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South Pacific Ministers adopt Action Plan for the Environment

In the Ninth SPREP Meeting, Ministers of the Pacific region made positive decisions to ensure that environment issues are at the forefront of regional agendas as we head towards the 21st century. The Meeting adopted: a bold Action Plan that will allow SPREP, in concert with other regional organisations, to confidently face the challenges that lie in the future to preserve the region's pristine environment; it appointed Mr Tamarii Tutangata as the second Director of SPREP; and issued a "Statement on Environment and Development" (printed in full on page 2 of this combined issue) stating: Ministers agree that economic and other costs and benefits of environmental initiatives should be considered during economic policy decisions. This follows through on the

decision made by leaders of the region at the 27th South Pacific Forum—to achieve rapid progress on economic reform and the sustainable management of natural resources.

Decisions endorsed by the Meeting which have significance to the operations of SPREP include: a new budget reporting format to reflect the structure of the new Action Plan; the SPREP Meetings to convene on a biennial basis (previously held annually); and amendments to the Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (Apia Convention) and Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (SPREP Convention), to transfer the Secretariat role for both Conventions to SPREP.



DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

SPREP coordinates Pacific island activities in association with a number of international conventions? These include: London Convention; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); Convention on Biological Biodiversity; Montreal Protocol; Basel Convention; Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); Ramsar Convention; and World Heritage Convention.

The SPREP Action Plan is the framework for a regional approach to environmental issues in the Pacific islands. The 1997–2000 Action Plan, adopted by the 1996 SPREP Ministerial Meeting, established five programme areas:

1. Biodiversity and Natural Resource Conservation
2. Climate Change and Integrated Coastal Management
3. Waste Management, Pollution Prevention and Emergencies
4. Environmental Management, Planning and Institutional Strengthening
5. Environmental Education, Information and Training

SPREP produces two other Newsletters, the *CASOLink* and the *South Pacific Sea Level and Climate Change Newsletter*.

Niue was the tenth country to ratify the Agreement Establishing SPREP and officially turned SPREP into an autonomous intergovernmental regional organisation.

The Agreement Establishing SPREP was signed at Papauta Girls' School on 16 June 1993 in Apia, Samoa.

The first Director of SPREP, Dr Vili Fuavao is also the first to head the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Pacific Sub-regional Office, in Apia, Samoa.

SPREP coordinated the highly successful 1995 *Year of the Sea Turtle* campaign and that the slogan was called "Let Our Turtle Family Live". Over 100,000 units of campaign material were distributed? This was so successful that the Indian Ocean region countries have followed the Pacific's example and have declared 1998 as their "Year of the Sea Turtle". 🐢

Ministers' "Statement on Environment and Development"

Ministers of the Ninth SPREP Meeting approved and supported a new four year Action Plan which will guide the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to the year 2000. The Ninth SPREP Meeting at Ministerial level was held in Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga, from 27 to 28 November 1996.

The goal of the 1997–2000 Action Plan is to build national capacity in environmental and resource management so that SPREP Members will be able to protect and improve the environment of the region for the benefit of Pacific island people now, and into the future.

The Action Plan represents a new and strategic approach to protecting the Pacific environment, as an integral part of the region's development, and recognises that this is essential due to the increasing number and severity of environmental threats.

The key elements of the plan deal with:

- conservation of biological diversity
- climate change and integrated coastal management
- waste management
- environmental management, planning and institutional strengthening
- environmental education, information and training

Ministers called for a report to be presented by the Secretariat at the next Ministerial Meeting on the outputs achieved in each of the key elements of the Action Plan.

The Ninth SPREP Meeting came in the wake of the 27th South Pacific Forum at

which Leaders agreed on a range of measures to achieve more rapid progress on economic reform and development, and sustainable management of natural resources.

Sustainable development is of particular concern in the South Pacific, where many island countries and territories have fragile environments and small land areas, and rely on their natural resources or ability to attract tourists for a significant part of their national income.

Moreover island countries and territories, especially the small island states, have particular difficulties in building national capacity for environmental protection. Although the final responsibility for environmental policy rests with national governments, international programmes, and the cooperation activities of the donor countries should continue to take account of the special environmental vulnerability needs of smaller island countries.

Ministers pointed out that sustainable development in the region can only be possible if economic development and environmental policies are mutually supportive. There is now a clear international consensus that sustainable development is a process in which the environment and development are treated as one.

Continued on page 3



Mr Don Stewart delivering the SPREP address at the Ninth SPREP Meeting



Having now spent three months as SPREP's second Director, I consider myself to be most fortunate in being entrusted by our member countries with the responsibility of leading the vibrant SPREP Secretariat into the 21st Century. On arrival in Samoa, my family and I have been well received by the Government of Samoa, the dynamic staff of SPREP and the wider Apia community in general.

Indeed, I was honoured to be received by the Right Honourable Tofilau Eti Alesana, Prime Minister of Samoa, on my second day in office. Further, my wife, Va'aipu and I were generously hosted to a welcome dinner by the Honourable Tuala Kerslake, Minister of Lands, Surveys and Environment and Mrs Kerslake.

Heads of Diplomatic Missions and the Sub-regional Offices of International Agencies also made me feel welcome by receiving me in my first week in office.

In addition, we were pleased to welcome Professor Obasi, Secretary General of the

World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to SPREP Headquarters on my third day in office. Professor Obasi explored with us and the Samoan Government, the possibility of locating WMO's Sub-regional Office for the South-West Pacific at SPREP Headquarters. Professor Obasi subsequently decided in favour of this move. We all felt that not only would such a development be to the mutual benefit of both organisations but, more importantly, our overlapping membership within the Pacific island countries would be better served through such an arrangement.

That first week was certainly a revitalising introduction for me into the new world of SPREP.

Many people from around the region and the wider international community have kindly extended to me expressions of friendship, kinship and continuing support for SPREP. Several of them also informed me of the high regard that they accorded to the work of the SPREP Secretariat. Let me, therefore, belatedly



Mr Tutangata, Director of SPREP

extend to Dr Vili Fuavao, first Director of SPREP, my very warm thanks for his exemplary service to the region and to the SPREP Secretariat in particular.

Let me also congratulate Don Stewart, for his stewardship as Acting Director of SPREP in the eight months period between Dr Fuavao's departure from SPREP and my arrival in mid-January, 1997.

SPREP is certainly blessed with highly dedicated and competent staff, a major factor contributing to the Secretariat's impressive outputs on behalf of the Pacific Island countries that it serves as Dr Fuavao, Don and many others have readily attested.

It has been ten years since I was directly involved in overseeing the activities of SPREP while it was one of the increasingly significant projects within the South Pacific Commission. Certainly SPREP has grown significantly in that time from a handful of staff members to the sixty that we currently have on the payroll, and its activities have obviously increased in equal proportion to the increase in staff. Obviously, there has to be a cut-off point in such phenomenal growth and in terms of our current "temporary" office facilities, saturation point was reached before I arrived on the scene.

We all look forward to that day in the near future when our members and friends will see fit to provide the SPREP Secretariat with office facilities that are conducive to the maintenance of consistently high, quality outputs by SPREP staff.

Tamarii Tutangata
Director

Continued from page 2

Ministers' Statement on Environment and Development


Ministers at the Ninth SPREP Meeting called upon their colleagues attending the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting to consider, in their discussions, the environmental implications of economic policy decisions, and to take fully into account environmental information that may assist in clarifying the range of sustainable development options.

Similarly, Ministers agreed that the economic and other costs and benefits of environmental initiatives should be considered before new commitments were agreed by governments.

Ministers declared 1997 to be the Year of the Coral Reef in the South Pacific and

initiated further work by SPREP to promote the conservation of the region's sea turtle populations following on from the 1995 Year of the Sea Turtle campaign.

Ministers recognised the importance to the region of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in June 1997 which will renew the international agenda for sustainable development and consider its further implementation.

Ministers agreed to contribute effectively to this process by developing a regional submission from Pacific island countries and territories containing concrete proposals for action. 

WMO relocate to the Pacific region?

Professor G.O.P. Obasi, the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), visited Apia in January this year. During his three-day visit, he held talks with SPREP about the possibility of setting up a WMO Sub-regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific (ASWP) that would operate within or coexist with SPREP.

The relocation of the office, which is currently in Geneva, is for certain, where it will be based in the Pacific is the question that Prof. Obasi and his tour party were here to discover—Fiji or Samoa. The relocation will allow WMO to monitor its programmes and respond quickly to the needs of its member countries in the Pacific region. If SPREP is the location, the office's objectives will be enhanced through: the close working relationship which the two organisations have built since 1994; using SPREP's extensive coordinating infrastructure in the region; and merging or collaborating on programmes that have similar activities and outputs removing areas of duplication and maximising their combined resources.

According to SPREP Director, Mr Tamarui Tutangata, "SPREP and WMO began a formal working relationship in 1994, with the aim of strengthening the capacity of the Pacific region in the areas of Meteorology and Climatology. Some of the projects from the relationship have resulted in the installation of satellite receiving equipment in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Tuvalu and Western Samoa. The equipment is being used by these countries to prepare daily weather forecasts and, even more importantly, to forecast and track tropical cyclones.

"However, with WMO projects increasing as well as their membership growing in the region, WMO is looking to relocate the office for ASWP. Therefore, exciting times lie ahead for the region in the area of Meteorology and Climatology, and in the environment of the new SPREP Action Plan."

The WMO sub-regional office will operate as an integral part of the WMO Secretariat. Its functions will focus on technical cooperation activities (especially

those relating to identifying WMO member needs); formulation of national and regional proposals; evaluation and follow-up of projects; mobilisation of resources; and participation in the implementation of the WMO Regional Programme.

Professor Obasi during this visit also held talks with Western Samoa Government officials including Prime Minister, Honourable Tofilau Eti Alesana, and

members of the Diplomatic Corps including United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative, Mr Anthony Patten.



Prof. Obasi, Mr Tutangata and members of their respective staff

“ . . . exciting times lie ahead for the region in the area of Meteorology and Climatology, and in the environment of the new SPREP Action Plan.”



Prof. Obasi discussing the GIS database with SPREP's GIS Database Assistant Officer, Mr Fiu Petelo Ioane, during a tour of the SPREP Secretariat

SPREP takes on the Internet

*As the Pacific embraces the electronic age, spreading the word on environmental issues has never been easier. In this article *Mr Alex Williams, SPREP's Computer Information and Technology Officer, reports on the new communication facilities soon to be available at the SPREP Secretariat.*

Information is the life blood of SPREP. In the same way that our bodies need to circulate blood efficiently to help us live and be healthy, SPREP must also disseminate information efficiently if it is to be successful. Currently this is achieved through workshops, seminars, and audio-visual and printed documentation, but soon another option will be available.

The age of electronic communication has well and truly arrived in metropolitan countries—and it is beginning to reach the Pacific. The so-called Information Super Highway (although at times it is more like a winding country road) is opening up via the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) who are setting up shop in many island countries, donors and anyone with an interest in the work we are undertaking. It is our intention for SPREP to be fully accessible from and to the Internet and for SPREP to have a presence on the World Wide Web.

Right at the beginning, it must be clearly stated that we are fully aware that affordable access to the Internet is not universally available in the region, and we will ensure that our service to those countries will not be adversely affected.

At the time of writing, we are in the planning stage, but it is expected that the project will be completed in the first half of 1997. Some training has already been undertaken, and much of the required equipment and software ordered. Implementation will be in stages but, when complete, the following facilities will be available.

Email

All Programme Officers and SPREP management will have an Email address. This will provide an efficient and cost effective means of communication to and from these officers. It is expected that the number of faxes being sent will decrease dramatically, as will the number of overseas telephone calls. The SPREP telephone bills



will reflect this reduction, and studies in other organisations have shown that this reduction more than covers the cost of the leased line to and charges by the Internet Service Providers.

World Wide Web

SPREP will have a page on the World Wide Web which can be accessed by anyone on the Internet. The contents of this page have not yet been finalised, and will evolve as more experience is gained in what information is useful to those accessing it.

File transfer

Many of our documents will be held online. After browsing the list, anyone wishing to have a copy of a particular document will be able to “download” it to a local computer for printing or for reading on the screen. This will not replace our mailing policy, but will allow people not on the mailing list to gain access to our documents.

A “Firewall” coupled with “routes” will provide protection to SPREP’s internal network from unauthorised access. A dedicated line between SPREP and the local

ISP will be installed, and mail will be sent and received regularly throughout the day and distributed to programme officers via its Microsoft Exchange Serve Post Office on the network.

The design of the Web Page is important. It must be interesting and relevant, but serious thought must be given to the use of graphics. Pictures make reading more exciting, but involve a lot of data which takes time to transmit and therefore costs real money to the receiver. Users can choose not to accept graphics, but this could produce a very boring page, particularly if the author used graphics and animation to make the page interesting. Internet access in the Pacific is still expensive, so we will ensure that this is borne in mind when designing the SPREP page.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the work of Al Blake of SPC, Noumea. Many of our ideas and plans stem from the work he has done and the suggestions he has made.

* Mr Williams has since departed SPREP. His replacement will be Mr Herve Dropsy.

The Treaty of Waigani

The Waigani Convention is designed to stop waste traders making the South Pacific an international waste dump for hazardous and radioactive wastes.

The Waigani Convention, or *The Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region*, was opened for signature by members of the South Pacific Forum at Waigani, Papua New Guinea, in September 1995.

It can be likened to a huge protective net around the South Pacific, banning the dumping of hazardous wastes produced outside the region.

Such an agreement is immensely important in keeping our region clean. Yet, by the time of writing only three Forum countries had ratified the agreement. The Convention requires 10 ratifications before it enters into force. Until this happens, this net will have many holes!

Why have a Waigani Convention?

The title of the Convention is self explanatory. Other objectives that can be inferred from the document:

- prohibit the importation of hazardous wastes into Pacific Island Developing Countries;
- avoid or reduce the generation of hazardous wastes;
- reduce to a minimum or eliminate the transboundary movements of hazardous wastes within the region;
- manage those wastes in an environmentally sound manner;
- optimise the environmentally sound recovery of those wastes;
- prohibit the importation of radioactive wastes into Pacific Island Developing Countries; and
- recognise different requirements for managing radioactive wastes and hazardous wastes.

In addition, the Convention Secretariat, SPREP, has already begun the search for

regional waste disposal facilities. Removing obsolete pesticides, PCBs from old transformers, and other hazardous wastes from Pacific Islands will be a significant step towards a cleaner and safer environment.

But why do we need a Convention to do that?

One country can't stop the danger of hazardous wastes, which represent an increasing threat to human health and the environment. It needs regional cooperation.

In fact, countries which ratify the Waigani Convention stand to gain in many areas. They are likely to attract financial support, possibly from SPREP, to help them administer and properly dispose of their existing hazardous wastes. The greatest benefit, though, is the knowledge that dangerous wastes will not enter the region and the risk of accidents involving ships carrying these wastes is far less likely.

Of course, there are some costs involved in the administration of the Convention, too.

What must a country do once it signs the Convention?

Countries should ban the import of hazardous and radioactive wastes. They should also minimise the production of hazardous wastes and cooperate to ensure that wastes are treated or disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. This will involve developing national legislation (and perhaps amending existing laws) to prevent and punish illegal trafficking of wastes.

There are also various forms of documentation which need to be transmitted between countries and the Secretariat including export notifications, written consent or disapproval, notifications of movements and accidents and information on the sound management of wastes. As

the Convention Secretariat, it is likely that SPREP will produce a standard set of documents based on those drafted for the Basel Convention, ensuring that administration does not become difficult.

The Convention includes: *American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia and Dependencies, New Zealand, Niue, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Republic of Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna.*

For more information, contact:

Mr Bernard Moutou
Legal Officer

Or

Mr Andrew Munro
Waste Management and Pollution
Prevention Officer
SPREP (the nominated Secretariat for
the Waigani Convention)
PO Box 240
Apia
Samoa
Email sprep@talofa.net

SPREP thanks Ian Fry and Greenpeace Pacific for their help in compiling this information.

What is a hazardous waste?

According to the Convention, hazardous wastes come in two forms:

1. those products whose production processes are known to be hazardous, such as medical wastes, organic solvents, explosives, photographic chemicals and industrial waste disposal operations; and
2. products which contain poisons, such as the heavy metals of zinc and lead, the inorganic compounds of cyanide and fluorine, and asbestos.

Both groups display certain characteristics such as being explosive, flammable, infectious or toxic.



V-FILES — AVA, WORKING WITH SPREP IN YAP AND PALAU

Two new Australian volunteers have joined the SPREP forces to strengthen its regional in-country activities. Glenn and Claire continue SPREP's long-running association with the Australian Volunteers Abroad (AVA) programme.

Glenn Whittaker will work in Yap for 12 months, for the Yap State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as a Water Quality Specialist. Glenn has a chemistry degree and has worked with Pacific Power (the New South Wales Electricity Commission in Australia) for approximately seven years, including a cadetship. This involved work with water treatment, water testing, coal analysis, plant operation/maintenance, gas emission testing, predicting changes in trace element emissions and, as Glenn says, “lots of other stuff”! He has the option of extending for a further year and, if he enjoys it as much as he has so far, just might do that.

Glenn can be contacted through the:
Yap State Environmental
Protection Agency
PO Box 178
Yap
FSM 96943

Claire Gronow is an environmental scientist with a degree in Science and Environmental Studies from the University of Melbourne, Australia. For the last six years (since graduating), she has been working as a consultant, first with Woodward-Clyde and then with Sinclair Knight Merz. Claire enjoyed the wide variety of projects that she worked on in three years, although some of her favourites have been:

- environmental impact assessment of gold mines;
- environmental impact assessment of infrastructure projects such as sewers and gas transmission pipelines;
- environmental audits of power stations, coal mines and irrigation drainage systems; and

- preparation of environmental management plans for operation of sewers and sewage pumping stations, electricity transmission systems and various construction projects.

She has also completed waste management and contaminated site related work.

“I am not really sure what my position in Palau will involve”, she says. “Probably everything from environmental impact assessment to community education. That is one of the most exciting things about the placement—the wide range of interesting things that I am likely to be involved with, not to mention the wide range of interesting people I am bound to meet!”



*Glenn and Claire at
SPREP Secretariat
preparing for their
respective assignments*

A whale of a time

When a Tongan national sought to resume whaling in the Kingdom in 1995, officials sought second opinions before deciding to continue a whaling ban imposed 17 years earlier. SPREP was among those approached.

The original request had suggested an annual take of 10 humpback whales (down from an earlier kill figure of 50). SPREP provided expert advice on why any hunting would threaten the recovery of an already endangered species that was also covered by an international moratorium on whaling.

Among the arguments in support of whaling was the supposed dietary benefit to Tongans, as well as a claim that humpback numbers were comfortably high enough. There were other claims as well, including one suggesting the whales were competing with fishermen for fish (research indicates that whales migrating to Tonga only go there to breed and raise calves, not feed. Humpback eat krill, not fish, in the southern oceans). Sue Miller, SPREP's *Biodiversity Officer (Species)*, describes the humpback population as severely depleted with current numbers a fraction of what they were before commercial whaling got underway in earnest last century.

From an original population of 120,000 there are now an estimated 10,000 left in the entire Southern Hemisphere. Of that number, several hundred are believed to migrate to Tonga and nearby countries.

Whales in the Southern Hemisphere are divided into six groups or tribes, with Group Five migrating past New Zealand and splitting into two sub-groups. One breeds mainly around Australia, such as in Hervey Bay, Queensland. The second sub-group breeds mainly around Tonga, between June and November, with some spreading further to other Island States.

The breeding population in Tonga shows little or no sign of recovery, although they

need to be studied further for a more accurate picture. In the Australian part of the group, the whales are showing around three percent recovery.

"The accepted international strike-loss rate is three to one, so if you propose to kill 10 whales you are talking about killing or wounding 40 whales. That could easily compromise the recovery of the whales on that breeding ground", Miller said.

Tonga had a small domestic whaling industry early this century. It is believed to have been introduced by American whalers. Rather than making money from legal hunting, SPREP has backed Tongan efforts to attract visitors who will spend money to watch the mammals in their natural environment year after year.

Whale watching as a commercial activity is picking up in islands such as Tonga, following established operations in Australia and New Zealand. At a 1995 seminar for operators in the Kingdom, the participants were told the best approach was one that did not change the giant mammal's behaviour in the water. They were also invited to learn about the humpbacks.

Newborn calves need to breathe every few minutes and can become stressed by boats moving too close. The calves need to build up body weight to undergo the lengthy



Photo by Jean Marc

Humpback Whale and Calf, Kingdom of Tonga. Produced with the kind permission of Jean Marc

swim back to Antarctica. One advantage of Vava'u is that the waters are calm, making it much easier for small calves to breathe than in the swells and spray of the Antarctic.

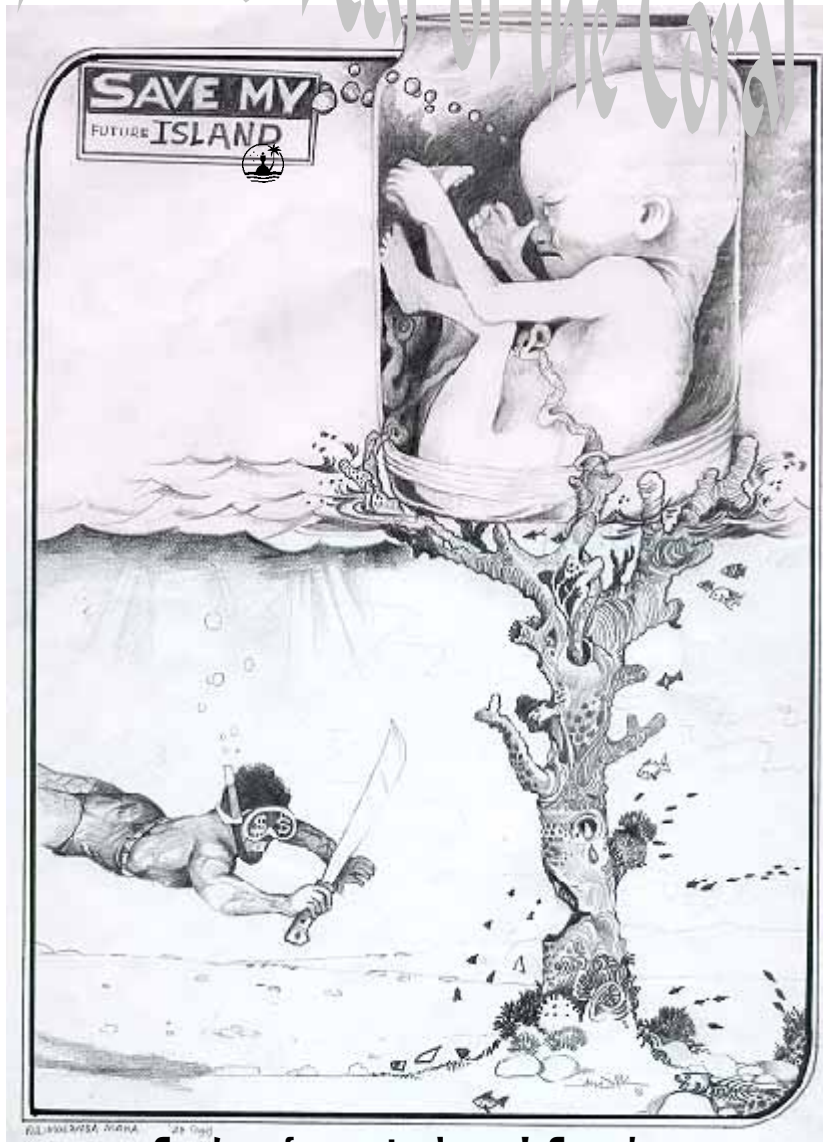
Individual whales are identified by their tail flukes which are as unique as human fingerprints. One of the most distinctive females in the Tongan breeding ground is Konga Hiku (Half Tail), who has part of one of her flukes missing. Konga Hiku was spotted two years ago and returned again this season with a calf. She is one of more than 50 humpback whales photographed in Tonga over a three-year period to help identify them.

Today tourists come from all over the world to see the humpbacks at play. "We had a 74-year-old grandmother who was so excited with the encounter she came back aboard crying", says Allan Bowe of Whalewatch, Vava'u. That crying is keeping the whales alive.

Adapted with permission from an article appearing in the March-April 1997 issue of Islands Business, by Ulafala Aiavao

From an original population of 120,000, there are now an estimated 10,000 left in the entire Southern Hemisphere. Of that number, several hundred are believed to migrate to Tonga and nearby countries.

1997 Pacific Year of the Coral Reef

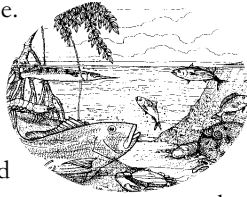


Coral reefs are in danger! Seventy percent of the world's coral is either dead, critical or threatened due entirely to pollution, overfishing and other human-induced activities. If this trend is not halted, coral reefs will disappear along with an integral part of our cultural identity.

Coral Reefs: Their Health, Our Future!

Why care for coral reefs?

Coral reefs are important to our natural and cultural heritage. The islands of Micronesia, Polynesia and Melanesia contain 15 to 20 percent of the world's remaining healthy coral. Pacific island countries (PICs) would like to keep these remaining healthy corals alive. If we take care of our coral reefs, they will take care of us!



What should I know about corals?

Corals are alive! Our coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses protect and support each other. We need them all. Protecting our coral reefs helps secure our future and is everyone's responsibility.

The Pacific Year of the Coral Reef (PYOCR) is a region-wide educational awareness campaign. It aims to increase understanding, appreciation, support and immediate action for coral reef conservation and its wise use. The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, together with its 26 member governments and many non-government agencies, is working on this international campaign to actively highlight damage to coral reefs and promote ways to protect and use them wisely.

The campaign slogan is "Coral Reefs: Their Health, Our Future!", because healthy coral reefs in the Pacific Islands help provide a healthy future for people of the Pacific. Corals are living animals. They are of fundamental importance to the Pacific way of life and this campaign provides the chance to celebrate corals and take real action to keep reefs healthy.

Launching across the region

With the exception of Vanuatu, Tonga, Tokelau, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, the PYOCR campaign was launched simultaneously across the Pacific region on 11 February, 1997 by prominent leaders in each PIC. Launch ceremony activities included floats, music, artwork, poetry and story-telling competitions, displays and many more. A documentary



video will be launched at the end of March, followed by the PYOCR rap music video in late July.

Key threats to coral reefs

The threats which contribute mostly to coral reef degradation are human-induced activities. For the Pacific region, the primary threats to coral reefs and related ecosystems include the following:

- 1. pollution from sewage, fertilisers, biocides, toxic wastes, oil spills, solid wastes, freshwater runoff and other land-based sources of pollution;* (American Samoa, Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu)
- 2. siltation due to soil erosion from inappropriately conducted landuse practices (agriculture, forestry, mining, roadworks, site clearance);* (American Samoa, Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, New Caledonia, CNMI, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tonga)
- 3. over-exploitation of coral reef resources (e.g. commercially valuable species such as beche-de-mer, giant clams, trochus and shellfish; live coral harvesting for aquariums and the tourist trade; mining coral beads for construction; subsistence fishing procedures);* (American Samoa, FSM, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Niue, CNMI, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna)
- 4. destructive fishing and collecting methods (e.g. poisons, explosives);* (Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Samoa and Tonga)
- 5. land reclamation (including mangrove and reef-flat destruction), inappropriate coastal protection works and unsound mariculture practices;* (American Samoa, FSM, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, CNMI, Palau, Samoa, and Tonga)
- 6. coastal and marine development projects progressing without EIAs or*
with inadequate EIAs; (FSM, Niue, PNG, and Samoa)
- 7. channel blasting and dredging activities;* (Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, CNMI, Palau, Samoa, Tokelau, and Tuvalu)
- 8. mining of beach and reef materials;* (Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Palau and Western Samoa)
- 9. coastal erosion and accretion;* (Fiji, French Polynesia and Kiribati)
- 10. tourism activities and related developments;* (Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, CNMI and Palau)
- 11. military testing, training and dumping (e.g. nuclear testing, munitions disposal)* (French Polynesia and Marshall Islands)
- 12. catastrophic events (e.g. tropical cyclones, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, coral bleaching, crown-of-thorns starfish, severe El Nino–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) events and possible climate change and sea-level rise;* (American Samoa, Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu)



These threats are common across the region. As a result of being host to one of the world's heaviest population densities, Ebeye atoll in the Marshall Islands has reefs which are badly polluted and damaged.



*Mr. Don Stewart,
Deputy Director
of SPREP
speaking at the
official launch of
the Pacific Year
of the Coral Reef
campaign*

The regional calendar of activities for the campaign

- i. Launch of the "Coral Reef: Their Health, Our Future!" video in March 1997;
- ii. Launch of the coral reef music video in July 1997;
- iii. Regional Coral Reef Curriculum Development Workshop in August 1997;
- iv. Integration and promotion of the PYOCR campaign at the Sixth Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in September.

Samoa and Rarotonga in the Cook Islands share the problem of having their coastal lagoons fished out. Logging and poor landuse practice have resulted in smothered patches of reefs around large Pacific town areas such as Suva, Port Vila, Honiara and Nuku'alofa. In the Federated States of Micronesia, large reefs have been buried alive under airfields built for international airports.

PICs have identified these threats as the issues that need to be addressed to alleviate coral reef degradation as well as promote conservation and wise use.

Campaign activities

There is a specific Regional Campaign Plan (RCP) which outlines the activities for the Pacific Year of the Coral Reef (PYOCR). Each participating country has its own National Campaign Plan (NCP). SPREP is working with these countries to implement NCP activities.

National campaign activities

American Samoa

Pacific Year of the Coral Reef logo and slogan competition
Flag day float contest

Cook Islands

Crown-of-Thorns clean-up (collection of COT by entire reef-user community)
educational reef flat walks

Guam

Coral reef monitoring and research workshops
Coral reef policy development

Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)

Poster and slogan campaign
Public awareness workshop
School colouring competition

Fiji

Community-based management of marine reserves
One-day "Coral Reef Awareness" workshop for Great Council of Chiefs
School Oratory competition and debates

Republic of the Marshall Islands

Coral reef clean-up (by diving clubs)
Battle of the Bands (coral reef theme song)
Public displays of coral reef resource materials

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)

Public building murals, bus shelter murals and rubbish bin painting projects
Library exhibits
Coral reef monitoring and research workshops

Republic of Palau

Essay and poster contest
Travelling theatre (skits)
Coral outreach programmes

Papua New Guinea

Underwater photo competition
Development of marine awareness and education resource kit for schools

Coral reef monitoring and survey techniques training workshop"

Samoa

National quiz on television (school quiz competitions to narrow down to one champion)
Coral Caravan (travelling library)
Site visits to degraded areas
Site visits to pristine areas

Tokelau

Public awareness workshop

Tonga

Artwork competition
Slideshow
Video production

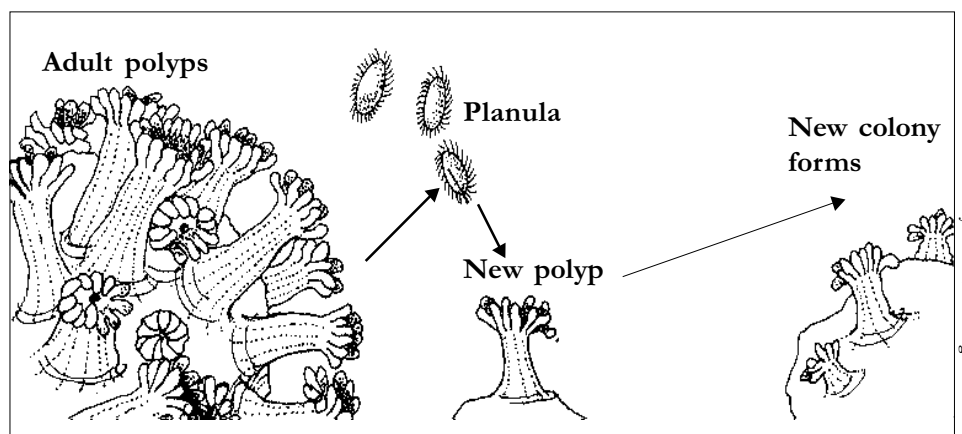
Tuvalu

Public awareness workshops
Essay and song competitions
Radio programmes

Vanuatu

Travelling play on reef custom stories
Poster competition on problems of reef litter
"Coral Reef and Living Creatures" exhibit

As mentioned earlier, the campaign slogan is "Coral Reefs: Their Health, Our Future!" because *healthy coral reefs in the Pacific Islands help provide a healthy future for our people*. Corals are living animals. If we take care of them, they will take care of us. Helping coral reefs is helping ourselves.



Campaign Network

For those interested in finding out about the national activities happening in their respective countries. Please contact the people or organisation/agency listed below.

| Country | Name | Organisation | Fax No. |
|------------------|--------------------------|---|----------------|
| American Samoa | Punipao Iagai-Nagalapedi | Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary | (684) 633 7355 |
| Australia | Chris Bleakey | Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) | (616) 247 5761 |
| Australia | Will Oxley | Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) | (677) 725 852 |
| Cook Islands | Edith Ngariu | Cook Islands Environment Service | (682) 212 47 |
| Cook Islands | Jacqueline Evans | Taporoporoanga Ipukarea Society | (682) 252 14 |
| FSM | | Dept. of External Affairs | (691) 320 2933 |
| FSM | Spensin James | Micronesian Island Conservation Inc. (MIC) | (691) 320 2479 |
| Fiji | Eleni Rova | Dept. of Environment | (679) 312 879 |
| Fiji | Aisake Batibasaga | Fisheries Division | (679) 361 184 |
| Fiji | Curley Carswell | Fiji Dive Operators Association | (679) 850 344 |
| Fiji | Steve Solomon | SOPAC | (679) 370 040 |
| Fiji | Ruth Lechte | | (679) 721 246 |
| French Polynesia | Annie Aubanel | Delegation a l'environnement | (689) 419 252 |
| Guam | Michael J. Gawel | Environmental Protection Agency | (671) 477 9402 |
| Kiribati | Andrew S. Teem | Environment Unit | (686) 283 34 |
| Kiribati | Temakei Tebano | Atoll Research Programme, USP | (686) 213 48 |
| Marshall Islands | Anwest P. Eleas | Environmental Protection Agency | (692) 625 5202 |
| Nauru | Joseph Cain | Dept. of Island Development and Industry | (674) 444 3791 |
| New Caledonia | Dr. Tim Adams | SPC | (687) 263 818 |
| Niue | Brendon Pasisi | Dept. of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries | (683) 407 9 |
| CNMI | John Furey | Coastal Resource Management Office | (670) 234 0007 |
| Palau | Demei Otobed | Bureau of Natural Resources and Development | (680) 488 1475 |
| PNG | Walain Ulaiwi | Dept. of Environment and Conservation | (675) 325 9192 |
| PNG | John Rewald | Motupore Island Research Station, UPNG | (675) 325 8093 |
| PNG | William Asigau | East Hiri Coastal Zone Management Programme | (675) 325 9192 |
| Samoa | Posa Skeltin | Department of Agriculture | (685) 2003 7 |
| Solomon Islands | Bernard Telei | Ministry of Environment and Conservation | (677) 212 45 |
| Tokelau | Makalio Ioano | Dept. Natural Resources and Environment | (685) 217 61 |
| Tonga | Sione Tukia Lepa | Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources | (676) 232 16 |
| Tonga | Netatua Prescott | Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources | |
| Tuvalu | Nicholas Apinelu | Tuvalu Fisheries Division | (688) 203 46 |
| Vanuatu | Robert Jimmy | Fisheries Dept. | (678) 236 41 |
| Vanuatu | Jo Dorras | Wan Smol Bag Theatre Group | (678) 253 08 |

Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information System

From the collection of marine information to advisory roles, workshops and library experience, the Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information System (PIMRIS) is proving itself to be at the centre of fisheries and marine information in the Pacific island countries.

PIMRIS is a joint project of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, the Forum Fisheries Agency, South Pacific Commission and the University of the South Pacific. The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme joined as a cooperating institution in 1994.

The PIMRIS Steering Committee serves as an advisory body on protocols for information exchange and resource sharing; and provides guidance and direction to the network. The membership of this Steering Committee includes the PIMRIS Coordinator (from USP Library), as well as librarians from SPC, SOPAC, SPREP and FFA. Representatives from the funding agencies and National Fisheries act as observers.

All marine and fisheries libraries in the region use PIMRIS as the regional centre for marine resources information through an inter-library loan scheme, circulation of publication lists and the PIMRIS newsletter. The SPREP library benefits from this scheme on a regular basis.

For further information on PIMRIS, contact:

Coordinator

c/o USP Library
PO Box 1168

Suva

Fiji

Tel: 679 313900; Fax: 679 300830

Email: library@usp.ac.fj

Or

Librarian

SPREP

PO Box 240

Apia

Samoa

Tel: 685 21929; Fax 685 20231

Email: sprep@talofa.net



SPREP Library and Information Centre. Library staff, Mr Lucas Dosung and Ms Satui Bentin seen here, hard at work

PIMRIS organises workshops, training and work experience attachments for all Fisheries Department librarians on general library operations, management and database creation and information dissemination using CDS/ISIS database software.

What can I do to protect Coral Reefs?

Avoid building pig pens and toilets on the shoreline

Take only what you need and eat what you take

Observe traditional customs to help manage your coral reefs

Tread carefully when walking, swimming, snorkeling and boating on and around coral reefs

Do not use destructive fishing methods such as poison and dynamite on the reefs

Do not let untreated sewage run straight into the sea

Use moorings instead of anchoring to coral reefs

Use alternative materials where appropriate for building

Help promote awareness of the value of coral reefs

Participate and support coral reef awareness programmes

Pass these messages on to your friends and relatives

For more information contact:
Ms Lucille Apis-Overhoff



Wetlands and Mangroves Officer
SPREP
PO Box 240
Apia, Samoa
Email: sprep@talofa.net

NOTICE

Waste Awareness and Education Programme

The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme is pleased to announce the commencement of the Pacific Regional Waste Awareness and Education Programme. The European Union has generously provided funding totalling 600,000 European Currency Units (ECU), approximately US\$700,00, for this two year programme. The programme recognises that – as with many activities in the South Pacific – one of the keys to success is the involvement of Pacific communities. Therefore, its aim is to assist countries with waste management by concentrating on raising public awareness in two areas: the consequences of inadequate waste management; and community involvement in managing their own wastes. Since funding is provided by the European Union, the programme will be confined to the Asia Carribean Pacific (ACP) States of Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

The objective of the programme is to prevent or minimise waste production and disposal in the ACP States. Activities of the programme include:

- acquisition of information relating to solid waste management in the ACP States;
- development of a multimedia regional programme of general waste awareness education;
- implementation of the programme in the ACP States;
- identification and development of further country and theme specific awareness and education campaigns;
- implementation of some of these specific campaigns;
- identification of priority legislative measures relating to waste management; and
- encouragement and assistance to the implementation of recycling activities in the ACP States.

Recruiting procedures for a Programme Coordinator will commence shortly followed by an identification of country priorities leading to the commencement of the education campaign. SPREP considers the programme to have great potential in assisting the overall regional objective of *ensuring wastes are managed in a manner commensurate with both environmental and health goals* and looks forward to the commencement of the programme with enthusiasm. Pacific communities are invited to participate in the programme over the coming months.

For more information contact:
Mr Andrew Munro



Waste Management and
Pollution Prevention Officer
SPREP
PO Box 240
Apia, Samoa
Email: sprep@talofa.net

Educational resources developed in Vanuatu

SPREP's Environmental Education Officer, Mrs Gisa Salesa-Uesele conducted a resource development workshop from 7-18 October, 1996 in Port Vila, Vanuatu. It aimed at developing materials to assist the Government, churches and NGOs in Vanuatu in their environmental education awareness campaigns.

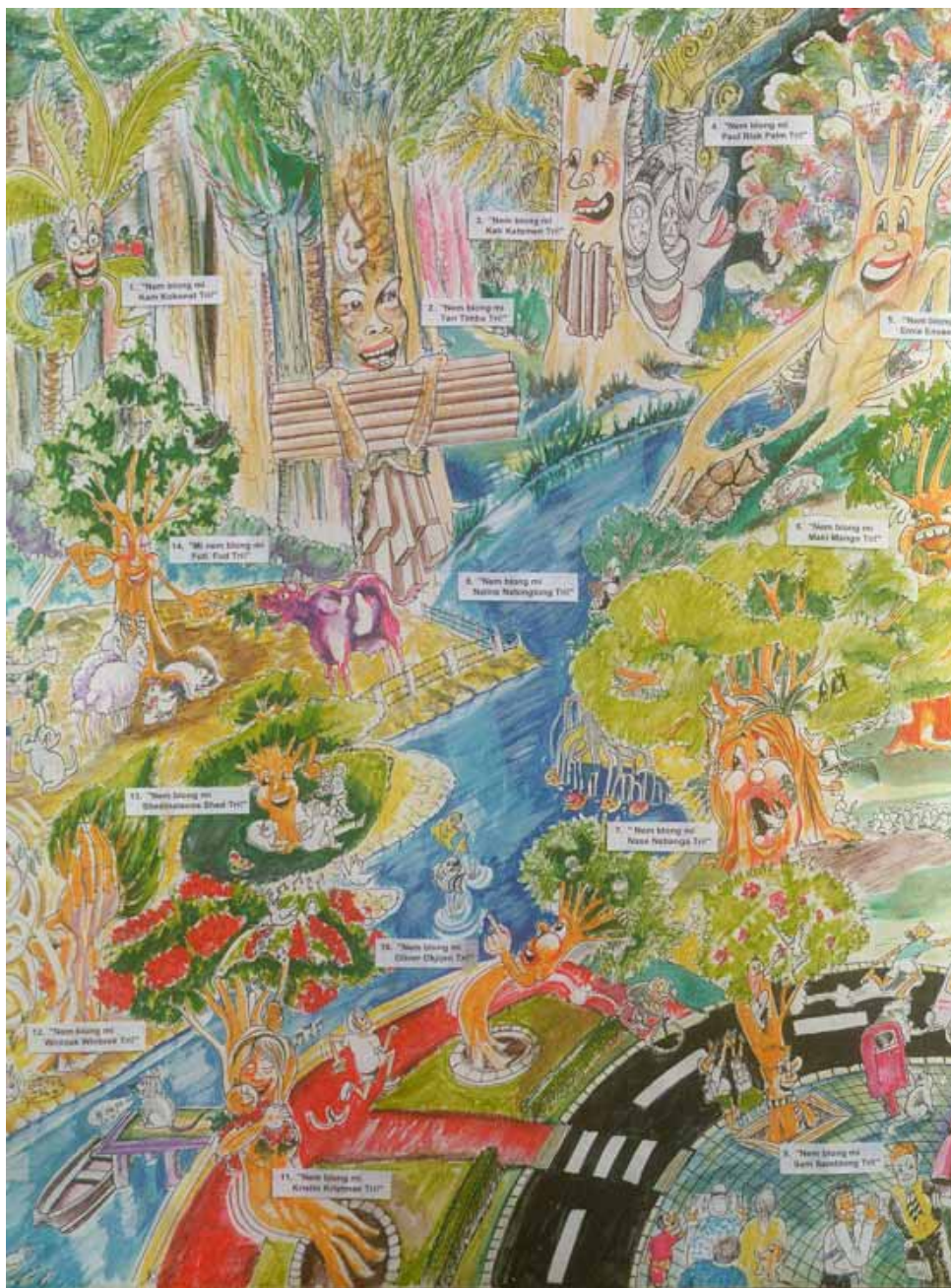
The workshop was the fourth of five activities in the AusAID-funded *Regional Environment Education Awareness Project* involving Vanuatu, Marshall Islands and Cook Islands. During other workshops

conducted with teachers, churches and media earlier in 1996, the need for materials to support and assist awareness campaigns was highlighted. In each of these workshops, specific materials and messages were identified. The Environ-



mental Unit fine-tuned and prioritised these needs to the kind of materials required.

The workshop went straight to task and produced three information booklets on *Population and Resources*, the *Protection of Mangroves* and the *Importance of our Coral Reefs*. A fact sheet and posters were also produced. All of these are being produced to camera-ready stage at SPREP and will be distributed in Vanuatu beginning in August 1997.



Some very good artwork (displayed here), was produced by the two ni-Vanuatu artists, Andrew Tovuvu and Moses Jobo who attended the workshop.

For more information contact:

Mrs Gisa Salesa-Uesele
Environmental Education
Officer



Or

Ms Tiare Turang Holm
Environmental Education
(Curriculum Development)
Officer (Palau Country
Attachment Trainee)
SPREP
PO Box 240
Apia, Samoa
E-mail: sprep@talofa.net



Tackling climate change

Climate change and sea-level rise are two of the greatest challenges to small island environments. A three phase project, designed in association with Environment Australia, hopes to make Pacific island countries more independent in responding to the challenge.

A joint SPREP/Environment Australia workshop and training on the *assessment of and response to the coastal impacts of climate change and coastal hazards* was conducted in February 1997. The workshop is part of a three-phase project which aims to:

1. contribute to capacity-building in Pacific island countries in assessment of and response to the coastal impacts of climate change; and
2. to improve communication between the Australian Government, Pacific island countries and SPREP, with respect to impacts of climate change and sea-level rise on small atoll islands.

Environment Australia is funding the initiative, with Ms Louise Rose acting as the Principal Coordinator of the project.

The first phase of this project, which was carried out between 27 September and 10 October 1996, involved preliminary visits to atoll nations and the preparation of in-country material for the workshop. The countries—including Tuvalu, Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia—were visited by two Programme Officers from SPREP and a Professor from the University of New South Wales.

Through direct face-to-face meetings with local environment staff, they identified climate change and sea-level rise issues important and relevant to each country. This approach enables vulnerability assessment and response strategies to be tailored to the local environments. It also complements the guiding principles in the 1997–2000 SPREP Action Plan, which emphasises the importance of building independent capability in the Pacific island countries, with the full involvement and participation of those countries.

The key issues relating to the impacts of sea-level rise raised during Phase 1 talks were:



Stormclouds, a spectacular climatic event

- coastal erosion;
- water resources;
- overcrowding settlements; and
- pollution.

The key response/adaptation options for addressing sea-level rise impacts were identified as:

- coastal protection measures (e.g. beach nourishment tree planting);
- water conservation;
- resettlement (inter- and intra-atoll islands); and
- waste management.

These broad strategies can be addressed using traditional or contemporary practices and technologies. The tools and resources identified included information and data management such as inventories and coastal resource maps, economic evaluation techniques, legislation such as

EIA, project proposal evaluation and policy.

Phase 2 involves a workshop aimed at discussing the issues and material arising from Phase 1 of the project. In Phase 3, priority actions that have been identified during the workshop will be followed up.

Inevitably, all the atoll nations in the South Pacific will be affected by climate change and sea-level rise. However, in appreciating that every country is unique with regards to its environment, we can see that there can be no single all-encompassing solution to the climate change-related challenges of tomorrow. We believe that the upcoming Phase 2 workshop will assist individual atoll nations in responding to these challenges.

This approach . . . complements the guiding principles in the 1997–2000 SPREP Action Plan, which emphasises the importance of building independent capability in the Pacific island countries.

SPREP

Retreat

The SPREP retreat was and historically, had always been an important exercise. It allows the Secretariat to strengthen and build teamwork; analyse and focus its approach for the coming year. Therefore, this year's retreat was of even greater importance on two counts: to align the Secretariat with the goals and guidelines of the 1997–2000 SPREP Action Plan; and to provide an ideal opportunity to meet and work with new Director, Mr Tutangata, and vice versa. The thoughts and issues that were highlighted and discussed during the plenary sessions augurs well for a highly productive year. Mr Tutangata, stressed the importance of getting the message across to the grassroots level, by working much closer with member countries at this level.

Beginning group discussions with a prayer



SPREP staff update

Exciting times lie ahead for your Secretariat, in the environment of the new SPREP Action Plan. However, there will be some old friends who will not be there. Mr Nuku Jones and Mr Alex Williams are two long serving staff members who have now departed.

SPREP newcomers

Ms Tiare Turang Holm joins the Environmental Education, Information and Coordination Division as Environmental Education (Curriculum Development) Officer. Tiare is from Palau and will be at SPREP for 12 months (until January 1998) under the SPREP Attachment Trainee Scheme. She works closely with Mrs Gisa Salesa-Uesele (Environmental Education Officer) developing education resource materials for use by SPREP member countries.

Mr Samuelu Sesega, joined SPREP in March 1997 as Biodiversity Officer (Resource Management) under SPREP's South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP). Sam is Samoan from the village of Fagaloa. He has a long history of working in the environment, having previously worked for the Samoa Environment Unit and recently at the South Pacific Commission (SPC) for the past two years. He and Bronwyn, with

young Kaiser and Sina are happy to be back—home.

SPREP farewells

Mr Nuku Jones vacates the position of Head of Finance and Administration. He leaves SPREP having been central to many of the physical changes at the Secretariat. He and his family have the best wishes from all the staff as they re-establish their lives back in New Zealand

Mr Alex Williams, leaves SPREP having established a strong computer technology infrastructure for the organisation. Alex became a very valued colleague. His personality, professional attitude and belief in SPREP is still very much visible in the Secretariat for those who were in constant contact with him. Alex is now in Australia, a happy grandfather to healthy twins.

Mrs Leigh Pu'epu'ema'i departs for family reasons to American Samoa.

The staff wish the **SPREP leavers** all the best in their future endeavours.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE ...

SAP:

What is SAP and what will it do for the region? The Global Environment Facility (GEF) break new grounds in the Pacific through its International Waters Program. Find out more in the next issue.

SPREP/USP/SPC collaboration:

The trend is for regional organisations to collaborate and use each others resources nowadays. One such event will be elaborated in the next newsletter.

Education Resource Materials:

The Environment Education unit has been busy conducting in-country activities. The products, materials and outputs will be revealed in the next issue.

SPREP's Training the Trainers in EIA Workshops

Find out about these three Sub-regional workshops and of their benefits to the region. Mr Onorio, SPREP's Environmental Impact Assessment Officer will explain these in detail.

Tonga wins regional artwork competition

Tonga was the big winner in the Regional Art Competition, coordinated by the Pacific Year of the Coral Reef campaign, winning two of the three categories. Western Samoa was the other winner.



Kulimoe'anga Maka (far left) and 'Amipeliassi Tu'akoi (far right) receiving their awards for the regional artwork competition in the South Pacific. Presenting the awards are Netatua Prescott and 'Amanaki Puniani

Books, videos, slides and other materials from SPREP and other environmental organisations in the Pacific Islands

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report: Neiafu Master Plan Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga

This report presents results of strategic environmental assessment of development projects that have been proposed for the town of Neiafu on the island of Uta Vava'u, Tonga, as part of the Vava'u Development Programme.

Various project proposals have been described in the Neiafu Master Plan, published in 1993. This report intends not to provide details but merely to provide a brief overview of the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) of the Master Plan. It assesses the broad environmental impacts of all projects involved in the plan on the Port of Refuge and the township of Neiafu.

The SEA process, in common with all EIA activities, is a basic tool for the promotion of sustainable development. It emphasises

thinking through the environmental consequences of proposed developments before committing to the proposal. In this way, when making final decisions, steps can be taken to enhance long term sustainability.

Onorio, Komeri and Morgan, Richard K. *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report: Neiafu Master Plan Vava'u Kingdom of Tonga*. Apia, Western Samoa: SPREP, 1996. 19pp. ISBN: 982-04-0157-7



Target area of the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) in the Neiafu Masterplan



new releases

Third SPREP Meeting of Meteorological Service Directors (ISBN: 982-04-0158-5)

Sustainable Development of Traditional Medicines and Non-Timber Products. Proceedings of the Workshop. 16-20 October 1995. West Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. (ISBN: 982-04-0162-3)

National Conference on Sustainable Development. Conference Report. 21-23 May 1996. Port Vila, Vanuatu (ISBN: 982-04-0159-3)

Integration of Environmental, Social and Economic Sustainability for Vanuatu. Sustainable Development: An Information Package for Vanuatu. (also published in Bislama and French) (ISBN: 982-04-0163-1)

Evaluation of the Implications of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for SPREP Activities. April 1996 (ISBN: 982-04-0161-5)

Report of the Meetings of Officials, Ninth SPREP Meeting. 25-27 November 1996.

Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga. (ISBN: 982-04-0166-6)

Report of the Ministerial Meeting, Ninth SPREP Meeting. 27-28 November 1996. Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga. (ISBN: 982-04-0171-2)

1997-2000 Action Plan for Managing the Environment of the South Pacific Region (ISBN: 982-04-0170-4)


1996 Progress Report of the SPREP/AusAID Environmental Education Awareness Project

The Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (Waigani Convention)

Posters

Coral Reefs: Their Health Our Future (A2 and A4) Available in French and English

Videos

1. *Coral Reefs: Their Health Our Future*
2. *Problems in the Pacific Island Environment* 

Meetings January to June 1997

| DATES | MEETING | VENUE | ORGANISATION |
|--------------------|---|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| January | | | |
| 20–23 | WMO Secretary-General Mission for relocation of Asia and South-West Pacific Sub-regional office | <i>Apia</i> | SPREP/WMO/ Government of Samoa |
| February | | | |
| 10–13 | Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Workshop on Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation for Atoll Nations | <i>Tarawa</i> | SPREP |
| 11 | Regional “Launch” for the Pacific Year of the Coral Reef Campaign | <i>Apia</i> | SPREP |
| 26–27 | Task Force Meeting on New SPREP Headquarters | <i>Apia</i> | SPREP |
| March | | | |
| 20 | Launch of the “Coral Reef Their Health, Our Future” video documentary | <i>Apia</i> | SPREP |
| April | | | |
| 14–18 | Training of Trainers in Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-regional (Polynesia) Workshop | <i>Apia</i> | SPREP |
| May | | | |
| 5–23 | Training Attachment for the 8 th Pacific Sea Level and Climate Change Monitoring Project at the National Tidal Facility University | <i>Adelaide</i> | SPREP |
| 12–14 | Third Meeting of the SPREP Working Group on Climate Change | <i>Rarotonga</i> | SPREP |
| 26–30 | Environmental Impact Assessment Training of Trainers In-country (Samoa) Workshop | <i>Apia</i> | SPREP/Government of Samoa |
| June | | | |
| 5–6 | Task Force Meeting on Strategic Action Program for International Waters | <i>Apia</i> | SPREP |
| 30 June to 11 July | Training of Trainers in Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-regional (Melanesia) Workshop | <i>Vanuatu</i> | SPREP |

The last word

The three major events that have occurred during the period of this issue of your *Environment Newsletter* have been the Ninth SPREP Meeting, the official launch of the Pacific Year of the Coral Reef campaign and the possible relocation of the World Meteorological Organization's Asia and South-West Pacific (ASWP) Sub-regional office to SPREP. Each event will have lasting effects on the environment of the Pacific region as we head into the next century.

The Ninth SPREP Meeting has given the organisation a new Action Plan to guide its activities and a new Director to provide direction towards the challenges that lie ahead.

The second major event is the Pacific Year of the Coral Reef. As part of the global International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) held in late 1995, it was agreed that 1997

be designated the *International Year of the Coral Reef*. At press time, the Pacific is the only region that has officially launched and implemented its activities. Coordinated by SPREP through its Mangroves and Wetlands Officer, Ms Lucille Apis-Overhoff, and with enthusiastic support by the Pacific Island governments, this campaign has already raised the profile of the plight of coral reefs world-wide. Funding support, mainly from the Australian and New Zealand governments, and in collaboration with other regional and international agencies, has enabled the campaign to be as successful as it is right now. However, there is a long road to hoe and extra funding support from the international community would go a long way towards making the campaign an even bigger success.

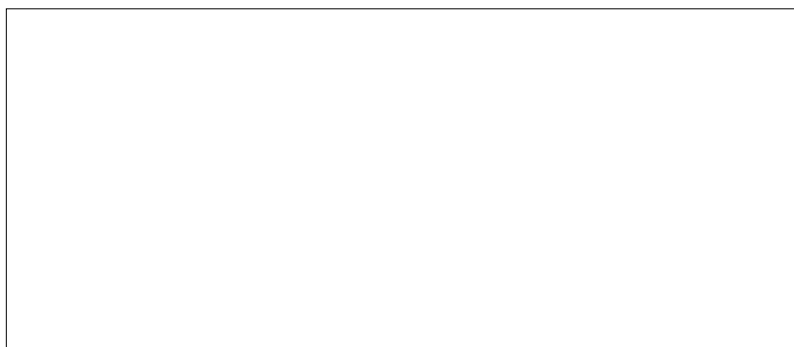
The third event have been the talks between SPREP and the World Meteo-

rological Organization regarding the relocation of its Asia and South-West Pacific Sub-regional office within the SPREP Secretariat (background information is available on page 4 of this issue)

As demands on the Secretariat increase, the SPREP retreat in February of this year was an excellent opportunity to build teamwork, coordination and focus for the long and arduous year in progress. The publication sector will focus more of its resources to keep its audience informed of these activities. At the same time, we look forward to your queries and requests regarding activities and products of your environment organisation.

Fatu Tauafiafi, *Editor*
with Carole Hunter

Air Mail



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