (HRD) programme, could an evaluation be done? This could be for the benefit of country recipients, donor partners, and the Secretariat.

137. She thanked the Secretariat, welcomed the upcoming collaboration with the Pacific Environment Information Network (PEIN) and looked forward to future work with the Secretariat.

138. The representative of Samoa would like to see its work programme with HRD continued. With regards to “communications and environmental programme”, he raised a question on the impact of the website on the region. He suggested collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to increase the emphasis on communications and environmental awareness work.

139. The Secretariat responded to Marshall Islands that the project proposal drafted was intended for GEF and some attempts have been made to include territories.

140. With regards to HRD, the Secretariat agreed with the suggestion to review and evaluate intervention; currently the project does not provide for an evaluation. The Secretariat is looking at including perhaps a mid-term review.

141. The impact of the website across the region had not been evaluated and the suggestion to use other media such as the SPC Pacific Way programme was noted.

142. The representative of the USA noted that the website is very refreshing, pleasing to use, very informative, and a great improvement. With regards to the Conference of Parties (COP), the delegate thanked the Secretariat's legal team for their diligent work with the IMO and the Parties which assisted in resolution of all bracketed text. She stressed the need for clarification and information on financial and budget reports for the Noumea Convention, which would be useful for planning purposes.

143. The representative of Tuvalu noted that countries are moving at a different pace with regards to the PEIN Project, and asked whether there is continuity after Tuvalu's Phase I.

144. The Secretariat clarified that the PEIN in Tuvalu will most probably move to Phase II in 2006.

145. The representative of Niue acknowledged the Secretariat's work in clarifying issues for Niue, for fast responses by the information team, and for assistance received with its National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA). He stated Niue's interest in PEIN I and sought clarification on the funding arrangement of 5.3.3.

146. The Secretariat clarified that PEIN I was meant for all the "old" eight Pacific (ACP) states; this did not cover Niue as it was not a Pacific member of ACP at that time. Niue will have to work with PEIN II which was specifically created to extend assistance to the six new Pacific ACPs. The Secretariat also informed that funds for 5.3.3 had just arrived last month.

147. Niue requested a review from the Secretariat to consider if the Bonn guidelines were still relevant in the context of Pacific SIDS.

148. The Secretariat clarified that the proposal involves all PICs. There had not been any modifications to the Bonn guidelines to suit the Pacific, but the document is permissive and allows participation of Territories.

149. The representative of Fiji stressed the importance of these KRAs, particularly 5.2 on “legal advice and services”. He noted that this is an important area in the Environment Units of the region which do not have legal officers of their own, so advice from the Secretariat is very useful. Fiji appreciated the legal advice it had received from the Secretariat. He noted that some countries have legislation of their own such as the Ozone Act which has been successful in court cases that dealt with non-compliance.

150. Noting 5.3, Fiji appreciated the work of PEIN I, particularly in the development of environmental awareness and sharing of information between ministries and departments. He noted that “environmental education & awareness” is very important at all levels: to parliamentarians, the public and local communities. This was especially so at the local community where 89% of resource owners are concerned – this highlights the importance of improving the understanding amongst resource owners for the success of environment-related projects.

151. Fiji noted that a lot of communication campaigns had been done but it felt that the target audience had not been reached. This is where an “evaluation of effectiveness” needs to be done right away on the materials used, the approach, and the style of handling campaigns to name but a few.

152. The representative of New Caledonia noted the importance of 5.4. She added that children are more aware of environmental issues and acknowledged the assistance provided by SPC for a video-conference that took place between New Caledonia and Fiji on World Environment Day 2005. She enquired about the possibility of establishing a Pacific youth network on environmental issues.

153. The representative of New Zealand reminded the meeting that the Secretariat is reporting on the old structure and was pleased to note that it has been working on the new programmatic structure over the last nine months. He added that despite requests from the meeting for improvements, the Secretariat had won a prestigious Stockholm Award through the PEIN Project, highlighting the excellent work done by the Secretariat.

154. The Secretariat stated that it is working with the “environmental youth network” that targets students from as early as primary school level. It added that the challenge is to identify initiatives on which Members and CROP could work together. The Secretariat also informed that the current establishment of national focal points was an avenue for doing this.

155. The representative of Marshall Islands enquired whether it was included in the proposal on the GEF project, as she did not recall viewing it before its submission to GEF for approval. Further, the delegate enquired whether the proposal was ever circulated for review.

156. The Secretariat responded that the proposal was not widely circulated as it had been in gestation for some time but it had been reviewed by a small group of Member countries. The proposal is most likely to be approved along with those of other regions, but any country issues could be addressed at the meeting in November 2005.

157. The representative of Tokelau informed his interest in some areas such as 5.2, 5.4 and 5.5 now that their National Environment Strategy Act is approved.

158. The Chair then summarised the discussions and highlighted major improvements, noting the Stockholm Award, and stressed the importance of training to strengthen the capacity of national administrations. He urged that the Secretariat focus on environmental education and made reference to comments by Fiji and New Caledonia. The Chair also requested that the Secretariat report on the financial stocktake of meetings of the Noumea Convention.



159. The representative of Australia reiterated his comments on the excellent presentation by the Secretariat and noted he was very pleased with the quality of ensuing discussion, which focused on key priorities. These were powerful, informative and useful.

160. The representative of France echoed Australia's comments noting that the quality of reporting would make the Parties more demanding on the Secretariat.

161. He noted that the presentations showed a patchwork of the current work being done in the region. He cited the work involving Solid Waste Management, which he found a bit difficult to fit within the overall thrust of work in the region. He suggested that a quantitative analysis of objectives and outcomes (such as quantities of waste being managed) be incorporated in future reporting.

162. He noted the confusion as to where the Secretariat stands with other CROP in terms of environmental work in the region. He requested clarity on the overall volume of funds dedicated to environmental work in the region.

163. France noted that international environment meetings do call for Pacific delegations. He appreciated the difficulty to monitor a situation, particularly if a country is party to a very large number of conventions and agreements. Despite the need for funds allocated to this, it is essential that countries' voices be heard and that SPREP measure the impact of its actions.

164. He urged that external assessments be undertaken to give an independent view of the Secretariat's activities, adding that perhaps a periodic assessment would be useful.

165. The Secretariat clarified concerns expressed by the USA on the Secretariat's reporting on sources of financing and Parties to Conventions (Apia, Noumea and Waigani). He informed that not all SPREP Members are Parties to these three Conventions. The agendas and budgets of the Conventions are restricted to the Parties. Full reports, documents and budgets, including schedules of contributions by the Parties, are tabled and approved by the COPs at their meetings which are held on a biennial basis. Details are provided to the Parties when they meet. Budgets and contributions approved at last year's COP have been provided to Parties and the collection of contributions for 2004 and 2005 will be reported to the 2006 COPs. The Secretariat have to show these separately to avoid confusion with the SPREP Members' contribution to the work of the Secretariat.

166. In response, the representative of USA thanked the Secretariat for the explanation and insisted that having a budget beforehand would be of administrative help in knowing what is due in the next year. She added that inclusion of income from Convention Parties' contributions in the Annual Report publication and in the Working Papers each year, would be useful for parties' budgeting purposes.

167. The Director in his concluding remarks thanked the Meeting for their comments and commendations, noting that all comments were very helpful and constructive in helping the Secretariat move forward.

#### **KRA 6: Secretariat Functions and Corporate Services**

168. The Secretariat informed that KRA6 comprises Executive Management, Corporate Services, Personnel, Information Technology, Library Services, etc. The Secretariat added that the detailed notes in the Working Papers were self-explanatory. Given that the delegates have had the documents for some 6 weeks and would have thoroughly reviewed them already, he invited specific comments and questions.

169. The representative from Niue sought clarification from the Secretariat regarding output 6.1.4. He asked whether the large under-spending in this output was in fact due to the lack of visits by the Director to all the countries as anticipated.

170. The Secretariat replied that outputs 6.1.4, 6.1.5 and 6.1.6 must be read together in terms of spending as they all dealt with management travel to Members, regional and international meetings. Taking this holistic approach, the Secretariat advised that actual spending was on par with the budgets estimated.

### **5.3 Financial Reports**

#### **5.3.1 Report on Members' Contributions**

171. The Secretariat introduced the Report on Members' contributions and advised that a revised schedule had just been distributed, taking into account contributions received to date. It was noted that the total outstanding as at 30 June 2005 was \$660,008. The current outstanding balance has now been reduced to \$372,633. The Secretariat thanked the Members for their effort and further encouraged all Members to pay all outstanding contributions as soon as possible to assist in the implementation of its work.

172. The representative of PNG advised that PNG will meet its Members contributions by the end of the year. Marshall Islands anticipated its contribution to be made soon after the start of their new financial year in October 2005.

173. The representative of Kiribati urged Members who have not yet met their contributions to do so in a timely manner, to allow the Secretariat to carry out their work effectively and efficiently.

174. The Chair thanked the delegates for the large reduction of the outstanding Members' contributions since 30 June 2005. He also noted the concerns raised and urged the Members which had not yet paid their contributions to do so on a timely basis. He asked the Secretariat to continue to give friendly but firm reminders to all Members about their contributions.

175. The Meeting:

- (i) Considered the report and asked the Secretariat to continue to give friendly but firm reminders to all Members which had not paid their contribution;
- (ii) Noted with concern the status of unpaid Member contributions; and
- (iii) Committed itself to paying current contributions and arrears in full in 2005.

### **5.3.2 Audited Annual Accounts for 2004**

176. In presenting the Audited Annual Accounts for 2004, the Secretariat advised that the financial regulations require an annual audit of its accounts which is an important aspect of the Secretariat's accountability and transparency responsibility. The Secretariat highlighted the unqualified audit opinion obtained, certifying the financial statements reflect fairly and accurately the financial position and performance of the Secretariat for the 2004 year. In particular the Secretariat pointed out the net surpluses in both the Core activities and Programme activities, which will be carried forward to be used in 2005. The Secretariat offered to answer any specific queries.

177. The Chair added that this paper should be discussed together with WP.5.3.3 on the auditor' opinion on the amended Financial Regulations.

178. The representative of Australia welcomed the unqualified audit opinion and moved to adopt the recommendations provided in this agenda item. In addition, he thanked the Secretariat for obtaining the auditor's advice as requested in the previous SPREP Meeting and also moved to adopt the recommendation of that paper. Australia recommended that the audit opinion be included in the Annual Reports.

179. The representative of the USA echoed the sentiments of Australia. She noted a variance between the WP.5.3.2/Att.1 of the financial statements and a similar schedule contained in the 2004 Annual Report. The USA provided examples in the rows of 'UNCCD' 'US Additional Members Contributions' and Primary Function. The USA asked for clarification as to which schedule was correct, and how many audit reports there were.

180. The representative of France asked whether the number of donors in the report are an indication of the number of different projects managed by SPREP. In response, the Secretariat confirmed that separate accounts were kept for all donor projects.

181. The representative of New Zealand queried the net surplus in the Core/Primary function. Regarding depreciation, she had hoped the auditor was present and explain her concern with the depreciation policy in 2003. The audit was silent about the same issue in the 2004 accounts and the lack of explanation concerned New Zealand. She requested from the Secretariat further clarification. She noted the healthy financial situation and high working capital, and enquired as to how the Secretariat planned to use this surplus.

182. The Secretariat replied that the Income & Expenditure Statement was compiled in categories based on Functions as per the Financial Regulations. By contrast, Note 14 of WP.5.3.2/Att.1 represented the income and expenses of the Secretariat by donors. Moreover in the Income & Expenditure Statement, income for the Core activities includes funds from donors; in Note 14 these were separated under the flag of each donor to recognise the correct amount of Member contributions. This explained the variance in total income for Core/Primary activities shown in the Income & Expenditure Statement \$2.4m, and the income in WP.5.3.2/Att.1 of \$1.5m. Also, WP.5.3.2/Att.1 comprised income from Members' contributions, interest income, administration fees, etc.

183. Regarding the depreciation issue raised by New Zealand, the Secretariat referred to the extensive discussion on this topic during the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting. Given the nature of the organisation, this treatment best suited and represented its actual financial practices. The Secretariat contrasted the nature of its structure and operation with that of a private organisation. In the latter, depreciation is shown in the accounts to reflect the future intention for self replacement of assets. However, if the Secretariat required assets, these needs are presented in the budget for approval and funding at the meeting. Inclusion of depreciation in the Secretariat's accounts and budgets would distort the financials given the non-cash nature of depreciation. Lastly, the Secretariat noted that the auditors had considered and accepted this policy adopted by management and approved by the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting.

184. The representative of the USA again requested a response to its query on the variances between WP.5.3.2/Att.1 and the 2004 Annual Report. She reiterated she would like the Secretariat to point out which schedule is correct, which audit report the meeting should refer to, and whether there were two audit reports.

185. The Secretariat asked for time to review the variances and to consult with the representative of the USA on the variances she was referring to.

186. The Chair summarised the discussion and stated there is only one audit report, the financial statements are correct and should remain. The schedule in the 2004 Annual Report was compiled by the Secretariat separately. The Chair then moved for the Members to adopt the audited financial report. Reviewing the 2004 Annual Report later in the meeting would give the Secretariat time to address the issues raised by the USA. The representative of Tonga however was not comfortable with a move to adopt the recommendations given the variances raised. The Chair therefore suggested that the adoption of the audited financial statements be considered later in conjunction with the 2004 Annual Report.

187. Upon the Chair reopening this topic later in the SPREP Meeting, the representative of the USA thanked the Secretariat for the changes made to correct the schedule in question in the English version of the 2004 Annual Report. She reiterated her concern expressed in previous meetings of not having the contributions to Conventions clearly recognised in the schedule of Working Paper 5.3.2. She agreed the changes carried out by the Secretariat have satisfactorily addressed all her concerns raised previously; she thanked the Secretariat for the additional schedule listing the contributions to the Conventions. She noted the schedule served as a reminder to Members of their commitment to these important Conventions that meet every two years. Hence the annual inclusion of this schedule could serve to improve the collection of contributions and allow the Secretariat to carry out their important work. As a final comment, the USA requested that the footnote in the new contributions schedule about the inclusion of Conventions funds under 'Multiple Donors' also be included in Working Paper 5.3.2 Attachment 1, and that the new Conventions schedule be included in Working Paper 5.3.2 as Attachment 2.

188. The representative of Australia supported the intervention by the USA. He also thanked the Secretariat for producing an Annual Report that tells a story of the workings of the Secretariat. He then suggested that the acronyms against their contributions for XB and XXB, as well as those next to New Zealand's, be clearly defined. That is, XB stands for Extra Budgetary whilst XXB stands for Extra Extra Budgetary contributions. XB represents the annual set contribution provided by Australia whilst XXB represents other project support, for instance to the POPs in PICs project. Finally, he reiterated his earlier suggestion for the inclusion of the audit report in the Annual Report.

189. The representative of Tonga thanked the Secretariat for its clarification and explained that his reason for the earlier reservation to adopt this paper was because of the discrepancy in the financial statements. Now that it had been clarified, he approved the recommendation of this Working Paper.

190. The representative of Samoa had no difficulty in supporting this Working Paper but suggested that the Director's overview also be included in the Annual Report. The overview could cover donor relations, staffing matters, problems encountered by the Secretariat, as well as an overall update of the progress the Secretariat has made since the end of the year in discussion.

191. The Chair then summarised the interventions made and moved to adopt the audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Report.

192. The Meeting adopted the audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Report.

### ***5.3.3 Auditor's Advice on the revised Financial Regulations***

193. The Meeting noted the advice of the Auditor and approved the proposed amendments to the new Financial Regulations contained in paragraph 5 of WP.5.3.3 i.e. for Financial Regulation 27(b) be amended to delete the phrase "... and to avoid the requirement to provide for depreciation"; and that Regulation 28 be also amended to add to its current wording the phrase "and there shall be no depreciation charge for fixed assets".

#### **5(a).1 Annual Reference Market Data Review for Professional Staff**

194. In presenting the working paper on Professional Staff Remuneration Issues, the Secretariat referred to the recommendations from the review, highlighting the difficulties faced by CROP Agencies to attract and retain staff; and the need to ensure competition with similar job markets. CROP agencies were all taking the recommendations from the Working Group and the CROP CEOs Meeting held this year to their respective Council meetings. The CROP CEOs agreed to recommend to their respective Councils the increase for salaries based on the average movement of the three reference markets studied, being Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. The Secretariat acknowledged and thanked the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) for their assistance through the provision of the French-translated version of the reviewer's report for use by the Secretariat.

195. The Secretariat recommended that the meeting approve the salary adjustments to professional staff; the cost of these increases would be absorbed by the Secretariat through ongoing efficiencies and productivity gains without compromising programme delivery or increasing membership contributions.

196. The representative from New Zealand endorsed the recommendation for a salary increase from cost savings but noted that there was likely to be a recommendation for a need in future to consider increasing Member contributions or reducing programme delivery. If so, this decision needs to be based on an assessment of resources required for programme delivery.

197. The Chair summed up the discussion including the approval of the recommendations by the meeting.



198. The Meeting approved:

- (i) Salary adjustments to the professional staff as in WP.5(a).1 paragraph 5 (i.e. Grades H and I – 5.1%, Grade J – 7.3%, Grade K – 10.6%, Grade L – 10.3% and Grade M – 9.4%), to be effective from 1 January 2006; and
- (ii) That the cost of these increases be absorbed by the Secretariat through an ongoing efficiency and productivity gains without compromising programme delivery to PICTs or increasing Members' assessed voluntary contributions.

#### **5(a).2 Housing and Education Allowances**

199. The Secretariat tabled the report by the CROP Working Group. The Meeting's attention was drawn to the 19 recommendations and requested the approval of the Meeting.

200. The Meeting adopted the recommendations of the Secretariat as detailed in Annex 7.

### **Agenda Item 6: Regional Conventions**

#### **6.1 Outcomes of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries**

201. The Chair invited the representative of Samoa, Chair of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries, to report on the meeting of Monday 12 September 2005.

202. Samoa's summary of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries (COP) included a background to the meeting and the major issues discussed. Present during the COP were Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, France, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and the United States of America.

203. He advised that at the previous meeting of the Plenipotentiaries, a Working Group had been formed to make amendments to the existing dumping protocol and to develop two new protocols from the existing Noumea emergency protocol, in order to align them with two corresponding international agreements.

204. He advised that the Conference of Plenipotentiaries had considered and adopted “in principle” by consensus:

- (i) An amended “*Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution of the Pacific Region by dumping*”.
- (ii) A new “*Protocol on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in the Pacific Region*”.
- (iii) A new “*Protocol on Hazardous and Noxious Substances Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in the Pacific Region*”.

205. He added that the amended Protocol and the two new Protocols would be circulated early to all the Parties for formal adoption and signature at the next Conference of Plenipotentiaries. This was to be held concurrent with the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties in 2006.

206. The SPREP Chair thanked Samoa for its report on the successful outcome of the COP and thanked the Parties for their participation. He added that the procedures relating to the adoption of the changes made to the existing protocol, and the two new ones, are to be discussed by each Party within its own government bureaucracy before adoption and signing at the 2006 Meeting of the Parties.

207. The SPREP Meeting noted the outcomes of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries.

## **Agenda Item 7: 2006 Work Programme and Budget**

### **7.1 Island Ecosystems Programme Issues**

#### ***7.1.1 Island Biodiversity Programme of Work***

208. The Secretariat drew Members’ attention to this significant new Programme of Work (POW). The paper and agenda item were to advise the Meeting of the Island Biodiversity Programme of Work (IBPOW) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Secretariat was seeking support to ensure this POW is endorsed at the upcoming 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP8) in March 2006.

209. The Meeting's support for a request to the CBD for hosting a side event would allow the region to head into the COP with a POW that aligns with the region's work in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Specific funding will be available to assist countries with attendance at CBD where possible. There will be a side event at next year's meeting to highlight the region's commitment and readiness to undertake the IBPOW. There will also be a pre-COP preparatory meeting early next year.

210. The Chair welcomed this initiative in the light of the focus on threatened species and invasives, especially given the previous day's discussion, and invited comments.

211. The representative of Kiribati thanked the Secretariat for its efforts in assisting on the development of the IBPOW, and for reporting back on CBD reports. He urged SPREP to circulate all regional reports prepared on behalf of PICs, to countries for their specific comments and further inputs, before SPREP forward the report to the Secretariat of the CBD or other related international conventions.

212. The representative of New Zealand expressed a particular interest in this topic because of its relevance to NZ and the focus of its national conservation efforts. He thanked the Secretariat for assisting through the Roundtable and preparatory meetings to bring strong input to the development of the IBPOW: this was a very useful platform for island biodiversity work. The Pacific's presence at the 10<sup>th</sup> Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA10) was particularly pleasing and he commended the Secretariat on the IBPOW.

213. The representative of Samoa thanked the Secretariat for hosting a workshop in Alotau to consider how the IBPOW should be refined to further reflect the regional situation. He thanked Palau, the Cook Islands and New Zealand who represented the region in the ad hoc working group. He realised quite a few areas needed improvement; hoped to put these elements before the COP; and encouraged good representation at the next COP as this would be important to the consideration of the IBPOW. It provided an opportunity to make a big impact on how this is to be presented at the COP. Samoa supported the recommendations of the paper and encouraged the Secretariat to pursue further resources to allow Pacific island countries (PIC) participation at the COP.

214. The representative of France observed this was a well structured paper with good recommendations, the last recommendation being paramount. He reported on the “Biodiversity: Science and Governance” conference held in Paris in early 2005 and its outcomes which suggested the establishment of a scientific mechanism to guide policy decisions. A committee to assess this mechanism was set up in July 2005 and France would keep SPREP informed. France will hold in January 2006 a workshop on access to genetic resources and sharing of the benefits arising out of their utilisation. This workshop is of great importance in the context of the next CBD COP. He indicated that the concerns of the region could be put forward by the Secretariat. SPREP will be made aware of the outcomes of the workshop.

215. The representative of Australia strongly supported the POW to highlight problems of biodiversity of small islands. Many issues were to be considered, including existing national level programmes and whether these could be rebadged under IBPOW. Hotspots were also to be considered in the POW. Regional Natural Heritage Project (RNHP) funding could also be rebadged. Given the short time frame, he wondered how much progress had been made towards COP8 preparations? He was keen to work closely with the Secretariat to prepare for the CBD.

216. The representative of Vanuatu supported the proposal. He observed that the work programme was focussing more on getting a thematic area under CBD. He encouraged looking at links between policy and projects at the regional level and implementation at the national level, perceiving a big gap between the two. He wondered how Members could effectively, on the ground, address the issue of biodiversity loss and make efforts effective?

217. The representative of PNG referred to the reduction target of biodiversity loss by 2010 and have 10% protected. Experience suggested this time frame was unrealistically short, citing that it took more than 7 years for PNG to establish its first protected area. Few islands were members of the CITES Convention. He stated that at least 5% of the world’s biodiversity was found in PNG, and he was concerned that possible illegal trade by neighbouring countries who are not members of CITES may deplete the species found in PNG. He called on neighbouring countries to accede to CITES as a means towards achieving the 2010 target.

218. The representative of American Samoa mentioned sharing ideas on preserving biodiversity under the United States National Parks Service (USNP) programme; this was effective in American Samoa for the management of coral reefs, soils, and threatened species. This programme could be useful for other Pacific Islands and he looked forward to working closely with others on biodiversity issues. Being well versed with enforcement also, he offered assistance to other PICTs.

219. The representative of Niue acknowledged and supported the work undertaken by the ad hoc technical group in Alotau. In reference to the biodiversity workplan, he suggested looking at the targets set but the timeframe of 2010 was too ambitious. The time frame set in the matrix gave no guidance on how to achieve this, and more ground work was needed.

220. The representative of New Caledonia advised that communities had developed an action plan for biodiversity conservation while contributing to the French strategy for biodiversity, which had similar aims. Reference was made to this Action Plan on page 28 of the working paper.

221. The representative of Fiji emphasised the importance of the NBSAP reports as they were comprehensively prepared. They reflected a national inventory of biological resources, activities needed, and stakeholder involvement with addressing the needs to protect the biodiversity. Organisations will duplicate work unless properly coordinated; doing so under the umbrella of the NBSAP ensured better allocation of limited resources. He was pleased to see that the basis of the IBPOW was the NBSAP.

222. The Chair observed that clear consensus had emerged in relation to the IBPOW and that the Meeting agreed with the recommendations. He emphasised the need for PICTs support and thanked Australia for its offer of assistance. It was necessary to look at the gap between plans and agreements and what was happening on the ground. He encouraged all Members to accede to CITES in order to protect biodiversity.

223. The Meeting:

- (i) Endorsed the approach of the Secretariat in supporting the ongoing development of the IBPOW and in its strategy to support its implementation;
- (ii) Noted the upcoming CBD Pacific preparatory meeting and COP meeting as opportunities for Pacific input to further the IBPOW;
- (iii) Recognised that biodiversity is a fundamental underpinning of island well-being, productive lifestyles and livelihoods, and that the rate of loss of species in the Pacific is currently among the highest in the world; and
- (iv) Commended the proposed new IBPOW, recognising the important contribution it will make to support the Pacific region's goal of significantly reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity.

#### ***7.1.2 International Waters Project***

224. The Secretariat briefly introduced the paper, noting that the International Waters Project (IWP) will be reaching its end next year, and welcomed questions or comments.

225. The representative of the USA noted that the IWP has two components and enquired if and how the two elements are complementary. The Secretariat commented that other than the fact that the two components relate to international waters, they are two quite separate projects with ongoing dialogue between the responsible agencies.

226. The representative of Niue noted that the project is coming to end, and asked whether there had been any attempt to extend it. It would be very hard for individual countries to continue the excellent work underway – much good work could go to waste unless an extension was possible. The pilot projects have been very successful and should be expanded to other places.

227. The Secretariat commented that it had developed a draft replication strategy, to be finalised in 2006, and is also encouraging replication of the work through the national coordinators.

228. The representative of Tonga commended the Secretariat on the management of IWP. As a recipient of the project, Tonga was happy to report things were going very well indeed and strongly supported the recommendation.

229. The representative of Samoa raised the process to be followed from here on: whereto after the final review of IWP? He commented that much work had been done since IWPs inception in 1997 and many lessons had been learnt. What was the exit strategy? Had other funding options or mainstreaming options been explored? Waste and water management were fundamental community issues involving governments and communities. More was needed than just looking for funding. Samoa also raised the issue of micromanagement that can divert attention from the matter at hand. One of the key targets was to involve governments; how could this be done and how could we learn from this very successful project.

230. The Secretariat agreed and emphasised the need to finalise national reporting by the end of 2006, pulling out the lessons learnt. The three areas are being strongly picked up across SPREP, for example in relation to waste strategies. The scope of the project had been refined over time and outcomes tied to indicators developed at local community level. There was a continued emphasis on influencing national-level work. Economic valuation work, especially in the Cook Islands, had been valuable.

231. The representative of FSM noted its participation in the project and requested greater flexibility in the use of funds. At the last review, hope was raised that the project could be extended, but later he learnt that funds had gone to SOPAC. He requested that CROP agencies collaborate in the future so that opportunities for extension can be met rather than having to start another project.

232. The representative of the Marshall Islands welcomed the item on facilitator toolkits for the website. She reaffirmed her comments from the previous day with regard to IWP and further supported Samoa's comments on micromanagement and looked forward to resolving some of these issues at the highest level before leaving Samoa.

233. There has been confusion in collaboration at the national level between the two different components of IWP. Therefore she recommended that in the future, regional projects should focus on one component.

234. The Secretariat expressed its disappointed that it had not been able to address the scope of the work plan and indicators set out last year and the initial audit by Marshall Islands did not meet the requirements of UNDP hence the non-release of funds. The Secretariat had now sent an auditor on behalf of Marshall Islands to conduct the required audit so that funds could be made available as soon as possible.

235. The representative of Vanuatu stated the IWP was working very well, but had some issues. For example, there had been many pilot projects in the region and he expressed the hope that new projects could build on the lessons learnt. He suggested that the last year of the project should focus on a transitional strategy with the national team, so it was clear to participant countries where to go from here. Projects should not be implemented in isolation, but should be aligned with national priorities and programmes. He suggested the coordination at regional level needed strengthening. He thought that the SOPAC project could build on the IWP lessons learnt and that SPREP and SOPAC merge their efforts to maximise the value of these projects. SPBCP's transitional strategy had come at the last minute, he did not want this to happen to the IWP.

236. In responding to the micromanagement concerns, the Director stated that the project came with its own conditions and criteria such as UNDP global requirements. However the point made by a number of delegates was taken and, to the extent permitted, the Secretariat will do its best to exercise maximum flexibility within the rules. He welcomed the Deputy Director of SOPAC's presence at this meeting and invited him to comment on the links seen between the two projects, as well as how SOPAC plans to use the lessons learnt from the IWP project.

237. The SOPAC Deputy Director commented that the new SOPAC project is to further the concept of integrated water resources management to implement the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Water. This was still in the developmental phase, undergoing further consultation with stakeholders including SPREP.



238. The representative of Fiji noted similarities of the IWP work in Samoa and Cook Islands with the Canada-funded climate change adaptation project. This also focused on community-level problems related to water collection, storage and distribution. Perhaps links could be established between the two projects, however this would require regional input. There were 400 village applications for the Fiji IWP project; they still have 399 potential sites waiting so Fiji was working out ways to replicate the lessons learnt. The focused was on waste management strategy in Fiji.

239. The representative of American Samoa commented on integrated watershed management, a critical area taken very seriously by the American Samoa government and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This involved sewer lines and piggeries (leptospirosis is common in tropical islands); the maintenance of clean water requires enforcement and public awareness raising. He reported that American Samoa had a successful, comprehensive programme underway (including public health services, the power authority, EPA) to ensure the quality of the watershed. As much as 90% of water pumped was from underground; the use of surface water was no longer allowed. Governments should prioritise water conservation, monitoring and management.

240. The representative of the Marshall Islands recognised the limitations of project regulations and constraints as indicated by the Secretariat's Director. She also acknowledged understanding of the policies and procedures of UNDP on project management, and supported comments of FSM. She requested an extension of time to complete the work, or work out a way to schedule timely completion of the priorities and expenditure of the funds. Regarding the audit, it was important to know the issue ahead of time. She would have liked to have been informed of problems with the audit earlier.

241. The Chair noted the report and expressed disappointment about the end of the programme. He expressed concerns about the mechanism in place for links between the wide range of projects underway in this area. The aim should be to reduce duplication, to address complementarity between projects, and to best share information.

242. The Meeting noted the status report and the provisional arrangements for the terminal evaluation of the project.

### **7.1.3 Endorsement of the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy Integrated Action Strategy and SPREP's activities related to the PIROP**

243. The Secretariat outlined the purpose of the information paper being to highlight the work undertaken on the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy Integrated Action Strategy (PIROP-IAS). The PIROP was intended as a guide for regional collaboration on ocean issues to improve regional ocean governance. CROP has been keen to develop a reporting template. The Secretariat highlighted this is a work in progress requiring further development, and that CROP is proposing assistance to be given to countries for progressing initiatives.

244. The Secretariat updated the meeting on the *Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands* that has been overseen by the Marine Sector Working Group. The Steering Committee received funding from GEF to implement their programme of work. The Secretariat reported the Marine Sector Working Group of CROP has been liaising with the Global Oceans Forum Steering Committee, to propose a list of participants to attend a management conference in September 2005.

245. The representative of New Zealand stated his intention to endorse the framework but said the wording was not clear pertaining to reporting mechanism. Although the need not to duplicate reporting was understood, he said he was not clear on how the framework related to SPREP's Strategic Programme. This needed to be reported back to SPREP Members.

246. The Secretariat outlined that PIROP reporting is at the regional level and that SPREP reports only on strategic objectives of its Programme.

247. New Zealand suggested that the first recommendation be reworded to read "a means" or contain the existing wording of "the means" but add a supplementary explanation. The Chair supported recommendations to amend the text.

248. The representative of Vanuatu welcomed the initiative and stated the policy was a better approach in providing a regional framework for guiding all Members in implementing policies. Vanuatu strongly supported the Secretariat's recommendations and encouraged Members to ask CROP agencies to use the same approach for streamlining programme arrangements.

249. The representative of Niue said this was the first time that he had heard of the oceans policy and expressed a willingness to learn more about this initiative.

250. The representative of Australia endorsed the direction of New Zealand's comments and suggested that the policy be reinforced with Action Plans. He said the policy was a key partnership initiative from the World Summit on Sustainable Development and encouraged action on it.

251. The representative of FSM supported the recommendations and looked forward to national assistance from the Secretariat in developing a national policy to govern the ocean.

252. In summarising, the Chair stated the Meeting accepted the recommendations while observing the changes suggested by New Zealand and Australia.

253. The Meeting:

- (i) Endorsed the PIROP-ISA as a means for SPREP to report on activities and actions relating to oceans and coasts;
- (ii) Noted that such reporting will complement SPREP's [the Secretariat's] reporting on its Strategic Programmes;
- (iii) Noted that such reporting should be accompanied by actions that implement the other key principles of the PIROP;
- (iv) Endorsed SPREP's intention to incorporate reporting on activities that support the PIROP to integrated systems for environmental monitoring and reporting on the state of the Pacific environment;
- (v) Noted the ISA as a mechanism for promoting the implementation of the PIROP; and
- (vi) Noted the report of the Secretariat on activities undertaken through its Strategic Programmes relating to the PIROP-ISA

**7.1.4 SPREP/Convention for Migratory Species Secretariat collaboration to Assist PICTs on Marine Mammals**

254. The Secretariat stated the purpose of the paper was to update the Members of the SPREP collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention for Migratory Species (CMS) and to explain the consultation and drafting process of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which had an extended deadline for feedback to 30 October 2005.

255. The Secretariat highlighted potential collaborations or regional arrangements for marine turtles and dugongs and the development of an MOU with Australia on dugongs. It outlined progress on the Year of the Sea Turtle—a good opportunity to highlight the work undertaken in this area. The Secretariat has formed a Steering Committee and is currently working to develop activities and a concept proposal to move forward on this programme.

256. The representative of Samoa thanked the Secretariat and the Working Group for their work in this area, particularly the development of the MoU. This would be a good opportunity for the Pacific to start interacting with the CMS Secretariat. Samoa fully supported the Secretariat's proposal to run the Year of the Sea Turtle and suggested the 'Sacred Fish' as a possible theme of the Year of the Sea Turtle.

257. The representative of the USA, highlighting the turtle as an important sea animal, thanked the Secretariat for collaborative efforts with George Balazs and the US Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. She congratulated the Working Group on drafting the MoU and expressed the need for review by the relevant US Government authorities; she would forward her comments to the Secretariat after review.

258. The representative of New Zealand congratulated Samoa on its role in developing the draft MoU and encouraged its endorsement. He said the MoU would bring the region together to protect cetaceans and highlighted the potential of conserving cetaceans for the Pacific (with its whale and dolphin tourism opportunities). He said the endorsement of the MoU would result in regional action in this area and would allow Samoa to pick up its own Action Plan. New Zealand would like Samoa to lead representation at CMS COP8 meeting.

259. The representative of Australia fully supported New Zealand's comments and expressed interest in supporting the MoU. He looked forward to the plan of action introducing results, and endorsed the development of whale watching guidelines to encourage sustainable tourism. He encouraged the work that was going ahead at the CMS Secretariat and would work with Samoa and New Zealand.

260. The representative of France supported the MoU, endorsed New Zealand's comments and stated that France will be in a position to sign the MoU.

261. The representative of Papua New Guinea commended Samoa for taking the lead in developing the MoU arrangement. PNG is currently reviewing the MoU and will submit comments to the Secretariat at the latest by October. PNG commended the Secretariat for funding and participating in the inaugural Melanesian Turtle Forum in Gizo and proposed a leadership award in recognition of the role that the Secretariat has played in this region.

262. PNG announced a conference in late October where PNG, Indonesia and the Solomon Islands will sign a non-legally binding statement and make arrangements to protect leatherback turtles. PNG extended an invitation to the Secretariat to attend this event and thanked donors for support in coordinating the event. He proposed that other countries develop a similar arrangement. PNG strongly recommended that this arrangement be promoted by the Secretariat if this was not provided.

263. The representative of New Caledonia outlined the activities undertaken and said that turtles are considered a gift that is exchanged during customary ceremonies (dugongs also). Fishing remains allowed for part of the year even though over-harvesting of turtles sometimes occurs. She said long-term conservation will require awareness raising and working alongside communities. New Caledonia is mobilising for sanctions on overfishing in order to promote conservation.

264. The representative of Tuvalu thanked the Secretariat for the work undertaken to date, especially on the draft MoU Working Group. Further comments would be forwarded by the due date. Tuvalu has developed a proposal with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) to develop a cetaceans project and will be working with New Zealand on similar projects in future.

265. The Chair invited the CMS Secretariat to comment.

266. Robert Hepworth, the Executive Secretary of the CMS, commented that the response to the agreement is a very gratifying and tangible outcome between CMS and the Secretariat; he hoped to develop the agreement late in 2005. He said they would continue working together and formalise a partnership. Close cooperation with the Secretariat could lead to similar arrangements for turtles, dugongs and birds. He thanked Samoa for convening the MoU Working Group and noted the comments from Australia. He hoped that the text would be finalised for signature by the end of 2005. He requested feedback from the delegates as to whether dugongs and turtles would be better covered by extending the range of the MoU with Indian Ocean – South East Asia (IOSEA) or by developing a new arrangement for the region; the Secretariat was already working to develop this process.

267. He expressed gratitude to donors enabling further work on cetaceans and possibly other species, and thanked New Zealand for funding the position of Marine Species Officer within the Secretariat. He said France had made known it will support the signing of the cetaceans agreement in the Pacific.

268. The level of CMS activities in the Pacific region, as elsewhere, would depend on Parties re-financing the convention to compensate for the effect of the falling value of the US\$ against the Euro. This would require about a 50% increase in subscriptions. However, the cost in absolute terms was modest, and CMS Parties or potential Parties from the small Pacific island states would still face subscription of less than \$100 per annum on the UN scale. He was pleased to see an interest in the Year of the Sea Turtle, which was a global initiative; 2007 may become the Year of the Dolphin.

269. The Meeting:

- (i) Endorsed the joint SPREP/CMS process to date towards the development of a CMS MoU for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region;
- (ii) Agreed to forward official comments on the MoU no later than the 30 October 2005 deadline;
- (iii) Directed the Secretariat to progress regional arrangements for dugongs and marine turtles including under the auspices of the CMS; and
- (iv) Noted progress for the Year of the Sea Turtle 2006.

***Bird Conservation Programme and Regional Strategy Review Outcomes***

270. The Secretariat informed the Meeting on the outcomes of the recent 2<sup>nd</sup> Bird Conservation Programme and strategy meeting, and sought endorsement of the way forward contained in a “declaration” attached to the paper.

271. The Secretariat elaborated on the bird conservation programme and regional strategy review outcomes, highlighting a meeting held in Suva. This had brought together Birdlife International’s Pacific Partnership and SPREP member countries and resulted in the Suva Declaration. This meeting was seen as a unique opportunity for collaboration between NGOs and countries on the important issue of bird conservation.

272. The representatives of French Polynesia, Fiji, Samoa, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and the Cook Islands strongly supported the Suva Declaration and related recommendations, however the representative of the Marshall Islands asked the meeting to note that she had not seen it, hence had not had adequate time to consider the Suva paper and therefore was not in a position to endorse it. The representatives of the USA and Australia suggested that the meeting note the resolution rather than endorse it as a means of progressing the issue.

273. The representative of French Polynesia highlighted collaboration between the Cook Islands and French Polynesia on the Rimatara lorikeet restocking project in Atiu, and the representative of the Cook Islands notified the meeting of the successful outcomes of their kakerori recovery programme.

274. Both representatives asked for consideration for funding to assist with the further development of projects between Member countries in relation to birds. They thanked all the parties involved, including the Secretariat and Birdlife International, with special mention of the Government of New Zealand for funding the Suva meeting.

275. The representative of Niue said that a Niuean NGO had been awarded an international award by Birdlife International for its bird-feeding programme.

276. The representative of Samoa stated the region was now moving into a more difficult area of nature conservation related to bird conservation, and believed that this programme will help coordinate bird conservation work in the region.

277. The representative of Vanuatu requested increased attention from international NGOs and donors in relation to its bird conservation actions. It seems that they are being very selective in where they want to work, and Vanuatu seems to be left out, he said.

278. The representative of the USA said that US Fish and Wildlife is very interested in collaborating with the Pacific, having shared concerns over migratory birds which travel between the USA and Pacific Islands. She also expressed strong support for collaboration between SPREP and interested parties on regional bird conservation strategies.

279. The representative of Birdlife International said he represented their Pacific Partnership, a network of eight conservation NGOs working together to improve the status of globally threatened birds. He wanted to build on the Suva Meeting in bringing together Birdlife Pacific Partners and SPREP member countries, and to make best possible use of scarce resources. To achieve this we should continue developing common strategies as well as actions on the ground. This could save what remains of the region's threatened and endangered bird species before it is too late.

280. The Chair supported the adoption of the recommendation as amended, which was to welcome the Suva Declaration rather than to endorse it.



281. The Meeting:

- (i) Noted the outcomes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bird Conservation Programme and Regional Bird Conservation Strategy meeting;
- (ii) Welcomed the resolution arising from the joint SPREP and BirdLife Pacific meetings in Suva, Fiji, 27 June–2 July 2005, the “Suva Declaration”; and
- (iii) Noted the significance of this new approach to better integrating species conservation efforts into the region’s work in pursuit of the goal of significantly reducing loss of biodiversity.

## **7.2 Pacific Futures Programme Issues**

### **7.2.1 Climate Change Issues**

282. The Working Paper 7.2.1 advised the Meeting of the status of the work of the Secretariat in climate change and variability, sea level rise, and stratospheric ozone depletion. The Secretariat sought the Meeting’s comments and agreement on the revised Pacific Islands Framework on Climate Change 2006–2015, to be recommended to the Forum for endorsement. The Secretariat also sought the Meeting’s endorsement of the Regional Meteorological Services Directors’ meeting “Alofi Statement 2005” to be drawn to the attention of the next Forum Leaders Meeting in October.

283. In presenting the paper, the Secretariat provided the background of the framework including the meetings leading up to drafting it, and the review that had been carried out. It also highlighted the purpose, scope, and assistance of donors and expert reviews.

284. The representative of New Zealand congratulated the stakeholders in preparing the framework. He said New Zealand was prepared to endorse the framework and the Alofi Statement. He enquired whether the “Action Plan” would also be discussed at this meeting. SPREP informed that the Action Plan would be developed as soon as the framework is endorsed.

285. After some discussion, the meeting agreed to adopt the framework as a document agreed by the meeting of regional experts in Madang and take note of the suggestions of Kiribati and the Marshall Islands.

286. The representative of Samoa congratulated the Climate Change team for the excellent report and commended the work of the former coordinator. Samoa fully supported the framework including its priorities on adaptation measures and suggested this part be expanded. He also supported the work on the 2<sup>nd</sup> national communication and enquired about the status of partnership with SPREP to implement the 2<sup>nd</sup> national communication. As background information, Samoa informed that SPREP had introduced a proposal to work with countries through a consultancy and viewed this as both an exciting development and a good model for other projects.

287. The Secretariat clarified it is currently working with several countries on the 2<sup>nd</sup> national communication. It aims to come up with a stocktake and develop a full proposal in which each country can access up to US\$405,000. The Secretariat also informed that it would be recruiting a Climate Change Adviser, who will support the work of the 2<sup>nd</sup> national communication at the country level.

288. The representative of Federated States of Micronesia registered support for the framework. FSM also thanked New Zealand for financing its participation at the Madang meeting. FSM looked forward to working with the Secretariat and thanked it for assistance with the exercise to date.

289. The representative of Tonga acknowledged the work of the outgoing coordinator, and the remaining staff. He acknowledged that the process is ongoing and that his delegation is well aware of the efforts for the document to reach this stage. Tonga supported the Director's sentiment in terms of not re-opening the document for negotiation and stated that it would be sensible to move forward with the document to achieve concrete results. Tonga noted with sincerity the attention given to adaptation with the expected outcome by 2015. It supported the recommendations in the document.

290. The representative of Cook Islands endorsed and supported both the framework and the comments by the Director to be forwarded to the Forum. He endorsed and supported the Alofi Statement.

291. The representative of Vanuatu added that the framework is critical for Vanuatu in encouraging its moving away from a project approach towards a programmatic approach. The document will provide guidance in dealing with climate change issues, and he stressed the importance to process the document to enable implementation at ground level.

292. The representative of Niue echoed the support of other delegations in endorsing the framework. He also informed that Niue is ahead with its 2<sup>nd</sup> national communications and had submitted it to GEF in 2004.

293. The representative of Fiji expressed appreciation of the Secretariat's work in addressing areas where Fiji is concerned with climate change. Fiji stands ready to agree with the framework to be forwarded for endorsement by the Forum. He stated that the goals related well to concerns and issues of importance to Members, especially on adaptation measures. He cited the Capacity Building for the Development of Adaptation Measures in Pacific Island Countries (CBDAMPIC) project and other related activities. He also noted global warming effects. He stressed that government decision would be guided in implementing the climate change policy and partnerships and cooperation were very important. Countries like Fiji need to look to other organisations that may be working together with other implementing agencies on climate change issues.

294. The representative of Marshall Islands regretted she had not been able to conclude her discussions prior to the SPREP Meeting and hoped to complete these for endorsement to be forwarded to Forum.

295. The representative of PNG informed that it had started work on the 2<sup>nd</sup> national communication as part of its national actions on climate change.

296. The representative of the USA agreed for the framework to be forwarded to Forum. The USA strongly supported the Alofi Statement and the USA was party to that, back in April. She supported the idea of meteorology services providing the basis for support in weather and climate work.

297. The representative of Samoa acknowledged the Secretariat's support over the past 11 years despite its limited budget. He acknowledged that SPREP was the only regional organisation that recognises the work of meteorology services in the region. He acknowledged the Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (ARM) Program, the Pacific Islands Global Climate Observing Systems (PIGCOS) and the donors for their support towards meteorology services in the region. Samoa hoped for a protocol for reporting meteorology services to Forum.

298. The representative of French Polynesia supported the Alofi Declaration and Framework but, in respect of this last document, queried the need for taking it up to the Forum for a second endorsement if it is already approved by the SPREP Meeting.

299. In response, the Chair informed that in his understanding Kiribati would distribute its observation. Also, the Forum needed to make a decision to allow inclusion of territories. He wondered if the Forum's endorsement could be left out. Samoa said it understood that the Forum will make any decision at this meeting but that the SPREP Meeting is the one to endorse the framework.

300. The Chair asked the meeting to amend the first recommendation "review and agree" to reflect the intended outcome. Australia cautioned this would cause problems knowing that the Forum had asked the Secretariat to update the framework in 2003, stressing the Forum's ownership. The Chair suggested a neutral term to replace "to be forwarded for endorsement by the Pacific Forum Leaders" by "to be submitted to the Pacific Forum Leaders".

301. The Secretariat clarified to the Meeting by referring to the Forum communiqué of 2003 "...and forward its recommendations for consideration at the SPREP Meeting". The representative of the USA agreed to a compromise term and looked forward to seeing details of the implementation, especially as SPREP's climate adviser comes on.

302. The representative of the Marshall Islands reminded that she was not in a position to endorse until they conclude national discussions. The Secretariat responded to this concern and suggested that the Meeting note that Marshall Islands has not completed its national review and when it does this be forwarded to the Forum and to SPREP. In the meantime this would be reflected in the record.

303. The Meeting:
- (i) Endorsed the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006–2015 to be forwarded to the Pacific Forum Leaders in 2005;
  - (ii) Endorsed the Regional Meteorological Directors Meeting’s Alofi Statement 2005 for the Secretariat to bring to the attention of the Pacific Forum Leaders in 2005;
  - (iii) Noted with appreciation the effective partnership between SPREP, UNDP, GEF and the PICs on sourcing funds for regional greenhouse gas mitigation activities and request a continued partnership to source more funds for more regional and national greenhouse gas mitigation activities;
  - (iv) Noted the work done by the Secretariat to progress Second National Communications;
  - (v) Endorsed the need for adaptation for local communities to be further continued and request other development partners to assist with the continuation of adaptation implementation;
  - (vi) Endorsed the need for effective Pacific islands representation to the 12 Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol and the proposed preparatory workshop being planned by the Secretariat in this regard; and
  - (vii) Agreed with the need for the work of the Secretariat to complete the current phase of the Pacific ODS Project and request participating countries to establish and implement ODS regulations within the extended timeframe.

### ***7.2.2 Strategy for Solid Waste Management in Pacific Island Countries and Territories***

304. The Secretariat referred to Working Paper 7.2.2 and stated that a regional strategy for solid waste management has been under development for some years. The paper provides the historical background. Solid waste management is one of the region's priority environmental issues and a concerted and cooperative regional effort is needed. The paper provided the Meeting with the draft Strategy for Solid Waste Management in the PICTs region for approval as well as to obtain commitment from the Members to fully support and participate in the implementation of the activities in the strategy. Without commitment this would only remain a "paper" strategy.

305. The Chair expressed his appreciation for the strategy because it takes a holistic and integrated approach that is in line with major national and regional issues in this area. He also noted the rigorous examination and consultation process that had taken place in developing the strategy.

306. The representative of Tonga acknowledged the work and quality of the document and understood the document had undergone vigorous review processes. Tonga had been fully consulted with the preparation of the document and as such fully endorsed the recommendations of WP 7.2.2.

307. The representative of Samoa recognised that the document reflects issues of concern in most countries. Samoa saw these issues as a priority and acknowledged the support of Japan, through strong partnerships with JICA and SPREP that enabled Samoa's work to move forward. He suggested that wastewater be included in the strategy as it goes hand-in-hand with solid waste and perhaps could be fitted under part 3. He also commented that the framework is still generic and proposed another part to the strategy (part 5) to deal with practical options in the Pacific. This would make it more relevant to all countries big and small, citing the example that landfills may not be a relevant solution for atolls; perhaps small countries could work in partnership with big countries in managing waste.

308. The representative of Guam commented that the strategy was regional and that each island faced different issues. He added it was critical to use the strategy as a guide to develop country-specific guidelines and noted the importance of SPREP's leadership and guidance. He was concerned that the strategy would involve management systems and capital investments and one had to be mindful of the options available. He informed that the Western Pacific Executives' Summit had set up an initiative called the Pacific Island Regional Recycling Initiative Committee (PIRRIC). This is aimed at putting together a strategy to deal with the recycling of waste in the sub-region. He flagged the potential of learning from these experiences and replicating the initiative in other countries and sub-regions. He also reminded the Meeting that addressing water and solid waste involves the entire community. He foresaw the inclusion of other industries in future work, stating that in seeking assistance, Members should not limit themselves to CROP.

309. The representative of Niue endorsed the Strategy and noted his earlier request for assistance with the disposal of asbestos.

310. The representative of American Samoa echoed support regarding the importance of addressing solid waste by Members, both individually and cooperatively. He noted that Appendix 1 was outdated and needed to capture recent accomplishment in recycling activities. Also, Appendix 2 needed to be updated. In relation to Samoa and Guam's comments, American Samoa enquired whether SPREP intended to amend the Appendix 1 or whether the intention was to share information.

311. The representative of Vanuatu commended SPREP on the excellent document that should be used as a starting point to seriously consider waste issues in the Pacific. He urged that the Strategy was a negotiated text agreed after a series of sub-regional consultations. It captured issues that were common to Members but could also be used by Members as a guide in developing a national solid waste framework that is more country-specific. For implementation of the Strategy and other associated initiatives, such as that for wastewater, CROP agencies needed to clarify their role to promote effective co-operation and implementation of activities. He reminded Members of the need to take the lead on strategies instead of leaving this to the Secretariat. Vanuatu fully endorsed the document and awaited implementation at national level.

312. The representative of New Zealand was glad to see the strategy being finalised. He sought clarification on the modalities for the regional cooperation mechanism, in particular the Secretariat's role. He also queried how monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy would be carried out, particularly at the regional level.

313. The representative of France underlined the relevance and necessity to invest in effective management of solid waste, and that the document gave a good number of guidelines for moving forward. France supported the strategy and intended to actively contribute to its implementation. To this end, he would like to receive the suggestions and proposals of the Secretariat.

314. The representative of Marshall Islands recognised that the strategy could be used also as a guide for countries, and where appropriate formulate partnerships, for example on recycling. She supported the Strategy and noted the need for more updated and appropriate information.

315. The representative of French Polynesia stated that solid waste management was a priority for his Government, citing a national programme to reduce the use of plastic bags and increase the recycling of waste. He stressed the importance of information sharing with everyone including industry, to promote and improve understanding and to welcome initiatives such as waste disposal.

316. The representative of Tuvalu endorsed the Strategy. He highlighted that waste is particularly problematic for atoll states, given their limited land area and low-lying nature. He understood that the work to address solid waste management in atoll countries had stopped and requested that this work be resurrected, because of the dire need for this in atoll countries.



317. The representative of Fiji acknowledged the Secretariat's assistance with developing its national waste management strategy which Fiji was now ready to endorse. He requested that incineration be carefully considered as a disposal option because of emissions of the toxic gases and requested the Secretariat's assistance in further studies and assessments of incineration. Fiji also saw the need for regional cooperation with recycling as a way of making this economically viable. He also highlighted the importance of a regional approach on waste disposal initiatives such as for Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS).

318. The representative of Kiribati stated that waste management is a priority issue for Kiribati. He encouraged co-operation between countries as an effective remedy to share success stories and knowledge of waste management. He requested from the Secretariat greater focus on atoll countries in addressing the vicious cycle of waste.

319. In response, the Secretariat clarified that the document provided a framework that would evolve over time; there were already mechanisms in place for its evolution.

320. Regarding wastewater issues, the Secretariat assured the Meeting that this was a priority work area for SOPAC and as such it would collaborate closely with SOPAC. One should also be mindful of the strengths of SOPAC in wastewater and SPREP in solid waste; the two sister organisations will work in collaboration. The Secretariat was aware of the need for integration, indeed a document exists on the integration of all waste.

321. The Secretariat is fully aware of the PIRRIC initiative in the west Pacific and attended the Executives' Summit. It agreed that the initiative was relevant to other parts of the region and had established linkages through its website with the PIRRIC website.

322. The Secretariat noted the concern raised by Niue on asbestos and will address this as a priority.

323. The intent of Appendix 1 was for information sharing. The Secretariat informed the Meeting a field trip to Tafaigata landfill had been arranged to take place the day after as a form of information exchange and to highlight the successful collaboration between JICA, Samoa and SPREP.

324. Regarding the New Zealand question on regional coordination, the Secretariat will oversee all this. Monitoring and evaluation will be done through processes at the national level; at the regional level this will be done through evaluating work when requested.

325. The Secretariat welcomed assistance from France and would welcome and encourage other potential donors and partners.

326. The Secretariat fully recognised the importance of sharing information and will utilise existing mechanisms such as PEIN.

327. The Secretariat agreed with Tuvalu and Kiribati's comments on the special vulnerability of atoll countries to waste and accordingly allocated high priority to waste management assistance to atoll countries. It is a difficult area and the Secretariat has consulted extensively with other island regions, as yet there is no existing method for effective management of waste in atoll countries.

328. The Secretariat concurred with Fiji on the viability of a regional approach to address recycling of waste, in order to maximise economies of scale.

329. The representative of American Samoa sought clarification on how frequently the Strategy was to be reviewed.

330. The Secretariat replied that a review would be carried out every 5 years.

331. The Chair thanked all for the work put into developing the strategy and the extensive discussion and encouraged Members to fully participate in the implementation of the strategy.

332. The Secretariat informed the Meeting of a workshop to be convened in November to further develop the plans for the strategy, and urged all Members to participate. The Secretariat acknowledged Japan's assistance with the funding of PIC participation at the Workshop and urged Territories to attend.

333. The Meeting:

- (i) Endorsed the draft Strategy for Solid Waste Management in Pacific Island Countries and Territories; and
- (ii) Committed itself and all Members to fully support and participate in implementing the activities contained in the strategy

### ***7.2.3 Increasing Integration of Pacific Island Territories into the Work Programme of the Secretariat***

334. The Secretariat tabled its report of the meeting of June 2005, which included collaborative efforts on the implementation of the SPREP 2005–2009 Action Plan and Strategic Plan. Some of the priorities identified within the report were:

- (i) Better communication between Secretariat and territories;
- (ii) Competence availability in the territories;
- (iii) Creation of Focal Points within territories and the Secretariat for the exchange of information;
- (iv) Better visibility of SPREP action within territories as most information is distributed in English;
- (v) Mobilisation and/or tapping into expertise available within territories that could be shared with other PICs, and regional policies; and
- (vi) Management of territories and involvement in the Pacific Plan.

335. The report reiterated the need for cooperation and integration of territories and the Meeting was invited to note, and comment on, the report.

336. The representatives of French Polynesia, Guam, American Samoa, USA and New Caledonia commended the Secretariat not only for holding the Meeting but also for the quality of the report as presented. They underlined the importance of ensuring better eligibility for the territories to tap into international funds.

337. The representative of French Polynesia thanked the SPREP Members for allowing for this type of meeting to occur.

338. The representative of Guam noted the need for better communication of any activity to happen well in advance. If initiatives are brought to the attention of the Territories early on, they are likely to commit themselves to these. Communication is a vital step to ensure integration and that collaborative work happens successfully.

339. The representative of New Caledonia would pass on to the Secretariat a list of their expertise and areas of their capacity where they could help out other Member countries. New Caledonia undertook to translate, within its capabilities, documents likely to interest SPREP Members on its various institutional sites.

340. The Meeting:

- (i) Noted the report of the Meeting with the territories;
- (ii) Urged the Secretariat to pursue efforts in promoting greater involvement of the Pacific island territories in the work programme of SPREP; and
- (iii) Requested the Secretariat to report to the next SPREP meeting on the steps undertaken to address the identified opportunities and mechanisms for greater involvement and participation of the Pacific island territories into the work programme of SPREP.

### **7.3 Effects of Human Population on the Environment**

341. The Secretariat presented a discussion paper on the linkages between population and the environment, noting that this paper had been requested by the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting. The paper highlighted population changes in the region and problems associated with these. The Secretariat drew attention to the recommendations which refer to ongoing activities in this area.

342. Given the lack of questions and interventions from the Members, the Chair moved to adopt the recommendations whilst urging the Members to support the Secretariat's efforts in this important work area.

343. The Meeting:

- (i) Noted the discussion paper on population, settlement and the environment;
- (ii) Commended the United Nations Environment Programme for pledging resources to assist with the 5<sup>th</sup> MCED Pacific Initiative “Sustainable Community Lifestyles in the Pacific island countries – Planning for implementation” and encourage its continued support;
- (iii) Commended work with the UNDP/GEF in bringing to fruition the Portfolio Approach to Sustainable Land Management project for land degradation, which among other things will avail resources for integrated land use planning;
- (iv) Noted the programme component activities that will assist with capacity development for PICTs to manage population related pressures on the environment, especially those delivered through the Environment Policy and Planning component 2.5 of Pacific Futures; and
- (v) Urged Members and their partners to support and participate in implementing the activities intended in Programme component 2.5, including the leveraging of resources to engage an EIA officer to support these activities.

#### **7.4 Consideration and Approval of Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2006 and Indicative Budgets for 2007 and 2008**

344. The Secretariat provided a brief overview of the budget details and noted the increase in the budget from \$7.6m in 2005 to over \$8m in 2006, partly attributable to new projects anticipated in 2006 including PIGGAREP and Invasive Species from GEF. Additionally, NZAID have approved several projects over the next few years.

345. The lower spending experienced in 2004 as well as 2005 was largely due to staff shortages; this will change in moving forward, given that many of the vacant positions are now filled. The Secretariat pointed out there had not been a Members’ contribution increase since 2004, partly due to the concerns raised by the small island countries. In comparison to other CROP agencies, the Secretariat has the smallest ratio in terms of Members’ contributions to total budget. And given the high expectations and service demands by the Members, the Secretariat required Members’ consideration of additional support to the Secretariat to enable it to provide efficient and effective delivery of the strategic programmes.

346. The Secretariat wanted to highlight this inevitable need for consideration since as costs increase, the Members must decide whether they would support an increase in contributions or reduce the services to be provided by the Secretariat. The Secretariat also highlighted the significant reduction in the unsecured component of the budget funding. For 2004 the unsecured component was 31% of the total budget, 19% in 2005 and 8% in 2006. The Secretariat welcomed the initiative of Members and donors who sought clarification on the work programme and budget prior to the SPREP Meeting and encouraged this practice in the future to facilitate discussions in plenary.

347. The representative of the USA referred the Members to page 2 of the Working Paper and pointed out the possible increase in Member contributions in the future. She pointed out that, while the Secretariat has assured the Members that the salary increase will be covered by savings from operating efficiencies, it was signaling an increase in the near future. She also pointed out that increases in contributions in the past four years have amounted to 67% and therefore she did not support a further increase. She asked that the Secretariat maximise its efficiencies as in the salary increase case, and become more active in sourcing other funding to fill this gap in the future.

348. The representative of New Zealand thanked the Secretariat for the concerted effort to reduce unsecured funding, as it allows the Members to set its priorities rather than having donors dictate priorities. She also echoed the concerns raised by the USA and requested that the Secretariat provide a clear analysis on how much is required by the Secretariat in terms of operating expenses to deliver the strategic programmes.

349. The representative of Niue noted that the GEF funding made up about 20% of the proposed budget. Niue then sought clarification on exactly how much of this the Secretariat receives in Administration Fees to manage the project.

350. The representative of French Polynesia sought clarification as to whether all the positions on page 43 of the budget have secured funding or if some are unsecured.

351. The representative of Australia echoed the concerns raised by New Zealand and the USA and emphasised that his government is focused on getting results. He encouraged a flexible programme allocation to areas of need during the year. He believed enough interventions had been made by the Members to give guidance on priorities and make allocation decisions.

352. The representative of Samoa commended the improvements in the budget and suggested an extra column be added to the schedule on page 3 to allow the Secretariat to report the current year's financial out turn as well as a projection to the year's end. He pointed out that several positions in the budget that are vacant and some urgency should be employed to fill these in light of the priorities raised by Members during this meeting. Samoa also urged Members to settle outstanding Members' contributions and requested the Secretariat to regularly remind Members of their contributions. With respect to any increase, Samoa would find it difficult to raise its contribution any higher than current levels.

353. The representative of Marshall Islands advised her government will be rationalising its programmes soon. It may remove any that are not benefiting the Marshall Islands and therefore she was not in a position to endorse any increase in Member contributions. Additionally, she queried whether the increase in programme management charge in the 2006 budget from the 2005 budget would be sufficient to cover the future needs of SPREP.

354. The Chair summarised the interventions and highlighted that the Members' contributions make a small percentage of the overall budget. The Chair also noted that the reason the Secretariat was able to balance its budget for 2006 is because of the savings from the depreciation reserve. He reminded the Members that this issue will have to be discussed sooner rather than later.

355. The representative of Tonga supported the intervention by Samoa and noted that collecting all the arrears would go a long way to alleviating the need for an increase in future years. Tonga also requested an update on the recovery of contributions from Nauru, given this makes up nearly half the total outstanding to date.

356. The Secretariat explained that, in relation to the increase in Members' contributions, it feels it had a duty to inform the Members of this possibility in the coming years, despite the news being an unpleasant one. The Secretariat also advised that collecting all the contribution arrears would not avoid the need for a contributions increase, especially without the depreciation reserve to draw upon. The Secretariat reiterated that it is trying very hard to improve operating efficiencies to create savings and to manage money markets to maximise its return on investments. However, the returns from these in its estimation would not be sufficient to cover cost and demand increases. The Secretariat also pointed out that the fundamental question was about ownership of the organisation as external donors cannot be expected to contribute to SPREP when the level of its Members shares are low and due contributions not paid.

357. In response to the programme management charge question for GEF projects, the Secretariat advised that GEF projects like the International Waters Project are charged on a cost recovery basis. This is a compromise given the rules and regulations of GEF-funded projects. In relation to the salary schedule, the Secretariat advised that all those listed have secured funding. The positions throughout the body of the work programme that have been noted as unfunded have not been included in the budget. The Secretariat also took on board the suggestion by Samoa to improve page three of the work programme and budget; and will work towards including this in future budgets. In relation to Nauru, the Secretariat advised that it has repeatedly wrote to Nauru but no response has been received.

358. The representative of Australia sought clarification from the Secretariat on the mechanisms in place to allow adjustments to allocation, or to reallocate funding from one programme to another, to adapt or accommodate the changing priorities of countries from year to year. He queried whether allocations could be altered, or were the Members locked in, based on the proposed work programme and budget.

359. The Secretariat advised that a number of donors have allowed it some flexibility to reallocate funds for adapting to the changing environment and PICTs demands, and thanked these donors. The Secretariat encouraged all donors to allow it flexibility in allocating funds, to ensure the work delivered was parallel to the current and emerging needs of the Members. The Secretariat encouraged the open and candid interventions by all Members during the meeting to inform the Secretariat of its needs.



360. The representative of the Marshall Islands reiterated her previous intervention as to whether the programme management fee increase, as shown in the budget between the 2005 and 2006 budget, can offset the future need of a Members' contribution increase. Secondly, she asked if the charge applied to GEF projects was 20% or 30%.

361. The Secretariat advised that GEF projects are not charged a flat percentage, rather they pay for actual services and sources consumed.

362. The representative of New Zealand enquired about Output 1.1.3, asking what actions were proposed to implement the Whales and Dolphin Actions Plan.

363. The Secretariat advised that the New Zealand-funded Marine Species Officer will continue the implementation of relevant aspects of the Action Plan. It highlighted an omission in the action column to match the relevant indicator under 1.3.1.

364. The representative of the Marshall Islands requested clarification of unsecured positions in the body of the work programme, especially with regards to the Biosafety Officer that she understood was already housed at the Secretariat.

365. The Secretariat advised that the position has featured for several years in the budget, but lack of funding had caused the position not to be filled. The Secretariat continues to seek funding especially in light of its importance highlighted in the interventions. In relation to the Biosecurity Officer at the Secretariat, this officer works for UNEP and while there is collaboration between this officer and SPREP, his main focus is on the UNEP project. The Secretariat highlighted its limited capacity for terrestrial work and will endeavour to improve resources in this area.

366. The representative of New Zealand complimented the Secretariat on the indicators of the work programme and encouraged it to continue to improve this practice, as it allows Members to better judge the performance of the organisation.

367. The Chair summarised the interventions and welcomed the new culture of reporting that makes evaluations easier to conduct. The Members were then invited to review the Executive Function. As there were no interventions, the Chair moved to adopt the 2006 Work Programme and budget.

368. The Meeting approved the proposed 2006 work programme and budget and noted the indicative budgets for 2007 and 2008.

## **Agenda Item 8: Institutional Matters**

### **8.1 Appointment of SPREP Director (Report by the Chair of SAC)**

369. The Chair announced that the Meeting had reappointed the incumbent to the post of Director. He congratulated Mr Asterio Takesy on the good work over the past three years and that the excellent work by the Secretariat reflects his good leadership. He also reiterated the support by all Members of his tenure and wished him well in his remaining term.

### **8.2 Proposed Procedures for Reappointment of Incumbent Directors in the Future**

370. The Secretariat presented a paper with a view to harmonising practices evolving at other CROP agencies on reappointment of incumbents, and a mechanism to enable all PICTs to comment on the performance of the incumbent Director.

371. The Secretariat sought agreement in that future Directors provide annually to the SPREP Meeting a report on achievements of identified management objectives and goals, upon which Members would determine whether his/her performance earns a salary increment. On the second year in office, in a first term, the SPREP Meeting could use these annual reports as the basis on which it would decide whether to offer a second term or to advertise the post.

372. The representative of French Polynesia asked for clarification of the recommendations and whether the annual report as suggested was to justify a salary raise for the Director, or to establish a new procedure for appointment of the Director. If so, he drew the attention of the Meeting to the practice in other regional organisations (e.g. SPC), where reporting back is every second year. He also asked whether this same report is to be used at the end of the term of the incumbent Director. Or would this mean that if the Director was not performing well on an annual basis, that the Members use this report to cancel his/her contract.

373. He said that it would become too cumbersome an undertaking to be handled during a SPREP Meeting and also pointed to impracticalities. For example, who will actually do the evaluation? And if the evaluation finds that the Director's performance was not up to par, did this mean that the Members could 'do away' with the Director on an annual basis?

374. He also stated that at the time of renewal of mandate, if the evaluation was found positive, the Members could abstain from going through the whole procedure of advertising the vacancy and just renew the contract without the current cumbersome and costly procedure.

375. The representative of New Zealand reiterated the ambiguity of the recommendations and suggested the recommendations be divided into two: Firstly, that the report be used as a performance-based report of the Director and that the Members have the choice of reappointing so long as there was satisfactory performance. Secondly, the report should be annual as some issues need to be addressed on an annual basis and should not be left to fester as Members might have to wait for the three-year term of the incumbent to end.

376. The Secretariat provided clarification on points raised and stated that the SPC Conference occurs biennially hence the two-year reporting and contracting basis.

377. The representative of Samoa stated that there should be no question as to whether the Director needed to report annually as this is the norm for every organisation. However the point of salary increase should be separated from the performance-based report. He also said that the performance review of the Director should be done at the end of the three-year term of the incumbent Director; he further clarified that the CEO post of SPC is reviewed on a two-year basis because of their 2 + 2 + 2-year rule.

378. He supported the points raised by French Polynesia that the annual evaluation was a cumbersome job for the SPREP Meeting. He understood the point raised by other countries but Members should also take the point that a one-year non-performer may be able to improve his/her performance after feedback from the Meeting. But he stated that the recommendation to report back annually on a personal level was not accepted by his Government.

379. The representative of Australia stated that the first point in the recommendations was about the Director reporting back to the Meeting on his/her performance; and for the Meeting as his 'Directors' to guide and advise him/her on ways to improve his performance. This is totally different from the requirement for the Director to report on the performance of the Secretariat as an organisation. He stated that the first system would enable the 'bosses' to advise the improvement of the Director's performance during a closed session. Australia therefore supported the recommendation based on his definitions provided.

380. The representative of the USA supported the comments by Australia. She stated that the performance evaluation is more a personal evaluation as opposed to an organisational evaluation. She further stated that she was sure that the Director would be able to bring very good and measurable marks enabling the Members to make a decision on the Director's reappointment or not when his/her three-year term comes to end.

381. The representative of Tuvalu asked the meeting to consider the Director's annual report as a basis for the performance appraisal of the Director. She also suggested that perhaps the outputs under the Secretariat's annual work programme could be used to develop measurable indicators for the performance evaluation.

382. The representative of the Marshall Islands stated she had always understood that the evaluation of the work programme equalled the evaluation of the Director. She pointed back to her comments raised in earlier discussions about micromanagement. The suggestion of a personal evaluation will mean that the Members will be doing just that.

383. The Chair suggested that the existing recommendations in the paper be divided into two— that:

- (i) The Meeting invited the Director to report on the state of his performance in light of the aims and strategic objectives of the organisation. This report may be used by Members to establish whether the performance of the Director justifies a salary raise.
- (ii) The Meeting decide that after two years, the Director's performance is evaluated and based on the performance to decide whether to change the mandate or not.

384. The Chair stated he was supportive of annual reporting: this should not be taken as a reason to replace the Director but rather as a way to guide the Director on where to improve.

385. The representative of New Zealand acknowledged the impracticalities of an annual review. He asked if there was a possibility of the Chair and Vice-Chair negotiating a review of the Director's performance on behalf of the Members, and then to report back to the Meeting on an annual basis. This review should be open to Members for commenting before the final report is presented at the meeting.

386. The representative of Australia suggested, given the sensitivity of the issue, to defer the subject to next year's meeting. He offered his assistance in developing a paper in collaboration with other Member countries, on ways to deal with personal responsibilities in achieving organisational goals. This proposal will give confidentiality and security for options raised. He stated that it is a complicated issue that Australia itself is struggling with and so it was unfair to put this expectation on the Secretariat.

387. The Chair thanked Australia for the comments. He conceded that it is good to take stock of issues and look at evaluation at a regular basis, especially in situations that are difficult to appraise. He suggested taking on board comments by Australia and asked the Meeting to consider setting up a working group to develop a process for evaluating the work of the Director. The process would be submitted to the next SPREP meeting for consideration by Members.

388. The Meeting agreed:

- (i) To establish a working group facilitated through email by Australia and a core group comprising Samoa, Tonga, FSM, French Polynesia and any other interested Members to allow consideration of a system for evaluating the Director's performance and to report to the 17<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting; and
- (ii) That on the second year of the Director's first term, the Members evaluate his/her performance and decide on whether to offer a second term or advertise the post.

### **8.3 Proposed Amendments to the Current Procedures for Recruitment of Post of Director (Paper by Australia)**

389. The representative of Australia tabled a paper suggesting changes to the recruitment of Directors. He pointed to Rule 7 of the SPREP Rules of Procedure for Appointment of Director and presented Australia's concern that having government nominations is potentially inconsistent with the position being based on merit.

390. The Meeting was invited to comment on the suggestion to remove the current requirement of requiring government nomination of candidates for the post of Director. He stated that this would encourage a transparent and more open field.

391. The representatives of France, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand and the USA supported the proposal. However the representatives of Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Samoa, PNG, Tokelau, Tonga and Vanuatu wanted to retain the current procedure. The representative of Tuvalu did not have sufficient time to read the proposal to have a position on it.

392. The representative of Australia thanked representatives for their frank and insightful comments and withdrew the proposal to ensure consensus. He clarified the proposal as being focused entirely on SPREP member countries being nominees. He explained that endorsement and nomination have different meanings and that Australia does not express a view on who the best candidate from his country would be; yet he understood that it worked for other SPREP members. He indicated that Australia may give some consideration to its nomination process.

393. The Chair asked participants to note the withdrawal of this proposal.

## **Agenda Item 9: Regional Cooperation**

### **9.1 Pacific Plan (an update by the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat)**

394. The Chair invited the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) to update the Meeting on the Pacific Plan then asked for Member comments and clarifications.

395. Dr Padma Lal, Sustainable Policy Adviser of PIFS, outlined the developments of the Pacific Plan since the Forum Leaders adopted it in 2004.

396. She briefed the meeting on the origin of the Pacific Plan which gave effect to the Leaders' Vision for the future of the Pacific. The Plan is a framework for effective engagement among Pacific Island countries. It is not a blueprint but a process that aims to strengthen collaborative efforts and to evolve over time.

397. Its goals are to enhance and stimulate economic growth, enhance sustainable development, and promote good governance. It is about regionalism where people in countries are working together for individuals and collective benefits. It means not to replace, but add value to, what is happening at the country level. Different types of regionalism are aimed at improving diseconomies of scale to reduce costs of delivering services to the countries.

398. A Task Force set up by the Leaders, comprising senior government officials, CROP representatives and non-state actors had met several times to guide the development of the Pacific Plan. At the national level, extensive consultations with all stakeholders have occurred in order to enhance ownership of the Pacific Plan by the people and the countries.

399. Three of the Plan's Guiding Principles are: to increase the wellbeing of the people of the Pacific; meeting common responsibilities and providing services cost-effectively; and strengthening partnerships.

400. The Plan identifies priorities and three categories being developed outlining "early wins", in principle agreement, and further analysis. Several examples of early wins were presented including the development of NSDS at the country level to mainstream and improve the decision-making process at all levels. Implementation of the Plan will depend on national ownership and partnerships. Extending coverage of the Pacific Plan, to include non-self governing territories, is to be decided by the Leaders.

401. A draft was considered by the Task Force on 1 July and by the Core Leaders on 11 July. Preparation of the Plan is on track for the Leaders' Meeting in PNG in October. A final meeting of the Task Force is planned for 19 September to deliberate on the draft document before it goes to the Leaders.



402. Following the presentations, interventions by representatives of the Marshall Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji focused on membership and composition of the Task Force; the limited time available for country consultation; issues raised and contained in the current draft of the Pacific Plan; ownership; and implementation coordination. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Pacific Plan would provide a good basis for promoting regional collaboration, coordination of its implementation would be a challenge.

403. The Meeting noted the status report on the development of a Pacific Plan.

## **9.2 Reports of the CROP Heads Meetings**

404. The Secretariat tabled a report from the Heads of CROP Meetings for information and comment. The Director elaborated on the objectives of these meetings in April and August 2005, one of which is to deliberate on issues of collaboration (an issue repeatedly raised this week), and leadership at the CROP level. He was optimistic about the leadership by Secretary-General Greg Urwin, and confident that progress has been achieved in the most recent deliberations. He mentioned the recent endorsement by CROP Heads for the establishment of a GEF focal point in SPREP. Genuine attempts were being made to deal with the challenges faced by the organisations and the region through putting their acts together.

405. The Meeting noted the report of the Director.

## **Agenda Item 10: Items Proposed by Members**

### ***Members' Reporting on National Activities under SPREP Action Plan (NZ)***

406. The representative of New Zealand highlighted that last year's Meeting agreed to a name change. He also noted that the Members supported the SPREP Action Plan and highlighted the joint responsibility to undertake this work. He suggested that each year, Members report to the SPREP Meeting on their efforts to implement the SPREP Action Plan, under an agreed theme. This would provide an opportunity to highlight the work being undertaken by Members under the Action Plan. He said it was necessary for a mechanism to be developed and asked for suggestions on how to undertake this process.

407. The Chair supported this proposal and stated that SPC has adopted a theme process for reporting. He suggested that each Member prepare a short briefing on a selected theme.

408. The representative of Marshall Islands supported the idea if it was within the capacity of countries to share information on national initiatives currently taking place and not in a reporting manner.

409. The representative of Vanuatu endorsed the proposal. He said Members can take a stronger lead in implementing the SPREP Action Plan and promoted collaboration and partnerships. He expressed willingness to be involved in the process.

410. The representative of Tonga supported the proposal. Such an agenda item to the Meeting would give Members the opportunity to promote its expectations to the Secretariat.

411. The representative of Samoa suggested the need to refine the process for sharing information on issues, and a mechanism for sharing experiences. He suggested there was a need for a forum for Members to share their work programme to the other Members.

412. The representative of France supported the proposal, however stressed that the Members not be laden with administrative reporting requirements. He suggested that themes are drawn from international agendas, that would result in a significant contribution to regional dialogues. He also stated that other such reports generated in this context could be used as a basis for discussion at the SPREP Meeting.

413. The Chair proposed that the next SPREP Meeting would be a forum to discuss a mechanism for developing and presenting Members' reports and decide on a theme for the 18<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting.

414. The representative of New Caledonia supported the proposal and suggested this would be a good opportunity to better integrate territories into SPREP programmes.

415. The Meeting endorsed the proposal for the next meeting.

***Australia's Global Overseas Development Assistance (Australia)***

416. The representative of Australia said that his government had just decided to increase its global Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) through AusAID to about A\$4 billion by 2010. This represented a doubling of ODA from 2004 levels, much of which will be focused on the Asia-Pacific region.

417. The representative of the Marshall Islands thanked Australia for the information provided on the increase in its ODA.

***Future of the Apia Convention (Australia)***

418. The representative of Australia proposed that the Apia Convention be examined. He said that, although innovative when first introduced, the issues it covers are now also covered by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with the GEF as the main financial mechanism. In the lead-up to the 17<sup>th</sup> SPREP meeting, Members were requested to indicate or confirm their support for a review of the Apia Convention. If the Convention was considered no longer relevant, then the Parties might support its folding and focus instead on supporting SPREP's work programmes.

419. The representatives of Samoa, Fiji and France supported this proposal.

420. The representative of Fiji stressed that some elements of the Convention are important and may need to be continued and integrated into other relevant regional instruments, such as the state of the environment reporting.

421. The Chair summarised that, given the small number of parties to the Convention and the fact that many of the issues are covered through the CBD, there may no longer be a reason to keep it working. He encouraged Members to consider this issue in the lead-up to the next Conference of the Parties in 2006.

***National Capacity Self Assessment Workshop (Marshall Islands)***

422. The representative of the Marshall Islands announced that a National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA) workshop will be held in the week beginning 10 October and thanked the Secretariat for its role in the NCSA process. She thanked the UNDP, particularly the Fiji Office, for assisting with the NCSA proposal, in this regard helping the process to having an NCSA Workshop to be hosted by the Marshall Islands.

***Australia's Adaptation Facility Funding***

423. The representative of Australia provided an update on Australia's support for vulnerability and adaptation initiatives in the Pacific, as requested earlier in the week by Tonga. He advised that \$4 million has been committed to provide support to Pacific island countries to address adaptation issues. He acknowledged the role of the Secretariat in this area, and recognised that national governments are keen to move forward to implement adaptation initiatives on the ground. Adaptation funding will be progressed through existing bilateral grant mechanisms in accord with the Pacific Islands Climate Change Framework. He said the funds would be used to enhance capacity of meteorological services in the region.

424. He said Australia is proceeding on negotiations with Tuvalu and Tonga to progress previously initiated discussions. He announced that Australia is also providing funding to Members through other mechanisms, for example \$2 million to the government of Kiribati as part of a World Bank project. He expressed regret at the slow start but would like to see the funding used without delay.

425. The representative of Tonga requested the Secretariat consider Tuvalu and Tonga in future adaptation work undertaken by the Secretariat.

426. The Director responded to Tonga that the recently approved Climate Change Framework provides the basis for the Secretariat to support Tonga in future adaptation work.

427. The representative of Tuvalu thanked Australia for its assistance on the adaptation project, and thanked Tonga and the Secretariat for their comments in support of adaptation initiatives.

***Development of a United Nations Environment Organisation (France)***

428. The representative of France provided an update on his country's initiative for the creation of a UN environmental organisation built around the current UNEP. He stated there are many regional and international agreements dealing with the environment and it is becoming increasingly difficult to appropriately monitor the numerous activities being undertaken, as a result.

429. He stated that the outcomes of the 26 country working group led by France were presented to the Secretary General earlier this year. The working group proposed, in its preliminary report, to five-yearly reviews of the Millennium Goals and the establishment of an integrated structure dealing with the environment. The proposal now has the support of the European Union and is currently being discussed in the UN General Assembly.

430. The representative of Vanuatu thanked France for the information regarding the proposed UN environmental agency. He expressed difficulties in the reporting requirements of the various agreements and supported a streamlined approach to reporting mechanisms.

***GEF Position in SPREP (Niue)***

431. The representative of Niue outlined that a Third Overall Performance Study of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF-OPS3) review had taken place in March 2005. It highlighted the need for increased capacity of Members in order to access GEF resources. Subsequently, the Secretariat conducted in-depth interviews with Members represented at OPS3. These consultations led to the call for a dedicated GEF position within the Secretariat to provide support to Member countries—among others, the need to:

- (i) Identify opportunities for GEF funding and co-financing to assist SPREP members address environmental priorities;
- (ii) Report on the outcomes of the GEF governing councils;
- (iii) Collaborate with the GEF secretariat and implementing agencies to assist with capacity building of Members, including project proposal development and implementation, which would be beneficial not only nationally but also regionally.

432. Terms of reference had been developed and circulated to Member countries for feedback. Niue reiterated the importance of such support to Member countries and wished to see this request by Member countries come to fruition in the near future.

434. The Director responded that following from the GEF-OPS 3 review and the request from its Members for a GEF position within the Secretariat, the Secretariat has been in consultation with bi-lateral donors. The Director reported that the GEF has responded positively in support of this position. The Secretariat is currently awaiting feedback from the GEF and the donors and hopes this might come into fruition early in 2006.

**Agenda Item 11: Statements by Observers**

435. Observers from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Conservation International (CI), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), University of the South Pacific (USP), Greenpeace, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) presented their respective statements. The statements by observers are attached as Annex 9 (in English only).

**Agenda Item 12: Other Business**

436. These items had been dealt with under Agenda item 10.

**Agenda Item 13: Date and Venue of Seventeenth SPREP Meeting**

447. 437. In accordance with SPREP policy of alternating venues between Members and Headquarters for cost reasons, New Caledonia offered to host the 17<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting in 2006.

438. The Meeting unanimously accepted and thanked New Caledonia for its kind offer.

**Agenda Item 14: Adoption of Report**

439. The Meeting adopted the Record of Proceedings.

**Agenda Item 15: Close**

440. The Chair thanked all representatives of Member countries and territories for their contributions to the discussions, and the Secretariat for the excellent organisation of the 16<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting.

441. In reply, the Director also thanked all delegates for their active participation, the interpreters and translators and the Secretariat staff for their assistance in organising and contributing to the week's events and the success of the Meeting. He then presented small gifts to the Chair and Vice-Chair in recognition of their successful management of the meeting.

# Annexes



Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

## Sixteenth SPREP Meeting

13-16 September 2005, Apia, Samoa

### Annex 1: List of Participants

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## **Annex 2: Director's Introductory Remarks**

### **Asterio Takesy**

I would like to warmly welcome each and every one of the representatives, government leaders, civil society groups and observers, here to the beautiful and peaceful islands of Samoa.

A year has quickly elapsed since we gathered for the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting in wonderful Tahiti. Your participation there and the generosity of our host the government of French Polynesia ensured a successful gathering.

Some key decisions were made that has led to some important transformations taking place for your Secretariat. We have refined our modus operandi to two programmes, Pacific Futures and Pacific Ecosystems, that I will talk about in more detail later this morning. We have also renamed ourselves the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme to better reflect our geography.

During this time the Secretariat has had to contend with an unexpected turnover of personnel across all our work areas for reasons both personal and professional.

Through this transition the commitment from the Secretariat has remained firm. I would like to thank my staff for their commitment to myself as their Director, and welcome the new staff members, most of whom you will likely meet during the next few days. As the Director of this organisation, I cannot stake any claims to being knowledgeable in the various areas of expertise our Programme Officers and staff deal with, in coming to terms with the needs and expectations of our communities each day.

As Pacific islanders we are only too aware that living on tiny, geographically isolated islands with finite resources, low wages, and a trade advantage tipped heavily in favour of the developed world, is not only tough but is getting even tougher.

Typically most Pacific island communities are agriculture-based consisting of subsistence farmers, fishermen or hunters who are living in communities mostly located on coastal shorelines. Many have not had the opportunity for anything apart from basic schooling. Their cultural sophistication and philosophy on life have been learnt from their relationship with the land, rivers and ocean, much of which has been handed from one generation to the next. Family, tribal and village identities and values count for a lot here as do kinship ties to the land and the titles that are bestowed there. I feel many of you in this room can readily identify with what I am describing here.

Even with the assistance that the Secretariat receives from you our member countries, and others donors such as the People's Republic of China, and Japan, our fiscal resources places serious limits on the range of activities and services that ideally we would like to offer.



There are however some factors in running an inter-governmental agency that no amount of money can acquire. What I am talking about here is seldom mentioned in action plans, strategic programmes or as organisations are being restructured. It is not about law, or logic, accounting or the sciences.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, I am asking about what you and I as regional delegates, as environmentalists, and as Pacific islanders, can bring to the table to make SPREP a more dynamic, successful organisation.

As an intergovernmental organisation it is timely to check ourselves and ask basic questions about who we are, what do we stand for and what do we believe is right.

SPREP's focus is exclusively on the environmental needs facing the eight million Pacific citizens—regardless of whether they are rural or urban, black or white, rich or poor, articulate or ignorant.

We may not have the fiscal resources but we still need to reach for the one factor that has made us the resilient, intelligent and free-spirited people that we are. I am talking the human factor: the X-factor. I am talking about bringing emotion, inspiration and passion to the forefront of what we are here to achieve.

As science-based environmentalists, we need to transfer our ideas beyond the masses of empirical research we do, the academic logic that law, accountancy, and the sciences bring, and instead build community partnerships, based on example, trust and friendship.

Pacific Islanders can be very emotional people. We can see it in the way we work, the way we play sport, the way we sing in church, and even in the manner we celebrate our successes and failures. These are always displayed with passion, emotion and inspiration. I put it to you now that we all need to bring these attributes out when committing to the challenges facing our region.

We already have mentors who are leading the way and inspiring others to do likewise.

Those who have heard the brilliant Papua New Guinea environmentalist and lawyer Kep Kinawi know, they are witnessing a man who speaks with a passion and is inspired by his love of the environment and the well being of his fellow man.

Another is the Islands Business Monthly magazine Editor, Fiji's Robert Keith Reid who has backed the work of SPREP since the outset, and writes with a passion and honesty about the environment and all manner of important regional issues. He does this with little fanfare but his magazine is a triumph of accuracy and objectivity.

American Samoa Congressman Eni Falomavaega Hunkin is constantly speaking out on pollution and issues he feels islanders are vulnerable to, with conviction and intelligence. You can sense his purpose and his determination to seek out a better way for his people.

The rousing Te Vaka who lifted this roof off last week are acclaimed internationally for their unique music that fuses traditional Polynesian sounds to contemporary rhythms. These Pacific ambassadors' message to the world is the impact that climate change is having on their beloved Tokelau and other low-lying atolls. Buy their music and listen to what sounds like a slice of heaven.

Whatever position you are in, you must seize every opportunity possible to inspire and convince others that the Pacific environment is relevant and has a right to be.

In my experience, the best governments, communities and organisations are built on the unity and inspiration of its leaders. To ensure the SPREP Action Plan and Strategic Programme of Action, can work and will make a difference, the Secretariat needs your inspiration as leaders and advisers to your own governments. SPREP is committed to providing the best technical advice and assistance, but we this will never eventuate if not met with positive reinforcement from our countries and territories. This means encouraging a culture of positive empowerment where we all take the responsibility to succeed as a region.

As the regions environmental frontline; the Secretariat takes the issues of communicating what we are about seriously. Sometimes we do well and there are times when we know can do better. We need to encourage more substance and less process in the way we deliver our message.

In tandem with what the Secretariat is trying to achieve are other go-ahead ideas aimed to make our world a better place. The Pacific Plan wants to strengthen regional cooperation to allow small islands with fragile economies to achieve more, and ensure we manage our natural resources more efficiently.

Some observers say that this may mean the erosion of our sovereignty and the likelihood of our nations being usurped to suit the agenda of stronger nations. While we will not know the outcome of this until later in the year, I can see some of the advantages in terms of collective action, that may lead us to lives of dignity and peace.

As your Secretariat we need passion, and inspiration as the pre-requisite for action in all sectors of the community. We need business leaders who can offer more than a balancing the books mentality to environmental protection. We need businesses and corporations that take responsibility for their products from the very beginning of the chain of production to their end use and back again—the life cycle approach.

To do this we need to ensure that the real costs—environmental and social—of goods and services are taken account of and particularly when the supply chain begins in the developing world of Pacific island states and territories.

Passion, creativity and inspiration can conquer all.

Some of our member countries have themselves set the benchmark for inspirational environmental examples. Remember:

- Palau's selfless refusal to have geologists from multi-national companies run tests on potentially lucrative underground mineral streams to conserve its ecosystems.
- The Solomon Islands' government cancelled a lucrative deal to one of its larger islands as a dumping ground for toxic wastes from overseas.
- The Cook Islands, Tonga, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia have declared their economic exclusion zones whale-free sanctuaries after being voted down at the International Whaling Commission.

Making environmental progress requires a good plan and strategy, aligned to a passion and harmony that expresses itself when you have optimism, belief and positive flow tendencies.

In sport the results are more immediate and stunning.

- New Zealand All Blacks are being openly encouraged by their coaches to express themselves as an on-field strategy and not to fear failure. Inspired and lead by a son of the Pacific, their trophy cabinet is groaning under the weight of their current success.
- Last week, against huge odds, the Solomon Islands' soccer team went down narrowly to a star-studded Australian soccer team in Honiara by a solitary goal, after being told by their Brazilian coach that the only failure was the failure to give everything they had for their country.
- Against all odds, Fiji's amazing Vijay Singh is battling to become the worlds No. 1 golf player. What an example to every Pacific Islander of what can be achieved by a single-minded plan based on a positive outlook, guts, skill and sheer determination!

I believe that you are all here at this 16<sup>th</sup> SPREP meeting because you are driven to make a difference. You are here to win. This means that you will not let anything stop you—you will find a way around / under / over / through any obstacle. You are the inspirational players for the environment today. You are the people who can make our region and our people the agents of hope and the dreams that this region and our children deserve.

The SPREP Secretariat is committed to providing Pacific people with the will to face every obstacle that is degrading the region's environment and homelands and to overcome. We will not pray for an easier life, our prayer is to become stronger people.

On behalf of the Secretariat I take this moment to salute you and to say that I believe in you and that together we can achieve, prosper and inspire one another to ascend to the higher ground that awaits us.

Thank you.

### **Annex 3: Address by the Outgoing Chair**

#### **OPENING ADDRESS BY FRENCH POLYNESIA**

Mr Bruno Peaucellier, Head of International Relations Department, Office of the President

Minister,  
Director of SPREP,  
Heads of delegations,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Ia Orana, Maeva e Manava.

First of all, allow me to convey to you, on behalf of the Government of French Polynesia and its President, Mr Oscar Manutahi Temaru, French Polynesia's warmest greetings.

It is an honour and a privilege for me to give, on behalf of the outgoing chair of the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting, this brief introductory and welcome speech on the occasion of the official opening of the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of SPREP Officials.

As French Polynesia completes its chairmanship, I would like to reiterate how happy and proud my country was to welcome the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting of Officials and the 5<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting of Environment Ministers to Tahiti. In this connection, we would like to thank you again for the confidence with which you honoured us, and the help you gave us to meet the challenge. I would particularly like to pay tribute to the management and staff of the SPREP Secretariat, who showed unfailing enthusiasm and professionalism, and also to France which gave us unstinting support.

The convening of these meetings in Tahiti was a landmark in that it was the first time, since SPREP was established in 1993, that such conferences have been hosted by a French-speaking member country. We hope that this new experience has won you over and that all SPREP Member States and Territories will not hesitate to repeat the exercise, preferably as soon as possible.

More seriously, as we review this year's wealth of achievements and consolidation, we are gratified by the dynamic thus set in motion to increase the involvement of the territories in SPREP's programmes and activities. Further to the recommendation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Environment Ministers, the Secretariat organised a workshop on this theme last June. The participants unanimously labelled the workshop a success. The findings of this important meeting will be considered at agenda item 7.2.3.

As for us, we hope that this positive move, which meets a real need, is continued and that all the French, American and New Zealand Territories feel fully involved in SPREP's activities and future, for ultimately this concerns our common environment, notwithstanding our institutional, economic, social or linguistic differences.

To illustrate our intention to strengthen dialogue and share our experience with all SPREP Member States and Territories, we are delighted to advise you of an initiative of the Government of French Polynesia designed to fight the spread of plastic bags. This initiative

fits perfectly into the Pacific Year of Action against Waste. The recyclable bags that we are delighted to offer you have been on sale since the beginning of the year in all Tahiti hypermarkets, and can be exchanged free of charge when they wear out. This initiative was very well received by the community and the reduction in the number of plastic bags in circulation is already estimated at over 80%.

As far as we are concerned, we are convinced of the merits of having a regional organisation dedicated to environmental conservation, and we will continue to support any initiatives that will strengthen SPREP and increase its efficiency.

More than ever, we believe that the environmental challenges we are facing oblige us to act and cooperate together, whether at the local level, in dealing with ever increasing amounts of waste, conserving our water resources or fighting invasive species, or at the international level, with global warming or threats to biodiversity.

Since the last SPREP Meeting in Tahiti in September 2004, the Secretariat has continued its internal restructuring to better meet the goals of the Action Plan for Managing the Environment of the Pacific Islands Region (2005-2009). In accordance with the environmental priorities set out in the Action Plan, the Secretariat has also overhauled its two strategic programmes for 2004-2013. These are inherently evolving documents, designed to be amended and improved over time.

Institutionally, the organisation has changed its name, by deleting from its title the reference to the “South Pacific” alone while keeping the acronym SPREP. The steps taken by the United States, Palau and Vanuatu to become parties to the Convention establishing SPREP are also in the process of reaching their goal.

The Selection Advisory Committee has met to nominate the new SPREP Director, and will present its report and recommendations.

SPREP is a dynamic organisation that continues to attract new members and international donor agencies. Its course is clearly set for the years to come, with the ever more firmly established goal of best serving the interests of the region and its people.

French Polynesia has been happy to contribute to this collective undertaking and particularly wishes, at the end of its term, to thank New Zealand for its vital assistance as vice-chair of the 15<sup>th</sup> SPREP Conference.

We wish the new chair every success, and assure it that it may count on the unfailing support of the Secretariat and all the SPREP members.

Thank you for your attention. Fa’afetai, Mauruuru.

## **Annex 4: Remarks by the Honourable Tuisugaletaua Sofara Aveau**

Minister of Natural Resources, Environment and Meteorology—Government of Samoa

Reverend Dr. Featunai Ben Liuaana,  
Mr Chairman, Mr Bruno Peucellier,  
Director SPREP, Mr Asterio Takesy,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I begin by extending to you all a very warm welcome to Samoa, particularly to those of you who are visiting our country for the first time. It is regrettable that you have arrived just as we close our annual Teuila Festival, which would have enabled you to sample some of our culture and traditions, as well as a taste of Samoan hospitality. Perhaps it was just as well, as it might have distracted you from the more important issues of environmental concerns that are entrusted to you for deliberation.

As Minister responsible for the Environment, I would like to assure you and SPREP of my Ministry's and Government's ongoing support to SPREP and its environmental mission, and to facilitate the conduct of your meeting and your comfort while here.

I have been informed by the Secretariat that it is 13 years since SPREP located to Samoa and 12 years since SPREP attained its full independence as an intergovernmental organisation in 1993. As anticipated from the start the environmental concerns of the Pacific, for which SPREP was set up to help the region find solutions for, would remain as topical now as they did in the early years. Indeed, increase in populations and the growth in economies will continue to exert relentless pressure on the environment. This is why the work of SPREP for the region will always be important and why the guidance your Committee provides to this Organisation is so critical.

Through national efforts, regional collaboration and SPREP support, Pacific island countries and territories have developed and strengthened their respective environmental Departments and Ministries, and enhanced the capacities of their personnel and infrastructure to address pressing environmental concerns. We, in our Pacific region, have become more recognised and increasingly effective, both regionally and internationally, through the staunch support of the Secretariat, and particularly through our unified stance on key environmental concerns. Our concerns have been well articulated to the Secretariat who in turn has listened and effectively taken and presented these issues to various international and regional fora.

It must be noted that the Secretariat has evolved in harmony with, and in response to, the needs and responsibilities required by its island members over the past 12 years. In order to cope with its growth in programmes and responsibilities, the Secretariat has restructured itself to ensure efficient delivery of its services in a more programmatic approach that should ensure greater continuity in programmed activities and hopefully in resourcing these activities.

While we as Members and owners set the role SPREP should play in addressing our growing concerns and needs in the environment area, we also have a huge role and contribution to make in protecting and improving our environment. Often also we make many demands on our Secretariat and expect a variety of services. However, we are not always responsive or willing to do our part in ensuring that we meet on time our contributions to the operations of the Secretariat, or to provide appropriate resources or support to enable the Director and his staff to make good on our needs and requests.

A large number of our members are Pacific island countries and territories, most of whom are developing nations and themselves facing financial constraints. Nonetheless, as the Governing body of the Secretariat, we must ensure that the Secretariat has not only the moral support it needs, but also appropriate and sufficient resources to enable it to provide the services we require of them.

I note in the Agenda that the Secretariat is reporting on its performance and activities with respect to addressing our region's environmental concerns and priorities for the year 2004. This is important as it fulfils part of the Secretariat's accountability and responsibility to its Members and donors for the resources entrusted to it. In addition to this internal assessment by the Secretariat, it is my hope and expectation that you also as Members and recipients of Secretariat services would provide your own evaluation to complement that of the Secretariat's.

The Work Programme and Budget is an issue that is always one of substance and sometimes, of difficulty. I note that the Secretariat's proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2006 is a balanced one for which the Director and staff must be congratulated. However, I also note that a contributions increase for the next year is only averted by the fortuitous existence of a Depreciation Reserve which when used next year will not be available for future years. I urge all members to use 2006 to reflect on what I had already commented on above, being that it is our responsibility as Members to adequately resource the organisation so that the Director and his staff can perform the responsibilities we entrust them with.

An item that will also require funding is the necessary adjustment of the professional staff salaries in accordance with movements in the reference markets, as we had determined for them last year, and to harmonise their activities with other CROP organisations. I also note that the Secretariat proposes to provide for this by endeavouring to find savings through optimum efficiency in the delivery of their services. I urge you to give this matter your due consideration and support.

Perhaps the most important item to the Secretariat and the Meeting this year is the appointment of the next Director to provide stewardship of our regional organisation for the next three years. I believe the Selection Advisory Committee, which the SPREP Meeting appointed last year has short-listed and interviewed candidates, and has reported back to you with its recommendation. I cannot overemphasise the importance of this appointment and again urge you to give it your serious consideration.

While each Delegation is free to express its views and to determine its position as it sees fit on matters proposed for discussion, I would also encourage you to provide the Secretariat the support that it deserves from us as Members, by facilitating the implementation processes expected from the Director and his staff. Now, more than ever, SPREP needs your guidance and willingness to make appropriate and adequate resources available to enable it to accomplish what you require of the Organisation to do—a better environment for our region!

You have an extensive and full agenda before you. No doubt the Secretariat and our region are looking forward to the results of your deliberations to guide their work for the continued protection and improvement of our environment!

In closing, may I wish you all an enjoyable and successful meeting, and a pleasant stay in Apia.

It is now my pleasure to officially declare the 16th SPREP Meeting open.

Soifua, ma ia manuia.

## **Annex 5: Address by the Incoming Chair**

Introductory address by Mr Bruno Gain,  
Ambassador, Permanent Secretary for the Pacific,  
Chairman of the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting

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Director,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Dear friends,

First of all, I would like to say how moved I am to be able to succeed French Polynesia as chair of this meeting. Listening to Bruno Peaucellier, I had in mind the visionary remarks made last year in Papeete by the French Polynesian Minister for the Environment, Mr Jacqui Drollet, at the opening session of the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting, when he passionately portrayed his transcendent vision of nature as the basic matrix of the Maohi world. I was also thinking of the unforgettable welcome that President Temaru and the Tahitian community gave us, in the Papeno valley, thanks to which we were able to experience the richness of an ancestral culture intimately linked to the environment.

So a highly symbolic succession falls on me today. I am truly happy and proud of this symbolic role which, for French Polynesia, consists in transmitting its experience to France, in passing the baton; and for France, consists in being a link in this long chain connecting all the States and territories of the region through SPREP. This is a unique moment which I feel deeply as a privilege and an honour.

I would also like to thank the Samoan Government for its unceasing efforts to ensure that the Secretariat has optimal working conditions, allowing it to focus on its invaluable activities for the benefit of all the region's States and territories.

Whenever I have the opportunity to travel to Apia, I experience immediately upon arrival all the elements that make Samoa the quintessence of the Pacific world. There is, of course, the beauty of nature and the landscape, but there is also the hospitality, a unique way of being attentive to others, a mixture of modesty and seriousness which make this country a haven of harmony and wisdom.

Finally, let me applaud the remarkable work carried out, day after day, by the Secretariat under Asterio Takesy's leadership, in conditions that are not easy. The challenges to be met in the area of the environment and sustainable development are numerous. Moreover, the administrative load, the project management issues and the contacts with donor agencies – in short, all these difficult, thankless and often unrecognised aspects that are the lot of any large-scale international organisation such as SPREP is – are overwhelming.

So here we are, at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting, and I see the extent of the task awaiting the neophyte that I am. Rest assured that I will take on the responsibility of chairmanship modestly and attentively. I will take care to ensure that the consensual policies which emerge reflect the concerns of all members of this organisation and the Pacific communities that we must serve.

At a time such as this, with the United Nations set to consider the Millennium Development Goals in the coming weeks, SPREP is indeed faced with even greater challenges than ever.

The Pacific is at the crossroads of all the environmental and sustainable development issues. It is one of the richest areas of the world in terms of the diversity and natural abundance of its environment. However, it is also one of the most fragile. This vulnerability encourages us to consider the need for full harmony between economic development and nature.



In examining the impressive file prepared for this conference by the Secretariat, once again I was struck by the extremely broad spectrum and extraordinary complexity of the problems to be dealt with. I will only mention some of them:

- *Island biodiversity* – We can no longer ignore the irreparable evidence of the decline in living things throughout the world. Let us remember that there are nearly 16,000 endangered species in the world today and that part of this heritage is in the Pacific;
- *International waters and regional ocean policy* – The Pacific Ocean is the common heritage of all the States and territories and the only truly shared resource and it is up to us to conserve it;
- *A better understanding of climate change* – Last December’s tsunami and the devastating passage of cyclone Katrina, a tragedy that plunged America into mourning and for which I would like to express all our sympathy to the representative of the United States, remind us of the urgent need to raise awareness more quickly: nature has unleashed its forces, sending us a message that we must hear, as Asterio Takesy so rightly reminded us yesterday;
- *The nagging issue of waste management* – This poses a major problem for all island communities and constitutes a critical element in the sustainable development on which we all need to reflect, and especially to act, in this year of 2005 which has been declared “The Pacific Year of Action against Waste”.

There is still a long list of issues which we must get down to during this 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting, taking care to ensure that what prevails is the environment, the demands of which so often compete with those of survival, demographic pressures and development needs.

The problems are so large that none of our States or territories can respond to them alone.

Regional cooperation, mutual aid between States, joint reflection, the pooling of energies and ideas must be the guiding principles directing our debate at all times.

All joined together in SPREP, we can and we must continue to play a driving role in overcoming the difficulties with which the region is confronted, by contributing to its rational development. We must act so that the aspirations of the communities are fully taken into account.

To attain this, we must strike the difficult balance that, in environmental terms, allows us to reconcile the legitimate quest for human and economic progress with awareness of our duties to nature and our responsibilities to future generations. I am persuaded that we will get there.

I thank you in advance for your understanding and your patience. I hope that during the coming days your ears will get used to the singing accents of the French language, the organisation’s second working language! And, without further ado, I suggest that we start work. Thank you.

## **Annex 6: Agenda**

**Agenda Item 1: Official Opening**

**Agenda Item 2: Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair**

**Agenda Item 3: Adoption of Agenda and Working Procedures**

**Agenda Item 4: Action Taken on Matters Arising from Fifteenth SPREP Meeting**

**Agenda Item 5: Performance Review/Overview of Developments in 2004**

- 5.1 Presentation of Annual Report for 2004 and Director's Overview of Progress since the Fifteenth SPREP Meeting
- 5.2 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the 2004 Annual Work Programme and Budget
- 5.3 Financial Reports
  - 5.3.1 *Report on Members' Contributions*
  - 5.3.2 *Audited Annual Accounts for 2004*
  - 5.3.3 *Auditor's Advice on the revised Financial Regulations*

**Agenda Item 5(a): Professional Staff Remuneration Issues**

- 5(a).1 Annual Reference Market Data Review for Professional Staff
- 5(a).2 Housing and Education Allowances

**Agenda Item 6: Regional Conventions**

- 6.1 Outcomes of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the SPREP
- 6.2 Convention to Consider and Adopt amendments to its protocols

**Agenda Item 7: 2006 Work Programme and Budget**

- 7.1 Island Ecosystems Programme Issues
  - 7.1.1 *Island Biodiversity Programme of Work*
  - 7.1.2 *International Waters Project*
  - 7.1.3 *Endorsement of the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy Integrated Action Strategy and SPREP's activities related to the PIROP*
  - 7.1.4 *SPREP/Convention for Migratory Species Secretariat collaboration to Assist PICTs on Marine Mammals*
  - 7.1.5 *Bird Conservation Programme and Regional Strategy Review Outcomes*

- 7.2 Pacific Futures Programme Issues
  - 7.2.1 *Climate Change Issues*
  - 7.2.2 *Strategy for Solid Waste Management in Pacific Island Countries and Territories*
  - 7.2.3 *Increasing Integration of Pacific Island Territories into the Work Programme of the Secretariat*
- 7.3 Effects of Human Population on the Environment
- 7.4 Consideration and Approval of Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2006 and Indicative Budgets for 2007 and 2008

**Agenda Item 8: Institutional Matters**

- 8.1 Appointment of SPREP Director (Report by the Chair of SAC)
- 8.2 Proposed Procedures for Reappointment of Incumbent Directors in the Future
- 8.3 Proposed Amendments to the Current Procedures for Recruitment of Post of Director (Paper by Australia)

**Agenda Item 9: Regional Cooperation**

- 9.1 Pacific Plan (an update by the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat)
- 9.2 Reports of the CROP Heads Meetings

**Agenda Item 10: Items Proposed by Members**

**Agenda Item 11: Statements by Observers**

**Agenda Item 12: Other Business**

**Agenda Item 13: Date and Venue of Seventeenth SPREP Meeting**

**Agenda Item 14: Adoption of Report**

**Agenda Item 15: Close**

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### Annex 7: Housing and Education Allowances Recommendations

	Mercer's Recommendations	Decision
1.	Both housing and education allowances should continue to be paid by the CROP agencies.	Approved.
2.	Both housing and education allowances should in future be regarded as benefits associated with appointment to a professional grade (i.e., Grades I to M).	Approved to also include professional grade H.
3.	Payment of either housing or education allowance should no longer be regarded as compensation for staff who relocate in order to take up an appointment at a CROP agency.	Approved.
4.	Housing allowance should be paid to all staff who hold appointment in a CROP agency in a professional grade (i.e., Grades I to M).	Approved to also include professional grade H.
5.	Education allowance should be paid to all staff with school age dependent children who hold appointment in a CROP agency in a professional grade (i.e., Grades I to M).	Approved to also include professional grade H.
6.	Neither housing nor education allowance should be paid to support staff in the CROP agencies (i.e., Grades A to H).	Approved.
7.	The policy of setting the maximum value of housing allowance at 75% of the monthly rental for a standard three bedroom executive house should continue unchanged.	Approved.
8.	A new survey of the rental housing market in Suva should be carried out urgently to ensure that the maximum available housing allowance is set at a realistic figure. The survey should be carried out by a reputable local real estate firm, sponsored by Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat ("PIFS"), and supervised by a steering group comprising representatives of PIFS management and the Staff Association.	N/A.
9.	CROP agencies should be responsible (however its administration is organised) for paying 75% of the actual rent on each eligible employee's accommodation, up to the set maximum allowance.	Approved in principle. SPREP to continue to set a flat rate for all staff based on Mercer recommendation 7 and the principle of 75% organization subsidy and 25% personal contribution.
10.	There should continue to be no explicit linkage between the rental subsidy paid by an agency, and the individual employee's family size or hierarchical position.	Approved.
11.	A new multi-school benchmark should be established as the basis for the maximum education allowance to remove the reliance on the single benchmark currently in use. The benchmark schools should be selected from the CROP remuneration "Reference Markets": Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji.	Not approved.

	<b>Mercer's Recommendations</b>	<b>Decision</b>
12.	The current education allowance structure of a maximum rate per child per annum with a maximum rate per family per annum being calculated at three times the per child rate should continue.	Approved.
13.	Employees should in future be asked to contribute 25% towards the cost of their children's schooling. The maximum education allowance should be set at 75% of the benchmark rates (maximum per child, maximum per family) once they have been established.	Approved to apply to new appointments or contracts.
14.	Differential rates for education allowance for local staff and expatriates should be abolished. In future, all professional staff (i.e., Grades I to M) should be eligible for the same level of education allowance (in the same family circumstances).	Approved to also apply to professional grade H.
15.	The Fiji Government should be approached to seek tax-free status for all CROP agency employees, in recognition of the contribution made by the agencies to Pacific communities.	N/A
16.	A new "Security Fit Out Allowance" should be established, at least for Suva-based missions, to ensure that incoming employees are able to install at least basic security features in their accommodation: deadlocks and grilles on doors and windows, and if necessary, an alarm system.	Not approved.
17.	The Working Group should investigate further the possibility of meeting some costs associated with tertiary study by a dependent child of a CROP professional employee, with a view to matching best practice.	Approved. Already the practice.
18.	CROP agencies should review their definition and practice regarding "Dependent Children" to ensure that payment of education allowance in each case is appropriate.	Approved. Suggested wording: <i>Dependent children are defined as natural or legally adopted offspring who are unmarried and financially dependant, and who are:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ under the age of 16 years;</li> <li>▪ under the age of 19 years if undertaking full time study at a secondary school;</li> <li>▪ under the age of 22 years if undertaking full time study at a university or other tertiary institution;</li> <li>▪ mentally or physically incapacitated to the extent that they are prevented from either obtaining employment or attending and education institution.</li> </ul>
19.	Agency management should be advised that provided the set maximum rates of education allowance are not exceeded, there is to be a degree of flexibility in the administration of education allowance, provided always that the business purpose of what is proposed (i.e., it must contribute to the core education of the child) is maintained.	Not approved.

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**Observer statement: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

by Ms Joyce Yu, Resident Representative, UNDP Samoa

On behalf of UNDP, I wish to congratulate the SPREP Secretariat and the respective Member countries for a successful meeting.

I wish to express our appreciation to the Director and staff of SPREP for all their efforts in addressing environmental challenges facing the Pacific. This is a daunting mission but one to which we are all fully committed.

I would also like to fully acknowledge the good working relationship that UNDP has fostered with SPREP over the last 14 years. Although the relationship is often seen as mainly through project level interventions, I hope that we are moving toward a more strategic partnership and collaborations with SPREP and the region as a whole.

UNDP is committed to assist countries and CROP agencies including SPREP, in addressing environmental issues in the region at all levels. Sustainable Environment and Energy is one of the key practice areas of UNDP and for UNDP Samoa we serve as the hub for the Pacific. UNDP's universal coverage is delivered through our three Country Offices in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Samoa. We are continuing to assess the way we do business in the region to ensure the maximum benefits out of our limited resources.

In addition to SPREP, UNDP also recognises the technical support and roles of other CROP agencies. The greater harmonisation and alignment of the CROP agencies working in the wide ranging areas of development and environment would assist donor agencies such as UNDP.

With regard to the SPREP programme of work, last year in Tahiti I noted that UNDP views its responsibility as the largest donor to SPREP not strictly on a project-driven basis. And we hope that the GEF-funded projects are integral to the Pacific vision. The UNDP-GEF International Waters Project is SPREP's largest project and it supports the results under the Island Ecosystem Programme of SPREP. For example, the integration of the IWP into SPREP's core regional programmes, such as the Regional Waste Management Strategy, is an excellent demonstration of how the UNDP-GEF-funded projects support other regional initiatives and work for common goals.

Other new UNDP initiatives for the region through SPREP have been confirmed. For the first time, an MOU between UNDP and SPREP has been signed to provide support to countries for the development of National Action Plans under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. This is the first engagement with UNDP outside the GEF funding and moves SPREP into a closer partnership with UNDP regional programming. Land degradation is one of the critical underlying issues that hinders progress towards sustainable development. Further, on the issue of environmental governance, UNDP is examining through case studies across Asia and the Pacific how traditional environmental governance processes interface with contemporary approaches. Sound environmental governance underpins all our efforts for sustainable development in the Pacific. And this is complemented by the UNDP-GEF Sustainable Land Management MSP in the Pacific.

I am also privileged to inform you that there have been significant developments and progress in facilitating the participation of Pacific Islands in the Small Grants Programme of the GEF. Prior to the SPREP Meeting, the UNDP and the SGP Global Manager and his team have been meeting with representatives from Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, Samoa and Vanuatu to discuss arrangements for the expansion of SGP in the Pacific. This is indeed a tremendous achievement for the Pacific and we hope that more countries will join next year. This will bring the potential number of Pacific countries with SGP up to as many as 10 by 2006.

We urge SPREP particularly to strengthen its dialogues with the international community for support towards the implementation of regional environment strategies and plans. The voice of the Pacific must be heard in a great variety of fora. The challenge is to actually implement these regional environment strategies and to make one Pacific vision a reality.

Lastly, UNDP stands ready to work with you as member governments of the United Nations to assist in your national efforts to achieve the MDGS.

In closing, I would like to once again extend our sincere appreciation and congratulations to the Secretariat, the Chair and to all the participating member countries for their achievements this year.



## **Observer Statement: Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society**

by Dr Margi Prideaux, Australasia CEO

Thank you Mr Chairman. I want to thank you for this opportunity to address this important forum and for your excellent and good-humored chairmanship during this meeting. Time is precious and so I will keep my verbal statement brief.

WDCS is relatively new to the South Pacific and we respect that we are not yet well known to the Pacific island countries. Our main contribution has been over the past three years as we have participated in the development of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding that has been under deliberation at this meeting. We want to pledge our commitment to being here for the long term.

WDCS is an international non-governmental organisation with resource and expertise in the area of cetacean conservation. WDCS's varied activities currently span more than 25 different countries around the world. Our expertise crosses the spectrum from science and field research to habitat protection models, policy implementation and legal development covering a wide range of cetacean conservation and protection issues.

WDCS is a partner organisation to CMS and it is through this partnership that we see our most relevant contribution here in the Pacific Region—in underpinning the work that will be necessary to make this CMS MOU a reality. We are committed to working in the region on the development, resourcing, on-ground implementation and all-important promotion of achievement in other regional forums and through international opportunities.

I thank you for your time and will be delighted to speak with anyone that might be interested in further information about what WDCS may be able to offer.

### **Written supporting statement:**

WDCS, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, is pleased to participate as an observer this 16th Pacific Island Forum Meeting.

WDCS is an international non-governmental organization with resource and expertise in the area of cetacean conservation. WDCS's varied activities currently span more than 25 different countries around the world. Our expertise crosses the spectrum from science and field research to habitat protection models, policy implementation and legal development covering a wide range of cetacean conservation and protection issues.

WDCS believes that basing conservation initiatives around the ecological needs of migratory flagship species, such as cetaceans, can develop a 'migratory range approach' that is able to address the multiple, cumulative and synergistic impacts faced by these species; effectively protect habitat critical to their survival; and weave a fabric of broader conservation measures across many jurisdictions, coordinating local, regional and international efforts, maximising the marine conservation outcomes for all concerned.

During the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) a Global Biodiversity Challenge was set to "achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national levels as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth". Specific indicators

proposed by the CBD Conference of Parties that can be used to demonstrate a measurable achievement of this target include:

- trends in extent of selected biomes, ecosystems and habitats;
- trends in abundance and distribution of selected species;
- change in status of threatened species;
- coverage of protected areas; and
- connectivity/fragmentation of ecosystems.

The conservation of species and their habitat and the monitoring of those species and the ecosystems on which they depend is directly applicable to the 'migratory range approach'. The Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), is recognised by CBD for the delivery of migratory species related targets.

As a Partner organisation to CMS, WDCS is committed to developing effective conservation mechanisms under the framework of CMS.

### **CMS Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitat in the Pacific Islands Region (CMS MOU)**

WDCS has been privileged to work closely with both CMS and the SPREP Secretariat in the past two and half years on the development of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitat in the Pacific Islands Region (CMS MOU). WDCS has specifically sought to provide technical support to CMS, SPREP and Pacific Island Countries in the negotiation process for the CMS MOU and will be pleased to continue in this role as the MOU develops further.

We regard investment and focus on the activities articulated in the SPREP Whale and Dolphin Action Plan, which now also underpins the CMS MOU, as being of critical importance and believe that it will benefit the region by:

- facilitating deeper region-wide cooperation to address issues of shared responsibility including threat reduction, habitat protection and the establishment of migratory corridors, research, monitoring, and information exchange, regional capacity building, the development of sustainable and responsible cetacean-based tourism;
- increasing international awareness and coordination about the issues and threats to cetaceans in the Pacific Island Region;
- networking the Pacific Island Region with other similar cetacean agreement regions, increasing technical information flow and capacity sharing; and
- providing an effective channel for international funding.

WDCS is very interested to develop a closer working relationship with the South Pacific Region, through the mechanism of the CMS MOU.

### **WDCS Cetacean Research**

WDCS is one of the leading funders of non-invasive cetacean conservation research world-wide. Over the past decade, WDCS has supported over one hundred conservation field projects in over forty countries, spanning all major ocean regions. These projects include scientific work such as population studies, research on threats and threat mitigation, as well as a broad range of conservation initiatives such as working with local law enforcement agencies and development of alternative fishing activities to reduce bycatch. We work closely with recognized experts in the field of cetacean conservation and are very interested to direct significant energy into field research that serves the needs of CMS, its Agreements and MOUs.

From 2006, WDCS will publish an annual research report of the WDCS field research, science and policy work programmes. We intend to make this research and policy data available to CMS, its Agreements and MOUs as a contribution towards the CBD 2010 targets and to assist Governments with national reporting.

WDCS has recently completed a major global review of cetacean protected areas. The research has been widely reviewed by marine protected area practitioners around the world and details over four-hundred and thirty marine protected area systems that work towards cetacean conservation, in domestic and international jurisdictions, in eighteen marine regions. The cetacean protected area dataset contained in this publication will be electronically launched in 2006 where it will be kept current and available as a further data source.

WDCS has developed a body of work surrounding the implementation of the 'migratory range approach' to marine species conservation, action plan development that understands and is responsive to species and ecosystem needs and the role of effective critical habitat protection in cetacean conservation.

WDCS regularly develops technical briefings on threats to cetaceans, the most recent of which have focused on the impacts of global bycatch and noise pollution. We will be soon finalizing a technical briefing on the impacts of climate change.

In the next triennium WDCS will expand our programme of work to harmonize with the CMS Strategic Plan 2006-2011, with the aim of maximizing the effectiveness of WDCS as well as contributing to the work of CMS, its Agreements and MOUs.

### **WDCS Partnership Pledge to CMS**

As a Partner organisation to CMS, WDCS has sought to maximize the work of both organisations and has pledged for the next triennium (2005-2007) to:

- work in partnership with CMS towards the 2010 target and cetacean conservation around the world;
- work in partnership with all current and future CMS cetacean related agreements and MOUs in their development, resourcing, on-ground implementation, and promotion through regional and international opportunities;
- share with CMS our scientific information resource to assist CMS with its commitment to the 2010 target and to report against trends in abundance and distribution of cetacean species and the status of threatened cetacean species, as well as the coverage of effective cetacean critical habitat protection.

In particular, we retain our strong and ongoing commitment to the two existing regional Agreements - the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS) and the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS) - and are committed to working towards the development of arrangements in South East Asia, the Bay of Bengal and in Central West Africa.

WDCS looks forward to extending our pledge to work with Pacific Island Countries and the Secretariat of the CMS MOU towards our mutually shared goals. We urge the Governments of the Pacific Island Region to:

1. endorse the process proposed by the SPREP Secretariat for the development of the CMS MOU;
2. sign the CMS MOU soon after text finalization; and
3. consider becoming Parties to CMS to increase regional representation in this important biodiversity convention.

**Observer Statement: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

by Isabel Martinez, Programme Officer, GPA (Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities)

On behalf of UNEP/Regional Seas Programme and UNEP/GPA Coordinator, Dr Veerle Vandeweerd, I would like to thank SPREP for the opportunity to attend this meeting and the Government of Samoa for a great hospitality.

As indicated by Mr Takesi the first day, SPREP and UNEP have recently signed a framework MOU and UNEP will soon establish a senior management post based in SPREP to improve cooperation with SPREP, with all the governments of the region, with the rest of the UN family and with all relevant actors in the region.

This is a direct follow-up to UNEP's participation in the 15th SPREP meeting, the discussions between Mr Takesi and UNEP's Executive Director during the Mauritius International Meeting, and the Mauritius Strategy lines of action.

The SPREP 2004 report has some 8 direct references to various SPREP and UNEP joint activities. Hopefully, UNEP will feature higher in the next reports. And, hopefully, the "quantity" of UNEP's work will go hand in hand with the "quality" of the work to be delivered, facilitated or supported, which, by the way, is also possible thanks to donor countries around the table.

Finally, I would like to say that after four days of "observation" or, better said, of "listening" from the observer's corner, I would like to congratulate SPREP for their impressive work during the last year, as well as all the delegates for their active and constructive contributions to the meeting, and the Chairperson for a very focused, effective and lively chairmanship.

I have "listened" carefully to your interventions and I have taken due note of issues where UNEP could perhaps be of greater assistance. We will make sure that we pass on these notes to the UNEP relevant colleagues and, most importantly, to the UNEP staff member that will soon be hosted in SPREP and within the UN team in Samoa.

Two final announcements:

- SOPAC, UNESCO and UNEP will hold the first train-sea-coast course on wastewater management adapted to Pacific SIDS Islands from 24 to 28 October 2005 in Suva, Fiji with 20 participants (mainly wastewater managers). In addition, 5 instructors will be trained for future activities.
- UNEP/GPA (Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities) will have its Second Intergovernmental Meeting in Beijing, China from 16 to 20 October 2006 and you are all most welcome to participate in the preparations of the meeting and the meeting itself (further information is available at the UNEP GPA website).

Thank you for your attention.

## **Observer statement: Conservation International (CI)**

By François Martel, Director – Pacific Islands Program and Team Leader – CEPF Polynesia-Micronesia Hotspots, Conservation International

Mr Chairman, on behalf of Conservation International's President, Dr Russell Mittermeier, I would like to congratulate SPREP and its members for a successful 16th meeting.

I take this opportunity to announce officially to the meeting that the Board of Directors of CI just approved the setting-up of the Pacific Islands Program to be based at the SPREP Centre in Apia from July 2005. This newest Regional Program of Conservation International will complement and build synergy with the Melanesia Centre for Biodiversity Conservation established in 2002, but will be fully independent strategically and financially.

Although CI has been much engaged over the last three years in its relationship with SPREP, this will further increase our engagement in partnerships for the conservation of Pacific Islands biodiversity. Please note, Mr Chairman, in this CI has declared its intention to work and support biodiversity conservation in all small countries and territories of the Pacific members of SPREP, all inclusive.

CI is a science-based organisation aiming at biodiversity conservation in hotspots and wilderness areas. We now have offices in 35 countries and work in more than 50 countries on four continents. Its mission is to conserve the earth's living heritage, our global biodiversity, and to demonstrate that human societies are able to live harmoniously with nature. This is very much in line with the mission of the new strategic program on island ecosystems of SPREP for the Pacific Islands—hence the synergy and the strategic importance for CI to be based and work closely with the Secretariat.

Our team's side-event gives a brief overview of key initiatives of significance for biodiversity conservation in the SPREP region led by CI, but I would like to briefly acknowledge here the financial and strategic support provided by the Government of France and the Government of Australia, and in particular in their confidence in CI scientific and technical expertise for the Pacific. These initiatives are:

- 1) The Coral Reef Initiative for the South Pacific (CRISP);
- 2) The Asia-Pacific Regional Natural Heritage Program (RNHP)
- 3) The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund for Polynesia and Micronesia Hotspots (CEPF).

Conservation International takes great pleasure in announcing that it has finalised the agreement with the Government of France to coordinate Component 1 of the CRISP focusing on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Integrated Coastal Management.

Implementation of the MPA and Integrated Coastal Management Component is a partnership between CI, Foundation of the People of the South Pacific (FSPI), World Wide Fund for Nature France and South Pacific (WWF), IFRECOR, Proscience–Te Turu ‘Ihi, Centre International de recherche en agriculture et développement (CIRAD Foret), Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD) and the Aleipata and Safata MPAs in Samoa.

Over the coming three years this partnership will focus on:

1. Marine Conservation Planning.
2. MPA site support (new and strengthening existing sites).
3. MPA Capacity Building, Networking, and Lessons Learned.
4. Integrated Coastal and Watershed Management.

CI will also be working closely with other CRISP partners, particularly SPREP, to maximise use of lessons learnt and to leverage further support for marine conservation in the region. Importantly this work will contribute to the planning and development of national MPA networks as committed to by all parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The CRISP work is part of CI's new Pacific Islands Programme will have a significant marine component to complement the effort in terrestrial conservation in the Polynesia/Micronesia and New Caledonia Hotspots. CI looks forward to developing these initiatives with community, NGO and government partners in the SPREP region.

Following the SPREP meeting in Tahiti last year, CI with the support of the Government of French Polynesia and its Civil Society groups, conducted the final roundtable for the completion of the Ecosystem Profile for Polynesia-Micronesia.

The CEPF Working Group comprising the GEF, the World Bank, the MacArthur Foundation, CI and the Government of Japan reviewed the profile in November 2005 however approval by the CEPF Donor Council has been contingent on additional funding.

CI is pleased to advise that in June 2005, the Regional Natural Heritage Program (RNHP) of the Australian Government agreed to provide AU\$1.5 million to CEPF for a targeted one-year CEPF Invasive Alien Species Program in the Polynesia-Micronesia Hotspot. Invasive species

is the single most important conservation issue in the hotspot: Approximately three quarters of the globally threatened species in the hotspot are threatened by invasive species.

The CEPF Invasive Alien Species Program, for which implementation is now being planned, is a partnership initiative of CEPF and the Pacific Programme of the Cooperative Islands Initiative (PP-CII). PP-CII is a WSSD Type 2 partnership under the Convention on Biological Diversity involving five initial partners (the South Pacific Commission, SPREP, the Invasive Species Specialist Group of IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Conservation International and the New Zealand International Aid and Development Agency). The CEPF Invasive Alien Species Program will complement PP-CII, funded by New Zealand and other existing initiatives by supporting a series of civil society-led demonstration projects to eradicate, mitigate, and prevent invasive alien species.

The new and very targeted funding from the RNHP for the CEPF Invasive Alien Species Program for the Pacific will provide seed money to launch the CEPF investment strategy and is hoped to result in follow-on funding to begin implementing the remaining strategic funding directions in 2006; we would like to congratulate their effort. Thus, the RNHP investment will result in on-the-ground conservation within one year that will leverage a larger multi-million-dollar investment program.

I am pleased to acknowledge that CEPF and CI are currently in negotiation with the Government of France to become the 6th Donor Council member for this investment.

In this context, we would like to seek the support of each GEF Focal Point in the Polynesia-Micronesia countries and territories of the Hotspot, including their “metropolises”, in particular France, New Zealand, Britain and Chili, who speak on their behalf within the GEF, to fully endorse the CEPF Ecosystem Profile, thus paving the way to its full implementation. We would like here to acknowledge the Government of Fiji as the first country to have endorsed with the World Bank, the Polynesia-Micronesia Ecosystem Profile.

Defining conservation outcomes with regional and international significance will remain a priority of CI's on-going work in the region, and we are continuing this partnership to cover the island of New Guinea (in collaboration with CSIRO Australia), the New Caledonia Hotspot (with our New Caledonia partners) and the Melanesia Islands Hotspot comprising the Bismark group, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.



The same approach in strategically defining conservation priorities will be applied in the marine and coral reef realms with the support of the Government of France, as part of the Coral Reef Initiative for the Pacific just now being initiated.

In concluding, I would like once again to thank the Director of SPREP and his staff for their support during the past year and congratulate SPREP and its Members, for the adoption of its comprehensive work programme and action plan for islands ecosystems in 2005–2006.

I am pleased to reaffirm Conservation International's full commitment in supporting SPREP and its members towards achieving our common goals and mission, and in looking jointly at innovative ways to collaborate for the benefit of this partnership.

Fa'afetai lava, Merci

## **Observer Statement: University of the South Pacific (USP)**

By Prof. Koshy, Director, Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development, USP Suva

Thank you very much Mr Chairman. I am indeed very pleased to bring warm greetings and best wishes from USP, and in particular from our new Vice-Chancellor Prof. Anthony Tarr, to all the distinguished participants of the 16th SPREP Meeting. At the outset may I congratulate SPREP Secretariat for a job well done during the reporting period, 2004/05, and to you Director on your reappointment.

Mr Chairman, SPREP and USP share similar visions in the areas of natural resource management, pollution prevention, climate change & variability, waste management, policy and planning, and capacity building for sustainable development. It is USP's firm belief that education, training and research constitute the most important foundation for sustainable development.

Through its 3 campuses and 14 regional Centres linked by our telecommunication network, USPNet, the University continues to pioneer the delivery of a flexible education programme, often reaching out to the remote unreached. In this regard, Mr Chairman, I am pleased to inform this meeting that USP is currently undergoing a restructuring with the creation of 4 new Faculties – Faculty of Science and Technology, Faculty of Arts and Law, Faculty of Business and Economics, Faculty of Oceans and Islands—as opposed to the present School system. I am sure the restructured USP will be better able to work more closely with SPREP in all its Key Results Areas.

Mr Chairman, in a statement like this it is difficult to cover all areas of USP activities relevant for SPREP KRAs; however, I would like to highlight a few of them:

- **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD):** The importance of Education for capacity building for sustainable development (SD) was highlighted many times over during this meeting. I am pleased to inform you that USP has been identified as a Regional Centre for Expertise (RCE-Pacific) for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD), 2005–2014. Together with the activities of PACE-SD—the focal point for RCE-Pacific—the USP-based Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of Basic Education, PRIDE, the Department of Education and the Institute of Education, I

am sure we will be able to work closely with SPREP in the promotion Environmental education in our region.

- **Special Training:** As part of ESD and other on-going initiatives, USP is planning to offer special training courses and programs, in addition to the existing programs, in the area of Environmental Management and Sustainable Development, using the distance and flexible learning approaches. It is hoped that this will address some of the capacity needs identified during the course of this meeting.
- **SIDS Universities Consortium (UC-SIDS):** Realising that USP alone may not be able to meet all the capacity needs of the region in a complex field like SD, we have formed a consortium with four other SIDS Universities. It is expected that a variety of Small Island Developing State (SIDS) specific training, research and outreach (with START/APN, COTS) programs will be conducted as part of this initiative.
- **Faculty of Oceans and Islands (FOI):** The main focus of this Faculty will be the sustainable management of island natural resources, both terrestrial and marine. Particular attention will be paid to the sustainable development challenges of Atoll countries in the Pacific. There will be several possibilities for meaningful interaction between SPREP and USP through this Faculty, especially in supporting KRA1.
- **Analytical Services:** The need for environmental monitoring for successful environmental management was highlighted by several delegates during the discussions and I am pleased to report to you that the Institute of Applied Sciences (IAS) at USP has an internationally accredited laboratory capable of providing analytical services for POPs, PCBs, toxic waste and food contaminants. IAS is also promoting conservation activities through the LMMA and the PABITRA initiatives, by providing EIA services and by managing the South Pacific Herbarium.
- **Research:** A structured and systematic approach to understanding nature is essential for planning management strategies. Modern as well as indigenous knowledge play equal roles in providing this knowledge base. The need to engage in targeted research aimed at problem solving to facilitate SD was highlighted during the various discussions; this is an area where USP has a comparative advantage and I am sure USP and SPREP will be able to work together this important area in a synergistic manner.

- **MEAs and Policy Matters:** USP was fortunate to work very closely with other CROP agencies and in particular with SPREP in the lead up to and beyond Johannesburg and Mauritius. Our joint facilitation of the Education based Capacity Building Type 2 initiative is an example of such cooperation. The need for legal assistance in the implementation of MEAs was raised as a major challenge for some countries in the Pacific. May be SPREP and USP should consider sharing their expertise in this area to provide the needed service and hope we could discuss this issue further to work out the modalities of cooperation.
- **Governance:** Mr Chairman, USP and SPREP believe that good governance lies at the heart of sustainable development. USP is committed to our region's efforts to improve governance at all levels through new and innovative programs. It is hoped that USP and SPREP will be able to work together in the 'Governance for Sustainable Development' area through our Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance (PIAS-DG). In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, may I say that USP is fully committed to working with SPREP, through the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development at USP serving as a focal point to support SPREP's vision to improve and protect the environment of the Pacific Island Countries.

I wish SPREP and its Strategic Programmes all the very best.

## **Observer Statement: International Fund For Animal Welfare (IFAW)**

Statement by Ms Denise Boyd, Head of Programs, IFAW

IFAW is pleased to participate as an Observer in the 16th SPREP Intergovernmental Meeting.

### **About IFAW**

IFAW was founded in Canada in 1969 and has grown to become one of the world's leading animal welfare organizations with representation in 15 countries and more than two million supporters around the world. IFAW brings a unique perspective to animal welfare by having a clearly stated aim in its Mission Statement to “promote animal welfare policies that advance the well-being of both animals and people”. IFAW is committed to achieving balanced solutions to conservation challenges - solutions that meaningfully address the needs of both wildlife and people in the world we all share.

### **IFAW in the Pacific islands region**

IFAW Asia Pacific has had a long association with SPREP through collaborative work on the region's marine species programmes. This has included supporting:

- SPREP's Regional Marine Mammal Conservation Programme – including preparation of the 10 year review and collaboration on the current SPREP 2003-2007 Marine Species Action Plans for Whales and Dolphins, Dugongs and Turtles;
- the promotion and development of whale watching tourism widely in the region;
- the establishment and management of national whale sanctuaries and the proposal for a South Pacific Whale Sanctuary;
- the South Pacific Whale Research Consortium (SPWRC) by funding its establishment and supporting its research on whales and dolphins.

This is the second time we have had the opportunity to come to a SPREP meeting and we thank the Secretariat for the warm welcome, excellent documents and the overall way NGOs, like IFAW, are able to work with SPREP and its member governments on matters of mutual interest and concern.

In Tahiti, SPREP announced the agreement of an MoU between IFAW and SPREP with the key objective of providing a framework of co-operation between our two organisations. Under this agreement, IFAW has committed to assisting SPREP develop a strategic vision against agreed strategies for implementation of conservation initiatives, such as the Action Plans for marine species, and to identify possible partners and resources required and investments needed. We will work jointly to develop proposals for financial assistance to provide resources to implement such initiatives.

### **Marine species conservation**

In the last year I am pleased to report that this relationship continues to grow and under the MOU IFAW has worked with SPREP and NGO partners to:

- Facilitate the draft MOU on Cetaceans with the CMS Secretariat;
- Prepare an update on implementation of the regional SPREP Whale and Dolphin Action Plan;
- Produce a field guide to the whales, dolphins and turtles of the region;
- Produce a video – the Giants of Tonga – to promote the wider understanding of the successful development of whale watching in Tonga;
- Prepare proposals for further support of the whale and dolphin action plan;
- Assisted with the preparation for, and participated in, the first regional meeting for dugong conservation in Thailand.

In addition to working directly with SPREP, IFAW also places equally strong emphasis on working directly with governments and NGOs in the region, guided by the priorities of the regional plans. Since Tahiti we have:

- Supported the development of management planning for Niue’s whale sanctuary;
- Supported Samoa’s development of the marine wildlife regulations;
- Supported research with Samoa’s Division of Fisheries to better understand the interaction of cetaceans with the tuna long lining industry and potential mitigation measures;
- Provided critical analysis of whales and fisheries issues in the region and agree with the conclusions of the SPREP report on this issue:
  1. “Large whales have no impact on commercial fisheries in the South Pacific region;
  2. Removal of hooked fish by small toothed whales (depredation) is known to occur in the region, as it does in every other ocean of the world;

3. The impacts of depredation by small whales are generally minor.”
- Continued to support key research undertaken by the SPWRC;
  - Continued to support the development and management of whale watching tourism in Tonga;
  - Undertaken economic assessments of whale watching in NZ and Australia;
  - Designed and funded a project to assess the cultural values of cetaceans in Tuvalu.

Despite this progress, IFAW remains concerned at the lack of resources to implement the SPREP Marine Species Action Plans and is committed to finding ways to access further resources.

In the coming year we look forward to:

- Working with SPREP’s new Marine Species Officer to implement the Marine Species Action Plans;
- The conclusion and early implementation of the CMS MOU for Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region;
- Expanding support for turtle and dugong conservation in the region;
- Supporting further in-country work in the region consistent with the priorities from the Action Plans, including targeted assistance for whale watching and sanctuary development consistent with the goal of the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region to reach a total area of 20 million sq km by 2008;
- Undertaking an analysis of the economic value of, and potential for, responsible whale watching tourism in the Pacific Islands Region.

IFAW is a strong supporter of research in the Pacific, to inform international, regional and national efforts to improve species conservation efforts and habitat protection.

- IFAW also works at the International Whaling Commission (IWC), and it behaves us as a conscientious working partner in the region to highlight developments that potentially threatens the development of whale watching tourism. Of particular concern for PICTs is the proposal to hunt humpback whales in the Southern Ocean Sanctuary

The SPREP Whale and Dolphin Action Plan notes concern over the impacts of ‘scientific’ whaling. The Government of Japan’s proposals are also contrary to the weight of international opinion and contrary to scientific opinion. There have been, for example, over 40 resolutions made by the International Whaling Commission opposing ‘scientific’ whaling. With the development of new research methodologies, such as genetic analysis to age individual whales and determine whale population structure, killing whales is unnecessary to scientific research.

IFAW hopes that all SPREP members will join in international condemnation of Japan’s expanded ‘scientific’ whaling, particularly as it will include humpback whales in their feeding grounds in the Antarctic. It is possible that humpback whales killed under such a program are the very individuals that travel to their breeding grounds in the Pacific Islands region and which are economically important to countries like the Kingdom of Tonga, the Cook Islands and New Caledonia as a result of commercial whale watch operations.

IFAW notes the increase in the number of Pacific Island Countries that have now acceded to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling. We urge members to recall commitments to positive conservation initiatives in the region that are not consistent with support for commercial and “scientific” whaling in the International Whaling Commission, and remind members that there is no logical foundation to support whaling policies on the basis of concern about whales eating fish.

IFAW calls on SPREP members at their 16th meeting to:

- SUPPORT the resourcing and implementation of the 2003–2007 SPREP Marine Species Action Plans;
- SUPPORT the early conclusion of an MOU to conserve cetaceans in the South Pacific under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS);
- CONSIDER membership of CMS as an international framework for conservation efforts;
- STRONGLY OPPOSE the proposals by the Government of Japan to expand ‘scientific-whaling’ in the Antarctic, including beginning a catch of humpback whales.



## **Observer Statement: Greenpeace**

by Ms Valerie Campbell, Pacific Political Liaison Officer, Greenpeace.

Thank you for the opportunity to observe this meeting and for the chance to present this brief statement.

Greenpeace has been advocating for the Environment, for peace and social equity for over 30 years. A global NGO, its energy and strength comes from its connections to the communities with which it engages. Thus Greenpeace can form a valuable link between coordinating organisations like SPREP and people whose hearts and minds must be won to the issues that have been discussed this week.

Very aware of this potential, Greenpeace is always open to dialogue and partnerships to achieve progress on agreed projects. There are a number of such project areas emerging from this week's agenda.

Greenpeace has identified the issues surrounding Climate Change as paramount. The consequences of intensifying weather events, of sea level rise and changing distribution of rainfall are all too familiar to this forum. These will fundamentally affect all other environmental problems, and must underpin decisions made in moves towards sustainable national economies and secure communities.

I have heard delegates articulating that they do not want further evidence, they do not want talk, they sense the urgency for action: and they want that action on the ground. It is clear that leaders in the Pacific Islands have accepted the realities of Climate Change more readily than many parts of the world. Their countries have the potential to become models of positive responses to this ultimate challenge to human intelligence. This is a challenge but an exciting one.

One of the smartest responses in Greenpeace's analysis is for the islands of the Pacific to move away from dependence on imported hydro-carbons to a variety of renewable energy. This is already happening. Clean bio-fuels and alternative generation methods are already being adopted but, used more widely, they have the potential to free island economies from the shackles of rising oil and transport costs and to bring locally generated electricity within the reach of even remote villages. Greenpeace notes with pleasure the work already done by SPREP in this area and would seek liaison in this area.

Greenpeace would also congratulate SPREP on facilitating the training programmes to enable the reduction of ozone depleting substances and urges the continuation of this project.

Another major focus of Greenpeace is directed towards the exploitation of our oceans. With many others from the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, Greenpeace raised the issue of bottom trawling last year. This fishing practice amounts to destructive mining of oceanic resources. The SPREP Oceans Project is applauded but does not directly address this issue. Greenpeace would repeat its call for action again this year.

Having long campaigned on behalf for the conservation of marine mammals Greenpeace welcomes moves towards a regional arrangement for the conservation of cetaceans. Greenpeace thanks members for the hard work that has gone into this project and urges them to follow through with the recommendations of this meeting.

On a personal note I conclude by thanking Samoa for its hospitality and SPREP staff and other attendees for their assistance in initiating someone new to the process. I have had a delightful stay in this most beautiful of islands in a part of the globe that specialises in beautiful islands. I congratulate SPREP on the smooth running of its 16th Meeting and wish all members a productive year.

## **Observer Statement: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Statement**

by Dr Padma Lal, Sustainable Development Adviser, ForSec, Suva

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for giving Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) this opportunity to provide some comments.

First, on behalf of the Forum Secretariat, I would like to congratulate SPREP for a successful year. A year, where many activities were carried out and some have been successfully completed producing some key outputs. In some cases they have made some difference in the lives of local communities and the state of the environment.

This has been achieved despite many odds, limited resources, changing staffing situation and many hurdles it has had to overcome in-country.

We heard this week that SPREP, in partnership with other CROP agencies and development partners, have also held many workshops:

- increasing profile of key issues
- building member country understanding of key environmental and resource issues – at all levels
- translating international agreements and commitments made by our Leaders into regional strategies, plans and policies, including on themes such as Climate Change, Nature Conservation and Solid Waste Management

But, as noted by the esteemed delegate from Vanuatu, the time has come to for us to operationalise these at the national level.

We need practical actions on the ground:

- to bring about real difference to the lives of the Pacific peoples, increase environmental conservation and building resilience
- that are underpinned by robust information and rigorous analysis, yet in the short term making do with whatever information we have and improving on it as time goes on

In the Pacific we need to embrace adaptive management approach to natural resource and environment management, recognizing that we do not have complete information, there is a lot of uncertainty, and global environment is rapidly changing, as are the needs and aspirations of our communities.

Pacific Islands Form Secretariat, like other CROP agencies, will also be judged by the nature and level of impacts on the lives of the local communities, on the environment, on the resilience of the communities and nations to natural disasters, to external shocks from natural and market forces. Such an expectation is consistent with commitments by our Leaders nationally, regionally and internationally, particularly following WSSD and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation.

These two, and other international multilateral agreements, have emphasized stakeholder based integrated interdisciplinary program of activities, a program of activities that reflects the science- social science- economics – policy and politics continuum. Program of activities that will be needed to:

- improve the well being of our people (economic and social and environmental)
- conserve our resources
- strengthen social harmony and

- build resilience – resilience against natural disasters, resilience against market forces, resilience against diseases etc.

Yesterday, the France delegate had mentioned in the context of biodiversity, I think, that we need to emphasise the direct link between science –policy and politics. That is, we need to develop our collective work programs that reflect the relevance of, and the link, between science, people, decision-making process and governance. It is only through such an approach that real outcomes can be achieved, since management of natural resources and environment is about managing people. To manage people we need to understand what motivates people and how these can be influenced. To do this we need to also focus on people, policy making process, and decision-making enabling – that is people, politics and governance.

The Forum Secretariat, the Secretariat to the Forum Leaders and with its core technical strength in economics, policy analysis and governance, has a critical role in natural resource and environmental management. The Forum Secretariat is, as per the Leaders 2004 decision, expected to provide policy advice to member countries including those that will assist them achieve sustainable development.

The Forum Secretariat plays two main roles:

- I. Coordination and harmonisation of key policies, program sand donor support.

As the Deputy Director of SPREP noted on Tuesday core activities associated with the coordination of sustainable development activities in the region will be carried out by the Forum Secretariat. This reflects the Leaders' Apia decision in 2004.

The Forum Secretariat will build on the work of particularly SPREP and SOPAC in the lead up to WSSD in 2002, and BPOA+10 in 2005, CSD in 2004, 2005 and promote Pacific interests in international fora. It will also continue to work with other CROP agencies to assist member countries to incorporate commitments made in the international fora and in their respective national development plans and regional frameworks, policies and plans.

The Forum Secretariat is looking forward to taking initiatives as necessary as well as working in partnership with SPREP and other CROP agencies in:

1. identifying emerging opportunities in the area of sustainable development in regards to
  - donor support from our traditional partners and emerging development partners. In this regard the Secretariat will be taking full advantage of annual Post Forum Dialogue discussions between the Forum Secretariat and our key development partners;
  - assisting countries and CROP agencies to access new funds through our New York Missions, through our trade offices in strategic locations such as Sydney, Hongkong, China
2. identifying new international and regional fora where Pacific inputs are needed to ensure the unique features, needs and aspirations and unique challenges are appropriately reflected in multilateral environment and trade agreements and appropriate allocation of international assistance is also provided for the Pacific region.
3. coordinating and assisting member countries to report individually and regionally on key sustainable development issues at the international level, including reporting against MDGs. As we know that this can be a very onerous task given the limited size of our member countries and limited technical and financial resources.

4. coordinating reporting on environmental matters, up to the Leaders, through:
- FOC and Forum Leaders Meetings,
  - Forum Economic Ministers Meetings
  - Forum Trade Ministers meetings.

As was emphasised this week, mainstreaming environmental issues in national economic planning and budgetary process is a must. In many countries, Ministry of Environment is often given junior ministerial status, and as a result, environmental concerns are often given lower priorities in the budgetary process.

The Forum Secretariat can be a strong conduit through which environmental matters can be reported to the Forum leaders, particularly when we want some key decisions of critical importance. PIFS will be looking at working in close partnership with SPREP to raise the profile of environmental issues with out Leaders.

## II. Economics and Policy Advice

Economics, as many of you know, is a branch of social science that addresses how people make decisions in the face of resource scarcity – limited money, limited fish stock, limited genetic material, limited land resources. It is also about improving institutional decision-making process to improve good governance at all levels. Economics is about rules and regulations that can encourage equitable sharing of benefits from community based IGA projects, from ecotourism, from bioprospecting, from traditional knowledge. It is also about rules and regulation that can help provide the right type of incentives to people to act in a manner such that we can achieve the desired outcome

Therefore economics and policy analysis is critical when designing management strategies and instruments to encourage appropriate decisions at all levels – from communities, government agencies – in each sectoral and thematic areas, such as climate change, disaster management, financing biodiversity, waste management, user charges for marine protected areas. It is also important at national planning and budgetary process.

Of course, as articulated in the Pacific Plan, CROP agencies are expected to become involved at the national levels only where there are

- advantages due to increased economies of scale
- technical backstopping is required to assist member countries and
- cost effective for the region to adopt a regional approach to generate regional and national public good

CROP activities are expected to be country focused but some of the services may be delivered regionally and ensuring that synergy is achieved through our collective efforts.

Towards this goal, as some of you may know, the CROP Heads meeting in August agreed to strengthen joint programming amongst ourselves. In practical terms, this should mean that we collectively develop our program of activities, on each of key themes (such as wastes, energy, climate change, disaster ,e tc).

For PIFS this would mean working with other CROP agencies to identify and develop economics and policy analysis and governance dimensions of key themes. This program of activities will complement biophysical and physical-geoscientific activities of other CROP agencies. It is only through such an analysis that a robust and sustainable decision-making process can be instituted. Let me emphasize country specific activities will be the target – after all SD is a context specific challenge. To be truly effective, we would need

to develop our programs collaboratively to reflect country priorities. Now we have to put this into effect.

#### TARGET AREAS: 2006

The Forum Secretariat will in 2006 be targeting a few core areas in order to encourage mainstreaming of environment into economic process, mainstreaming economics into environmental conservation, and integrating the three pillars of SD into decision-making at all levels. It proposes (the work program is still to be considered by FOC in October 2005) to assist:

- countries to develop their NSDS or like (NSDS is about improving decision-making process – it is not a blue print)
- in developing Pacific relevant targets and indicators (for each of the three pillars and across each core themes and sectors) to help member countries to measure progress against national plans as well as globally through the MDGs
- countries to develop/ strengthen core statistical databases that can be used for M& E of each of the themes, sectors, and at all levels; and
- countries develop institutional and individual capacity in economic and policy analysis as appropriate to their local situation and local needs at different levels.

As a coordinating body, Forum Secretariat also looks forward to working with SPREP and other CROP agency where necessary to help member countries develop and implement their own national plan of action in the key thematic areas. We have already begun activities in some key areas. PIFS is looking at developing a more strategic program of work in partnership with other CROP agencies and development partners adopting a programmatic approach. In such an approach explicit link between science and policy and politics will be made, reflecting the fact that management is about changing how people behave and what they do, that reflects that we have to target what motivates people be it money, status, morality – whatever works.

In summary, I wish to congratulate Asterio for his reappointment as the Director of SPREP for another term. Forum Secretariat is looking forward to our continued working relationship with the Director and his staff to provide outcome focused integrated and coordinated program of assistance that meets the needs and aspirations our member countries.

Thank you.

**Observer Statement: South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC)**

By Mr Bhaskar Rao, Deputy Director

Hon. Chair, national delegates and fellow observers

Firstly, let me congratulate the Director on his reappointment for a second term. Having just moved into my new position at SOPAC, and being a newcomer to the SPREP process, I have listened with interest to the deliberations over the past few days noting where possible synergies with our own programmatic areas: Ocean & Island (in areas of ocean and climate observations); Community Lifelines (in terms of energy, water) and the Community Risk Programme.

I certainly note and welcome calls from the floor for greater cooperation between the various CROP agencies including ours. The Regional Framework on Climate Change, the framework for action on disaster management, and the work of the Marine Sector Working group on PIROP are good examples and no doubt can be built upon.

Stronger efforts need to be made, however, to integrated action, avoid duplication and use our collective strengths to assist our member countries—really our tax payers, for they own us—in the best and most effective ways possible. Cooperation and collaboration is of course a two-way street and I trust officials from both agencies in future be quick to provide support to our membership in a constructive manner.

We have to translate these good regional strategies and plans, developed and developing, into effects and results on the ground. In this regard we are only limited by our imagination and the artificial barriers—inadvertent/unintentional.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavours and be assured of mine and my organisation's support.