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Kyoto Protocol a major first step in the right direction

The Kyoto Protocol, adopted by consensus on 11 December 1997, represents the first agreement on specific reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The Protocol commits 39 developed countries to reducing their overall emissions of greenhouse gases by six percent below 1990 levels during the years between 2008 and 2012.

Photo by Penehuro Lefale (SPREP)

The Kyoto Protocol was agreed after marathon negotiating sessions and allocation of an extra day in an effort to reach consensus. Towards the end, negotiations stretched over a 36-hour period. The huge media contingent attending the conference had a field day snatching photographs of exhausted negotiators who had stretched out in corridors to grab an hour or so of sleep.

At one point, when it was plain the 160-country talks would have to spill into an extra day, one of the participants begged Raul Estrada Oyuela, the Argentine conference chairman, to set a final deadline.

"The deadline?" Mr Estrada asked. "It is the end of the world, no?"

Exhaustion and deadlocks spilled into outbursts towards the end of the conference. Selwyn Gummer, environment minister in the former British Conservative Government, was one who briefly exploded.

"We are not talking about piddling trade negotiations over the price of beans here," he raged. "We are talking about whether Bangladesh and 36 small island States will disappear beneath the sea."

SPREP head of delegation Gerald Miles said the final Protocol provides the starting point for global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere.

When it comes into force, the Protocol will first reduce the three most common greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4) and nitrous oxide (N_2O). Ways of reducing the other three main greenhouse gases – hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF_6) – will be decided at the Fourth Conference of the Parties to the FCCC, due to be held in Argentina in November 1998.

While the overall global emissions reductions will be six percent, each

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Did You Know That ...

the 1997 Pacific Year of the Coral Reef (PYOCR) had the following key messages during its campaign:

Coral Reefs: Their Health Our Future

Coral Reefs are in danger

Healthy Coral Reefs are living communities—corals are living animals

Healthy Coral Reefs provide food for our families

Pollution kills our Coral Reefs

Soil is precious on land but kills life on Coral Reefs

Healthy Coral Reefs build beaches and islands and protect our homes from the sea

Taking too much from the reef today steals from our children's future

Fun campaign's serious messages help coral reefs world-wide

SPREP's campaign to raise awareness of the importance of coral reefs is now being copied by other regions. Campaign coordinator Lucille Apis-Overhoff says the success of the 1997 Pacific Year of the Coral Reef sparked the Caribbean region to pick up key messages from the Pacific campaign. "The Caribbean campaign is even using our well-known slogan 'Coral Reefs: Their Health, Our Future'."

The campaign, which aimed to raise awareness by celebrating coral reefs, was launched in February 1997 with dancing and singing which focused on the beauty and bounty of coral reefs.

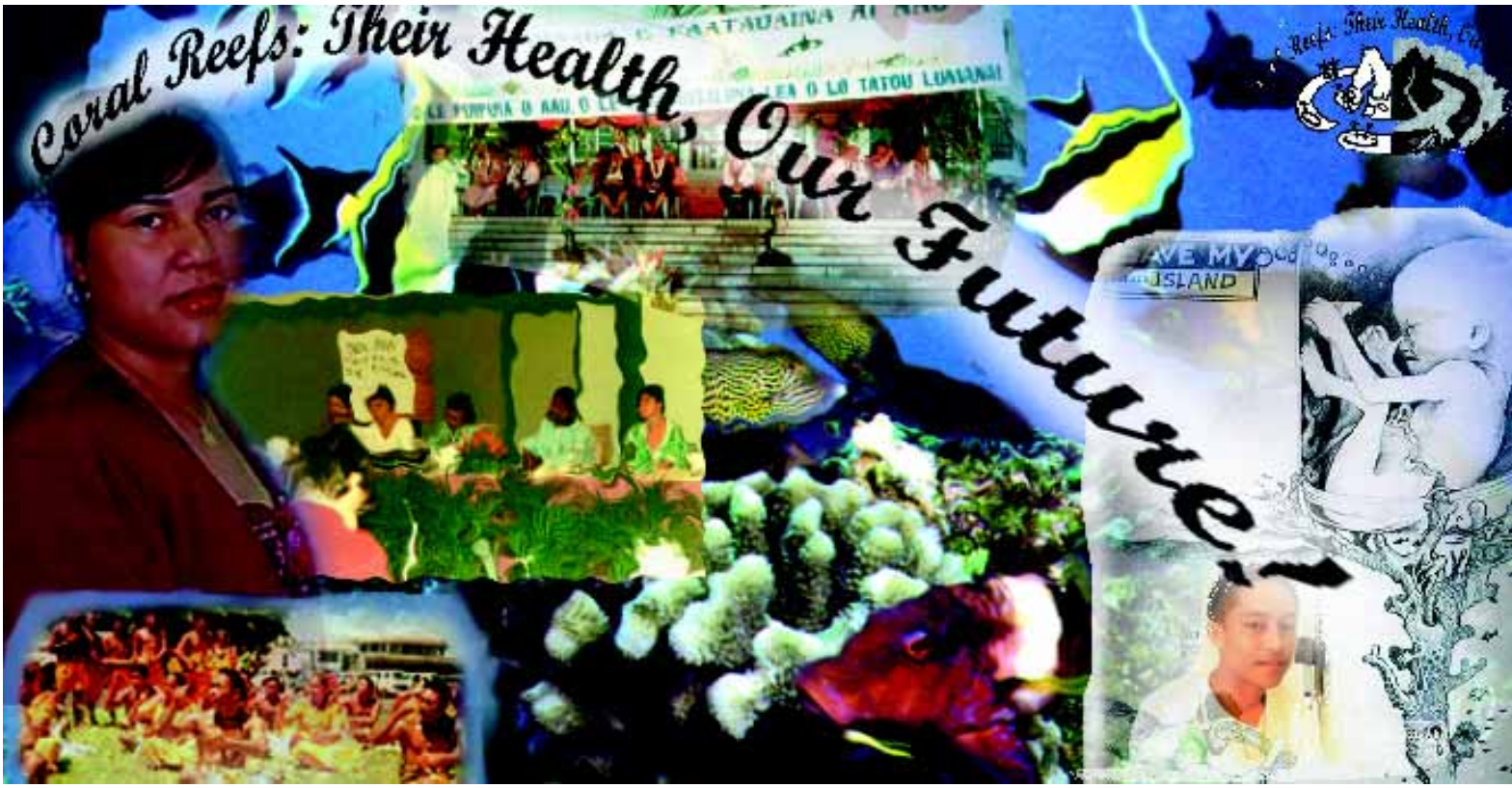
"The campaign was fortunate to be blessed with 18 keen and committed participating member countries," Ms Apis-Overhoff said. "Their hard work and innovative awareness-raising activities won international, regional and national recognition for the campaign."

Activities included coral reef competitions in dancing, singing, artwork, poetry, essay writing and quizzes, letting people learn about coral reefs while they were enjoying themselves.

"A central aim of the campaign was to make sure the learning experience was both fun and informative. All our activities as well as our resource materials were designed with this in mind," Ms Apis-Overhoff said.

Plainly the plans worked. The campaign received international recognition in the form of special voluntary funds from overseas, for instance from the British Embassy in Fiji and from the USA Government, and campaign resource materials such as posters, handbooks, videos and fact sheets are in demand throughout the region, and internationally.

Photos and graphic by Fatu Tauafiafi (SPREP)



from the Director's desk

Mr Tutangata, Director of SPREP

1997 has seen SPREP's member countries make steady progress in several environmental areas.

The highlight on the global environment agenda was obviously the Kyoto Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held from 1–10 December and the events throughout the year leading up to that Conference.

Agreement on the Protocol represented the first time the countries of the world have agreed to make specific reductions in their greenhouse gas emissions. As such the Protocol is an important and historic first step. However, it still does not go as far as many Pacific island countries would wish, and important details still have to be decided before any real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions begin.

The Protocol makes provision for a Clean Development Mechanism, which would allow polluting developed nations to offset some of their emissions if they help developing nations install clean technology, and fund adaptation to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. This provision could be of assistance to Pacific island nations. However, the specific approaches to adaptation have yet to be developed under the Protocol. In the South Pacific, there is a need for targeted studies on joint implementation and approaches to adaptation activities.

Another important detail missing from the Kyoto Protocol is development of effective mechanisms that would allow the Protocol to be implemented. There is also an urgent need to assess how developed countries' implementation of the Protocol's policies and measures would affect Pacific island countries, particularly in terms of social, economic and trade implications.

A challenge for SPREP is to ensure its member countries understand what the Kyoto Protocol means for them, and how it could affect people's everyday lives. Our recommendation is for a well coordinated regional public awareness and education programme, spread over the next few years.

SPREP staff continue to face more immediate and down-to-earth challenges, in the form of their increasingly cramped office accommodation. A continuing preoccupation is the need to secure adequate funds for our new offices. Through the Headquarters Task Force, Forum Leaders, Forum Secretariat and our members, definite progress has been made on this issue over the last twelve months. Thank you to Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea in particular in this regard and we look forward to pursuing this matter further with the Government of Japan. We sincerely hope that adequate funds will be secured as early as possible in the new year to allow the actual construction to proceed.

We have seen much progress on most aspects of the Action Plan for the Environment of the island countries throughout the year. However, it is clear that greater emphasis and more resources are required to build up the capacities of all countries to deal with increasingly urgent environmental issues.

I should like to thank one and all, member governments, donor agencies, the other SPOCC Agencies, cooperating agencies and people throughout the Pacific islands, for your continuing strong support for SPREP and what it stands for in 1997. We look forward to continuing and strengthening our joint efforts in 1998.

Photo by Fetu Tauafiafi (SPREP)

Space restrictions at the Secretariat mean these containers, originally used in a schools painting competition, have been turned into offices

Developed countries' greenhouse gas reduction targets for period 2008 – 2012

Australia 8% increase
Austria 8% reduction
Belgium 8% reduction
Bulgaria 8% reduction
Canada 6% reduction
Croatia 5% reduction
Czech Republic 8% reduction
Denmark 8% reduction
Estonia 8% reduction
European Community 8% reduction
Finland 8% reduction
France 8% reduction
Germany 8% reduction
Greece 8% reduction
Hungary 6% reduction
Iceland 10% increase
Italy 8% reduction
Japan 6% reduction
Latvia 8% reduction
Liechtenstein 8% reduction
Lithuania 8% reduction
Luxembourg 8% reduction
Monaco 8% reduction
Netherlands 8% reduction
New Zealand zero reduction
Norway 1% increase
Poland 6% reduction
Portugal 8% reduction
Romania 8% reduction
Russian Federation zero reduction
Slovenia 8% reduction
Spain 8% reduction
Sweden 8% reduction
Switzerland 8% reduction
Ukraine zero reduction
United Kingdom and Northern Ireland 8% reduction
United States 7% reduction

Capacity 21 programme ends with satisfaction

A three-year programme which aimed to strengthen the development of a uniquely Pacific version of sustainability has now ended, with participants satisfied it met its objectives.

Federated States of Micronesia participant Simpson Abraham told the terminal Multipartite review meeting that the proof of the success of the awareness-raising activities could be seen every time the programme officer for Micronesia came into sight. "Whenever people from my island see him they say 'Here comes the sustainable man'."

Six Pacific island countries took part in the Capacity 21 programme: Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in the Melanesian region; Federated States of Micronesia and Kiribati in the Micronesian region; and Cook Islands and Samoa in the Polynesian area. Representatives of those countries and others from Fiji, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau and Tonga joined donor community representatives from UNDP and New Zealand to review the programme and make recommendations for future capacity building efforts.

The programme's overall objective was to strengthen the capacity of Pacific people, and their formal and informal institutions, to achieve sustainable development in a form suited to Pacific island circumstances.

Activities ranged from awareness-raising activities for large groups and training workshops for a handful, to consultancy training for individuals. They involved several economic sectors of governments, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and a variety of community groups.

Countries told the terminal review meeting, held in Nadi, Fiji on 20 November 1997 that they had seen a positive impact from the programme, particularly in the greater awareness of sustainable development which it had fostered, and in the participation of groups at the grassroots level. They said the programme's flexibility led to innovative ways of building the capacity of different groups in the region.

One notable innovation was the use of three programme officers (POs), each from a country in one of the three Pacific sub-regions which took part. Each PO implemented the programme in their own country, and in another in their region. The terminal review meeting noted that the programme was most successful in the countries where the PO was based—FSM, Samoa and Vanuatu. That particular success may be due to the fact that the POs are usually more in tune with events in the country in which they live, and therefore can reorient their activities to fit the country's situation more precisely.

Photo by Fatu Tauafiafi (SPREP)

Mr Okean Ehmes, 'the sustainable man'

Having POs also made it possible to overcome the language barrier. For example, Vanuatu's PO is fluent in the Pidgin language and so can communicate with grassroots groups in both Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. In addition, when consultants were hired the programme tried as much as possible to use Pacific islanders.

The terminal review meeting agreed that despite all the activities undertaken and successes of the Capacity 21 programme, Pacific island countries needed continuing and further capacity building in environmental management. Accordingly, SPREP is to execute a new programme, developed by UNDP, which is expected to build upon previous capacity building projects.

The new programme is based on lessons learned from these past programmes. For example, one clear lesson that emerged from the Capacity 21 programme was that in developing activities, closer consultation needs to be taken with countries. For this new programme, there will be a six-month in-depth in-country consultation period during which individual countries can design their own programmes. Countries have already expressed interest in taking part in this new programme but the actual participants have yet to be decided.

Photo by Craig Wilson (SPREP)

Integrating traditional with modern technologies: modern motorboat rests on shore beyond traditional buildings in Kiribati

CBEMP:
The new capacity building project for the Pacific

This new project has now commenced its Preparatory Assistance Phase at SPREP to ensure that the capacity building and institutional strengthening initiatives that were established in the National Environmental Management Strategies (NEMS) and the Capacity 21 Programme are further developed to achieve the sustainable development of Pacific island countries' natural resources.

The important aspect of the Preparatory Assistance phase is that the countries themselves determine their own priorities for capacity building that will meet the objectives of the project. These priorities will ultimately determine in-country activities for implementation.

At the UNDP Saipan Pacific Regional Programming Consultations held 25 October, 1996, UNDP and its Member Countries agreed that there should be an *environmental management* component under the section on Environment and Natural Resources Management of the UNDP Sixth Programme Cycle Pacific Island Sub-Regional Programme.

The objective of the Environment and Natural Resources Management component is:

- to increase the capacity of Pacific island countries to use their natural resources in a sustainable manner;
- to support and create employment opportunities; and
- to support sustainable livelihoods.

To address these objectives the Capacity Building for Environmental Management in the Pacific (CBEMP) project (to be executed by SPREP) was developed as a sub-component of the Sustainable Management and Utilisation of Natural Resources (SMUNR) programme.

Photo by Fatu Tauafiafi (SPREP)

The CBEMP team. Craig Wilson, Sarah Mecartney and Okean Ehmes

The objectives of the CBEMP project are as follows:

1. That national, local and community environmental management institutions are able to integrate their formal and traditional resource management systems thereby contributing to job creation and sustainable livelihoods for both women and men.
2. That formal and traditional institutional systems are able to contribute to job creation and sustainable livelihoods, for both women and men, through improved management of natural resources.
3. That community education and empowerment programmes integrate both formal and traditional systems of environmental management to promote job creation for men and women and the sustainable management of the natural resources.

Preparatory Assistance Phase

The six month preparatory assistance phase has now begun at SPREP with preparation of a project document that will achieve the objectives of CBEMP. The preparatory assistance phase will be country-driven, through in-depth and broadly based national consultations in each participating country.

National Project Coordinator and National Coordinating Committee

In accordance with the recommendations established in the project preparatory assistance document, a National Coordinating Committee (NCC) is to be established to facilitate in-country consultations. A National Project Coordinator (NPC) in each participating country will assist in the establishment of each NCC, and will manage the consultation process. It is proposed that the NPC take charge of the establishment of the NCC and facilitate in-country discussions. The NCCs will also be used in the consultative process for other components of the UNDP Sustainable Management and Utilisation of Natural Resources (SMUNR) Programme.

Mr Craig Wilson is the project manager for CBEMP. Mrs Sarah Mecartney (Vanuatu) and Mr O'Kean Ehmes (Federated States of Micronesia) will act as regional coordinators to assist NPCs with the in-country consultation process.

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Project Manager

Ambitious SPBCP delivers the conservation goods

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, they say, and an innovative approach to biodiversity conservation pioneered by the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP) is now drawing the compliment of being embraced by other Pacific projects. The SPBCP approach focuses on strengthening the knowledge and skills of the communities who own the natural resources so they can make their own plans for protecting and managing biodiversity, developing new ways of generating income from their resources without destroying them.

When the SPBCP started up five years ago, in 1993, its goal was deliberately ambitious. The programme aimed to establish at least one Conservation Area Project (CAP) in each of the 14 participating Pacific island countries. By the end of 1996, 14 CAPs had been established in 11 countries. A year later, three new projects were approved for SPREP support, with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Government of Australia.

Perhaps as important as the number of CAs now established in the Pacific is the underlying ethic of community involvement from the outset. Communities which have been included from the start in all decision-making and planning involving sustainable management of their natural resources rightly feel, when the CAP has finally been established, that it belongs to them. That substantially strengthens a community's incentives to value and conserve the resources in the CA, and improves the chances that those CAPs which have been set up will remain established long-term.

In the Pacific, communities traditionally have managed their environment, on land and in marine areas, conserving their resources through a variety of measures. It's probably no surprise therefore that the SPBCP community-based approach has gained region-wide acclaim and support, or that it is now being used in other initiatives in the region. For example, World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) and other non-governmental conservation organisations are also promoting initiatives similar to the SPBCP approach.

slide foto from Joe

Photo by Iosefatu Reti (SPREP)

Conservation Area Coordinating Committee (CACC) of Utwa-Walung—the success for SPBCP

At a Multipartite Review Meeting of donors, the executing agency SPREP and participating countries, held in Nadi Fiji in November last year, programme manager Mr Iosefatu Reti reported on the success of the programme's approach and achievements.

"It is readily recognised in the Pacific that building local community capacity to protect and manage biodiversity on land and in the marine areas they own and depend on is a much more effective way of conserving the region's invaluable but declining natural resources," Mr Reti said.

The Multipartite Review Meeting was particularly impressed with the progress a number of CAPs have made in developing sustainable benefit-generating activities such as eco-tourism, handicrafts, agro-forestry, alley-cropping, watersports and others. "These types of activities make it far more likely that in the long term, the projects will last, and local communities will continue to support CAP development," Mr Reti said.

SPBCP also reported to the review meeting on other biodiversity-related work in the Pacific, which it supports and SPREP executes. Follow-up work to the 1995 Year of the Sea Turtle is continuing. The Government of Fiji has extended its moratorium on the commercial harvesting of sea turtle and has developed a long-term strategy for the conservation of this valuable resource. A new programme on invasive species is being developed and will be implemented in 1998. Satisfactory progress has also been made in implementing two other regional strategies on birds, and marine mammals.

At the review meeting, there was unanimous agreement on recommending to UNDP and GEF that SPBCP should be extended until the year 2001. The meeting noted with satisfaction the progress achieved by SPBCP over the past 12 months, and noted also the need to develop a strategy that will make sure the CAPs established thus far achieve a "soft landing" after SPBCP support comes to an end.

Such an extension will not require additional funds but will enable the programme to use existing unspent resources.

"This was an important decision because, if approved, it would allow the programme sufficient time to help particularly the newly established CAs to develop to the stage where they can manage by themselves," Mr Reti said.

Participants at the meeting also had an opportunity to visit the Koroyanitu Conservation Area—the recipient of the "Best Eco-tourism Project" award in 1996. They went on a guided tour through the forest, the eco-lodge and the waterfall, accompanied by three village tour guides.

This more interactive conference style was extremely productive and suited "the Pacific Way"

6th Conference on Nature Conservation

Photo by Dion Ale (O le Si'osi'omaga Society)

"Congratulations! You really did a fantastic job and your scenario came off brilliantly. The Pacific facilitators were great and it's marvellous to see the growth and development in experience and confidence that bodes very well for the future of conservation in the Pacific"

Bing Lucas, Vice Chair World Heritage, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas

A major success for 1997 was the 6th South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas held in Pohnpei, FSM from 29 September to 3 October 1997. Held every four years, this conference series is the premier event for nature conservation in the region.

Organised by SPREP and hosted by the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia the 6th Conference was the largest in the series to date, with more than 170 delegates including representatives from all 26 SPREP member governments and administrations.

Participation from non-governmental organisations was high with 87 NGO delegates from conservation and development organisations, the private sector and traditional and community leaders involved in conservation. The conference also sponsored the participation of seven College of Micronesia students, providing an opportunity for new conservation workers to learn directly from experience in the region.

The 6th Conference theme of "TOOLS for Conservation" ensured a practical, solution-orientated approach to draw out lessons learnt from conservation initiatives in recent years. Tools focused on at the conference were: Protected Areas (marine and community-based conservation areas); Enterprise Development; Conservation Trust Funds; and the use of the World Heritage Convention in the region. A team of Pacific island facilitators were trained by SPREP to develop and lead working group sessions on key conservation tools. Often working in late evening sessions the team used the results of the TOOL Working Group sessions to compile a draft TOOLBox of the best current advice on using these tools in the region.

However, this was not all the conference achieved. Special technical sessions discussed development of a regional programme to address the problems caused by invasive species, and of a proposed regional Conservation Areas Resource Centre in partnership with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). Lunchtimes during the week were used as a chance to sample local food while listening to more than thirty formal paper presentations on key conference theme areas.

Partnership was a key to success of the 6th Conference with key donor partners, supporting agencies, the host government of FSM and the team of facilitators all working with SPREP organisers. Key donor and supporting agencies were New Zealand Official Development Assistance (NZODA), Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), World Heritage Fund, (IUCN), the Biodiversity Conservation Network (BCN) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). With donor assistance SPREP was able to support 84 delegates' participation in the conference: roughly half of those attending. The high number of self-funded delegates indicates how important the conference series is in networking and setting/reviewing conservation agendas in the region.

A participatory process was also a key factor in the conference's success. Planning began a year in advance and a wide range of government and NGO conservation players gave their time and energy to design the conference structure and its focus on essential conservation tools. The TOOL Working Group sessions offered the opportunity for all to contribute from their direct experience of using these approaches to conservation. Feedback from delegates indicated that this more interactive conference style was

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Environmental education conference

Some 200 participants from throughout the region are expected to attend the 1998 Pacific Regional Conference for Environmental Education and Training, which SPREP's EEIC Division is coordinating, in collaboration with Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), the Institute of Education of the University of the South Pacific, Suva, and the Pacific Island Network (PIN).

Pacific island communities are reaching a critical point in terms of addressing vital issues such as sustainable use of marine resources, biodiversity conservation, wise waste management and climate change. The way today's generations deal with these issues will make a large difference to the life and resources available to future generations. SPREP is coordinating the Pacific Regional Conference to allow educators and trainers to focus on effective environmental education, training programmes and tools.

The conference will bring together Pacific environmental educators, curriculum developers and trainers. Three delegates, governmental and non-governmental, will attend from each of 22 Pacific island countries. The theme is "Linking, Learning and Living", and the aim is to:

- define goals and needs
- share effective environmental education and training programmes and tools for the Pacific
- establish strategies
- build effective Pacific environmental education and training networks and linkages for Pacific professionals working in both formal and informal environmental education.

Those attending the conference will develop participatory approaches that increasingly form the focus of innovative teaching methods. This has shifted from teacher/instructor centred to student/learner centred, in recognition of the fact that capacity-building demands that each individual must have the chance to play an active role in building her/his own capacity.

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The last word

Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme. The NEMs, and their successor programmes, continue to this day to focus country attention on their own environmental priorities while, if I may be indulged a pun, the SPBCP is blazing a trail through the woods of biodiversity conservation with innovative approaches to community-based, sustainable use of natural resources within designated conservation areas. Having said that, though, I would pay tribute to all the other programmes and projects which have contributed markedly to the reputation now enjoyed by SPREP and continue to do so.

On the international front, SPREP has developed a valued and professional advisory service for its member governments at high-level global negotiations. This continues at the present time in relation to climate change, for example. But undoubtedly the two highlights during the period of which I write were the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the Barbados Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Islands Developing States in 1995. SPREP played a major coordinating and advisory role during these epic events and in the process learned much about its own capabilities.

On the administrative front, two decisions in particular stand out in my mind because of the way in which they changed long-standing existing practices for the better. One was to contract out to private enterprise all the secretariat's translation and simultaneous interpretation and associated technical requirements; the other was to move the secretariat away from responsibility for providing housing for all expatriate staff. Both these decisions relieved the secretariat of distracting burdens and led to much improved alternative arrangements.

There have been disappointments, too. My biggest regret as I leave SPREP is that we seem no closer to getting a permanent headquarters. SPREP staff are still housed in crowded and temporary accommodation although we have been trying for six years to get a new headquarters. I sincerely hope that the present SPREP management has a better run of fortune with this than we did.

My second area of concern is the failure by some countries to ratify the SPREP Agreement. Excuses for not doing so are beginning to wear thin coming up to five years after entry into force. The position of some territories is that of an ambiguous limbo.

There is much more I could reminisce about, but that can await my memoirs. When I do get around to writing those, though, my fondest memories—and my personal award for top all-round achievement—will go to staff of SPREP who have made the organisation what it is today from such unpromising beginnings. Their dedication, hard work, professionalism, help, advice and, above all, their friendship, will stay with me forever. I will miss them all. It has been my life's pleasure to have worked and played with them. Malo lava.

Finally, to a tribute to the giant who, I think it fair to say, was more responsible than the rest of us mortals for getting SPREP to where it is today. Vili, your vision and commitment achieved these things. You showed us what could be attained with perspective and determination. It was a pleasure to follow you. Malo 'aupito.

As I paddle into the sunset, I will remember SPREP with enormous affection and also with gratitude at being able to play a role in its formative years. I wish the new SPREP management the very best as it sails the SPREP ship onwards. You may need to change course now and then, you will need to weather storms. But I hope the keel we laid and the planks we caulked will endure and continue to carry you safely and well.

Soifua.

Don Stewart

V-FILES — THE EARLY DAYS OF SPREP: A ROUNDTABLE WITH ARTHUR

As we get bogged down in the latest obstacle or crisis, it is easy to lose a sense of history, progress and achievements. The annual meeting of SPREP's 1997 Technical Management Advisory Group (TMAG) gave staff an opportunity to see how environmental awareness in the Pacific has grown since the 1960s, when SPREP was conceived, and to appreciate the contribution the organisation has made to that growth.

Arthur Dahl, SPREP's founding father, was in Apia to chair the 1997 TMAG and found time to take current staff on a tour of their organisation's history. At "a year and a laugh" a minute, he traced the organisation's history from the planting of the seed from which it grew—at a 1969 IUCN symposium in Noumea on nature conservation in the Pacific—through to its current broad scope and independence.

Dahl, the organisation's sole staff member when it began, was lured to the Pacific from the scholarly prestige of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. He had previously spent a year in the Pacific studying coral reefs. On hearing of the South Pacific Commission's interest in appointing someone to look at environmental matters, he offered his services and was interviewed; however, funding for the job was declined before he could be appointed.

"The terms of reference for my position were unbelievably vague. They even included village beautification."

Funding took five years to materialise, and when he finally started work in Noumea in 1974 he was literally on his own. There was no secretary, just Dahl as the South Pacific Commission's lone Regional Ecological Advisor. Nor was there much understanding of what his job entailed among Pacific leaders and decision-makers. Environmental consciousness in the Pacific was such that he was asked to prepare, on his own, a survey of all the ecosystems in the South Pacific . . . in one year. He was also asked to prepare, again on his own, a report on Tonga's environment in two weeks!

Even the words used to describe his role caused consternation to many. "I was asked by some leaders to explain what these highly technical words, like ecology and environment, actually meant," said Dahl. "Nobody had thought through what all this meant, the terms of reference for my position were unbelievably vague. They even included village beautification."

The total first-year budget amounted to little more than US fifty thousand dollars, and this included Dahl's salary. He says he started work in July and promptly left Noumea for three months, travelling the world lobbying UN agencies and charitable foundations for funding. In his first 12 months on the job he went round the world three times and spent eight months away. His visits included one to UNEP headquarters in Nairobi which eventually saw that organisation funding SPREP through its Regional Seas Programme.

Dahl says there was little regional political interest in environmental matters until the 1975 Wellington conference on National Parks and Reserves in the South Pacific. After that, political support for a regional approach to environmental matters gathered pace, symbolised by the signing of the Apia Convention in 1976 calling for the protection of the region's natural environment.

Dahl recounts the growing political enthusiasm for SPREP at that meeting, particularly from the Minister from Papua New Guinea who included in his speech an acknowledgement of the warmth his people had always felt for Samoa. He told the assembled dignitaries that Christians had first brought Christianity to Papua New Guinea from Samoa, and his people had promptly eaten them. Current SPREP staff from both Samoa and Papua New Guinea seemed equally amused at this piece of institutional and culinary history.

There was continued momentum for an agency to promote better care of the environment with the South Pacific Conference on the Human Environment in Rarotonga in 1982. Modelled on the 1972 Stockholm conference that had launched the international environmental agenda, the Rarotonga conference gave real impetus to the push to establish a body to promote and coordinate environmental management in the South Pacific.

Asked by current staff about the state in which he now finds the organisation after those early times, Dahl pointed to the breadth of SPREP's responsibilities as a reflection of the value South Pacific countries place on the health of their environments.

He says the growth in environmental awareness in the region was also reflected in the growth of SPREP within the South Pacific Commission, to the point where SPREP needed to move out on its own to Apia.

Dahl's own position in the Commission came to an end in 1982 with the introduction of the rule limiting staff appointments to six years. However, since joining UNEP he has continued his involvement in the region's environmental affairs, gratified that the organisation he helped establish has come to occupy such a pivotal position in the promotion of environmental protection in the region.

Environmental consciousness in the Pacific was such that he was asked to prepare, on his own, a survey of all the ecosystems in the South Pacific . . . in one year.

Strategic Action Progamme for Waters of the Pacific

The period April–September 1997 saw thirteen Pacific island states actively engaged in an ambitious and challenging new project: the creation of an overarching strategy within which to coordinate the sustainable development of the region's international waters. In this special liftout, Philomène A. Verlaan, Chief Technical Adviser to SPREP for the SAP project, outlines why the agreement is so important for the region.

The Strategic Action Programme for International Waters of the Pacific Region (SAP) was endorsed by the Heads of Government of the 28th South Pacific Forum, held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 17–19 September, 1997. The project was financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as its Implementing Agency (IA) and by Australia and New Zealand as regional donors. It was coordinated by SPREP, as its executing agency, from its headquarters in Apia, Samoa.

The SAP is a pioneer effort in several respects: it is the first SAP for islands, and the first for international waters not only in the Pacific, but also the other three oceans. (The other international waters SAPs are for the Black Sea, the Danube River Basin, and the Red Sea.) It is innovative in its development process and in its explicit structure around holistic, linked watershed, inshore and offshore governance and management. The executive summary of the SAP follows this article.

The process through which the SAP was developed offers a striking example of multi-tiered regional cooperation on a complex and delicate matter of shared concern, with both regional and global ramifications. This example may be instructive for other groups of states faced with similar issues. Pacific island states themselves may justifiably take pride in showing the international community how cooperation can work.

A country-driven process

The ground rule of the SAP process was that it be country-driven. The "drivers" were composed of a representative Task Force of national stakeholders from each country, led by a Task Force Coordinator (TFC) from and appointed by that country in consultation with SPREP. At country level, each TFC was the link between the stakeholders and the national government and at regional level each TFC was linked with the other twelve TFCs, SPREP and the Regional Task Force (RTF). Five women and eight men served as TFCs, representing a varied expertise from both private and public sectors. An important criterion for their selection was that there be a reasonable likelihood that the TFCs and their countries would be able to use and benefit from the experience gained from working on the SAP in other national and regional work on sustainable development in Pacific islands.

Because this issue requires both national and regional interventions, with appropriate coordination, an RTF was also established. The RTF was composed of one representative from each of five of the participating countries (Fiji, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu), three members of and chosen by the South Pacific Organisations Coordinating Committee (SPOCC: Secretariat for the Pacific Community, the Forum Secretariat and SPREP), one each from the

It is the first SAP for islands, and the first for international waters not only in the Pacific, but also the other three oceans.

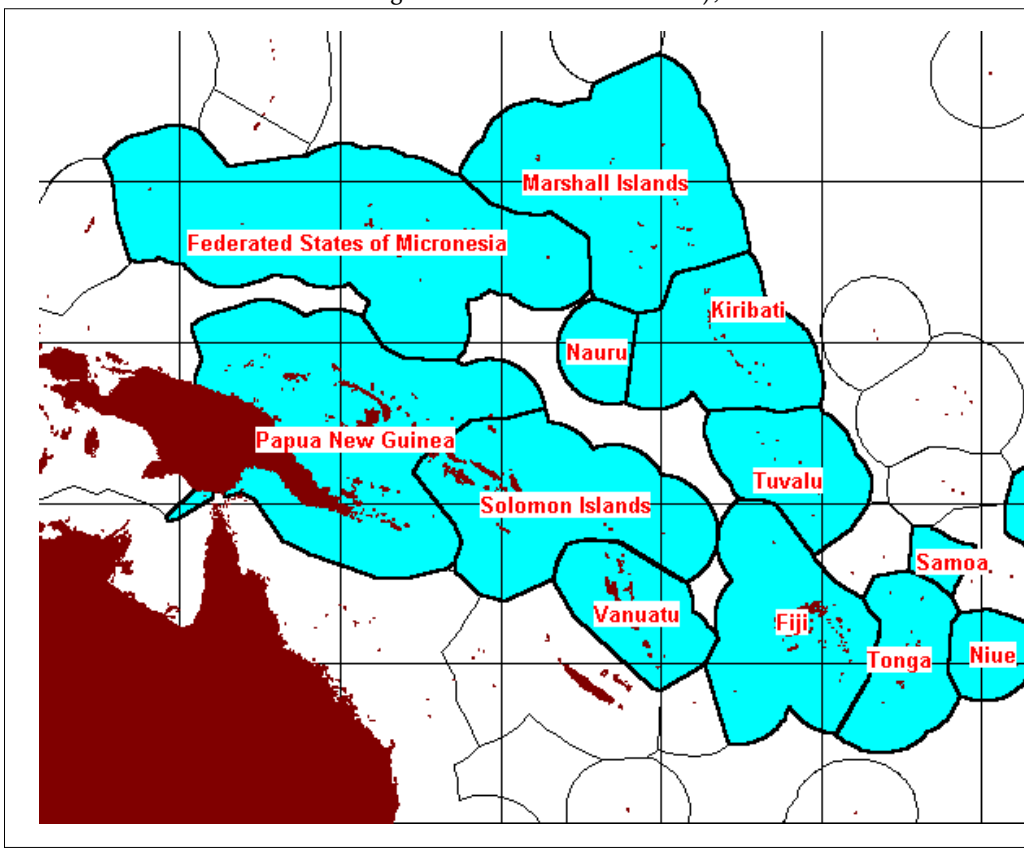
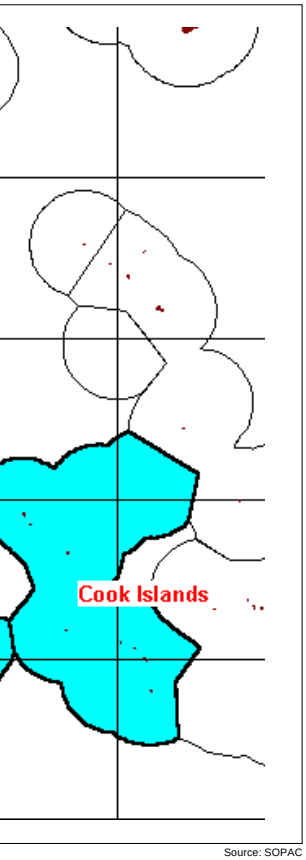


Photo by Fatu Tauaifafi (SPREP)

Philomene Verlaan discusses the options at a SAP project regional task force meeting in Apia.

three GEF IAs (UNDP, United Nations Environment Programme, World Bank), two non-governmental organisations (World Conservation Union and The Nature Conservancy) and one private sector representative (Fiji Dive Operators Association, recommended by the Tourism Council of the South Pacific).

As is necessary for adequate coverage of the numerous issues involved in managing international waters, the RTF members represented a wide range of disciplines, including anthropology, customary tenure, development economics, freshwater resources, integrated coastal management, marine biology, mineral resources, national budget and finances, ocean and coastal fisheries, oceanography, tourism and waste management. SPREP also served as the Secretariat for the RTF.



Source: SOPAC

EEZ map of the participating countries in the SAP

Putting it all together

The RTF met in Apia in early June. It considered reviews of regional issues (to be published in a single companion volume to the SAP), guidelines for the national consultations and terms of reference for the TFCs. Following their formal nomination by their respective governments, the TFCs met in Apia in early July 1997 for a briefing on the GEF, and to agree on the SAP preparation process and the methodology for the national consultations. They also received the draft reviews and other materials for the consultations. The results, in the form of national reports and targeted project proposals, were submitted to SPREP in mid-August.

A draft of the SAP was produced in accordance with the results of the national consultations. It was reviewed by the RTF and the TFCs at a joint meeting held in Apia in early September. The Pacific Office for the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the Asian Development Bank, who were among the organisations kept informed of the progress of this project by SPREP, were also represented at this meeting. The final SAP was then submitted to the 28th South Pacific Forum.

In addition to the three physical meetings, extensive interaction took place via various telecommunications media between all the major participants described above in the course of the project among each other and with SPREP.

Although this consultation process at first blush may appear cumbersome, costly and time-consuming—and it was certainly all of these—I believe that the level of professional, interpersonal and intraregional confidence, trust and experience nurtured by this process was essential to the creation of a truly Pacific Islands SAP. It will also, I hope, provide enduring benefits to the Pacific Islands region as the national and regional participants in the SAP address other issues of shared regional concern.

The SAP will be published in English and French (the latter with the kind assistance of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community formerly the South Pacific Commission) by early 1998.

Goal of SAP

Integrated sustainable development and management of International Waters

Priority Concerns

Degradation of water quality

Degradation of associated critical habitats

Unsustainable use of resources

Imminent Threats

Pollution from land-based activities

Modification of critical habitats

Unsustainable exploitation of resources

Ultimate Root Causes

Management deficiencies

- governance
- understanding

Solutions

Integrated Coastal and Watershed Management (ICWM)

Oceanic Fisheries Management (OFM)

ICWM Activity Areas

Understanding

Improved waste management

Better water quality

Sustainable fisheries

Effective marine protected areas

OFM Activity Areas

Sustainable ocean fisheries

Improved national and regional management capability

Stock and by-catch monitoring and research

Enhanced national and regional management links

Targeted actions

Management/institutional strengthening

Capacity-building

Awareness/education

Research/information for decision-making

Investment

continued from page 1

Kyoto Protocol

developed country party has been assigned a different individual target. Examples of these targets are:

- 8% reduction for the EU
- 7% reduction for the USA
- 6% reduction for Japan
- zero reduction (stabilisation) for New Zealand
- 8% increase for Australia

Developed countries are allowed to include the net changes in greenhouse gas emissions from sources and removals by anthropogenic sinks. These sinks are limited to afforestation, reforestation and deforestation since 1990.

There are no new commitments for developing countries but these parties can voluntarily undertake and implement, jointly or individually, activities with any other parties to reduce their own emissions.

Emissions trading between developed countries, which involves selling or buying permits to emit greenhouse gases, has been agreed in principle. Work on criteria, rules, reporting methodologies and verification will continue over the next 12 months and be agreed upon by the Fourth Conference of the Parties in 1998.

In addition, a Clean Development Mechanism has been established that will help all parties to comply with the provisions of the Protocol. It includes the possibility of joint implementation between developed and developing country parties on a voluntary basis, and will generate funds for adaptation activities.

Countries, particularly developed countries, still have to assess the Kyoto Protocol to determine whether it can be implemented. Some of the key issues to be looked at include:

- Are the targets set in Kyoto realistic?
- Will the mechanisms for compliance, the rules and verification of emission trading, and reporting methodologies, ensure real reductions in emissions?
- How will emissions trading and the Clean Development Mechanism work in practice?

Mr Miles has warned that considerable work is needed in the Pacific region to follow up on the Kyoto agreement.

SPREP's Director Tamari'i Tutangata said ratifying the Protocol should be treated by major emitters as a matter of priority.

GEO 2

When UNEP produces its second Global Environment Outlook (GEO 2) in May 1999, it will contain much more specific detail of the Pacific environment and the difficulties it faces, compared with GEO 1.

SPREP is coordinating a project which will report on such issues as depletion of oceanic and coastal resources, land- based sources of pollution, the loss of biological diversity, availability of freshwater, institutional support, climate change and sea level rise. Such detail will also help as countries discuss a successor to the Lome Convention.

The process of putting together a Global Environment Outlook was initiated by UNEP's Governing Council in May 1995, in response to the environmental reporting requirements of Agenda 21. SPREP collaborated closely with UNEP's Environmental Assessment Programme for the Asia-Pacific region (UNEP-EAP-AP) to compile information for the first GEO, presented to UNEP's Governing Council in January 1997.

Later analysis of GEO 1 revealed it did not fully address the specific priorities and needs of various sub-regions, particularly the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific. In the first GEO, these sub-regions were treated as part of the larger regions: Latin America and the Caribbean; Asia and the South Pacific; and Africa.

To gather more detailed information about the South Pacific for GEO 2, SPREP's Pacific Environment and Natural Resource Information Centre (PENRIC) will consult widely throughout the region. A questionnaire to governments will be distributed, and the draft input to GEO 2 for the Pacific will be based on responses to that questionnaire.

Before member countries are asked to make any official endorsement of the final report at a regional meeting, PENRIC will carry out extensive consultation with experts, institutions and private sector interests. This will include not only environmental agencies and organisations, but also regional organisations such as Forum Fisheries Agency, (FFA), the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), the South Pacific Forum (SPF) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

Pacific input to the GEO 2 will aim to identify and examine, from a regional perspective, current and projected environmental concerns. It will review environmental policies and analyse strengths and weaknesses of these policies for countries of the Pacific region, including current or projected environmental concerns, causes and interactions between development and environment, existing and possible policy responses, and emerging issues.

It is expected that the final report will also prove highly useful for Pacific island countries negotiating a successor to the Lome Convention, improving dialogue and mutual understanding on issues related to sustainable development and financing which arise during these negotiations.

The EU is seeking to encourage a form of development which focuses on the problems of destruction of the environment and natural resources. PENRIC's GEO 2 project will play a constructive role in the Lome negotiations, by encouraging and supporting governments and communities to develop their own capacity to assess and manage environmental problems.

"Agreements of this nature are always a compromise, and island countries find it difficult to accept compromise when they know their very existence is threatened by climate change. We must now look to the larger countries to implement this agreement in good faith." Tamari'i Tutangata, SPREP Director

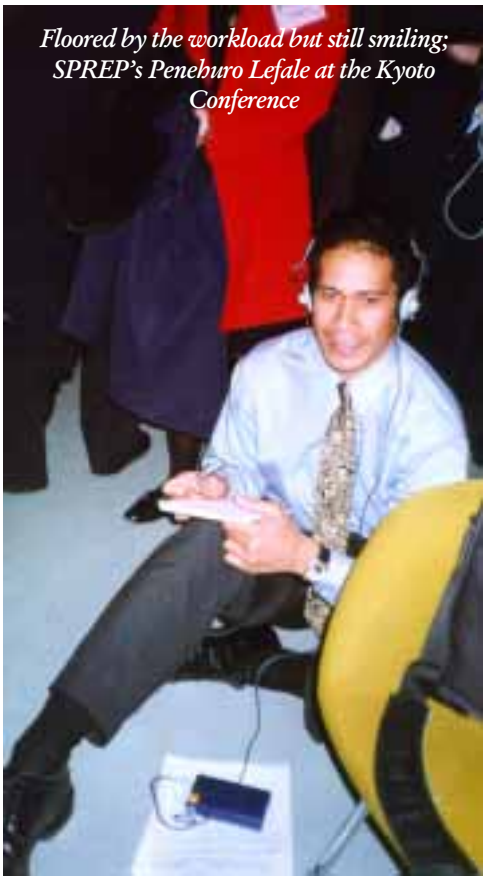
C–SPOD funds expanded coastal conservation project

A new SPREP project aims to strengthen Pacific island countries' ability to successfully manage the rapid development which is threatening precious coastal resources like mangroves, coral reefs and sea grasses.

Urbanisation, pollution from land and sea-based sources, inappropriate coastal and port developments, poor land use practices and over-exploitation of coastal resources are all taking their toll on vulnerable Pacific island environments.

There is an additional problem: in many parts of the region, women traditionally are the reef custodians. Yet when development decisions are taken or pollution threatens, they often have no opportunity to speak for the life in their reefs.

SPREP's new project, funded by Canada–South Pacific Ocean Development Program (C–SPOD) aims to strengthen countries' abilities to balance the need for revenue-earning development with the need to preserve precious natural resources for future generations. There has always been a high level of community involvement in the Pacific's coastal systems, and this project, which has been funded by the Canadian government, aims to boost women's participation in management of coastal systems and living resources.



Floored by the workload but still smiling; SPREP's Peneburo Lefale at the Kyoto Conference

It will do this by actively encouraging women to take part in training and workshop activities, using targeted advertising, specific outreach and advocacy, quota-setting, and making sure project materials and invitations are designed to appeal to women, as well as to men and children.

Sub-regional training workshops in reef eco-tourism will help communities devise alternative income generation options, allowing women, the reef custodians, to continue to earn a living from their reefs in an environmentally friendly way. The project will provide assistance in training reef naturalists such as reef walking guides, snorkelling guides, coral reef storytelling guides and canoe guides. The workshops will also assist communities to develop their own promotional materials for their reef eco-tourism efforts.

Raising awareness of the fragility of coral reefs and other marine environments will form another important part of the project. Many Pacific islanders are not aware that coral reefs, for example, have a slow growth and recovery rate. The project aims to build on the heightened awareness of coral reefs established during the 1997 Pacific Year of the Coral Reef and make sure conservation of coral reefs remains high on national planners' agendas.

The project's specific strategy for building Pacific island countries' capacity to manage their coastal systems and resources involves:

- Training in surveying and monitoring of coastal habitats including coral reefs and mangroves.
- Developing National Marine Advisory Groups, made up of key government and non-governmental representatives who have a vested interest in conservation of coastal areas. Representatives will include the private sector, NGOs, community leaders and women's groups.
- Increasing the understanding and skills of local communities so men and women can enhance their respective roles to better manage their coral reef resources.

Photo by Fatu Tauafiafi (SPREP)

SPREP's Director, Tamari'i Tutangata (right) and Canada–South Pacific Ocean Development Program (C–SPOD) representative William Cross after signing the *Letter of Agreement* (LOA)which formally establishes the new coastal conservation project.

Mr Cross said the project sought to enhance traditional marine resource management systems, for which Pacific islanders are justifiably famous.

"Combining as it does modern approaches to monitoring and multi-stakeholder involvement, with respect for the desire of Pacific island communities to preserve their traditional lifestyles, this project's approach should ensure benefits to the communities and the coastal marine environment that will persist for generations to come," Mr Cross said.

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Pacific governments and scientists meet to discuss climate change and sea level rise

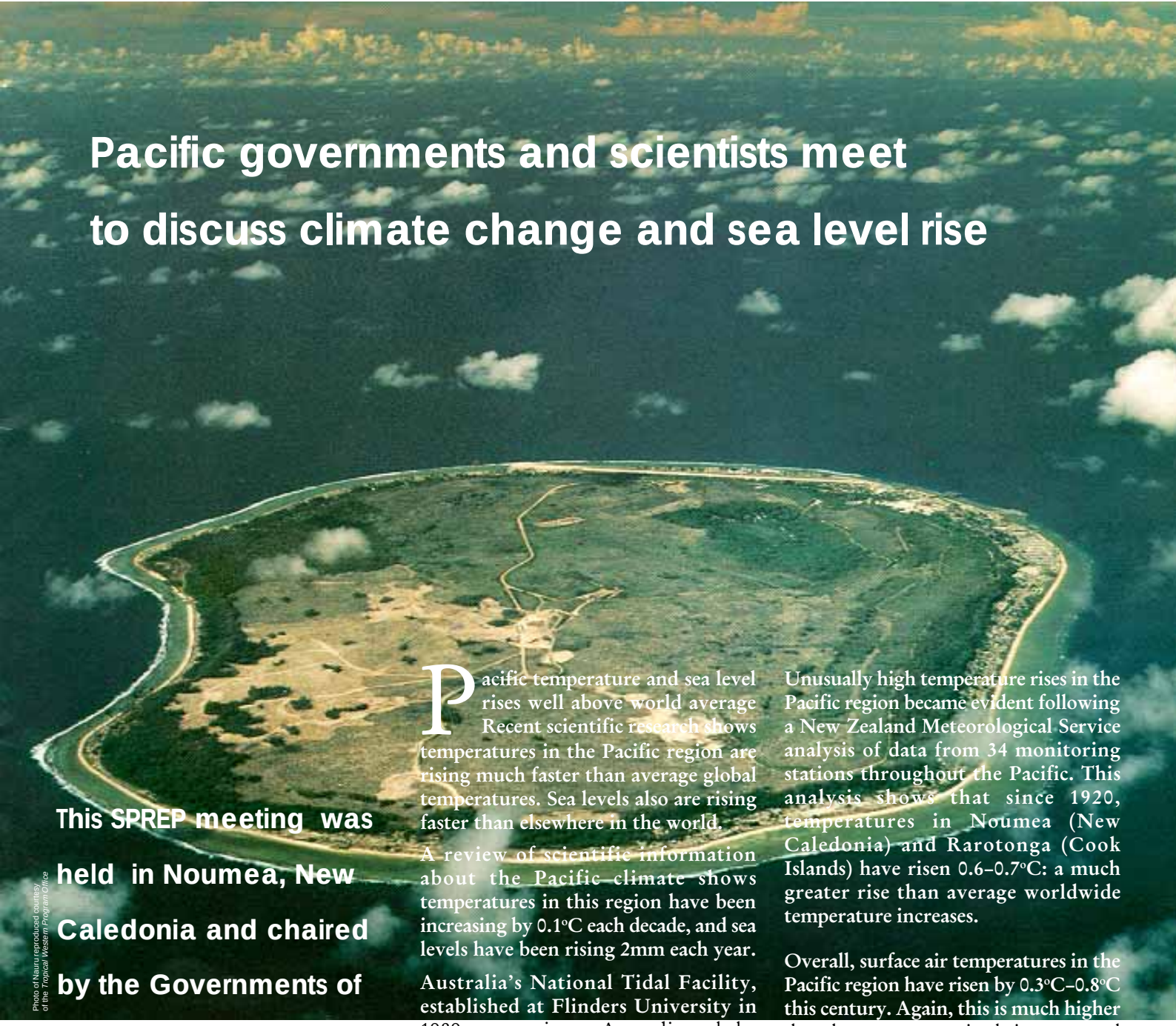

Photo of Nauru reproduced courtesy of the *Tropical Western Program Office*

This SPREP meeting was held in Noumea, New Caledonia and chaired by the Governments of American Samoa, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa and Vanuatu.

The meeting raised many important issues and recommendations, many of which are discussed in the following article.

Pacific temperature and sea level rises well above world average Recent scientific research shows temperatures in the Pacific region are rising much faster than average global temperatures. Sea levels also are rising faster than elsewhere in the world.

A review of scientific information about the Pacific climate shows temperatures in this region have been increasing by 0.1°C each decade, and sea levels have been rising 2mm each year.

Australia's National Tidal Facility, established at Flinders University in 1989 as a service to Australia and the region, has been making a specific study of changing sea levels in the region. The National Tidal Facility operates eleven sea level monitoring sites in the South Pacific.

Most of these stations are showing accelerating sea level rise, with recent increases of up to 25 mm/year. This is more than ten times the trend this century. These findings have been validated by satellite data showing 20 – 30 mm/year rises in a region from Papua New Guinea south-east to Fiji.

Scientists do not know why sea levels have recently started rising so rapidly, or how long this increased rise is likely to last, but they think it is related to changes in El Nino.

Meteorological records show rainfall has increased in the north-east Pacific, and decreased in the south-west.

Unusually high temperature rises in the Pacific region became evident following a New Zealand Meteorological Service analysis of data from 34 monitoring stations throughout the Pacific. This analysis shows that since 1920, temperatures in Noumea (New Caledonia) and Rarotonga (Cook Islands) have risen 0.6–0.7°C: a much greater rise than average worldwide temperature increases.

Overall, surface air temperatures in the Pacific region have risen by 0.3°C–0.8°C this century. Again, this is much higher than the average warming being measured over the Earth as a whole.

The NZ MetService report on these changes noted that they were consistent with what climate change theory would expect to see as human activities put increasing amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Other recent research results from ORSTOM Research Institute in Noumea, New Caledonia, show that during an El Nino event, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere tends to increase less rapidly. On the other hand, during the opposite, La Nina event, there was a more rapid increase in quantities of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Because climate change develops only very slowly, scientists need reliable records that document long-term trends. The SPREP meeting agreed that it was

important to make sure quality data continued to be gathered from Pacific island countries. Pacific island governments need to make sure national meteorological services continue to receive financial support; that there is ongoing training and capacity building; and that appropriate technologies are used.

Better early warnings of tropical cyclones needed

The SPREP meeting noted that the region needs significant improvements in the development of tropical cyclone warning systems. Although meteorological systems are doing their best, there is still quite a high error rate in predicting where a tropical cyclone will strike. For example, if a warning is given 12 hours in advance, the location given could be 122 km away from the actual path the tropical cyclone then takes. Because of this high error rate, there is a similarly high chance a tropical cyclone will hit an area that has not been warned to take the necessary precautions.

Scientists cannot yet calculate how cyclones might change in frequency, intensity, time of occurrence or location because they do not yet have details of a sufficiently large number of cyclones. Based on the existing records, no two tropical cyclones are the same. This means so far there is no basis for scientific comparisons or analysis of broader trends.

However, it is known that during an El Nino episode, there is a higher than 40 percent chance that a tropical cyclone will be severe.The Pacific ENSO Applications Center in Hawaii is carrying out experimental climate forecasting, to provide details of likely weather as the latest El Nino develops. These climate forecasts will considerably help Pacific island countries in agricultural production, fisheries, human health and civil defence planning. While the forecasts can be reliable for some locations and in certain seasons, prediction is difficult for other areas.

Risks to human health as climate changes

The meeting also heard of research which studies how climate change might affect human health. There are large gaps of knowledge in this field at present; for example, it is not known how climate change might affect the severity or the frequency of tidal waves which already devastate many parts of the world. It is also thought infectious and insect-borne diseases like cholera and malaria could increase, particularly in the developing world, as temperatures rise.

There has indeed been an increase in cholera outbreaks in recent years. There have also been reports of malaria occurring in areas where previously this disease was unknown, such as the highlands of Papua New Guinea.

Future research into climate change and human health should include:

(i) identification of the most vulnerable populations

(ii) monitoring potential carriers of disease and developing strategies to deal with disease outbreaks

(iii) establishing early warning systems for phenomena such as El Nino.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) are collaborating on research which studies indicators of climate-related health risks, and ENSO-related weather extremes.

Pacific needs stronger ability to respond to climate change

The Third SPREP meeting on Climate Change and Sea Level Rise agreed Pacific island countries need to strengthen their ability to respond to climate change, through regional and international cooperation and education, training and awareness-raising.

The meeting also agreed countries need to be encouraged to make overall assessments of the combined ways climate change will affect them, as well as clarifying the detail of individual impacts such as water supply or sea level rise.

Vulnerability assessments show Pacific island countries are highly vulnerable to climate change and sea level rise, and have little ability to protect themselves or soften the effects of these changes.

There are two key tools that will help the Pacific region understand what to expect from climate change, and what to do about it: computer models of how the climate might change in a region, and assessments of how vulnerable specific parts of each region might be as temperatures and sea levels rise.

However, at present the IPCC's computer models which study likely social and economic impacts of climate change make little reference to Pacific island countries. These models mainly deal with developed economies. They treat all islands as if they were the same, and focus on mitigation, or softening the likely impacts. This is of little relevance to a Pacific island country which faces inundation as sea levels rise, or total evacuation as water supplies disappear.

The meeting agreed that Pacific island countries should take a precautionary approach to climate change, concentrating on improving their understanding and knowledge of the effects of climate change, and how they could adapt as the climate changes.

The meeting agreed that Pacific island countries should take a precautionary approach to climate change, concentrating on improving their understanding and knowledge of the effects of climate change, and how they could adapt as the climate changes.

Changes in climate will affect both Pacific island environments, and the culture of the people who live there. Issues that Pacific island countries need to address include research into where people are likely to concentrate; what infrastructure they will need; food and water security; and what challenges their culture might face as the climate changes.

Options available to Pacific island countries as they consider how to respond to climate change include migration, resettlement and decentralisation. All these need careful, long-term planning.

Needs identified at the meeting are outlined on page 18 of this issue.

Early warning system for El Nino events

The 4th Meteorological Service Directors' meeting was held in Apia, Samoa in July, 1997. Organised by SPREP, the meeting raised many issues that have been acted on immediately.

Two Pacific weather experts meet at SPREP headquarters. Dr Bill Clements (left), Program Manager, US Department of Energy's Atmospheric Radiation Monitoring Program in the Tropical West Pacific, and Mr James Nako, Director of the Papua New Guinea National Weather Service, both attended the 4th Meteorological Service Directors' meeting.

The El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) was certainly an important item of discussion during the meeting. This latest weather event is turning out to be worse than the 1993–1995 event that caused droughts, famine and erratic weather patterns throughout the world. Alan Hilton, an ENSO specialist from Honolulu, will be keeping members up-to-date on this development.

On a smaller scale, one particular phenomenon which causes problems every year throughout the region is cyclones. Following the meeting, an early warning system was installed in the SPREP Secretariat. Called 'Emwin', this system is used to alert users to cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes, and tornado developments in the area. According to Penehuro Lefale, of SPREP, it is an excellent system that also manages to be very affordable, thanks to funding from the US.

The system is also being installed in other member countries over the next few months. The Meteorological Service will be negotiating with the US National Weather Service and US NOAA to allow the use of these organisations' satellite and data free of charge for Pacific member countries.

For more information please contact:
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AusAID targets dangerous chemicals in the Pacific

The Australian Government has agreed to fund a broad-based project which aims to improve Pacific island countries' ability to manage persistent organic pollutants.

SPREP will coordinate the project, which involves putting together a comprehensive database on types, quantities and locations of waste chemicals and unused pesticides in the region. All chemical and oil contaminated sites in the region will be identified, and a preliminary assessment made of the extent of contamination.

SPREP Director Mr Tamari'i Tutangata and Australian High Commissioner Mr David Hegarty sign the Memorandum of Understanding which formally established the Persistent Organic Pollutants project

SPREP will coordinate on the job training in safe methods of sampling, identifying, handling and storing chemicals.

The project will produce a report assessing the facilities and technical expertise available to Pacific island countries to manage waste chemicals and contaminated sites. It will also review existing government legislation and regulations dealing with management of waste chemicals and contaminated sites, assess the effectiveness of current legislation and make recommendations for any necessary improvements.

It will produce a technical document detailing appropriate procedures for identifying and safely handling unlabelled substances and produce plans for appropriate storage facilities in each country. There will also be an assessment of disposal options for waste chemicals, including the criteria decision makers should consider when arranging transport or treatment of waste chemicals.

The Director-General of AusAID, Mr Trevor Kanaley, (right) found time during a brief visit to Samoa to meet SPREP's Director Mr Tamari'i Tutangata. Also involved in the discussions was AusAID Regional Program Manager Margaret Callan.

Education, awareness and capacity building programmes will aim to reduce future problems with hazardous wastes and contaminated sites.

The 15-month project begins on January 1 1998 and will receive up to AUD813,400 from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).

The project will be undertaken in the following SPREP member countries: Cook Islands; FSM; Fiji; Kiribati; Marshall Islands; Nauru; Niue; Palau; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Tuvalu; and Vanuatu.

SPREP

Staff Update

Craig Wilson

Selesitina Craig

Jan Sinclair

Komeri Onorio

Don Stewart and Taiamoni Pifeleti

Due to the expanding coverage of environmental issues in the region, the Secretariat has also seen a corresponding expansion in its staff roll.

SPREP newcomers

Mr Craig Wilson joins the Environmental Education, Information and Capacity-building Division as Project Manager for the Capacity Building for Environmental Management in the Pacific (CBEMP) project. Craig will be compiling the Preparatory Assistance document with assistance from two former Capacity 21 Programme Officers, Mrs Sarah Mecartney and Mr O'Kean Ehmes.

Jan Sinclair has recently joined SPREP as Editorial/Publications officer, under a two-year Commonwealth Secretariat appointment. Jan is a New Zealand journalist and editor who has worked for New Zealand newspapers and radio, the Observer and New Scientist, and for UNEP and Greenpeace International.

Mrs Selesitina Craig is the new Executive Officer for the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP). Selesitina's role involves reviewing progress reports of the Conservation Area Projects (CAPs), as well as preparing quarterly updates of their progress. Selesitina will also advise the Programme Manager on a regular basis of progress with implementation of CAP work plans and associated costs. Selesitina comes to SPREP after working 10 years for the Electric Power Corporation as an accountant.

SPREP farewells

Some of the more familiar staff of SPREP have now departed. They are:

Dr Taiamoni Pifeleti (nee Tongamoa)

A very colourful personality, Taiamoni will be sorely missed by the Secretariat where she worked as SPREP's Population and Environment Officer funded by UNFPA. Taiamoni has now returned to her native Tonga.

Mr Komeri Onorio

Komeri who hails from Kiribati completed his six-year term and returned to Kiribati, although career moves to USP and Otago University are possibilities. Komeri is well known to SPREP member governments as Environmental Impact Assessment officer.

Mr Donald Stewart

Don, SPREP's Deputy Director, has been involved with SPREP since its relocation to Apia in 1992. He leaves the Secretariat with fond memories. An account by Don of his days at SPREP is documented in the *last word* section at the back page of this issue.

continued from page 7

extremely productive and suited the "Pacific way".

The 6th Conference also reviewed the 1994–1998 Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific and agreed on a framework and follow-up process for a new strategy for 1999–2002. This is a critical document for the region as it forms a succinct strategic assessment for conservation priorities in the coming four years. The strength of the strategy lies in the wide range of input from government and conservation agencies from around the region and internationally, and their commitment to its implementation.

The conference adopted a large range of resolutions which focused on actions needed to develop conservation networking, address invasive species problems, alert the region to the problems of the live reef fish trade, meet environment education needs and many more issues. The programme concluded with a special Micronesian celebration of conservation and culture in the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, Northern Mariana Islands, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Palau. The conference success was celebrated at a party reputed to be the best yet held in Pohnpei.

The next conference in the series will be hosted by the Government of the Solomon Islands in 2002.

Needs identified by the 3rd SPREP Meeting on Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

At the National Level

- Implementation of *locally-based* "coping/sensitivity" studies taking into account social and economic consequences of such phenomena as droughts, floods, tropical cyclones, high abnormal tides and storm surges, coastal erosion, outbreaks of cholera and failure of food supplies.
- Development, validation and application of integrated (i.e. multi-sector) national-level impact assessment models (e.g CLIMPACTS) which meet the requirements and challenges of producing meaningful results for Pacific island countries.
- Development and validation of seasonal forecasts of key national indicators, including rainfall anomalies, wind anomalies, tropical cyclone frequency and intensity and sea level variations and change.
- *In-country* assessments of local adaptation and mitigation strategies, including technical and economic effectiveness, cultural and social acceptability and links with traditional methods.
- *Public awareness-raising* including translation of technical information into local languages, songs and plays, briefing of decision-makers and policy-makers, information exchange, and education including curriculum development and preparation of resource materials of local relevance such as case studies and practical projects.
- *Non-targeted* (i.e. generic) in-country training to empower decision-makers, planners and community organisations in such skills as consensus building, priority setting and conflict resolution.
- *Targeted*, in-country training to equip key individuals with technical skills to use locally and internationally derived information.
- *Capacity building*, including strengthening of national meteorological services and port authorities.

At the Regional Level

- Regional assessments of probable environmental changes, including production of high-resolution scenarios, leading ultimately to predictions and assessment of economic, social, cultural and environmental consequences.
- Development and dissemination of guidelines for coastal protection, including technical, economic and cultural assessment (e.g. compatibility with traditional practices) of the various options.
- Development and dissemination of guidelines for coastal management, including such features as set-back "rules".
- Development and dissemination of technical guidelines for such procedures as storm surge calculations.
- Regional assessments of mitigation and adaptation strategies, including assessments of their technical and economic effectiveness and their cultural and social acceptability.
- Preparation of materials for public awareness-raising, such as those detailed in National Level recommendations for public awareness-raising.
- Non-targeted (i.e. generic) "training of trainers" for empowering decision-makers, planners and leaders of community organisations.
- Targeted "training of trainers" for equipping key individuals with technical skills to use locally and internationally derived information. (An example is regional training initiatives under PICCAP and the South Pacific Sea Level and Climate Monitoring Project).
- Capacity building, including regional activities to strengthen national environmental agencies and meteorological services.

At the Sub-regional Level

- This involves similar activities to those undertaken on a region-wide basis, but with a sub-regional focus, bringing together those island countries with common needs, settings and backgrounds. Activities might relate to such themes as adaptation strategies for high islands, coastal protection for low islands, forest management, water catchment management, "natural" catchments (e.g rivers) and "artificial" catchments (e.g. roofs).

At the International Level

- Technical support to the Alliance Of Small Islands States (AOSIS) and PIC negotiators, by establishing a Technical Support Network (e.g. AOSIS-TSN).
- Input to IPCC activities, including responsibilities of Pacific islanders as lead authors and contributors to reports.
- Sector-based, regional studies of consequences of environmental changes such as those related to tuna fisheries and energy supplies.
- Technical support for sustainable development of Small Island States, including reference to human dimensions as well as biophysical aspects.

Global awareness-raising through such activities as a Pacific Island Countries' Home Page on the Internet. This would help counteract inappropriate lobbying by industries and would help spread the AOSIS/PIC messages.

Photo by L. Bianco

SPREP official, Dr Chalapan Kaluwin at the 4th climate negotiations leading to the signing of the UNFCCC during UNCED in Rio, Brazil 1992

Schedule 1998

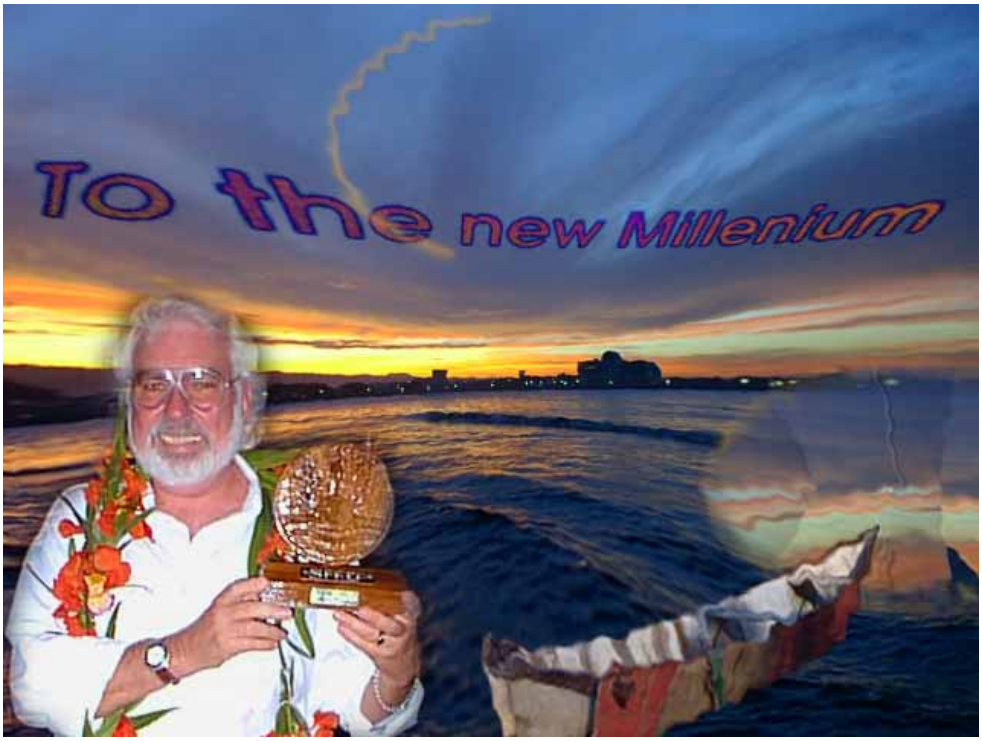
DATES	MEETING	VENUE	ORGANISATION
February			
2–4	Regional Planning and Training Meeting for the Capacity Building for Environmental Management in the Pacific (CBEMP) National Project Coordinators	Apia, Samoa	SPREP
9–11	Environmental Information Clearinghouse Sub-Regional Workshop	Apia, Samoa	SPREP
10–12	South Pacific Sea Level and Climate Change Monitoring Project Coordinating Committee Meeting	Port Vila, Vanuatu	SPREP/NTF
13–17	Workshop on Global Oceans Observation System (GOOS) for Pacific Countries	Suva, Fiji	Forum Secretariat
19–20	SPREP Retreat	Apia, Samoa	SPREP
23	Enhancing environmental broadcasting and media skills	Apia, Samoa	SPREP/SPC
23–27	COP 4 of the Basel Convention	Kuching, Malaysia	UNEP
24–26	Pacific Island Roundtable for Nature Conservation	Apia, Samoa	SPREP
25–27	ESCAP Sub-regional Expert Group Meeting on Integrating environment considerations into economic policy-making processes for Pacific Islands	Port Vila, Vanuatu	ESCAP
March			
	National Workshops on Climate Change and UNFCCC (for 12 participating countries under PICCAP; will be held from March to May)		SPREP
16–18	Preparatory Meeting for the SPREP/Commonwealth Secretariat/ United Nations Inter-regional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) Conference	London, UK	Commonwealth Secretariat
17	Marine Sector Working Group Meeting	Suva, Fiji	SPREP
30–3 April	Joint SPC/Forum Secretariat Sixth Regional Development Planners Meeting	Noumea, New Caledonia	SPC/Forum Secretariat
30–4 April	Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in the Pacific Island Region - Regional Workshop	Nadi, Fiji	SPREP
April			
13–17	Regional Training Workshop on Greenhouse Gas Inventories	Suva, Fiji	SPREP
19–24	18th Annual Meeting of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA)	Christchurch, New Zealand	
20–24	Regional Pacific Year of the Coral Reef Evaluation Meeting	Suva, Fiji	SPREP

The last word

SPREP – Then and Now

As I paddle into the sunset, I will remember SPREP with enormous affection and also with gratitude at being able to play a role in its formative years.

Apia was like Beirut. Buildings in ruins, coastline and roads washed away, huge trees uprooted, upland rainforests defoliated. All that was left of my rented house when I arrived at Vailima was the concrete slab on which it once stood before the fury of Cyclone Val reduced it to matchwood. SPREP's temporary office—newly renovated—had lost part of its roof with consequent water damage to the interior. With some fifteen SPREP programme officers and their families due to arrive within weeks and procedures under way for the recruitment of a similar number of local staff, food and accommodation were both in short supply. The Australian and New Zealand Air Forces were making relief flights to the stricken country. The SPREP office had no power, no water, no telecommunications and no office furniture or equipment either as shipping had been unavoidably delayed. Such was the decidedly unpromising setting when, as an advance guard of one, I arrived in Apia on 5 January 1992 to establish SPREP's new office in Samoa.



Photos and graphic by Fatu Tauafiafi (SPREP)

The first major decision taken by SPREP management in those days was to proceed as planned with the move from Noumea rather than delay it for six months. With that decided, the first SPREP workstation was set up at a kitchen table in the house of a friend with whom I stayed until facilities could be restored at the SPREP office and I could find another house for myself (as well as houses for the imminent 15 programme officers). SPREP's second workstation, when I finally was able to move out to Vaitele, was a packing case and a borrowed wooden chair. The only equipment was an ancient laptop computer with no printer. Until telecommunications were restored and SPREP's own equipment arrived, about two months later, I would take a diskette to the UNDP offices at Matautu-uta, print out a document and then take the printout to the New Zealand High Commission which had a functioning fax line which was very kindly put at my disposal. No such thing as Microsoft Exchange or e-mail back then.

Nearly six years later, Apia has been rebuilt and transformed. So has SPREP. Although still in its temporary office at Vaitele, SPREP in 1997 has almost 60 fully trained staff equipped with the latest in computerised equipment and facilities including even a satellite weather-monitoring system. Its programmes receive support and even acclaim throughout the region and beyond. To get from there to here has been an exhilarating expedition on which I have been privileged to be a front-seat passenger. This Newsletter is not the time or place for a detailed look at those times, but, even so, just before I disembark, I would like briefly to highlight some of the main events which occurred during the journey and which affected its course.

The most significant of these, by far, was the signing of the Agreement Establishing the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme in June 1993 and its subsequent entry into force in August 1995. Although this treaty may seem at first glance to be a relatively innocuous piece of paper, its successful negotiation was by no means pre-ordained. The negotiations were complex and difficult and the ultimate outcome is a tribute to the spirit of compromise and commitment which eventually emerged during the talks. The resulting document is the foundation stone of SPREP.

Other institutional highlights include the entry into force of both the Apia and SPREP Conventions (bringing to three the number of international treaties administered by SPREP which came into force during this time), the adoption of the SPREP Action Plan 1997–2000 at last year's Ministerial-level Ninth SPREP Meeting in Tonga, the adoption, in 1992 (with revisions in 1995) of SPREP's Staff and Finance Regulations and the establishment of an internal divisional structure in 1995. These are the wheels on which the organisation rides. With all institutional tyres inflated, the secretariat is now able to concentrate its main efforts on delivery of benefits to SPREP's member countries.

On the programme front, while it is not always easy–and sometimes even invidious—to rank some before others in terms of effectiveness, I do believe that two in particular, deserve special mention—the National Environmental Management Strategies and the South

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