### Report of the Twenty-eighth SPREP Meeting of Officials

### Introduction

1. The Twenty-eighth SPREP Meeting of Officials (28SM) was held from 19-21 September, 2017 in Apia, Samoa.

### Present at the Meeting were representatives from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States and Wallis and Futuna. A full list of participants, including observers, is available in Annex I.

**Agenda Item 1: Opening**

1. The official opening ceremony was held on 18 September at Tanoa Tusitala Hotel in Apia, Samoa. The welcoming remarks from the Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Mr Kosi Latu is attached as Annex II.
2. The Meeting was officially opened by the Acting Prime Minister of Samoa Hon. Tialavea Fea Leniu Tionisio Hunt. The opening address of the Hon. Acting Prime Minister is attached as Annex III.

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

1. In accordance with the *Rules of Procedure of the SPREP Meeting,* the Meeting appointed Palau as Chair and Fiji was appointed as Vice Chair.
2. The outgoing Chair, Niue’s Dr Josie Tamate, expressed her appreciation to the Members and the Secretariat for the privilege of serving as Chair, noting that the previous year had been a busy one, with a key highlight being the endorsement of the new SPREP Strategic Plan.
3. Hon. Umiich Sengebau, representing Palau, thanked the Chair of the 27SM for her leadership and took the Chair.
4. The Meeting:

* **confirmed** the Representative of **Palau** as **Chair**; and
* **confirmed** the Representative of **Fiji** as **Vice Chair**.

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

1. The Meeting reviewed the Provisional Agenda and the suggested hours of work.
2. At the request of Republic of Marshall Islands Agenda item 6.1 was moved to the first order of business on day two.
3. The Meeting:

* **considered** and **adopted** the Provisional Agenda (attached as Annex IV);
* **agreed** on hours of work; and
* **appointed** an open-ended Report Drafting Committee to work with the Vice Chair of the 28SM comprising Republic of Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, French Polynesia, France, Federated States of Micronesia, Cook Islands, Australia, American Samoa, United States, and Tuvalu..

**Agenda Item 4: Action Taken on Matters Arising from the Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting**

1. The Secretariat reported, by way of a Working Paper, on actions taken against the decisions and directives from the Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting (27SM).
2. The Meeting:

* **noted actions taken** against the decisions and directives of the 27SM.

**Agenda Item 5: 2016 Overview**

**Agenda Item 5.1: Presentation of Annual Report for 2016 and Director General’s Overview of Progress since the Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting**

1. The Director General presented the *2016 SPREP Annual Report* to Members and provided an overview report on progress since the 27SM.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** the report.

**Agenda Item 5.2: Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER) on the 2016 Work Programme and Budget**

1. The Secretariat presented its Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER) on the 2016 Work Programme and Budget, noting that this would be the last time performance would be reported against the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, and that as a consequence the PMER would report on work over the last five years
2. The Secretariat drew attention to key activities achieved in Climate Change, Biodiversity, Waste Management, Environmental Monitoring and Governance and Corporate Services. The Secretariat acknowledged the various donors that contributed to its work over this period, and outlined the disbursements to members.
3. The Meeting:

* **noted** achievements and progress as presented in the 2016 PMER.

**Agenda Item 5.3: Audited Annual Accounts for 2016**

1. In accordance with Financial Regulation 27(e), the Secretariat presented its Audited Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 December, 2016, noting that the Audited Annual Accounts for 2016 had been prepared in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), and advised that the auditors had provided an unqualified opinion of the Secretariat’s financial operations for 2016.
2. The Meeting:

* **reviewed** and **adopted** the audited Financial Statements and Auditors’ Report for 2016.

**Agenda Item 6: Institutional Reform and Strategic Issues**

**Agenda Item 6.1: Strengthening Regional Linkages update**

1. The Secretariat updated Members on the progress of SPREP strengthening regional linkages pilot as agreed to by members in the SPREP Meeting of 2010 and 2012 respectively by presenting the results of the desk top survey requested by the 27th SPREP Meeting.
2. Republic of Marshall Islands commended the many benefits of the placement of a Technical Officer in Majuro, listing these to the Meeting, further proposing to host the SPREP Sub-Regional Office in Republic of Marshall Islands as agreed to by the Micronesian Forum Leaders Meeting in 2017. In highlighting the financial challenges experienced by the current SPREP Desk officer based in Majuro, Republic of Marshall Islands announced that upcoming funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) would be considered for supporting the establishment and operation of the Northern regional office.
3. The Director General noted that funding of the sub-regional officers is from 2 sources\_- the core funding and projects. Both pilot offices are supported by the core, which is unable to provide all costs. SPREP is now requested to establish a new office in Palau as well as the Northern regional office. The Director-General commented that offices established by Host Country Agreements may be approached to provide further support, noting that Samoa makes a contribution as host country of the Secretariat.
4. The Meeting supported the initiative to strengthen regional linkages. Samoa and New Zealand recommended the development of a regional linkages strategy to guide Members consideration of this issue, noting resources required for a successful sub-regional presence and lessons learnt to date.
5. Federated States of Micronesia sought clarification on the support required by the governments that have host country agreements with SPREP and asked if a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) was undertaken, to which the Secretariat advised that the type of support required has not been finalised but may not be solely financial and that a CBA has been completed.
6. United States supported by Papua New Guinea and Kiribati was unwilling to support sub-regional offices funded by the core budget, but will support if other funding sources outside the core budget with Kiribati also seeking assurance that any core budget support would not impact on support provided to other Members.
7. New Caledonia proposed that multi-CROP country officers share salary costs with other agencies facing the same issues to avoid overburdening field officers for specific projects with country mission work,.
8. A Friends of the Chair (FoC) Committee was formed comprising United States, Republic of Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, New Caledonia, Kiribati, Australia, France, New Zealand, Cook Islands and Federated States of Micronesia.
9. The FoC reported back to the Meeting with a set of recommendations which were endorsed by the Meeting.
10. The Meeting:

* **noted** the Secretariat’s report;
* **welcomed** the decision of the Micronesian Islands Forum of May 2017 in which the Presidents of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia and Republic of the Marshall Islands, all agreed and supported the Republic of the Marshall Islands bid to host the SPREP sub-regional office in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands;
* **agreed** that the following actions are to be successfully completed by the Secretariat before establishing a sub-regional office in Majuro;
  1. Undertake a detailed assessment of the operational costs and other requirements for establishing a sub-regional office in Majuro**;**
  2. Identifya funding source by assessing all resource modalities available, including financial and in-kind support from the host government, cost sharing mechanisms with other organizations, sources of relevant programmatic funding and approved funds under projects that can be applied;
* **invited** the Director General of SPREP to brief the Micronesian Islands Forum on the actions taken towards establishing the SPREP sub-regional office in Majuro

**Agenda Item 6.2: Access to Climate Finance – Adaptation Fund (AF), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Global Environment Facility** (**GEF) Accreditation Updates**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on SPREP's delivery as a Regional Implementing Entity (RIE) for the Adaptation Fund (AF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as well as Global Environment Facility (GEF) Accreditation updates.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** the progress made, and pipeline initiatives, towards securing climate finance as an accredited entity to the GCF and AF resources;
* **noted** the establishment of the Project Coordination Unit and its role in supporting the development and management of the SPREP project pipeline, including for AF and GCF projects;
* **noted** completion of the GEF ‘MSP’ project, and ongoing focus on supporting GEF 7 replenishment and access to Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency; and
* **provided** advice on Members’ priorities for enhanced and/or additional Secretariat support for access to climate finance.

**Agenda Item 6.3: Pacific Climate Change Centre**

1. The Secretariatupdated Members on the progress of the establishment of the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC).
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** the progress in the work of establishing the Pacific Climate Change Centre;
* **directed** the Secretariat to continue working with the Steering Committee, and in close consultation with members and partnersworkto define the roles of the PCCC , ensuring that the function and roles of the PCCC complement those of other relevant regional mechanisms and organisations;
* **instructed** the Secretariat to develop for review,a governance structure and business plan, including engagement with private agencies, which address budget considerations for the operation of the PCCC;
* **agreed** to work together to encourage the Government of Japan in preparation for the upcoming PALM 8 meeting in 2018 to provide a fitting showcase of climate-friendly LEED certified building, and 100% solar design for the PCCC; and
* **encouraged** development partners and the international community to support the establishment of programmes and partnerships at the PCCC**.**

**Agenda Item 6.4: Sustainable Development Goals**

1. The Secretariat provided an update on progress made towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the work undertaken by the Pacific SDG’s Taskforce (PST). The update highlighted the recent Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Samoa in which the leader’s communique endorsed the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development (PRSD). The PST was established in 2016 as a response to the commitment made by the Leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum in 2015 to the full implementation of the SDG’s.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** progress in the implementation of the SDGs; and
* **noted** the Secretariat’s contribution in assisting with the monitoring and reporting on SDGs.

**Agenda Item 6.5: UN Oceans Conference: Outcomes and Next Steps**

1. The Secretariat informed the Meeting of the outcomes of the UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, SPREP’s support to Members leading up to, and during the Conference as well as the next steps.
2. The Meeting:

* **acknowledged** the leadership and effort put forth by Fiji in co-hosting the UN Ocean Conference with Sweden;
* **noted** with appreciation the support received from Sweden which allowed the Secretariat to support Members throughout the UN Ocean Conference process;
* **acknowledged** the logistical support provided by the UN Missions of Fiji and Samoa to SPREP for the UN Ocean Conference**;**
* **reaffirmed** our commitment as SPREP Members to achieving SDG 14; and
* **requested** that the Secretariat work with Members to ensure that we achieve the commitments made during the Conference

**Agenda Item 6.6: EDF11**

1. The Secretariatupdated Members on the progress of Round 11 of the European Union Development Fund (EDF-11). The presentation on upcoming activities under the EDF11, in particular regarding Objective 2.1 on sustainable use of marine resources (the Pacific-European Union Marine Project, PEUMP), and Objective 2.2 on waste management (PacWaste Plus), also included preparations with partners and members in developing activities under the EDF11 Overseas Countries and Territories package.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** that SPREP is a significant beneficiary of the EDF-11 funding round which will be implemented in Member countries, although implementation will only take off in early 2018;
* **noted** that for Objective 2.1 of EDF-11, SPREP’s main engagement will be to develop ways to mitigate the by-catch of threatened species and to improve the state of the biodiversity and the management of coastal ecosystems;
* **noted** that for Objective 2.2 of EDF-11, SPREP engagement will be to implement priority components of the Cleaner Pacific 2025 programme, with partners, to improve management of waste and pollution in the Pacific;
* **noted** that while there will be an OCT component to EDF-11 details of the programme are still in development, and the Secretariat will continue to provide advice and support to the OCTs on development of the programme, in particular the objectives with an environmental focus;
* **noted** that the EDF-11 programme will be implemented in accordance with PREP’s cost-recovery policy and the rules of the European Union, and that future reports will reflect this; and
* **agreed** to collaborate with SPREP in the implementation of projects to be initiated under EDF-11.

### Agenda Item 6.7: Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP)

### The Secretariat provided an update on the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP).

1. The Meeting:

* **noted** the progress in the work of implementing the FRDP and establishing governance arrangements; and
* **directed** the Secretariat to play an active role in the PRP implementation and report to Members on progress.

**Agenda Item 6.8.1: SPREP and UNEP Partnership**

1. The United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) Sub-regional Office in the Pacific provided an update on the implementation of the revised strategic priorities for the UN Environment Pacific Office and the UN Environment-SPREP partnership. The UN Environment Sub-regional Office in the Pacificalso informed the Meeting about the 3rd session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3) and its preparatory process.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** the progress and planned activities for the implementation of the strategic priorities for the UN Environment Pacific Office and the new MOU being negotiated between UN Environment and SPREP; and
* **urged** member countries to send ministerial delegations to the 3rd session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

**Agenda Item 6.8.2 SPREP and University of Newcastle**

1. The Secretariatprovided a short summary on the developing partnership between SPREP and the University of Newcastle (UON), Australia and other regional partners including the University of the South Pacific (USP). The partnership will include five PhD scholarships for Pacific Island applicants and a Postdoctoral Research Coordinator, to be posted at the SPREP Campus.
2. The UON was thanked and commended for this initiative and partnership with SPREP. Responding to a query from Tuvalu the Secretariat advised that the UON approach centered on targeted capacity building based on the needs and priorities of the region as identified in a competitive selection process.
3. The Meeting:

* **noted** the summary on the developing partnership between SPREP and the University of Newcastle, Australia

**Agenda Item 6.9: Update on preparations for the 23rd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP23)**

1. The Secretariatinformed the meeting of progress in supporting Pacific Island Countries and Fiji in particular in the preparations for, and activities at, COP23.
2. Cook Islands sought clarification on the role of SPREP as lead coordinating agency in light of the Forum Leaders Communique highlighting the Forum Secretariat as lead coordinating agency. The Secretariat advised that SPREP has the CROP mandate for COP coordination, recently confirmed by the Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), and has fulfilled this role since COP1. The Secretariat will work with PIFS under the One CROP approach.
3. The Meeting congratulated and thanked Fiji in its role as President of the UNFCCC COP23 and the work currently underway, commending the support from SPREP, in this New Zealand acknowledged the work of Fiji in priority setting and encouraged Members to join the NDC Partnership.
4. United Kingdom, Samoa, Australia, and United States informed the Meeting on their support for Fiji and the COP23 work:

* United Kingdom noted their pledge of USD 22 Million for the pre-COP event and to support Fiji’s Presidency in 2018 and development of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs),
* Australia noted their support of the Pacific island women negotiators training and funding of 15 Pacific island women to COP23,
* United States noted their support of USD 700,000 for Fiji in its role as COP President.
* France noted support to Fiji’s presidency by sharing their experience and contributing EUR 3.3 Million support for COP23.
* The Secretariat acknowledged the support provided to Fiji and the Pacific islands noting the positive impact of this upon the region, and welcomed further support, highlighting the requests from Member countries to seek additional funding for delegates to attend the COP23.

1. Samoa requested the Secretariat for assistance as they undertake their national stock-take as part of the finalised rulebook for the Paris Agreement for which the Secretariat noted discussions at the Pacific regional level still need to reach consensus from all Parties at the UNFCCC COP.
2. Fiji thanked Members for their support noting Fiji’s aim of COP23 to be a Pacific COP.
3. The Meeting:

* **welcomed** and **congratulated** Fiji on becoming President of COP 23;
* **noted** the progress in the preparations for COP 23;
* **provided** the Secretariat with views or suggestions on how to further support the COP 23 preparations, including Fiji’s Presidency role; and
* **encouraged** development partners and the international community to support the participation of Pacific island countries in COP 23.

**Agenda Item 7: Implementation of the new SPREP Strategic Plan 2017 – 2026**

**Agenda Item 7.1: Draft Performance Implementation Plan (PIP)**

1. The Secretariat presented the draftPerformance Implementation Plan (PIP) for the endorsement of the Meeting. The Secretariat outlined the purpose and the content of the PIP noting that this was the first of five PIPs to implement the Strategic Plan 2017-2026. Although the PIP was developed in-house the Secretariat acknowledged the assistance received by Friends of the Chair as well as Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded Regional Advisory Services Advisors.
2. The Meeting congratulated the Secretariat on preparing the PIP, noted its open, transparent process, the inclusion of SMART indicators and the input of Friends of the Chair and other Members. The Meeting acknowledged that the PIP would contribute to outcomes for the Strategic Plan 2017-2026. Australia flagged related issues of prioritisation to be addressed in later agenda items.
3. In response to a request from the Cook Islands, the Secretariat agreed to clarify the relationship between organisational and strategic goals in Figure 2 in order to, strengthen the link to results throughout the ten-year plan arising from the structural reforms to come.
4. Noting that the PIP acts as a monitoring mechanism for tangible outcomes against the objectives, New Caledonia suggested that the PIP may be too detailed and encouraged a simpler format to help make clearer the actions to be undertaken.
5. Fiji noted with appreciation the inclusion of sustainable financing mechanisms to support the PIP implementation.
6. The Meeting:

* **discussed** and **endorsed** the draft Performance Implementation Plan.

**Agenda Item 7.2: SPREP Country and Territory Action Plans**

1. The Secretariat sought interest from Members in the scope, focus and process for determining SPREP Country and Territory Action Plans. These will be annexed to the Performance Implementation Plan as directed by Members at the Twenty-Seventh SPREP Meeting.
2. United States, Samoa, New Caledonia and France expressed concern over the ambitious proposal and recommend tabling it to revisit later. Samoa noted the regional scope of the Performance Implementation Plan (PIP) in supporting country priorities, and recommended that countries should be engaged in the PIP reporting.
3. New Caledonia expressed concern that publishing country specific action plans risks losing sight of the regional interest, proposing that the Secretariat develop a matrix of national strategies that are linked to each regional objective and outcome, or alternatively adding a column to the PIP. It cited joint-country strategies implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC) and lessons learnt from these, in particular that such plans cannot be implemented unless proactively approached by countries.
4. Niue noted the inability of small islands with competing priorities to receive updated information and expressed the need for further support from the Secretariat ensuring regional outcomes reach national level, adding that the new biennial arrangements may result in missed opportunities.
5. The Secretariat noted concern by Members that this is a complicated undertaking and that countries should be developing the country action plan rather than the Secretariat. The Secretariat provided amended the recommendations for consideration by the Meeting which were endorsed.
6. The Meeting:

* **noted** the responsibility of Pacific Members to drive country and territory plans;
* **agreed** to greater involvement of Members in reporting to the SPREP Meeting; and
* **agreed** that the scope and content of the action plans will be further developed in the 2020-21 PIP.

**Agenda Item 7.3: Revised organisation structure**

1. The Secretariat sought endorsement from Members of the revised organisation structure. It was proposed that the revised structure will improve integration, strengthen efficiency and cost effectiveness for implementation of the 2017-2026 Strategic Plan and provide more effective service delivery to Members.
2. Samoa, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Cook Islands, Australia, United States, Wallis and Futuna, and France congratulated the Secretariat on the new organisational structure and, Samoa, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, and France endorsed the proposed organisational structure while New Zealand, Cook Islands, Australia and United States advised that they are not in a position to endorse it at this stage and sought further information regarding prioritisation and financial sustainability.
3. Unable to reach consensus the Meeting formed a Friends of the Chair (FoC) comprising Cook Islands, United States, New Zealand, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, France, and Australia, which provided text endorsed by the Meeting.
4. The Meeting:

* **acknowledged** that the functional logic driving the revision of the organisational structure is broadly aligned with the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017 – 2026;
* **directed** the Secretariat to regularly update Members via the Friends of the Chair on execution of the plan;
* **noted** that implementation of the plan is subject to availability of resources; and
* **further noted** that financial support is not immediately available in the 2018 – 19 budget.

**Agenda Item 8: Governance Arrangements and Mechanisms**

**Agenda Item 8.1: Governance arrangements for Biennial SPREP Meetings**

1. The twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting in 2015 agreed that the governing council of the SPREP Meeting would convene every two years hosted by the Secretariat in Samoa, commencing directly after the SPREP Meeting in 2017. The same Meeting also approved the SPREP Troika Terms of Reference.
2. The twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting agreed the Executive Board would be the decision-making body in the alternate years of the biennial SPREP Meetings, comprising Troika as well as four additional Members representing Melanesian, Micronesian, Polynesian and Metropolitan Members, each selected within their constituencies. The twenty-eighth SPREP Meeting (28SM) was presented with a draft Terms of Reference for the Executive Board developed with the Friends of the Chair appointed at the 27th SPREP Meeting.
3. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that America Samoa had sought to defer its membership of the first Executive Board, with Cook Islands agreeing to take up the position.
4. United States requested the Secretariat provide all papers for the Executive Board meeting at least 30 days in advance and recommended that decisions of the Executive Board should be circulated by the Secretariat to all Members.
5. The Meeting discussed the terms of both the TROIKA and the Director-General. There was consensus on the term of the Director-General being extended to 4 years to better align with the biennial SPREP Meetings and the term of the PIPs, and to not extend the term of the TROIKA beyond its current 3 years to ensure no countries will be disadvantaged.
6. Cook Islands noted that the rotation of the Polynesian and Micronesian regions needs to be reviewed due to equity issues because of the size of these constituencies, requesting further clarification on the decisions by the Executive Board and the consultative and approval process for decisions made, in the Terms of Reference. New Caledonia agreed with Cook Islands on the need for fairness to the Polynesian sub-region, further proposing the Deputy Director General be represented on the Executive Board. Tonga also requested there be clear guidance on the decision making powers of the Executive Board. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands agreed with the rotation proposal, but requested that Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands follow Nauru in the rotational listing.
7. The Secretariat acknowledged an error in Attachment 1 of the paper and advised that Kiribati would be included as an eligible Small Island State.
8. France sought clarification on the apparent lack of a French speaking Member in the rotation for the Executive Board, The Secretariat clarified there will always be a French speaking Member, and where no French speaking Member was represented in the Troika or by the sub-regions, an additional Member would be selected from amongst the French speaking Members.
9. The Chair asked the existing Friends of the Chair (FoC) meet to revise text to and come back to the Meeting. The FoC comprised Australia, Cook Islands, France, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, New Zealand, Niue, and Tokelau, to be joined by Federated States of Micronesia.
10. The Meeting considered the FoC revisions to the draft Terms of Reference for the Executive Board, which included distributing the decisions of the board to Members for endorsement and a revised attachment 3 with a rotation model providing for more equitable membership of the board in future years. France noted 2028 still did not feature a French speaking Member. Cook Islands suggested available spaces within the revised matrix to insert a French speaking country to address French concerns.
11. The Meeting:

* **considered and approved** the revised draft terms of reference for the Executive Board;
* **noted** the SPREP Troika term to remain as three years;
* **considered** the term of the Director General to be in alignment with the biennial arrangements of the SPREP Meeting under **Agenda Item 10.1 SPREP Director General’s Performance Assessment;**
* **noted** the incoming Executive Board will consist of the Troika of Palau, Papua New Guinea and Niue; and alphabetical rotation of Members of Australia for the Metropolitan Members; Cook Islands for Polynesia; Fiji for Melanesia; Federated States of Micronesia for Micronesia; and France for French speaking Members; and
* **noted** the first Executive Board Meeting to convene immediately after the 28th SPREP Meeting on Thursday 21 September 2017.

**Agenda Item 8.2: Audit Committee Report**

1. The Chairman of the Audit Committee, reported on activities performed by the Audit Committee during the period 1 July, 2016 – 30 June, 2017 with updates up to the end of July, 2017. The report is in accordance with the Governance Policy core requirements and the Audit Committee Charter.
2. The Audit Committee Chair noted the progress of the Secretariat in working to reduce the deficit, and strongly reaffirmed earlier Audit Committee recommendations on the importance of eliminating the reserve deficit.
3. The Meeting commended the independent audit committee for its excellent work in preparing a thorough report, and congratulated the Secretariat on the positive progress towards actively reducing the reserve deficit.
4. New Caledonia and Samoa congratulated SPREP for improvements to internal controls. New Caledonia commended the Secretariat for passing the seven pillar assessment of the European Union.
5. The Meeting:

* **noted** the activities performed by the IA and the AC and **approved** the report and recommendations provided by the Audit Committee for the period as from July 2016-June 2017.

**Agenda Item 8.3: Innovation in the Secretariat**

1. The Secretariat updated Members on a number of innovations in its operations. The implementation of the SPREP Strategic Plan 2016-2026 requires a strategic transformation in the organisation an example of which is the establishment of the Project Information System (PMIS), an on-line project management tool linked to the Financial Management System (FMIS), to enable staff to manage all aspects of projects for more effective delivery.
2. The Secretariat presented the Project Information System it developed to support the management of projects.
3. The Meeting:

* **noted** the innovations in place to enhance the Secretariat’s service delivery to Members.

**Agenda Item 9: Strategic Financial Issues**

**Agenda Item 9.1: Report on Members’ Contributions**

1. The Secretariat reported to the Meeting on the status of Member contributions as at 31 December, 2016 and provided an update on the status of Member contributions as at the time of the Meeting.
2. The Secretariat noted that total contributions received from Members as at 31 December 2016 amounted to USD 1,005,105. This was a decrease of USD 422,349 in comparison to contributions received in 2015 of USD 1,427,454.
3. Australia, New Zealand, Samoa and Cook Islands noted the common responsibility to pay outstanding member contributions. New Zealand further acknowledged Samoa’s contribution under the host country agreement, as well as Nauru for their commitment in clearing their outstanding contributions.

1. Supporting the recommendation, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, and Cook Islands proposed that the Secretariat establish a policy on Member contributions. The Secretariat acknowledged the suggestion yet also noted that it was an issue of commitment and ownership by its Members as these are voluntary contributions. The Secretariat urged Members to collectively address the issue in a timely manner to assist the Secretariat to address the deficit issue.
2. The Meeting:

* **considered** the report
* **committed** to addressing the problem of outstanding member contributions; and
* **committed** itself collectively and individually to paying current and outstanding contributions in full in 2017.

**Agenda Item 9.2: Sustainable Financing**

1. The Secretariat presented a report to Memberson actions undertaken by SPREP to address core budget pressures and thus ensure long-term sustainable financing for the organisation, including a range of options for increasing membership contributions, noting the unique position of SPREP, which unlike all other CROP agencies, has had no increase in membership contributions for 13 years, while the cost of doing business in the region has increased markedly. The Secretariat pointed out that the core budget is disproportionately dependent on membership contributions, and that had Members paid all their fees on time in 2016, SPREP would not have been in deficit in the reserves.
2. Members debated the issues, especially the proposal for an increase in membership contributions, The Meeting acknowledged the difficulties faced by the Secretariat because of the static level of member contributions. Despite noting that increases in contributions would be symbolic at best (being a minor contribution to the core budget), and emphasising the need for a greater focus on cost recovery. Discussion favoured support in principle, but could not agree on a way forward to agree to an increase in fees.
3. United States and France reconfirmed that their contributions to SPREP are unlikely to increase because of their Governments’ on-going policies on financial support to regional and international organisations. Furthermore they advised that to recommend any increase to their Governments could well be counterproductive. Other Members also expressed doubt about their ability to increase fees citing either budget or political barriers.
4. Noting that SPREP has had no increase in membership contributions since 2004, created a risk that there will be insufficient funds to deliver services in the longer term, Members agreed it is critical that Members support the Secretariat to succeed in meeting the needs of the region, noting that needs are increasing while resources are staying the same. The Meeting suggested that the Secretariat should focus on developing a strong business development plan in close consultation with Members, and that Members should prioritise meeting their current commitments., Australia and Cook Islands.
5. New Caledonia noted the distinction between voluntary and compulsory contributions, suggesting that voluntary commitments cannot be considered overdue as they are voluntary.
6. New Zealand advised that its preferred increase is 20% with an additional 3% for inflation. Cook Islands noted that they could support a 10% increase.
7. The Secretariat noted that while the proposed increases in Member contributions are minor, about the issue is one of commitment and ownership, and reminded Members that SPREP is the only CROP agency that has not had an increase in Member contributions in the past 13 years. While the Secretariat is actively looking at cost recovery options and increasing project management fees, there is a widening gap between projects and core funds, and that this situation is not sustainable. A strong core is essential if SPREP is to effectively support its members.
8. The Chair formed a Friends of the Chair committee to discuss this issue further. The FoC consisted of Wallis and Futuna, Australia, United States, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, New Caledonia, France, New Zealand, Tuvalu, Samoa, and Papua New Guinea. The FoC presented their revised recommendations to the Meeting, these were adopted after revisions by the Meeting.
9. The Meeting:

* **considered**  the options for membership fee increases presented inWP 9.2/Att.5a-5c:

5(a) - Implications of the options for a 10% or 20% or 30% increases in Membership Contributions

5(b) - Implications of the options for a 10% or 20% or 30% increases in Membership Contributions excluding Metropolitan Members

5(c) - Increase in Membership Contribution annually to take into account inflation (3%)

* **recognised** the need for an increase in core contributions in order for the Secretariat to deliver the outcomes agreed to in the Strategic Plan 2017-2026 and the Performance Implementation Plan, including the progressive restructure;
* **recommended** a20% increase in contributions by Members, subject to confirmation by capitals, commencing in time for the SPREP 2018 financial year. This does not include United States and France, noting that France prefers an ‘up to 20%’ recommendation. Tonga will consider the matter after its general election;
* **removed** the 2015 5% voluntary contributions; subject to approval of the previous recommendation;
* **agreed** to review Member contributions as a standing agenda item at each SPREP Meeting;
* **noted** the attribution of outstanding contributions from Members to the negative reserves balance accumulated over past years (refer to WP 9.2/Att.6);
* **directed** the Secretariat to continue to work with Member countries with outstanding contributions including development of payments plans;
* **encouraged** Members to commit to making membership contributions payments in a timely manner;
* **noted** the implementation of the cost recovery policy and programme fee;
* **noted** efforts by the Secretariat to improve the financial position of SPREP including the reduction of the overall deficit, reduction in foreign exchange losses in 2016, and cost reduction measures (refer to WP 9.2/Att.7 & 8);
* **noted** the efforts of the Secretariat to engage non-traditional donors/partners; and
* **noted** the efforts of the Secretariat to complete the review of the Reserves Policy by December 2017.

**Agenda Item 10: Corporate Services**

**Agenda Item 10.1: SPREP Director General's Performance Assessment**

1. This was a closed session.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted and endorsed** the review completed by the Troika of the DG’s PDP for the period Sept 2016 – Sept 2017;
* **endorsed** the proposed annual PDP for the DG for the period Sept 2017 – Sept 2018, noting that the DG’s PDP will be approved by the executive board in 2018;;
* **approved** the extension of the Director General’s existing contract for one year to align with the new governance arrangements for the Secretariat, this means the extended contract will end in December 2019;
* **requested that the Troika advise on the timing** realigning the DG’s PDP to the rest of the Secretariat’s staffs PDP cycle and financial year and timing of the SPREP Meeting; and
* **noted** the valuable contribution that Members of the Troika provide in the work of the Secretariat through active participation and regular constructive feedback.

**Agenda Item 10.2: CROP Harmonisation**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the progress with the Secretariat’s work on Council of the Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) harmonisation.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** the intention for CROP Heads to resolve the issues behind the lack of progress with remuneration harmonisation by 3 November; and
* **noted** the progress by the Secretariat in pursuing greater CROP harmonisation on a wide range of issues.

**Agenda Item 10.3: Appointment of External Auditors**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the appointment of external auditors, noting theterm of office of the Secretariat’s current external auditor will expire on 31 October 2017.
2. The Secretariat advised that a tender had been advertised for the audit of its 2017 and 2018 accounts, but that after extensive advertising over a four week period, only one tender proposal was received. A further two-week re-advertisement of the tender failed to attract any additional bids. The panel therefore assessed the proposal received from KPMG – Fiji, and concluded that it met the evaluation criteria and is technically capable of carrying out the work required. KPMG-Fiji is therefore recommended for the Meeting’s endorsement.
3. Samoa noted the efforts of the Secretariat in conducting the Procurement process and supported KPMG-Fiji to be the external auditor for the Secretariat in 2017 and 2018. This was supported by United States, with United States noting that in the previous appointment of auditors, five bids were received, and urged SPREP to take action to ensure a more competitive and transparent process such as directly approaching auditing companies, however the Secretariat advised that in order to maintain objectivity, it was unable to do so.
4. The Director General advised that the value of the bid may limit the offers and an increase in this may increase the number of responsive offers.
5. The Meeting:

* **considered** the paper and **endorsed** the appointment of KPMG Fiji to audit SPREP’s financial accounts for the financial years ending 31 December 2017 and 2018.

**Agenda Item 11: Regional Conventions**

**Agenda Item 11.1: Report of the Eighth 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)**

1. Cook Islands, the Chair of the Waigani Convention (COP8), presented the report of the 8th Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention.
2. New Caledonia queried as to how many MARPOL Convention infringements there had been, in response the Secretariat clarified there were no infringements however there were over 10,000 MARPOL violations which have been reported to countries for compliance and enforcement.
3. The Meeting:

* **noted** the Report of the Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention.

**Agenda Item 11.2: Report on the Fourteenth 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)**

1. Samoa, the Chair of the 14th Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention presented the report to the Meeting.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** the Report of the Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention.

**Agenda Item 12: 2018 and 2019 Work Programme and Budget**

**Agenda Item 12.1: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division – 2018-19 Overview**

1. The Secretariat presented an overview of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Division work programme activities for 2018 - 19 consistent with the SPREP Strategic Plan
2. The Meeting supported the Secretariat’s recommendations and gave particular emphasis to the regional invasive species work, noting several up-coming project funding agreements to advance this priority.
3. The Meeting:

* **noted** the 2018 - 19 highlights for the Biodiversity Ecosystem Management Work Programme.

**Agenda Item 12.1.1: Year of the Whale: Whales in a Changing Ocean Conference: Outcomes and Next Steps**

1. The Secretariat updated Members on activities conducted as part of the Year of the Whale, in particular, the Whales in a Changing Ocean conference hosted by the Government of Nuku’alofa from 4 – 6 April 2017, outlining the outcomes and next steps following on from the conference.
2. The Meeting thanked the Secretariat for their hard work in the Whales in a Changing Ocean Conference and supported the development of the new Whales and Dolphin Action Plan, with France noting its on-going support for marine mammal research, and the Tjibaou Cultural Centre exhibition, and Tonga noting the economic and conservation benefits gained from hosting the conference, including support to whale based tourism and the establishment of the whale sanctuary.
3. The Meeting:

* **noted** the report of the Whales in a Changing Ocean conference;
* **noted** the contents of the Pacific Islands Year of the Whale Declaration and **considered** signing the Declaration if not already a signatory;
* **noted** the undertakings given by some Members in Voluntary Commitment #16006 made to the UN Ocean Conference;
* **considered** how best to provide support; and
* **agreed** to contribute through the Whale and Dolphin Action Plan 2018-2022 and other mechanisms towards the effective conservation of whales in the Pacific islands region.

**Agenda Item 12.1.2: Draft Marine Species Action Plans 2018 – 2022**

1. The Secretariat reported to Members on progress towards reviewing the Marine Species Programme 2013 – 2017, and the development of a new Marine Species Programme 2018 – 2022.
2. The Meeting welcomed the more targeted approach for the review of the Draft Marine Species Action Plan 2018-2022, noted the release of the Marine Species Action Plan and committed to review the document by the deadline of 31st October 2017, with Cook Islands noting the establishment of its marine sanctuary and legislative requirements as part of implementation, and New Zealand noting that the lessons learned developing the New Zealand Turtle Action Plan may be valuable for the draft Marine Species Action Plan. New Zealand also suggested that it would be useful to further streamline the objectives of the draft Marine Species Action Plan by consulting with Member states and translating the objectives into national plans.
3. The Meeting:

* **noted** that the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Species Programme is revised every five years and is now due for revision to cover the five-year period 2018-2022; and
* **agreed** to review the draft Programme provided and to give feedback in writing to the Secretariat by 31 October 2017.

**Agenda Item 12.1.3: Pacific Islands Coastal Resilience Framework – Implementing a Paradigm Shift**

1. The Secretariat presented to Members a paper on the development of the Pacific Islands Coastal Resilience Framework (PIECoR) and the important role that it can play in strengthening the capacity of Pacific island governments and communities to design and implement effective responses to climate change adaptation and other environmental stressors. The Secretariat advised that the Framework was developed based on the new SPREP Strategic Plan, in partnership with IUCN and SPC, and in consultation with Green Climate Fund (GCF), noting the Framework is aligned with the GCF pillar on coastal resilience and with processes and policies already endorsed by SPREP Meetings.
2. United States noted that they are undergoing a review of strategic priorities including that of climate change policy and in that regard was not in a position to endorse the Framework on Pacific Islands Coastal Resilience, recommending to replace “endorsed” with “noted.
3. Samoa and New Caledonia reaffirmed the importance of the Framework with Samoa proposing it be endorsed whilst noting the position of the United States, and New Caledonia noting it would enable the region to seek funding support.
4. France reiterated its support for the Framework, noting the Secretariat had obtained the full consensus of the Pacific countries and it will allow the Secretariat the means to implement its strategic priorities in this regard.
5. The Meeting recognised the position of United States and agreed to endorse the recommendation whilst noting the United States position.
6. The Meeting:

* **noted** the development and importance of the Pacific Islands Coastal Resilience Framework as a basis for strengthening national responses to climate change;
* **endorsed** the framework as an important mechanism to support implementation of the Strategic Plan;
* **endorsed** the framework as an important mechanism to secure funding through the GCF and other relevant funding facilities; and
* **noted** that United States reserves its position on the last two points

**Agenda Item 12.2: Climate Change Division – 2018 - 19 Overview**

1. The Secretariat provided an overview of the Climate Change Division's work programme activities for 2018-19 consistent with the new SPREP Strategic Plan.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** the overview of the 2018 - 2019 work programme of the Climate Change Division

**Agenda Item 12.2.1: RTSM**

1. The Secretariat reported on the work achieved under the Strategic Program on Climate Resilience: Pacific Regional Track (SPCR-PR). Members were also invited to provide strategic guidance to ensure the sustainability of the mainstreaming work delivered under the program and the continuation of the Regional Technical Backstopping Mechanism (RTSM).
2. Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu commended the Secretariat for the technical support provided by the RTSM and encouraged donors to consider further funding of the RTSM.
3. The Meeting:

* **noted** the *Outcome Statement* attached as Annex V ;
* **noted also** that the technical assistance provided under the SPCR-PR was considered by participating members to be targeted support needed by Pacific island countries to build their resilience to climate change and disaster related risk, to scale up their climate change investments in support of their development aspirations, and to better enable access to climate change finance;
* **requested** that development partners support countries in incorporating climate change and disaster related risks into their development planning processes, policies and plans by adopting the methodological approach and the generic tools trialled under this program;
* **recommended** that the Secretariat prioritise the sustainability of the mainstreaming work and the RTSM; and
* **invited** development partners to lend technical and financial support to ensure that the mainstreaming tools and RTSM assistance are continued, as requested by those Member countries which have benefited from the programme to date.

**Agenda Item 12.2.2: Update from the 4th Pacific Meteorological Council and 2nd Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology**

1. The Secretariat reported on the outcomes of the 4th meeting of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC-4) and the 2nd Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology (PMMM-2) supporting sustainable weather and climate services for a resilient Pacific and thanked the Government of Solomon Islands for their hosting arrangements.
2. The Secretariat outlined the historical and evolution of the PMC and acknowledged the contribution of development partners and donors. The Secretariat also highlighted the media training of journalists preceding the PMC funded by Climate and Oceans Support Programme in the Pacific (COSPPac) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), facilitated by SPREP. The PMC-4 outcomes included, amongst many others, the *Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy 2012-2021* (PIMS) mid-term review and the revised *Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy 2017-2026* as well as the new *Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services 2017-2026 (PRSCS)*.
3. Samoa acknowledged the efforts of the Government of Solomon Islands, SPREP, UNDP, and development partners and donors and welcomed with appreciation the opportunity to host the next PMC and PMMM Meetings in 2019.
4. United States noted that although they were present in Honiara they were not part of the Ministerial Statement and requested the Meeting to note their reservation regarding reference to this in the recommendations. United States reaffirmed their full support as members of the Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy 2017-2026 (PIMS), the Road Map for Climate Services, PMC and the PMMM.
5. The Meeting:

* **noted** the outcomes of PMC-4 and PMMM 2;
* **noted** the Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy 2012-2021 mid-term review and the revised Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy 2017-2026;
* **noted** the new Pacific Roadmap for Strengthened Climate Services 2017-2026;
* **acknowledged** with thanks the support provided by the World Meteorological Organization, the Government of Solomon Islands, University of Hawai’i, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Government of Australia through the COSPPac, and Pacific-Australia Climate Change Science and Adaptation Planning (**PACCSAP**) Program, Government of Finland, Government of Korea, Meteo France and UNDP for PMC-4 and PMMM-2; and
* **requested** the PMDP to continue work with regional National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and partners to implement the action items from PMC-4, the priorities highlighted in the Honiara Ministerial Statement, the revised PIMS and the PRSCS. The United States reserves its position on this statement.
* **noted the support and commitment** of Members and development partners for the outcomes of the PMC-4 and PMMM-2

**Agenda Item 12.2.3: Update from the current Pacific Meteorological Council/Pacific Meteorological Desk Partnership projects supporting Pacific National Meteorological and Hydrological Services**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on progress made by SPREP and partners in meteorology, hydrology and climatology activities that are contributing to building the capacity of Member’s National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs).
2. New Caledonia requested they be included in the Panel on Climate Services in the Pacific (PICS), noting that they have requested support from France on access to climate carbon markets, and that Meteo France, which represented New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna at the PMC-4 meeting, would like to engage more broadly in the region, including working with Pacific countries to minimise the economic impacts of climate variability. The Secretariat noted that it is already working with Meteo France to strengthen their relationship via a Memorandum of Understanding, and that the membership of the PICS panel has been amended to include New Caledonia.
3. A number of Members expressed appreciation from their engagement in this work, with Wallis and Futuna noting that their recently adopted climate change strategy had relied upon the support of their SPREP trained meteorological services officers.
4. The Meeting:

* **acknowledged** the generous support and commitment of regional and international partners for the past, ongoing and upcoming work to support National Meteorological and Hydrological Services in the region, including the Government of Finland, Government of the Republic of Korea, Korea Meteorological Agency, Government of Australia, Government of Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Government of Japan, Japan Meteorological Agency, United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Meteo France, World Meteorological Organization and Green Climate Fund; and
* **encouraged** Members to **support** the on-going development of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and SPREP’s efforts to support them.

**Agenda Item 12.3: Waste Management and Pollution Control Division Overview – 2018-19**

1. The Secretariat provided an overview of major work programme activities in 2018 – 19 to improve management of solid and hazardous waste and marine pollution for the region.
2. The Meeting commended the Secretariat’s work on Waste Management and Pollution Control, with appreciation expressed for both the European Union funded PacWaste Project, and Japanese Technical Cooperation for Promotion of Regional Initiative on Solid Waste Management in Pacific Island Countries (J-PRISM) Projects.
3. Republic of Marshall Islands sought a response from the Secretariat on its request for assistance on the nuclear waste issue, in response the Secretariat clarified a regional working group which included SPREP, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Pacific Community (SPC) was formed to address the nuclear waste issue, noting that a mission to Republic of Marshall Islands will soon be undertaken.
4. The Secretariat was urged to ensure collaboration with all Pacific island countries and territories, to support Pacific islands with national recycling responses and to include private sector partners including in development of the waste database.
5. The Meeting:

* **noted** the work programme for the Waste Management and Pollution Control Division.

**Agenda Item 12.3.1: European Union/SPREP Pacific Hazardous Waste Management Project (PacWaste) Achievements, Evaluation and Legacy**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the achievements, evaluation and legacy of the EDF 10 Pacific Hazardous Waste Management project, known as PacWaste.
2. Several Members made specific requests for assistance from PacWaste+, including:

* Tuvalu requested technical assistance from the Secretariat for rehabilitation of the Funafuti dump site. In response, the Secretariat stated a baseline study has been conducted to address remediation of the Funafuti waste site and it will continue on this path.
* Samoa noted the need for regional coordination of chemical waste management and tracking systems for chemicals throughout their lives, including between stakeholders.
* Fiji requested the Secretariat to articulate an e-waste strategy going forward, with Samoa enquiring whether e-waste was a hazardous or chemical waste.
* Kiribati acknowledged the training provided by the Secretariat on healthcare waste, but noted that the duration of the training was short, and urged the Secretariat to extend the duration of training in the future. In response to Kiribati, the Secretariat observed the PacWaste training reflected the limited resources available, it was recognised that countries want more training and this will be built into the project design for PacWaste+.

1. In response the Secretariat noted the intention to utilise a range of technical working groups, including on Ridge to Reef projects, and acknowledged that while e-waste has been a minor component of PacWaste this is to be expanded in PacWaste+. Noting that e-waste contains some solid waste and some hazardous waste, the Secretariat explained that although the export markets from the stripping of e-waste can be valuable, the Waigani and Basel Conventions inhibit export to key Asian markets, and advised that putting e-waste into landfills should be a last resort.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** the achievements of the PacWaste project in improving the management of hazardous waste management in the Pacific, fostering regional collaboration and a Pacific to Pacific approach in line with Cleaner Pacific 2025;
* **noted** the results of the European Union Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) exercise and Final Evaluation and the end date of 31 December 2017; and
* **noted** the legacy that the PacWaste project leaves, by way of the EDF 11 funded PacWaste+ project.

**Agenda Item 12.3.2: Cleaner Oceans for a Cleaner Pacific**

1. The Secretariat informed the Meeting of the importance of best practice in waste management and pollution control as an effective mechanism for addressing marine pollution, and sought the commitment of Members to actively participate in these initiatives to sustain the long-term health of the Pacific Ocean and its people.
2. Noting that marine debris by definition is a trans-boundary issue requiring a coordinated response through partnership across the globe, United States highlighted work with stakeholders on marine debris issue including the Group of Seven (G7), Group of Twenty (G20) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) groupings, further acknowledging the role of the Our Ocean Conference in addressing marine pollution, and encouraged the Secretariat to engage the private sector to combat marine pollution, and proposed an amendment to text to strengthen language by adding the word “act”. The Secretariat noted that private sector engagement and innovation including on plastic pollution, is reflected in PacWaste+ and EDF 11 proposals.
3. Republic of Marshall Islands, sought clarification on support from the Secretariat for countries with high violation incidents reported through the observer programme. The Secretariat advised it is working with countries to increase understanding of the Cape Town Agreement for ratification, and conducting reviews of national laws to strengthen compliance and enforcement with MARPOL.
4. Members identified national actions to combat marine pollution:

* Kiribati noted its voluntary commitment to ban the use of single use plastic bags, requesting support from the Secretariat and partners to implement this commitment
  + Wallis and Futuna noted it has banned plastic bags since July this year with the intention to ban all plastics completely by 2020.
  + France introduced a new legislation last year to ban the single use of plastics with the next step being to prohibit the use of microplastics, and sought the support from the Secretariat in this area.
  + United Kingdom has committed to several actions to combat plastic pollution, recently introducing legislation to ban the manufacturing of plastics. United Kingdom further noted work in Fiji and Solomon Islands under the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme (CMEP) for plastic analysis and highlights the need for regional partnerships to support the work of the Secretariat in this area

1. Australia also supported the addition of the words to act previous comments on the importance of taking actions in the countries, at the regional and global level, requesting clarification on whether MARPOL violations of abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) have been raised with IMO MEPC (Marine Environment Protection Committee) and if it hasn’t, is there merit for the secretariat to do so. In response the Secretariat advised that it has committed to submit a proposal to the IMO to raise the classification of (ALDFG) in MARPOL.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** the progress made in waste management and pollution control, a productive collaboration between SPREP, Member Countries and other partners;
* **noted** that the success of such activities has been based on strong commitment from participating countries; and
* **committed** as SPREP Member countries to participate and act fully in waste management and pollution control interventions to stop marine pollution at its source.

**Agenda Item 12.3.3: Sustainable Regional Capacity Building for Improved Decision Making**

1. The Secretariat informed the Meeting of the planned implementation of sustainable mechanisms for strengthened institutional and human capacity, and sought the commitment of Members to participate and actively engage in the proposed capacity building initiatives and the collection and submission of data on waste, chemicals and pollutants.
2. Kiribati requested that while the Secretariat is working at the regional level on monitoring waste, t a similar system be established at the national level, and in recognising the efforts made by the Secretariat for training on waste management, called for this training to be sustained over time and be institutionalised.
3. United States requested that the recommendations three and four be amended from commit to engage. After some discussion this was agreed to.
4. The Meeting:

* **noted** the development of sustainable capacity building activities and a Regional Waste Monitoring System;
* **noted** that the success of such activities requires strong commitment from participating countries;
* **agreed to engage~~d~~** as SPREP Member countries to participate fully in the capacity building initiatives; and
* **agreed to engage~~d~~** as SPREP Member countries to designate country counterparts who will be charged with the task of regularly collecting data and submitting them to SPREP for inclusion in a database as appropriate.

**Agenda Item 12.4: Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division Overview 2018/19**

1. The Secretariat provided an overview of the outcomes of the Pacific Environment Forum (PEF) and the major 2018/19 work programme activities for the division to contribute to the Environmental Monitoring and Governance and related Strategic Priorities of the SPREP Strategic Plan.
2. The Meeting recognised the importance of data, stressing that good policies are based on good and accurate data linked to the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level, and noted the value of tools such as GIS to support this effort.
3. The Meeting:

* **Noted** the outcomes of the 2017 Pacific Environment Forum
* **Noted** the 2018 – 19 Work Programme for the SPREP Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division.

**Agenda Item 12.4.1: Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development in the Pacific Region**

1. The Secretariat presented the Members with a draft copy of the Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development in the Pacific Region (EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development)
2. The Secretariat advised that this EIA is aligned with objective 4.1 of the Secretariats new Strategic Plan and was developed in consultation with a number of Member countries and the South Pacific Trade Organisation (SPTO) who will both actively promote the document for use by Government, developers. The Secretariat further advised that this is one of a number of EIA guidelines that are being developed on subjects including landfill guidelines and sand mining.
3. The Chair acknowledged the important work by the Secretariat in producing such a relevant EIA document but further noted that much more work needs to be done in developing and applying EIA guidelines to help prevent inappropriate development.
4. The Meeting acknowledged the importance of tourism to many Members’ national accounts and commended the EIA guideline as an important mechanism to help minimise the impacts of tourism development, with New Caledonia appreciating the translation of the EIA guideline into French, and requesting to have national EIA workshops on use of the guidelines.
5. The Meeting:

* **endorsed** the publication of the EIA Guidelines for Coastal Tourism Development.

**Agenda Item 12.4.2: Programme to support strengthening environmental monitoring and collection of environmental data in the Pacific for national reporting processes and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).**

1. The Secretariat presented achievements made under the ACPMEA2 Programme and sought endorsement of the ACPMEA Phase III priorities and scope. The Secretariat highlighted the Capacity Building Programme related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements in African Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACPMEA) has been ongoing since 2009, acknowledging the funding support by the European Commission, through the ACP Secretariat, and the UN Environment. The Secretariat reported the significant results have been successfully achieved to raise the environmental agenda and the effective implementation of MEAs in SPREP Member countries.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** achievements under the ACPMEA2 Programme; and
* **endorsed** the ACPMEA III broad priorities and scope.

**Agenda Item 12.5: Consideration and Approval of Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2018 - 19**

1. The Secretariat presented its proposed annual Work Programme and Budget for 2018 – 2019.
2. The Director General further added that the balanced budget was a direct response to the request of members, also noting the increase in partner confidence was reflected in balanced budget and projected increases. The Director General noted the successful passing of the EU 7 pillar assessment helped contribute to the increased donor confidence.
3. Australia commended the secretariat on the comprehensive budget which was well received and requested the Secretariat, in light of the potential additional core funding from an increase in membership contributions, to consider its strategy in the allocation of these additional funds. Australia suggested to put as part of priority the positions currently remaining unfunded in the organisational structure.
4. The Meeting:

* **considered** and **approved** the proposed Work Programme and Budget for **USD$28,998,044** for 2018and the provisional Work Programme and Budget of **US$29,721,842** for 2019**.**

**Agenda Item 13: Items Proposed by Members**

**Agenda Item 13.1: The need for a Pacific wide ban on Asbestos**

1. Cook Islands presented a paper on the need for a Pacific wide ban on asbestos, seeking endorsement and commitment from Members to develop and implement a Pacific wide ban on the importation, re-sale and re-use of products containing asbestos.
2. In 2013 - 14 the PacWaste project conducted the first Pacific Regional Asbestos Baseline Survey across 26 islands in 13 Pacific island countries. The results from the Regional Asbestos Baseline Survey concluded that over USD 150 million would be needed to remove and replace all the asbestos identified in the locations surveyed, and that new asbestos materials are now being imported into the Pacific region, primarily from Asia.
3. Tonga, France, New Zealand, Australia, Tuvalu, Samoa, French Polynesia and Republic of the Marshall Islands fully supported the proposal. United States and America Samoa noted that they share the concerns with other Members but are unable to support the recommendation a Pacific-wide ban as the use of asbestos does remain legal in their countries for certain purposes. United Kingdom noted that they have not received guidance on this recommendation but are supportive in principle.
4. France, New Zealand, Australia, and French Polynesia noted that they have banned asbestos in their countries. New Zealand further offered to share their experiences and work with the Secretariat in drafting a ban.
5. Tuvalu noted the importance of data collected during the PacWaste baseline study, further requesting the Secretariat to expand PacWaste & PacWaste+ to include all 8 outer islands of Tuvalu in the removal and disposal of asbestos.
6. The Meeting:

* **noted** the information provided in this paper;
* **noted** letters of support in favour of a Pacific wide asbestos ban provided by the Tongan and Australian Government representatives;
* **noted** the work conducted by the EU-funded PacWaste project that has contributed significant resources to asbestos remediation, monitoring and awareness across 13 Pacific island countries;
* **noted** the threat posed by new asbestos to Pacific island communities;
* **endorsed** initiatives by countries to ban or restrict the importation, re-use and re-sale of products and wastes containing asbestos with the exception of importation for the purpose of safe disposal; and
* **directed** the Secretariat to work with countries and territories to ban or restrict the importation, re-use and re-sale of products and wastes containing asbestos; to be resourced through Cleaner Pacific 2025 and PacWaste+.

**Agenda Item 13.2: Call for Action for SPREP Members on plastic microbeads**

1. France presented a paper seeking the endorsement of the Meeting for a Call for Action for SPREP Members on plastic microbeads.
2. Micro plastics, such as microbeads are contributing to the fragments of plastics and fibres contaminating our seas, turning them into an unhealthy plastic soup. When used as directed, microbeads are washed down drains and into waste water systems where they are known to pass through these treatment facilities and consequently flushed out to sea.
3. Micro plastics in the marine environment are known to bio-accumulate. New scientific research is continuing to find more and more examples of plastic inside all kinds of sea life. A recent study showed that 90 per cent of birds have plastic in their stomachs too. Microbeads end up in humans through toothpaste and through eating seafood that has ingested micro plastics and the toxins that come with them.
4. Samoa commended France for the initiative, noting that the issue was also discussed by Leaders, outlining the importance of this initiative for this to be driven through the Secretariat to allow for guidance with development of domestic policies. New Caledonia fully supported the Call for Action.
5. United States shares the concerns over micro beads noting it has passed legislation at the national level to address this. United States proposed modifications to the Call for Action as microbeads are still used in some medical products for which there are currently few alternatives. The modifications were submitted for consideration.
6. United Kingdom, French Polynesia, America Samoa, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands endorsed the modification proposed by United States. French Polynesia further noted it does not have industries that use microbeads. New Zealand noted that a national ban has been announced on the manufacture of microbeads.
7. United States further elaborated on their comments, and requested that the Meeting consider the amendments to the Call for Action: *‘We resolve to take measures to reduce the use of plastic micro beads in our countries’* to replace *‘We commit to take measures to ban the use of plastic microbeads in our countries’* as well as replace *‘We also commit to advocate with other States for such bans’* with *‘We also resolve to advocate with other States for such measures’*.
8. Samoa sought clarification on the phrase “other States”. The Chair suggested removing the phrase so that the amendment would read: *“We also resolve to advocate for such measures’*
9. The Call for Action with amendments as proposed by United States and Fiji was agreed to by the Meeting.
10. The Meeting:

* **endorsed** the Call for Action from SPREP Members on plastic microbeads, as amended.

**Agenda Item 14: Regional Cooperation**

**Agenda Item 14.1: Framework for Pacific Regionalism – Governance and Financing update**

1. The Secretariat presented an update on the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.
2. Australia proposed revising the second recommendation to reflect the outcomes from the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting held 4th-8th September 2017, in particular to ‘confirm its understanding of the Leaders’ decisions on the Framework for Pacific Regionalisation, and express its support for their effective implementation’.
3. New Caledonia advised that New Caledonia and French Polynesia are now full Members of the Pacific Island Forum and the importance of SPREP Members, as well as non-Members, to be fully aware of the decisions made at the Leaders Meeting.
4. Cook Islands sought clarification on the process undertaken by the Secretariat in addressing the challenges of implementing and involving Members in the decisions made by the leaders. In response the Secretariat advised it is firmly committed to the CROP effort to align SPREP’s work and agenda with the Leaders’ decisions and priorities, and will continue to engage the Members in this process. The Leaders’ decisions also are implemented through the work plans of the Secretariat.
5. The Meeting:

* **noted** the process followed in developing recommendations to Leaders on the Framework for Pacific Regionalism; and
* **confirmed** its understanding of the leaders decisions on the Framework for pacific Regionalism and express its support for their effective implementation.

**Agenda Item 14.2: Review of CROP Charter**

1. The Meeting was updated on the Review of the Draft CROP Charter and possible implications for SPREP. The Secretariat noted that the CROP Charter was not endorsed by the Leaders Forum Meeting in September 2017.
2. Cook Islands advised that at the Leaders Forum Meeting, the issue was not put to Leaders since there were some agencies that had not yet reviewed the CROP Charter, noting that at the time the Secretariat had not yet agreed to the Charter.
3. The Meeting:

* **endorsed** the revised CROP Charter;
* **confirmed** the inclusion of SPREP as a current member of CROP;
* **approved** cross-CROP agency meetings of governing council Chairs, to strengthen whole-of-CROP governance, and appropriate meeting frequency; and
* **directed** the Secretariatto conferwith the other CROP (chairs) on what level of resources are required to be deployed towards the implementation of the Leaders priorities.

**Agenda Item 14.3: CROP Executives Meeting Report**

1. The Meeting was updated on the outcomes of CROP CEO Meetings in 2017, in particular the areas of Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP), Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR), CROP Resourcing, CROP Charter, EDF-11, UNOC, COP23, preparations for the 48th PIF and its Blue Pacific theme, SIS Aviation priority, RMI legacy issues and CROP working groups.
2. The Meeting:

* **noted** the update by the SPREP Director General on CROP CEOs Meetings in 2017

**Agenda Item 15: Statements by Observers**

1. The 28SM was attended by a range of observers which included CROP agencies, NGOs and other conservation and environment groups. Observers made statements outlining their areas of work and potential partnerships with Members and the Secretariat. The list of observers and the observer statements are attached as Annex VI.

**Agenda Item 16: Other Business**

1. New Zealand presented each SPREP Member with the book – “*New Zealand’s Great White Sharks”* written by Award winning natural history writer and broadcaster Alison Balance. The book, dedicated to Michael Manning, is also gifted to schools in New Zealand and the South Pacific. In response the Secretariat and Members expressed appreciation to New Zealand for the book.
2. The Secretariat noted the Executive Board Meeting in September 2018, further information will be sent out to Members. It was also noted the next official SPREP Meeting, including the Ministerial Meeting, will be in 2019. The exact timing is to be confirmed.

**Agenda Item 17: Adoption of Report of the Twenty-Eighth SPREP Meeting**

1. The Meeting:

* **adopted** the recommendations and decisions from the outcomes report of the Twenty-eighth SPREP Meeting.