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Report of the Thirtieth SPREP
Meeting of Officials
7-9 September 2021

and

Special SPREP Meeting
15 October 2021

Virtual Platforms

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Report of the Thirtieth SPREP Meeting of Officials

**7-9 October 2021
Virtual Platform**

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting

1. The Thirtieth SPREP Meeting (30SM) of Officials was held virtually from 7 – 9 September 2021. This was followed by the Ministerial High Level Talanoa on the 10th September 2021.
2. Present at the Meeting were representatives from, Australia, American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, France, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna. A full list of participants, including Observers, is available in Annex 1.
3. The Opening Prayer for the Meeting was delivered by Ms Ake Puka-Mauga from Tokelau.
4. The keynote address to officially open the Thirtieth SPREP Meeting was delivered by Peseta Noumea Simi, Chief Executive (CEO) Officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Government of Samoa. The Keynote address of the CEO is attached in Annex 2.
5. Mr Kosi Latu, Director-General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) presented a statement, welcoming delegates to the Meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

6. The “Rules of Procedure of the SPREP Meeting” (Rules 8.1 and 8.2), provides that where the Meeting is hosted by the Secretariat, the Chair shall rotate alphabetically, and where the Meeting is not hosted by the Secretariat, the Chair shall be provided by the host country. For the Thirtieth SPREP Meeting, Tokelau was appointed Chair and Kiribati Vice Chair.
 7. Solomon Islands, the outgoing Chair of the Twenty-Ninth SPREP Meeting of Officials thanked the outgoing Director General Mr Kosi Latu, and the Secretariat for their support during Solomon Islands term as Chair. Solomon Islands further noted the work of the Director General and the Secretariat and the progress made for our environment over the past year.
 8. Mr. Mika Perez, representing Tokelau as Chair of the Thirtieth SPREP Meeting thanked the Chair of the Twenty-Ninth SPREP Meeting on his leadership.
- The Meeting:**
- 1) **confirmed** the Representative of Tokelau as Chair; and
 - 2) **confirmed** the Representative of Kiribati as Vice-Chair.

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of Agenda and Working Procedures

9. The Agenda and Working Procedures were presented for adoption.
10. The Secretariat proposed a Friends of the Chair (FOC) to consider divergent views expressed by some Members on Agenda Item 8.4.3.
11. Cook Islands, French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Samoa congratulated Tokelau as Chair and Kiribati as Vice-Chair respectively and supported the Agenda and Working Procedures with the Friends of the Chair (FOC), proposed by the Secretariat.

12. Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, United Kingdom, United States and Vanuatu requested to be members of the FOC for Agenda Item 8.4.3.

13. The Chair further requested the FOC to also work on the Environment Ministers' High-Level Talanoa Communique, this was supported by Cook Islands and New Zealand.

14. The Meeting agreed to discuss Agenda Items 6.4 and 6.5 together

with Agenda Item 9.2 as proposed by Cook Islands and supported by Samoa.

15. French Polynesia further thanked Solomon Islands for their leadership as the Chair of the Second Executive Board Meeting including other smaller working groups.

The Meeting:

- 1) **considered** and **adopted** the Provisional Agenda; and
- 2) **agreed** on hours of work

Agenda Item 4: Action Taken on Matters Arising from the 2nd Executive Board Meeting

16. The Secretariat reported on actions taken against the decisions and directives from the 2nd Executive Board Meeting 2 – 4 September 2020.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** actions taken against the decisions and directives of the 2nd Executive Board Meeting.

Agenda Item 5: 2020 Overview and Implementation of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017 – 2026

Agenda Item 5.1. Presentation of the Annual Report for 2020 and Director General's Overview of Progress since the Second Executive Board Meeting

17. The Director-General presented the 2020 SPREP Annual Report and provided an overview report on progress since the Second Executive Board Meeting.

looks forward to working with the Secretariat and its Members on delivery of projects including the Pacific Ocean Litter Project.

18. Australia and New Zealand welcomed SPREP's progress over the past year and thanked the Secretariat for its work. Australia further noted that it

19. Vanuatu indicated that it looks forward to continuing its work with SPREP.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the Director-General's Report.

Agenda Item 5.2: COVID-19 Impacts of SPREP Work Programme and Secretariat Response

20. The Secretariat presented an overview of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of SPREP programmes and projects in 2020. The overview outlined the

Secretariat's response in ensuring that work programme and budget delivery are maintained to the highest level possible.

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21. Samoa and United States commended the Secretariat for their progress over the past year given the pandemic and its impacts. United States further acknowledged the Secretariat's progress in leveraging innovative technologies to advance their work under the current challenges of COVID-19.
22. Samoa noted the impacts of the pandemic have been substantial, particularly on its key sectors of tourism, fisheries and agriculture; the additional reality for Samoa is that these effects will be exacerbated by the impacts of natural disasters and climate change, further underscoring the vulnerability of countries.
23. Samoa further noted it continued to support the work of the Secretariat by making every effort to bring back its' returning staff to headquarters. These efforts are done in conjunction with Samoa's own repatriation efforts for citizens and nationals stranded abroad, as well as in ensuring access to safe and effective vaccines at the earliest opportunity for the Secretariat.
24. Samoa commended the ongoing efforts of the Secretariat and development partners in strengthening and preparing response measures for the pandemic, and welcomed the Secretariat's support to Members through the engagement of technical and project management staff on the ground including local consultants to ensure the continued implementation of activities at the national level. It further noted that in-country support is critical although not available to all, and if replicated cross most of its Members, thus it would be useful to consider possible resource implications on the present and next budget cycles.

25. Samoa further added that in the last two to three months, various regional meetings across key sectors have been convened, including with development partners, to address the extraordinary socio-economic challenges and impacts of pandemic to Samoa's development plans.
26. Samoa also requested that the Secretariat and Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies intensify and reinforce closer collaboration and coordination efforts across related programmes of work, in planning for the next 6-12 months.
27. Tonga indicated support for the recommendations and further noted that the third recommendation provides the opportunity to strengthen local capacity to help Members address new environmental issues and challenges more effectively.

The Meeting:

- 2) **noted** the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SPREP 2020 work programme, and likely continuing implications on programme delivery;
- 3) **noted** the responses of the Secretariat to limiting the impacts of the pandemic on the organisation; and
- 4) **noted** the opportunities provided in these responses to strengthening SPREP engagement with Members.



Agenda Item 5.3: Progress towards achieving PIP (2020 – 2021) strategic outcomes summary

28. The Secretariat presented on the progress report towards achieving PIP2 (2020-2021) strategic outcomes and implementation of the 2020-2021 Work Programme and Budget.

29. Fiji, France, and United States commended the work of SPREP over this period. United States welcomed the report noting that they are effective, transparent, and accountable by international organisations standards.

30. United States, Australia, and United Kingdom welcomed progress on gender mainstreaming.

31. France noted the action in the report provides options for continued and strengthened partnerships between the Secretariat and its Members.

32. Australia, French Polynesia, New Zealand, Samoa, and United Kingdom supported the recommendations.

The Meeting:

- 1) **endorsed** the 2020 Progress Towards Achieving PIP2 (2020-2021) Strategic Outcome Report and 2020-2021 Work Programme and Budget;
- 2) **noted** the 2020 PIP2 Achievements by strategic goals; and
- 3) **noted** the Secretariat responses and actions in addressing cross-cutting issues in the implementation of the 2nd PIP 2020-2021.



Agenda Item 5.4: Audited Annual Accounts for 2020

33. In accordance with Financial Regulations 27 (e) the Secretariat presented its Audited Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2020, and noted that the Auditors had provided an unqualified opinion of the Secretariat's financial operations for 2020.

34. Samoa thanked the Secretariat and noted the detailed and substantive report.

35. French Polynesia, New Zealand, and Samoa supported the recommendation.

The Meeting:

- 1) **reviewed** and **adopted** the audited Financial Statements and Auditors' Report for 2020.

Agenda Item 6: Governance, Institutional Arrangements, and Mechanisms

Agenda Item 6.1: SPREP 3rd Independent Corporate Review and Mid-Term Review of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017 – 2026: Initial findings

36. The Secretariat updated Members on the SPREP 3rd Independent Corporate Review (ICR) and Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Strategic Plan 2017–2026

and proposed to convene a Special Meeting of Members on 8 October 2021 to consider the full ICR and MTR report and recommendations.

37. The Natural Solutions Pacific consultants carrying out the 3rd ICR and MTR of the Strategic Plan 2017 – 2026 provided an overview of the methodology and approach used for the review.

38. New Zealand congratulated Tokelau and Kiribati respectively in their role as Chair and Vice-Chair, also expressing gratitude to Solomon Islands for its work over the past year as Chair of the Second Executive Board.

39. New Zealand welcomed the ICR and MTR, noting the short consultation timeframe, stating the Secretariat is of great value to its Members and hopes the report will result in the Secretariat growing stronger, ensuring long-term sustainability.

40. Australia requested more time to read through the ICR and MTR noting some recommendations are straightforward and easy, while others would require more consideration amongst the broader membership as they have financial implications that relate to Agenda Items 6.4 and 6.5. Australia further proposed a meeting on the 15th October and a second meeting in early 2022 to allow for the incoming Director-General to have a role in these discussions. It also proposed a working group to discuss governance and programmatic issues presented in the ICR and MTR.



41. The proposal for a Working Group was supported by Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, United Kingdom, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna. Cook Islands further requested a Terms of Reference for the Working Group that will help take the outcomes of the ICR and MTR forward including a collative of all responses from the Secretariat and its Members.

42. The Secretariat clarified that the proposed meeting in 2022 would impact contractual obligations of the consultant in response to a query from Samoa.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the update from the Secretariat on the Third Independent Corporate Review and Mid-Term Review of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026;
- 2) **noted** the consultant's presentation on the Joint Reviews that includes the methodology, background and consultations;
- 3) **endorsed** the Special Meeting of SPREP Members to convene on 15 October, 2021 that shall consider the full report of the Third Independent Corporate Review and Mid-Term Review of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026 and recommendations; and
- 4) **established** a working group to discuss governance and programmatic issues as an outcome of the reports, in the first six months of 2022. The Secretariat will develop TOR for the Working Group.

Agenda Item 6.2: Audit Committee Report

43. The Chair of the SPREP Audit Committee (AC) presented an overview report of the Committee's work over the period from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021.

44. Fiji, French Polynesia, New Zealand, and Wallis and Futuna noted and welcomed the Audit Committee Report further supporting the recommendations.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** and **approved** the report of the Audit Committee for the period August 2020-July 2021;
- 2) **noted** the reserve position though improved when compared to 2019 is still at a critical level;
- 3) **requested** Members to clear their outstanding membership contributions and provide extra voluntary contributions in support of their Secretariat;
- 4) **noted** the proposed changes in the Audit Committee Charter; and
- 5) **recorded** its appreciation for the cooperation and support it has received from the Director-General, management, and staff of SPREP over the past 12 months.



Agenda Item 6.3: Report on Member's Contributions

45. In accordance with Financial Regulation 14, the Secretariat reported to the Meeting on the status of Member contributions as at 31st December 2020 as audited, as well as a brief update on the status of membership contributions at the time of drafting this report (30 June 2021).
46. Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna supported the recommendations.
47. Tonga further requested an invoice for its membership contributions so it can make payments as soon as possible.

The Meeting:

- 1) **considered** the report and **addressed** the issue of outstanding member contributions; and
- 2) **committed** itself collectively and individually to paying current and outstanding contributions in full in 2021.

Agenda Item 6.4: Review of Staff Remuneration: Terms and Conditions

48. The Secretariat reported to the Meeting on the status of the Review of Staff Remuneration: Terms and Conditions and the Birchers LLC Group Consultancy presented on the review findings and recommendations for consideration.
49. Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, France, New Zealand, and Samoa requested more time to address this Agenda Item and the recommendations noting that the recommendations were substantial and may impact other agencies within the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) for which they are also Members of.
50. Cook Islands, Australia, Samoa, and Tonga queried why none of the CROP agencies was not included as comparable organisations in the review given the CROP harmonisation policy. Birchers LLC Consultancy Group clarified they did not include CROP Agencies as comparators in the review as they were not in the Terms of Reference for the consultancy. Birchers LLC Consultancy Group further clarified that they selected organisations that were similar to the Secretariat with dynamic, well established, and regularly updated salary systems.

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51. The Director General clarified that there was no longer a CROP unified approach on adoption of various market data, and further noted that there is a need for an approach to market data that is aligned to the Secretariat hence the request to SPREP Members through the SPREP Meeting to undertake this review.
52. Birches LLC Consultancy Group confirmed that gender pay disparity was not in the ToR for the review however coordinating gender neutral systems of the review can be done, in response to a query from Australia.
53. Australia queried the funding implications of these recommendations as this will lay the foundation for discussions on Agenda Item 6.5. The Director-General confirmed that there is no specific allocation within the budget, but provisions have already been provided in the 2022 budget noting that any increase in Member contributions were not to be used for this particular item.
54. Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Samoa, and Tonga further noted the implications of these recommendations upon other CROP Agencies.
55. The Meeting agreed to postpone a decision on the original proposed recommendations and agreed instead to discuss this Agenda item during the special meeting to be convened on 15 October to address the Independent Corporate Review and the Mid-Term Review.

56. The Director General proposed the establishment of an Informal Open-Ended Working Group to review and discuss all issues raised by Members pertaining to this Agenda Item to help find a way forward and bring these before the special Meeting on 15 October. This Informal Open-Ended Working Group would consist of but not limited to Australia, Cook Islands, New Zealand, Fiji, France, Samoa and Tonga.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the agenda of the Special Meeting of SPREP Members on 15 October 2021 to discuss the Independent Corporate Review and the Mid-Term Review of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017 – 2026, will be extended to include consideration of Agenda Item 6.4: Review of Staff Remuneration and the proposed recommendations.
- 2) **established** an informal open-ended working group comprising Members but not limited to, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga to meet and discuss further the recommendations of WP 6.4 and the full report by the Birches LLC Consultancy Group to report back with any revised recommendations to the Special Meeting on 15 October.



Agenda Item 6.5: Sustainable financing

57. The Secretariat provided an update on actions undertaken to address core budget pressures for 2021 in light of the global wide impacts from

COVID-19 and sought guidance on options and actions to address sustainable financing for its long-term financial resilience.

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58. Australia and Cook Islands acknowledged and congratulated the Secretariat for proactive efforts to achieve budget surpluses over the years.
59. Australia noted it has entered into a new 10-year partnership arrangement with the Secretariat and provides core funding in recognition of the importance of the core role of SPREP. Australia further noted that project pressures can place a huge pressure on core funding hence it has increased its management fee contribution to 15% in recognition of the significantly higher cost of delivering work in the Pacific.
60. Australia further encouraged all Members to increase contributions as appropriate and encourages donors and project financiers to be as accommodating as possible within their own financial management systems given the impacts of COVID-19 upon project delivery.
61. Australia, supported by Cook Islands welcomes the project funding opportunities assessed by the Secretariat and growth of cost recovery. Cook Islands further noted the Pacific Community had a cost-recover fee of 5.3% in 2015 which has now grown to 12.1% with a target of 15% and proposing the Secretariat may wish to build upon this success.

62. Cook Islands commended the target of 80% but queried how Members can commit to achieving it. Cook Islands further queried if this will be done through donor funding, or an increase of Membership contributions.

The Meeting:

- 1) **established** an ideal core funding structure that strengthens the core revenue of SPREP and enables the Secretariat to leverage additional funding sources;
- 2) **considered** a structure similar to the core funding structure of SPC, which is an increase of the SPREP support to the core from 58 percent to 80 percent which enables SPREP to be financially resilient to current and future unforeseeable events;
- 3) **encouraged** SPREP Members and Partners to consider entering multiyear core funding partnership arrangements similar to Australia and New Zealand; and
- 4) **provided** guidance to address sustainable financing for the long-term financial resilience of SPREP.



Agenda Item 6.6. Appointment of External Auditors

63. In accordance with Financial Regulation 29, the Secretariat updated the meeting on the appointment of external Auditors to conduct the annual audit of SPREP's financial accounts for the financial years ending 31 December 2021 and 2022.

The Meeting:

- 1) **considered** the paper and **endorsed** the appointment of BDO Samoa to audit SPREP's financial accounts for the financial years ending 31 December 2021 and 2022.

Agenda Item 6.7. SPREP Outgoing Director General's Performance Assessment (Closed Session)

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted and endorsed** the review completed by the Troika of the outgoing DG's PDP for the period Sept 2020 - Sept 2021, acknowledging his excellent performance and achievements in this final year of his contract; and
- 2) **noted and endorsed** the proposal by the Troika to invite Members to propose relevant and appropriate specific targets to be included in the incoming DG's PDP by the end of December 2021, and further **noted** that the Troika will work with the new DG to finalise their PDP targets in early 2022.

Agenda Item 6.8. Appointment of Incoming Director General (Closed Session)

The Meeting:

- 1) **approved** the appointment of Mr Sefanaia Nawadra to the position of Director General of SPREP with starting date of 4 April 2022;
- 2) **approved** the extension of the current Director General's contract, Mr Kosi Latu, up to 3 April 2022.

Agenda Item 7: Regional Cooperation and Strategic Partnerships

Agenda Item 7.1. Implementing the Pacific Leaders Agenda

64. The Secretariat provided an overview of the coordinated efforts to implement the Pacific Leaders Agenda as outlined in the 2021 CROP Strategic Work Agenda, and the SIS Regional Strategy 2016-2020, where relevant to the mandate of SPREP.
65. Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, and United States commended the active involvement of the Secretariat in the CROP process.
66. New Zealand sought clarification on the issue of limited capacity of the Secretariat on nuclear legacy issues. The Secretariat clarified that it does not have the precise expertise in nuclear issues to provide targeted assistance on the nuclear legacy issues which were highlighted as important for the CROP Heads to provide further support to Members.
67. The Secretariat clarified that any engagement on the issues such as the regional architecture and the 2050 strategies will not conflict with its mandate or place undue strain on existing resources in response to a query from the United States.
68. American Samoa, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Samoa, and United States supported the recommendation.
69. French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Samoa committed to the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Agenda.
70. Samoa noted its supports to the continued development of the 2050 Strategy noting it remains central to guiding development aspirations across key thematic areas. Samoa further commended the Secretariat and the One CROP Plus team for support provided to Samoa for COP26 including its role as the current SIDS representative on the COP Bureau.

71. Samoa also further welcomed the Secretariats' support on regional fisheries work noting the impact of climate change on fisheries and encourages the Secretariat to support the work of the Forum Fisheries Agency for greater advocacy for the recognition and inclusion of fisheries in the preparation for COP26.

72. Samoa also noted that the decisions taken by leaders at PALM9 on the issue of Handling ALPS Treated Water must be realised in particular the priority of undertaking efforts on ensuring international consultation, international law, and independent and verifiable scientific assessments and guidance to be realised, noting also that Forum membership have committed to pursue independent guidance to interpret the scientific evidence as it becomes available; Pacific region's engagement with Japan, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), is important to ensure transparency and continued close dialogue to clarify all issues of concern with regard to this matter.

73. Samoa further welcomed the nomination of Mrs Rhea Moss-Christian (RMI) to participate on behalf of the region and provide regional

perspectives in the IAEA Taskforce on Safety Related Aspects of Handling ALPS Treated Water at Tokyo's Electric Power Company (TEPCO's) Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station.

74. Australia noted that nuclear issues were discussed in the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM 9), and the IAEA on the ALPS treated water. It further noted that it had offered technical support to the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to assist Members interpret the scientific evidence through this process.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the coordinated efforts of SPREP to implement the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Agenda as outlined in the 2021 CROP Strategic Work Agenda, and the SIS Regional Strategy 2016 – 2020 for the period July 2020 to May 2021; and
- 2) **provided** guidance on the strategic issues identified on the implementation of the key decisions of Pacific Islands Forum Leaders.



Agenda Item 7.2. Securing climate financing to build resilience to Climate Change in the Pacific Region

75. The Secretariat informed Members on the current state of the Pacific climate financing landscape highlighting the challenges and opportunities for Pacific countries in accessing financing to meet climate change priorities. The Secretariat further reiterated the role of SPREP as a Regional Implementing Entity and

sought support from the Meeting of a proposed multi-country Readiness Preparatory Support Proposal Direct Access Entities in the region through SPREP.

76. Fiji, New Zealand, and Samoa thanked the Secretariat for the papers and welcomed the approach of the Secretariat in accessing Climate Finance.

77. Samoa commended the capacity building activities undertaken by the Pacific Climate Change Centre to better respond to needs and endorsed the multi-country SPREP Readiness proposal as recommended.

78. Fiji noted the gaps and challenges in accessing climate financing and proposed that the Secretariat liaise directly with Members to discuss how the unallocated 2021 climate readiness funds can support the readiness programme of the Secretariat. The proposal was supported by New Zealand.

79. New Zealand welcomed the upgrading of the Secretariats accreditation status to the Green Climate Fund further noting the additional work required to meet this upgrade.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the discussion paper on 'Securing Climate Financing to build Resilience to Climate Change in the Pacific Region (WP 7.2/Att.2);

- 2) **noted** the gaps and opportunities in accessing climate financing, in particular the opportunities available under the Adaptation Fund, and urge Members to work with SPREP to better articulate their climate change priorities for potential projects or programmes;
- 3) **endorsed** SPREP's approach to capitalising on opportunities in the climate finance landscape in the Pacific;
- 4) **endorsed** the multi-country SPREP Readiness proposal and encourage Members to support by allocating their respective unallocated 2021 country readiness funds. SPREP would like to also acknowledge those countries that have made commitments to support the SPREP Readiness and look forward to receiving the No Objection Letters; and
- 5) **encouraged** Members to maximise the Readiness support programmes available for climate financing to support national and regional Direct Access Entities.

Agenda Item 7.3. New European Union Funding Support Framework for the Pacific 2021 – 2027

80. The EU updated Members on the programming of European Union (EU) support for the Pacific for 2021 – 2027 and sought feedback on priority areas for cooperation in terms of new programmes requiring European Union support.

81. Tokelau noted it is often seeking funding assistance from partners that overlook territories, further requesting the Secretariat and the European Union to note this and consider including territories equally for funding opportunities. The European Union indicated it will relay the message to Headquarters in Brussels.

82. The European Union clarified its presentation made to the Meeting was from an office in Fiji that covers 13 Pacific islands, however the office that covers the Overseas Territories is a separate bureau in New Caledonia for which the programming cycle is different. This was in response to a query from Wallis and Futuna for the detailed methodology and programming schedule for this new European Union programme.

83. Samoa acknowledged ongoing support from the European Union in areas that cover sustainable waste management, climate change

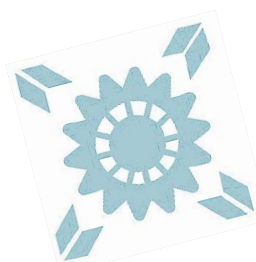
adaptation, biodiversity, natural based solutions and oceans noting the developments in the European Union programming from 2021 – 2027. It further requested clarification on amending recommendation 2 to ensure Pacific coordination of priorities for the Pacific regional programmes and programming purposes to be maintained by the Secretariat.

84. Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Tonga, and Vanuatu supported the current recommendations.
85. Tonga commended the support from the European Union, noting it would like to see continuation of the EU Waste Management Programme – PacWastePlus, the Global Climate Change Alliance, Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience Building Project Programme and Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Project Two. Tonga further noted that the PacWastePlus is the only programme that addresses hazardous waste and is helping with ongoing challenges in Tonga with used lead acid batteries and waste stockpiles that contain asbestos.

86. Vanuatu acknowledged the European Union Support towards the PacWastePlus, Pacific-European Union Partnership, and BIOPAMA2 Projects, further requesting continued support for these projects in the next funding phase.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the EU priorities and recent developments in the context of the programming of EU support for the Pacific for 2021-2027; and
- 2) **informed** the EU which priority areas (current and new) for cooperation they would wish to continue in the form of future programmes. The Members may also propose new areas of cooperation, within the priorities for EU funding in the Pacific for the next 7 years. Replies are to be sent by 30 September 2021 to the following email address: andreja.vidal@eeas.europa.eu



Agenda Item 7.4. Strategic Partnership between SPREP and JICA: future opportunities for collaboration

87. JICA presented on future opportunities between SPREP and JICA on waste management and climate change. This is to be done through human and institutional capacity development to ensure sustainability of Pacific islands.
88. Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu thanked JICA for the overview on the partnership between JICA and SPREP and acknowledged almost

two decades of support in the region from the Government of Japan through JICA.

89. Samoa further acknowledged the partnership between J-PRISM and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Samoa and noted they have requested additional support under J-PRISM 3 and look forward to future partnership strengthening of the SPREP and JICA partnership.

90. Tonga endorsed the Meeting recommendations and thanked the Secretariat and JICA for their collaborative efforts to ensure waste is properly managed in the region. Tonga highlighted a success story in waste management supported by J-PRISM in establishing a landfill and a waste management collection system in Ha'apai Island. The project saw the establishment of the Waste Authority Ltd which is now self-operating with no subsidies from the Government of Tonga. The Government of Japan has strengthened the capacity of the Waste Authority Ltd through the provision of equipment including collection trucks and heavy machinery at the landfill site.

91. Tonga acknowledged the new proposed activities under J-PRISM3 would complement Tonga's waste management efforts of reducing waste entering landfill and generating income to operate the waste management function, that is, circular economy. Tonga further highlighted their satisfaction with the efforts of JICA, the Secretariat and other partners in enabling Tonga to be able to undertake effective waste management.

92. Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Vanuatu highlighted that they have benefited from the J-PRISM programme and supported the recommendations outlined in the paper with Kiribati further noting they were not a partner under J-PRISM2 and requested involvement in Phase 3. Kiribati requested JICA to consider lessons learnt from J-PRISM2 in the design of J-PRISM3.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** and **reaffirmed** the positive outcomes of JICA's on-going technical cooperation projects with SPREP in the Pacific region; and
- 2) **supported** the current process for developing the next phase of the technical cooperation on waste management and its implementation which is scheduled to start in 2022.



Agenda Item 8: Strategic and Substantive programmatic matters

Agenda Item 8.1: Regional Goal 1 Overview: Pacific people benefit from strengthened resilience to climate change

93. The Secretariat presented an overview on the key priorities to support implementation of Regional Goal 1 for the biennial period 2022 – 2023.

94. Samoa acknowledged the work of the Secretariat and the One CROP Plus team in the lead up to the Twenty-Sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change (COP26), including support provided to Samoa as the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) representative to the COP Bureau. Samoa further commended the Secretariat's leadership to ensure Samoa remains engaged in the UNFCCC Process despite current challenges.

-
95. Samoa commended the One CROP Plus sub-committee coordinating Pacific SIDS high level engagement and advocacy to ensure champions are supported in their work and acknowledged the support of partners including Governments of New Zealand and Ireland.
96. Samoa announced it has submitted its second NDC with an increased ambition and looks to partners to help ensure effective implementation.

The Meeting:

- 1) **endorsed** the key strategic priorities and activities to support the implementation and achievement of Regional Goal 1 for the biennial period 2022 to 2023.

Agenda Item 8.1.1: UNFCCC COP26

97. The Secretariat updated Members on the progress of preparations by SPREP and the One CROP+ team to support Pacific Small Islands Developing States (PSIDS) that are Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) in their preparations for the Twenty Sixth Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP26) in Glasgow, United Kingdom in November 2021, and in the process leading up to COP26.
98. United Kingdom thanked the Secretariat for their work to support Pacific island preparation and participation at COP26 noting we are less than 8 weeks away from COP26 in Glasgow, the importance of which is highlighted by events such as tropical cyclones, wildfires, droughts and heatwaves across the world.
99. New Zealand recognised the importance of Pacific participation at COP26 and are working with the Secretariat, Australia, and United

Kingdom to address logistical challenges that hinder attendance. As such, New Zealand has availed support with its quarantine process for which it recommends Members that it will require they submit their application as soon as possible.

100. The Director General informed Members that it would be sending a small team to COP26 to support Members and noted that whilst it was a difficult decision to make given the covid19 situation, it was important that the Secretariat is available in person to assist Members at COP26.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the progress of preparations by SPREP and One CROP+ in the lead up to the UNFCCC COP26.

Agenda Item 8.1.2: Weather Ready Pacific Decadal Programme of Investment

101. The Secretariat updated Members on the 'Weather Ready Pacific Decadal Programme of Investment', which was endorsed by the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC) Out-of-Session Meeting on the 5 May 2021.
102. United States acknowledged the update on the Weather Ready Decadal Programme and commended the leadership from Tonga and the Pacific Meteorological Council and partners. United States supports the Weather Ready Decadal Programme and noted the data contribution from the TAO/TRITON Array (Tropical Atmospheric Array) operated by National Ocean and Atmospheric Agency of United States to monitor the variations of El Nino and La Nina Oscillations (ENSO) and the importance of the continuous data contribution from these arrays to global climate models and to the Weather Ready Program.

103. Samoa confirmed that the Pacific Island Forum Leaders have endorsed the Investment Plan noting the proposed cost of USD165 million. Samoa further welcomed the long-term investment, targeted interventions, and noted that the costs of impacts would be much higher than the investment and support.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the **endorsement** of the Weather Ready Pacific Decadal Programme of Investment by Leaders at the 51st Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting Retreat on the 6th of August 2021;
- 2) **acknowledged** the progress made by SPREP in cooperation with the Australian Bureau of Meteorology, World Meteorological Organisation, PMC members, SPC and other partners on the request of the PMC-5 to scope a decadal Pacific regional extreme weather, water and ocean response program initiative;
- 3) **acknowledged** funding support of the Government of Ireland towards development of the Investment plan;
- 4) **noted** the Weather Ready Pacific Decadal Programme of Investment and progress to date; and
- 5) **requested** the Secretariat to advocate for and seek funding for the Weather Ready Pacific Decadal Programme of Investment

Agenda Item 8.1.3: Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) strategic partnerships and cooperation through the e-learning innovative platform

104. The Secretariat updated Members on the status of implementation of the Pacific Climate Change Centre strategic partnerships and cooperation through the e-learning innovative platform.

105. New Zealand and Samoa commended the PCCC for progress

achieved in the short two years since it commenced operation.

106. New Zealand further noted that the PCCC is now fully staffed and operational and further encouraged the PCCC to maintain momentum and it looks forward to support from development partners for long-term sustainability of PCCC.

107. Samoa as host of PCCC expressed its gratitude to the partnership with Japan and the Secretariat which helps to build the resilience and capacity of Pacific peoples. Samoa further commended the work of the PCCC on information brokerage, climate change training, e-learning and sharing educational information across the Pacific which are critical to building Pacific resilience for our Pacific Island peoples. It also acknowledged the continued support from Japan, New Zealand and the Secretariat and looks forward to the journey to come.

108. Tokelau noted its interest in being part of activities coordinated by the PCCC requesting funding be sought to support this.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** that PCCC strategic partnerships and cooperation is crucial for the Centre's effectiveness and the Secretariat encourages donors and partners to work with PCCC to secure ongoing funding for the implementation of the key core functions of PCCC; and
- 2) **noted** the progress of PCCC e-learning platform as an innovative online learning solution and the positive impacts through increased number of participants and therefore increasing the opportunities for adaptive capacity and awareness of Pacific Island countries and territories on climate change.

Agenda Item 8.2: Overview of Regional Goal 2 – Pacific people benefit from healthy and resilient island and ocean ecosystems

109. The Secretariat presented an overview of key priorities to support the implementation and achievement of Regional Goal 2 for the biennial period 2022 – 2023 was presented to the meeting.

110. United States noted the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), is a major element of the CBD COP, and given that the outcome is not known yet the United States further noted that it is not able to support implementation, however it will continue to support partners in the Pacific in implementation to the extent possible.

The Meeting

- 1) **endorsed** the key strategic priorities and activities to support the implementation and achievement of Regional Goal 2 for the biennial period 2022 to 2023.

Agenda Item 8.2.1: Update on CBD COP15 and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

111. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on support provided to Pacific Parties to the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and associated meetings of 2020/2021.

112. Australia, Kiribati, Samoa, and Tonga noted the challenges in attending the range of virtual meetings in the preparation for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) including preparation for the CBD COP15. Australia further noted it had submitted to the CBD Secretariat alternative timings for virtual meetings and noted that the CBD have not yet responded. Samoa noted the UNFCCC has a process that allows for alternative time zones across

hemispheres and suggested a similar approach is considered by the CBD. Kiribati further requested support from the Secretariat with addressing the virtual challenges that hinder its participation in virtual meetings.

113. Australia welcomes Pacific support and collaboration on GBF and the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) in particular the areas of coastal and marine ecosystems, invasive alien species and plastic waste noting it has a seat on the Global Environment Facility which it strives to ensure there is support for the Pacific.

114. Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, and Tonga expressed thanks to the Secretariat for providing ongoing support for CBD negotiations.

115. Samoa highlighted the challenge to scaling up efforts for degraded ecosystems and livelihoods and key priorities with reference to UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration including focus on marine ecosystems, marine restoration, the 30 percent target for ocean management, ocean planning, invasive species management, and mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

116. Fiji requested the Secretariat to follow all official national communication channels in working with, and supporting countries with CBD COP15 negotiations, including through existing diplomatic channels.

117. Tonga proposed that the Secretariat organise regional preparatory meetings prior to CBD meetings to assure maximum and effective participation from the region.

118. The Secretariat confirmed that it would continue to work with countries to convene preparatory meetings including through existing communication channels in working with national focal points.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the update on the SPREP regional support for parties to the CBD;
- 2) **noted** the Pacific priorities for CBD COP15;
- 3) **noted** the challenges for Pacific Parties participation in virtual CBD meetings and to identify strategies to manage these challenges; and
- 4) **encouraged** Members to register and support delegations to participate in CBD COP15 and associated meetings and processes

Agenda Item 8.2.2: Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021 – 2025 and the 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas

119. The Secretariat presented to Members the new Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021 – 2025 and the Vemööre Declaration for endorsement.

120. Fiji and Samoa thanked the Secretariat for its work in this area and noted the purpose of the Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021 – 2025, the 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas as well as the Vermoore Declaration.

121. Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa, and Vanuatu noted support for the recommendations.

The Meeting:

- 1) **endorsed** the Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021 – 2025;
- 2) **encouraged** Members and partners to support the implementation of the Framework;
- 3) **noted** the successful virtual 10th Pacific Islands Conference; and
- 4) **invited** Members that did not attend the high-level segment of the Nature Conference to endorse the Vemööre Declaration.

Agenda Item 8.2.3: Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan

122. The Secretariat presented to Members the new Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan for endorsement and sought Members' commitment to implement the Coral Reef Action Plan in a cross sectoral and collaborative way as a matter of urgency for the Pacific Region.

123. Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa, and United Kingdom welcomed the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan and commended the Secretariat for its work.

124. Australia further noted the cross sectoral approach in development of the plan and looks forward in engaging with the Secretariat as it progresses this work.

125. Fiji noted that it fully supported the implementation of the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan which is in line with the Fiji Ocean Policy.

126. United Kingdom welcomed the plan which is crucial in reducing the threats to coral reefs in the Pacific and looks forward to exploring the Global Fund for Coral Reefs to support this work.

127. Samoa noted coral reef restoration and protection is a top priority and thanked the Secretariat for its support with coral reef restoration.

The Meeting:

- 1) **endorsed** the Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan;

- 2) **encouraged** Members and Partners to commit and support the cross-sectoral implementation of the Plan; and
- 3) **directed** the Secretariat to support implementation of the Plan by Members.

Agenda Item 8.3: Overview of Regional Goal 3: Pacific people benefit from improved waste management and pollution control

128. The Secretariat provided an overview of key priorities to support the implementation and achievement of Regional Goal 3 for the biennial period 2022-23.

129. Kiribati, United Kingdom, and United States welcomed the work from the Secretariat in this area.

130. United States supported by United Kingdom requested the regional framework addressing marine litter be consistent with work undertaken at the global level through the Fifth UN Environment Assembly. United States further noted that it had raised this matter during the 16th Noumea Convention Meeting including concerns with the compliance mechanism.

131. United Kingdom further encouraged Pacific islands to participate in the UNEA5 to support the new global agreement.

132. United States further noted training was underway with the US Coast Guard to support the PACPLAN, efforts of which were hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic and looks forward to discussing regional goals and how best to support regional waste management efforts including that of PACPLAN with the new Director-General.

133. Kiribati noted this work is in line with the Kiribati Waste Management Goals in its Strategy that was endorsed in 2020. Having experienced challenges with resources and technical assistance to implement this strategy it sought support from the Secretariat in this area and requested that the Secretariat and donor partners take into consideration national priorities which may not fall within the regional projects.

The Meeting:

- 1) **endorsed** the key strategic priorities to support the implementation and achievement of Regional Goal 3 for the biennial period 2022 to 2023.

Agenda Item 8.3.1: Strategic planning and management of disaster waste

134. The Secretariat presented on the proposal for the integration of Environment Sectors (with disaster waste included) into National Disaster Management Offices to ensure appropriate preparedness, response, and recovery activities adequately include and address waste management.

135. Fiji recognised and commended the work of the Secretariat, and further recommended consultations be led in country to identify the relevant lead agencies for Disaster Waste Management.

136. Samoa noted their support for this waste area to bring about a more resilient environment, noting that Samoa's National Disaster Management Office has already adopted the sector wide approach, including disaster waste management. Samoa also supported the regional task force as this will increase support for the area.

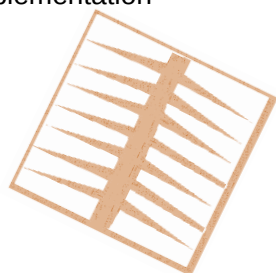
The Meeting:

- 1) **supported** and **committed** to establishing Environment sectors (with disaster waste included) within National Disaster Management Offices to address disaster waste and other environmental issues; and
- 2) **directed** the Secretariat to work with Members and Partners in seeking assistance from the FRDP PRP in the establishment of a Regional Disaster Waste Management Taskforce.

Agenda Item 8.3.2: Strategic planning and management of hazardous waste

137. The Secretariat presented opportunities to strengthen awareness and management of hazardous wastes in the Pacific due to the significant and detrimental impacts of inappropriate management of mercury, asbestos, and healthcare waste which pose a significant and on-going risk to the people and environment of the region.

138. Samoa noted their development of the national mercury report under the Minamata Convention and requested support for the implementation of this report.



139. Samoa also outlined their existing mercury inventory and national healthcare management plan, and acknowledged support received through partners including the Secretariat.

The Meeting:

- 1) **endorsed** the “Asbestos Management Legislative Reform Pathway” that is derived from the Asbestos Management Code of Practice and Policy Note to ban the importation of asbestos containing materials and support progress towards its adoption by Members;
- 2) **noted** the status of addressing mercury waste in the Pacific and support the development of a “Mercury Free Pacific Campaign” to phase out mercury containing products; and
- 3) **supported** the development of a “Healthcare Medical Waste Investment Plan”.

Agenda Item 8.3.3: Pathway to introduce Sustainable Financing Mechanism

140. The Secretariat presented to Members a proposal for a common approach to establishing sustainable financing systems to assist Pacific Island countries and territories to generate required income to effectively manage waste in the region.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** and **supported** the proposed Pathway for a sustainable financing mechanism; and
- 2) **directed** the Secretariat to work with Members and Partners in sustainable financing mechanisms for waste management.

Agenda Item 8.4: Overview of Regional Goal 4 – Pacific people and their environment benefit from commitment to best practice of environmental governance

141. The Secretariat presented an overview of key priorities to support the implementation and achievement of Regional Goal 4 for the biennial period 2022 – 2023.

142. Samoa supported the recommendations presented by the Secretariat and commended the Environment Indicator Reporting Tool that streamlines reporting indicators at national, regional and the international level.

The Meeting:

- 1) **endorsed** the key strategic priorities to support the implementation and achievement of Regional Goal 4 for the biennial period 2022 to 2023.

Agenda Item 8.4.1: Scaling up environmental data management in the Pacific Islands region

143. The Secretariat informed Members of the background and rationale for scaling up environmental data management in the Pacific to strengthen national planning, reporting, and decision making as well as in meeting regional and international reporting commitments; and sought endorsement of the Secretariat's proposal to develop a full-sized project to support the scaling up of environmental data management in the Pacific.

The Meeting:

- 1) **supported** the scaling up of environment data management in the Pacific and directed the Secretariat to initiate a process for developing a full-sized project proposal to support the scaling up environmental data management and explore the options of seeking resourcing from the GEF 8 replenishment and other funding sources.

Agenda Item 8.4.2: State of Environment and Conservation in the Pacific Islands: 2020 Regional Report and process for developing future SOEC Regional Reports

144. The Secretariat presented to Members the first regional State of Environment and Conservation (SOEC) report and the proposed process and timeline for reporting on the next State of Environment and Conservation Regional Report.

The Meeting:

- 1) **approved** the State of Environment and Conservation in the Pacific Islands: 2020 Regional Report; and
- 2) **approved** the process and timeline for reporting on the next State of Environment and Conservation Regional Report.

Agenda Item 8.4.3: Deep Seabed Mining: A Pacific Environment and Governance Challenge

145. The Secretariat provided advice on proposed Deep Seabed Mining in the Pacific islands region; and proposed to apply the precautionary approach to proposed Deep Seabed Mining activities.

146. French Polynesia, the Chair of the Friends of the Chair (FOC) for Agenda Item 8.4.3 presented an overview of the work undertaken by FOC which consisted of Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, United Kingdom, and United States.

147. Cook Islands and United States recognised the hard work of French Polynesia as Chair of the FOC, the FOC and the Secretariat for their work in this noting it supports the newly proposed text.

148. France noted their reservations and highlighted the need to articulate this document with the mandate given to the International Seabed Authority which, for France, is the appropriate body to invoke the work that is undergoing in this area over the coming years.

149. Cook Islands noted it had registered its interest in this Agenda Item and recommends the Secretariat consider the advantage of prior consultation with Members at the earliest opportunity. In the spirit of regional compromise, Cook Islands supported the newly proposed text and recommendations.

150. French Polynesia thanked the Friends of the Chair and notified the Meeting that work is ongoing to address the text of the Environment Ministers' High Level Talanoa.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the position paper prepared by the Secretariat "Deep Seabed Mining: A Pacific Environmental and Governance Challenge" and the reservations on it expressed by some Members;
- 2) **encouraged** Members, who are exercising their sovereign right to develop their mineral resources according to their national priorities, in accordance with international law as reflected in UNCLOS, to implement a sound precautionary approach, together with comprehensive scientific analyses of the deep-sea environment and impacts of deep seabed mining and any associated social and economic issues; and
- 3) **recognised** the centrality of UNCLOS in ensuring the protection of our Blue Pacific Continent.

Agenda Item 9: Consideration and approval of the 3rd PIP 2022-2023 and the 2022-2023 Biennial Work Programme and Budget

Agenda Item 9.1: Draft Performance Implementation Plan (PIP) 2022-2023 and Updated Results Framework 2017-2026

151. The Secretariat presented the third draft Performance Implementation Plan (PIP3) for the biennial period 2022-2023 and the updated 10-year Results Framework 2017 – 2026.

The Meeting:

- 1) **endorsed** the Performance Implementation Plan for the biennial period 2022 – 2023; and
- 2) **endorsed** the updated Results Framework 2017 – 2026

Agenda Item 9.2: Consideration and Approval of the Proposed Biennial Work Programme and Budget for 2022 – 2023

152. The Secretariat presented the proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2022 – 2023.

The Meeting:

- 1) **considered and approved** the proposed Biennial Work Programme and Budget of **USD\$35,194,757 for 2022** and **Budget of \$23,731,883 for 2023.**



Agenda Item 10: Report of the SPREP Conventions

Agenda Item 10.1: Report on the Sixteenth ordinary meeting of the contracting parties to the convention for the protection of the natural resources and environment of the South Pacific Region and related protocols (Noumea Convention).

153. Samoa, the Chair of the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention presented the COP16 Report to the Meeting.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the Report of the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention

Agenda Item 10.2: Report of the Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and the Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (the Waigani Convention).

154. Australia, the Chair of the 11th Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention presented the COP11 Report to the Meeting.

The Meeting:

- 1) **noted** the Report of the 11th Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention

Agenda Item 11. Other Business

155. The Director-General reported that there was no other business submitted to the Secretariat in advance of the Meeting. The Chair opened the floor for any other business to be tabled.

156. No matters were raised under this agenda item.

Agenda Item 12: Observer Statements

157. No verbal statements from Observers were made.

158. The Secretariat announced to the meeting that Observers may submit their written statements to the Secretariat for the full record of the Meeting.

Agenda Item 13: Dates of the 3rd Executive Board Meeting

159. The Secretariat proposed the week of the 5th September 2022 to convene the 3rd Executive Board Meeting. It further confirmed that it will circulate information to Members on the composition of the Third Executive Board, including the Chair of this

Meeting, in response to queries from French Polynesia and the Chair respectively.

The Meeting:

2) **agreed** to convene the Third Executive Board Meeting during the week of 5 September 2022

Agenda Item 14: Adoption of the Outcomes of the 30th SPREP Meeting

The Meeting:

3) **adopted** the outcomes of the 30th SPREP Meeting

Agenda Item 15: Closing

160. In closing, the Chair expressed gratitude on behalf of all SPREP Members to the out-going Director General Kosi Latu for his leadership during his two terms as Director General and through his role as the Deputy Director-General before that. The Chair presented a gift as a token of appreciation to the Director-General on behalf of all Members and the Secretariat.

161. Kosi Latu, Director-General of SPREP in his closing remarks thanked all Members for their guidance, support, and advice over the years.

162. The Chair closed the meeting with a prayer.

163. The 30th SPREP Meeting of Officials was formally closed at 5.15pm Samoa time.

Annex I: List of Participants

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Annex II: Opening Remarks by Peseta Noumea Simi, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Samoa

Representatives of SPREP member countries

Members of the Diplomatic Corps
The Director General of SPREP
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I extend to you a warm welcome from Samoa to your 30th SPREP Meeting. Under present circumstances, and following the complement of many regional and global meetings held in the last 18 or so months, our meeting this week is being convened virtually. This, however, should not detract us from ensuring that our discussions and decisions on the protection and management of the natural resources of our Blue Pacific continent continue to hold relevance and import for us all. Our commitment in ensuring the priorities and work of SPREP, as well as all our regional organisations, remains critical to the needs of our Pacific region and peoples.

SPREP, like our respective countries and CROP agencies, have had to adapt accordingly to absorb changes and challenges brought about by COVID-19, climate change and others without compromising its support and service delivery to our Member countries.

Samoa commends the work undertaken by the Director General and SPREP for their timely responses and assistance to our Pacific countries to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and likewise our respective country efforts with the generous support of our development partners.

The reaffirmation by our leaders at the 51st PIF that climate change is the single greatest threat facing the Blue Pacific, has meant recommitment to the goals of the

Paris Agreement and a call for bold, decisive and transformative action to address the challenges of climate change under the *Kainaki II Declaration*. We cannot allow COVID 19 to disrupt ambitious climate action, and our meeting this week should continue to address the commitments we made as a region in this important climate change declaration.

The recent IPCC report from the world's top scientists restates the message loud and clear. Climate Change is affecting everyone around the globe.

The upcoming Glasgow COP26 is another important milestone event for us to demonstrate this unity for ambitious climate action; albeit, we face real challenges in being able to attend.

Forum Leaders at their meeting also endorsed the ***Declaration on Preserving maritime Zones in the Face of Change-Related Sea-Level Rise***. As the Pacific we continue to take leadership on climate change, oceans and many environmental issues. We must remain committed to better environmental management overall and deal with the many outstanding issues that continue to degrade our environment.

As we celebrate the second anniversary of the Pacific Climate Change Centre we must remind ourselves that the Centre embodies a common aspiration of our Leaders and governments – it is a strategic opportunity to build capacities through knowledge, training, networking and research to ensure Pacific-tailored solutions to address our own adaptation needs and mitigation priorities.

The full agenda for the SPREP Meeting this week continues to reflect the complex inter-relationship of our regional initiatives albeit recognising that environmental considerations remain vital to the achievement of both regionalism and resilient development of our countries, as well as ensure the continued safety and well-being of our people. It is important to contribute to and make the connections and interlinkages to the various ongoing regional dialogues.



This being the Director General's last SPREP Meeting, as officials we acknowledge with deep appreciation and gratitude the work you have undertaken in the last six years. We all are extremely fortunate for the opportunity to work with and be guided by you to better support and encourage the development aspirations of our SPREP members. Thank you in particular for your support and ready assistance to Samoa on the many issues of significant importance to us and to the region. We wish you all the very best in future endeavours.

I wish you all successful and fruitful deliberations this week. I now declare the Officials meeting officially open.

Report of the Special SPREP Meeting

15 October 2021
Virtual Platform

Agenda Item 1: Formalities: Opening Prayer and Welcome

1. The 30th SPREP Meeting of Officials – Special Meeting was attended by American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, United Kingdom, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna. The list of participants is attached as Annex I.
2. While Fifteen Members attended the Meeting, however a quorum was not formed in accordance with the Rules of Procedures.
3. The Meeting was Chaired by Tokelau and opened with a prayer by the Secretariat.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of Agenda and Working Arrangements

4. The Meeting discussed the Provisional Agenda which proposed the suggested hours of work for the Meeting.
5. The Meeting started late while waiting for more Members to join and to determine whether the number of attendees was sufficient to reach a quorum. While awaiting a quorum the Cook Islands proposed the Meeting only address Agenda Item 3.1 and await 3.2 when there is fuller representation.
6. Given that there was no quorum, Members agreed to continue on an informal basis to discuss Agenda Item 3.1 only while 3.2 was deferred to a later date. The Secretariat provided guidance on the process for validating the record from this informal meeting.
7. The Secretariat proposed the hours of work be adjusted to suit the late start, and discussions of one Agenda Item only.



The Meeting:

- 1) ***considered and adopted the Provisional Agenda; and***
- 2) ***agreed on hours of work.***

Agenda item 3.1: SPREP 3rd Independent Corporate Review and Mid-Term Review of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026: Initial findings

8. The Special Meeting considered the Third Independent Corporate Review (ICR) and Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026 Report and recommendations together with the responses from the Secretariat and subsequent responses from the Natural Solutions Pacific Consultant.
9. A presentation was made by Dr Russell Howarth on behalf of his team, Natural Solutions Pacific.
10. New Zealand welcomed the Joint Review, noting its findings and as agreed at the 30th SPREP Meeting, it further welcomed the establishment of a working group to assess and take forward the recommendations in the review.

New Zealand further recommended SPREP consider how to resource the working group to review and implement the recommendations noting the importance of having the incoming Director General as the owner and driver of this review.

11. New Zealand proposed that the Working Group: discuss and agree upon a ToR of the Working Group as well as a timeline; identify membership and resourcing required to support participants as well as consideration of an external facilitator; identify fast achievements to be implemented quickly where SPREP and Members agree to recommendations as they stand; and identify three key focus areas for the group to work on and seek Member endorsement to progress these.
12. The Director General also welcomed the report and noted the emphasis on opportunities. He also noted that whilst change is important, it is equally important to thoroughly assess what and how change could be undertaken.
13. The Director General further stressed that many of the recommendations lacked proper justification, substantive analysis of how they came about; and no proper validation was undertaken. Some recommendations were factually incorrect or contradicted each other. Overall, it highlighted the lack of understanding by the consultants as to how the Secretariat works.
14. To further illustrate the points highlighted by the Director General, specific references were made to the recommendations 4, 10, 12, 15, 8 and 2:

- Recommendation number four recognised the Pacific Climate Change Centre as being established to be a shared resource that integrates key important work to address climate change, a priority of Pacific Island governments. It was not established to become a separate legal entity, which in itself would require a lot of work and funds to establish.
- Recommendation number 10 failed to understand the history of how the Executive Board came into being and why the current system is, and that having 2 – 3 meetings a year would require a lot of preparatory work by the staff, further to that a proposed independent chair would diminish the work of the Director General. He further pointed out that no other CROP agency has such a process in place.
- Recommendation number 12 on the creation of a new Technical Division for Projects would create silos within the Secretariat. The Director General clarified that policy and project-based work are integrated. Policy informs the work and projects help implement policy and they are complementary.
- Recommendation number 15 which recommends an independent chair to supervise the Director General on day-to-day decisions. The Director-General expressed concern over the role of the Director General being diminished and pointed out that it is not a function of the Chair of the Audit Committee to assess performance of senior management.

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- Recommendation number eight was highlighted as being inaccurate, the recommendation was for an action that is already in place noting that this could have been addressed if there was earlier discussion with the Secretariat.
 - Recommendation number two could have been corrected, as well as factual. The strategic mechanisms recommended for programme integration are already being implemented.
15. The Director General concluded by noting that these were only a few of the responses from the Secretariat to the Joint Reports.
 16. The Republic of the Marshall Islands noted the recommendations in the joint report, further noting the response from the Director General to the recommendations indicating their inclination to agree with the Director General.
 17. In response to a request from the Republic of the Marshall Islands who indicated they would like to hear from NSP again, the Secretariat clarified that NSP had left the Meeting and it had completed its task and would not be back to respond to queries from the Meeting.
 18. The Secretariat confirmed that the Terms of Reference for the Working Group will be completed before the end of this year in response to a request from New Zealand about the timeframes of the ToR, requesting it to be in place before the end of this calendar year.
 19. Australia, supported by the Republic of the Marshall Islands, requested the first meeting be convened in the first quarter of 2022.
 20. Australia further clarified their view that once NSP have submitted their final report, this process will be led by Members with the Secretariat and there will be no further need to engage with the consultants after this.
 21. Australia, Cook Islands, New Zealand, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Samoa volunteered to be part of the Working Group. The Chair further noted this working group is open for other Members to join as well.
- The Meeting:**
- 1) **noted** the update and feedback from the Secretariat on the Third Independent Corporate Review and Mid-Term Review of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026;
 - 2) **noted** the consultant's presentation on the Joint Reviews that includes the methodology, background, and consultations; and
 - 3) **considered** the full report of the Third Independent Corporate Review and Mid-Term Review of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026 and recommendations.
22. These were endorsed by New Zealand and supported by Australia.
 23. New recommendations were presented based upon discussions of the SPREP Special Meeting.
- The Meeting:**
- 1) **noted** the Working Group shall consist of Australia, Cook Islands, New Zealand, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, and other Members who may wish to volunteer by informing the Secretariat before the end of 2021;
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| <p>2) noted that the Secretariat will develop a draft Terms of Reference to be provided to Members before the end of 2021; and</p> <p>3) agreed for the Working Group to meet in the first quarter of 2022 to consider timelines and resourcing</p> | <p><i>including consideration of an external facilitator and identification of three key focus areas for Members endorsement.</i></p> <p>24. No objections were recorded to these recommendations.</p> |
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Agenda Item 3.2: Review of Staff Remuneration: Terms and Conditions

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| <p>25. The Director General sought guidance from the meeting on the way forward for Agenda Item 3.2.</p> <p>26. New Zealand proposed a one-off staff salary increase of 2.5% and the rest of the remuneration review recommendations to be considered alongside the ICR-MTR Joint Review Process.</p> <p>27. New Zealand further requested the Secretariat to submit a proposal to Members for a one off 2.5% general salary increase to be implemented as soon as possible, including how it will be resourced.</p> <p>28. Cook Islands supported the approach proposed by New Zealand noting they are currently not in a position to discuss the proposed salary scales for 2022 however would like to acknowledge the work of the Secretariat that have not had a salary increase for a number of years.</p> <p>29. The Cook Islands further noted there are many other discussions happening such as the regional architecture review which will feed into what the Secretariat is proposing. Further noted that discussions would require the wider Membership and their views.</p> <p>30. The Republic of the Marshall Islands supported New Zealand's proposal</p> | <p>and further proposed that the 2.5% salary increase is implemented immediately.</p> <p>31. Australia further supported the Cook Islands and New Zealand proposal noting they are aware SPREP staff have not had a salary increase in years, falling behind other CROP Agencies and requested the Secretariat provide further details for the resourcing of the salary increase.</p> <p>32. France sought clarification on whether the salary increase will start in 2022 and whether it was for all staff. France further noted that given that this increase was not forecast for the 2022 budget, it therefore requested the Secretariat to circulate a proposal in writing on the resourcing of the proposed increase to be considered by Members following this meeting. This was supported by Australia and New Zealand.</p> <p>33. The Director General confirmed that the increase is for all SPREP Staff and noted that there are funds in the approved 2022 budget to accommodate a 2.5% interim salary increase.</p> <p>34. France noted there are other elements to review and discuss in greater details both in the working group and in a plenary meeting,</p> |
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asking that this be discussed further in the first quarter of next year, with the wider participation as possible to discuss all questions that Members may have. This was supported by the Cook Islands.

35. Australia clarified the proposal for an interim 2.5% increase is not to be approved at this meeting, but to be discussed further and in detail, and would like the Secretariat to present recommendations to help make this happen.
36. The Republic of the Marshall Islands requested a proposal put forward for an interim salary increase of 2.5% in recognition of SPREP staff especially the challenging situations with the impacts of covid19.

The Meeting:

- 1) **requested** the Secretariat to submit a proposal to Members for a one off 2.5% general salary increase proposing that it be implemented as soon as possible including how it will be resourced; and
 - 2) **agreed** that the rest of the remuneration review will be considered alongside the ICR and Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan.
37. No objections were recorded to these recommendations.
38. On the way forward and given the lack of a quorum, the Secretariat provided legal guidance and clarified that the recommendations from the Special Meeting can be recognised as draft/proposed recommendations to be shared for feedback from all Members particularly the 11 Members that were not present at the meeting. If consensus is forthcoming, it would then mean a ratification or validation of the

draft/proposed recommendations and therefore become effective SPREP Meeting decisions.

39. The Cook Islands sought clarification on whether the Rules of Procedure specifies a process that must be followed, such as an out of session decision or another meeting to seek consensus especially the recommendation to propose a 2.5% one off salary increase. The Secretariat clarified that the Rules did not provide such a process, but in order to validate the current discussions, the Meeting needed to achieve a quorum as well as consensus. This could only be achieved by reaching out to the 11 Members that were not present and obtaining their approval of the meeting record.
40. France sought clarification if the proposal for a 2.5% salary increase will be sent to all SPREP Members, or only the 11 not present at the Meeting for which the Director General confirmed that it will be sent to all Members for further validation.
41. Republic of the Marshall Islands requested the Secretariat to explore a different platform to be used, other than the current virtual one to avoid technical issues in the future.
42. The Director General thanked all Members for their patience and persistence given the technical challenges and expressed appreciation on behalf of the Secretariat.
43. Tokelau, the Chair, apologised for being late and thanked everyone for participating in the meeting.

The Meeting was adjourned at 5.00pm Samoa time.

Annex I(b): List of Participants

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