

# **REVIEW OF THE ACTION STRATEGY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND REGION 2003-2007**

**Reports of the Roundtable  
Prepared for the  
8<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference on Protected  
Areas and Nature Conservation**

## **REPORT 1: PROGRESS ACHIEVED TOWARDS THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTION STRATEGY DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS**



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## PREFACE

This report is one of two companion volumes produced by the Roundtable for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands for the 8<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas to be held in Papua New Guinea in October 2007. It reviews the progress that has been achieved with the implementation of the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Island Region 2003-2007 over the past five years. The other volume, entitled "*Report 2: Recommendations for Strengthening the Action Strategy and Enhancing its Implementation*", comprises the Roundtable's recommendations to the Conference on ways of strengthening the Action Strategy and enhancing the chances of its successful implementation.

While each of the two reports can stand on its own, they are closely related and this close relationship is reflected in the Executive Summary, which is common to both reports.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

The Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region for 2003-2007, arose out of the 7<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas which was held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, in July 2002. It was then endorsed by the member country representatives of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) at the September 2003 SPREP Meeting and it was meant to represent a consensus on the priority concerns for conservation and ways in which these can be addressed.

At the same Conference, the delegates officially resolved to confirm the Pacific Island Roundtable for Nature Conservation *“as a mechanism for promoting, facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Action Strategy.”* The delegates also confirmed that the Roundtable’s mandate for the next five years was to *“increase effective conservation action in the Pacific Islands”*. And the Roundtable was required to report to the 8<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas on the implementation of the Action Strategy (see Annex 1).

This is the Roundtable’s report to the Conference, contained in two volumes. The first volume is a report on progress towards the Action Strategy; the second volume comprises recommendations from the Roundtable to the Conference on strengthening the Action Strategy and enhancing the effectiveness of its implementation.

### Progress towards the Action Strategy

The Strategy had 18 Objectives and progress has been somewhat varied. The assessment carried out by the Roundtable reflects the collective opinion of the members of Working Groups comprising representatives of PICTs, NGOs, donors and other experts. The Working Groups had been assigned specific Objectives and Targets to monitor and report on. All 18 Objectives except Objective 1.6 (climate change) were covered by a Working Group.

This is the first time that targets have been set in the Action Strategy in the expectation that they would apply right across the region. The Roundtable concludes that they did not work as well as expected. The implementation was likely hampered by the volume of targets identified and the very ambitious time line. In addition, some targets were not clearly formulated which left them open to interpretation. The Roundtable also found that it was difficult to apply each specific target equally to all PICTs.

The Objectives were also too numerous and some were overlapping. Like the Targets, their specificity made them difficult to apply equally to the variety of circumstances prevailing in the PICTs. This has influenced the extent of satisfactory progress possible and is reflected in the gradings determined by the Roundtable.

In addition, the system available for reporting progress was not strong or comprehensive enough and there is a need for contacts at the PICTs level. Furthermore, the information base may not be entirely reliable.

Of the 17 Objectives assessed, the Roundtable Working Groups reported that progress has been satisfactory or highly satisfactory for only three Objectives. Progress with eight Objectives was found to be marginally satisfactory and six were considered unsatisfactory.

The Roundtable concludes that the economic and social Goals have diluted the effort of PICTs towards the environment Goal and that it may be more effective for the Action Strategy to focus on the environment Goal in the future while acknowledging parallel initiatives in the region which focus more specifically on the economy and society.

Based on its assessment of progress towards the Objectives, the Roundtable concludes that progress towards the three 30-year Goals of the Action Strategy has been uneven and ranges from satisfactory to unsatisfactory.

Progress towards the Environment Goal, *The biodiversity and natural environment of the Pacific region are conserved*, has been satisfactory. This is not surprising, since it is based on the continuation, improvement and expansion of “core” conservation work.

Progress towards the Economy Goal, *Nature conservation and sustainable resource use are integral parts of all island economies* is probably only marginally satisfactory overall. Engaging the economic sector is a new challenge for the conservation community, and this suggests that it will require more investment and new skills in order to be successful.

Progress towards the Society Goal, *Pacific peoples, their governments, and institutions are leading activities for the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources in the Pacific region*, is deemed to have been unsatisfactory. This is surprising because in the Pacific context, nature conservation is inextricably linked with communities and society in general, and the Roundtable suspects that progress has indeed taken place but may not have fitted the descriptors established by the Objectives and Targets of the Action Strategy.

### **Strengthening the Action Strategy**

A better sense of ownership and commitment are required among those that sign up for the Strategy and this would be helped if the Strategy had a clearer focus by reducing the number of hierarchical layers and Objectives. It needs to be formulated based on specific country/territory priorities but focused on the shared priorities where regional collaboration can make a difference. A stronger Action Strategy will be relevant to each PICT and owned by them, will be endorsed by all PICTs, donors, and NGOs and each must indicate how they expect to use it so it can remain alive after the conference.

The Roundtable recommends that the Action Strategy should reflect the goals and expectations of PICTs and what countries are actually doing. Governments goals should be reflected in the strategy such that this becomes their regional Strategy and the proposed links with the NBSAPs should help bring this about. In addition, the Roundtable can assure the Conference that it will strive to raise awareness of the Action Strategy, improve communication between the Roundtable and the country level, and provide assistance to Governments in implementing their priority actions (e.g. help with identifying technical assistance, funding sources, etc).

The Roundtable further recommends that donors use the Action Strategy to guide and support them when developing projects in the Pacific Region. New initiatives in the region must be seriously integrated with the Action Strategy.

Both the Vision and the Mission of the Strategy focus well on the protection and conservation of the natural heritage and the cultural heritage of the Pacific, and for the ultimate aim of *benefit of the people* and the Roundtable recommends that the Vision and Mission of the Action Strategy remain as they are. On the other hand, the Roundtable recommends that the wording of the Society Goal should be adjusted to link better with the Vision and Mission.

The Targets are too numerous and, like some of the Objectives, they are also too specific to be applicable across the region. The Roundtable feels that the Action Strategy document should do away with the Targets altogether. However, there should be a strong message to Governments, regional organizations, donors, NGOs and other users of the Action Strategy to set their own country-specific Targets through which they will meet the Objectives.

There are currently too many Objectives and some are too specific to be applicable across the entire region. The number of Objectives needs to be reduced, they need to be more generic and less specific so as to apply across the region. While they must be aligned to the Goals, the Objectives need not be linked to any specific Goal.

In selecting Themes to propose for formulating Objectives, the Roundtable was aware of the need to create linkages with the current Strategy and this was considered as a principle for Objective formulation. An effort has therefore been made to ensure that the sentiments, if not the scope, of all the past Objectives, have been carried forward in the new proposals. Some of these linkages are at the Theme level and have been reflected in one of the new Objectives. Some have been adopted as overarching principles for implementation. Others are among the support that will be available for the implementation of each new Objective.

Another formulation principle was the need to reflect the priority themes of NBSAPs and the Island Biodiversity PoW. The Roundtable has therefore reviewed the ten National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) which were available at the time of writing, as well as the New Caledonia Biodiversity Conservation Plan, and the Island Biodiversity Programme of Work of the CBD, as well as the Millennium Development Goals and the Pacific Plan. The Roundtable found 12 common themes, objectives or other targets that could be relevant to the Action Strategy.

In considering which of the 12 themes were to be developed as proposed Objectives, the Roundtable recalled the other two principles it had adopted namely, the need to give prominence to the Environment Goal and the need to keep the number of Objectives as small as possible. With this in mind, the Roundtable proposes the following three Objectives for consideration as potential new Objectives for the Action Strategy:

Objective 1: Identify, safeguard and conserve priority sites, habitats and ecosystems

Objective 2: Safeguard and restore indigenous species of ecological or cultural significance, especially those at risk

Objective 3: Manage priority invasive species, prevent new invasions, and regulate genetically modified organisms

### **Implementing the Action Strategy**

All PICTs, participating NGOs, donor agencies, regional organizations and others with an interest in nature conservation in the Pacific, who have signed or endorsed the Action Strategy will set up Targets, relevant to their circumstances, arising from the Objectives of the Strategy. The Targets, with milestones for the next five years for each relevant Objective, should also cover CBD obligations especially the Island Biodiversity PoW.

Governments and communities must take the initiative to implement the Action Strategy, albeit aided by NGOs, regional organizations and donors.

Priority-setting, coordination and monitoring within a PICT, an NGO or a regional organization, is best entrusted to a Working Group headed by a Focal Point for the Strategy. The in-country Working Group for the implementation of the Action Strategy should ideally comprise the same membership as the NBSAP Steering Group, namely representatives of agencies whose activities benefit from, or have an impact on, the themes covered by the Action Strategy Objectives. These could include environment, fisheries, forests, agriculture and quarantine, water, tourism, economic development, etc. It would be effective to also invite participation from community representatives, relevant NGOs, and the private sector.

The Roundtable will establish a Working Group for each Objective to track and report on progress relying on reports from the country level. The Roundtable WGs will receive regular annual reports

from the Focal Points, augment the information received by their own assessments and report annually to the Roundtable Management Group. The Management Group will arrange for the WG reports to be collated and distributed to all PICTs, other signatories of the Action Strategy and Roundtable members as an annual assessment of overall progress towards the Action Strategy Objectives.

Through its partnership with the Pacific Biodiversity Information Forum (PBIF), the Roundtable will also produce other useful products illustrating the nature conservation situation in the Pacific region. These will include a web-based and up-to-date database of conservation projects and other initiatives in the region together with their status; the database on protected/conservation areas in the region; and, the data and information management functions of the Roundtable will also be able to serve as a means of communicating experiences and lessons learnt across the region.

In their reports on progress towards the Action Strategy Objectives, PICTs will be encouraged to recognize barriers that may have hindered progress and propose solutions. The solutions may identify resources required in addition to what the government can mobilize, and request the Roundtable members to assist with the identification of potential funding sources, expertise, and other resources. In performing this “clearing house” function, the Roundtable will capitalize on the comparative advantage it possesses through its span of membership.

Funding sources for the work under each Objective are varied and range from the allocation of government funds, to self-funding mechanisms for goods and services generated, to traditional sources of funding support, to more innovative sources of funding such as the private sector.

The Roundtable recommends that the Conference should actively seek endorsement of the Action Strategy from PICTs, donors, NGOs, foundations, and regional intergovernmental organizations. Donors, regional organizations and others should recognize the benefits that accrue from the comprehensive context created by the Action Strategy and should align their programmes to the Action Strategy. Statements of commitment along these lines will provide a clear signal to PICTs that support will be available for work under the Action Strategy, and will go a long way towards ensuring the viability of the Strategy. The Action Strategy then, would serve as the venue for bringing together all plans, programmes and activities for conservation under one cohesive regional framework.

# 1 BACKGROUND

## 1.1 The Roundtable and the Action Strategy

The Roundtable for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Island Region is a growing coalition of conservation organizations and donor agencies created to increase effective conservation action in the Pacific Island Region. It was formed in 1997 at the request of Pacific Island countries and territories to serve as a forum whereby organizations working on nature conservation in the Pacific could improve their collaboration and coordination and increase effective conservation action. In particular, the Roundtable serves as the coordination mechanism for the implementation of the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Island Region.

The Roundtable achieves most of its work through Working Groups. Membership is voluntary and provides participants with an excellent opportunity to identify gaps and develop collaborative activities to monitor the Action Strategy objectives that are assigned to each Working Group.

The Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region for 2003-2007, arose out of the 7<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas which was held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, in July 2002. It was then endorsed by the 25 member country representatives of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) at the September 2003 SPREP Meeting and it is meant to represent a consensus on the priority concerns for conservation and ways in which these can be addressed.

At the same Conference, the delegates officially resolved to confirm the Pacific Island Roundtable for Nature Conservation “as a mechanism for promoting, facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Action Strategy.” The delegates also confirmed that the Roundtable’s mandate for the next five years was to “increase effective conservation action in the Pacific Islands”. And the Roundtable was required to report to the 8<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas on the implementation of the Action Strategy (see Annex 1).

This is the first of two reports by the Roundtable to the Conference.

## 1.2 Scope

The overall scope of work comprised a review of current monitoring and evaluation systems; a review of the Objectives and Targets of the Action Strategy and an evaluation of the corresponding achievements; proposals for adjustments to the Objectives, Targets and Indicators of the Strategy; and, the development of a sustainable monitoring and evaluation process/mechanism for long term monitoring of progress with the Strategy. The results of this work are carried in two reports. This report, which focuses on progress, starts with a brief review of the background to the Action Strategy and this is followed by an assessment of progress over the past five years.

## 1.3 Methodology

The approach and methodology applied to this task have been inclusive and participatory, and electronic means of communication as well as face-to-face meetings have been employed. The electronic distribution of documents failed to result in the expected level of response. However, face-to-face meetings during country visits and Roundtable meetings made up for this deficiency.

The work commenced with desk reviews of various documents including website research. Country visits were undertaken to Samoa, Fiji, New Caledonia, Hawaii, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Meetings were also held in New Zealand. An emailed Questionnaire was sent out to over 200 recipients. The results of reviews and discussions and the questionnaire responses were used as the basis for

various reports which were distributed widely with an invitation for further comments and reactions. Specific individuals such as key members of the Roundtable and the Chairs of Working Groups were approached specifically and invited to respond or react to questions or issues raised for discussion.

The final draft of this report was circulated widely throughout the region with an invitation for comments and these were taken into account fully when the final report was produced by the drafting group set up by the Roundtable.

### 1.4 The structure and scope of the current Action Strategy

The Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands Region is reviewed every five years at the Pacific Regional Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. The current Strategy for 2003-2007 arose out of the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference in 2002. The Strategy, which is considered as a Type II Partnership Initiative for mainstreaming conservation under the World Summit on Sustainable Development, was endorsed by all member country representatives of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme at the 2003 SPREP Meeting. It represents a consensus of the priority concerns for conservation across the region and ways in which these can be addressed.

The **Vision** set by the Action Strategy for the Pacific is:

Our people proudly honour our natural heritage and cultural identity,  
The waters of our streams, lagoons and ocean are bountiful and crystal clear,  
Our mountains are wild, our forests pristine and our beaches unspoiled,  
Our societies are vibrant and diverse,  
We have equitable relationships with our global partners and our economies thrive,  
Our cultures and traditions are widely appreciated, and  
The products of our creativity and labour are especially prized.  
Islands of Life ... Pure Pacific

The **Mission** is:

To protect and conserve the rich natural and cultural heritage of the Pacific Islands forever for the benefit of the people of the Pacific and the world

Both the Vision and the Mission focus well on the protection and conservation of the natural heritage and the cultural heritage of the Pacific, with the ultimate aim of *benefit of the people*.

The Strategy has three 30-year **Goals** based on the three accepted pillars for sustainable development. These are :

- The **Environment** goal -  
The biodiversity and natural environment of the Pacific region are conserved
- The **Economy** goal -  
Nature conservation and sustainable resource use are integral parts of all island economies
- The **Society** goal -  
Pacific peoples, their governments, and institutions are leading activities for the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources in the Pacific region

The Goals expand somewhat on the scope established by the Vision and Mission by bringing in economic considerations as well as sustainable development. On the other hand, the protection and conservation of cultural heritage, which is equal to natural heritage in the Mission, is not mentioned in the Goals and benefits for the people are implied rather than explicit as in the Mission.

The three Goals give rise to 18 **Objectives** as follows:

#### Environment Objectives

- 1.1 Establish and strengthen conservation networks and partnerships
- 1.2 Increase the number of areas under effective conservation management

- 1.3 Bring each PICT's priority invasive species under effective control, and prevent new introductions of marine and terrestrial alien, invasive species and regulate genetically modified organisms
- 1.4 Safeguard and restore threatened species of ecological and cultural significance
- 1.5 Safeguard and restore threatened areas of ecological and cultural significance
- 1.6 Address the impacts of climate change on the natural environment and biodiversity
- 1.7 Improve knowledge and understanding of the state of the Pacific's natural environment and biodiversity

### **Economy Objectives**

- 2.1 Develop multi sector partnerships for sustainable resource use and management
- 2.2 Develop and enforce integrated environmental, economic and social planning, policy and legal frameworks
- 2.3 Foster economic instruments that create incentives for conservation and remove those with negative impacts
- 2.4 Strengthen resource and environmental valuation for effective decision making
- 2.5 Engage business in environmentally sound practices and support for conservation
- 2.6 Create sustainable financial mechanisms
- 2.7 Promote sustainable livelihoods to eradicate poverty

### **Society Objectives**

- 3.1 Empower local people, communities and institutions to effectively participate in decision making and action
- 3.2 Recognize and integrate customary structures and processes in natural resource and environmental governance systems
- 3.3 Safeguard and strengthen traditional knowledge and practices
- 3.4 Raise awareness and promote conservation values

The Objectives broaden further the scope of the Strategy, beyond the Vision and Mission and create a series of specific outputs.

Each objective is further elaborated by a cluster of 5-year **Targets** making a total of 77 targets in all.

## 2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION STRATEGY OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS

This assessment is based on the deliberations and reports of Roundtable Working Groups who had been assigned specific Objectives and Targets to monitor and report on. All 18 Objectives except Obj.1.6 (climate change) were covered by a Working Group. The discussion below summarizes the responses received from Working Groups. Each discussion concludes with an assessment of progress graded as follows :

Highly Satisfactory	Objective achieved as targeted
Satisfactory	Objective achieved in many PICTs, but short of targets
Marginally Satisfactory	Objective achieved in a few PICTs but with good potential to achieve targets in future
Unsatisfactory	Very little or no progress with Objective

This assessment reflects the collective opinion of the members of the relevant Working Group comprising representatives of PICTs, NGOs, donors and other experts. It also should be noted that many targets were ambitious for a 5-year timeframe and current programmes and activities will improve progress over the next 5 years. Finally, it must be acknowledged that the assessment is based on whether an activity has been completed or not, *i.e.* whether the output has been achieved. It has not been possible to determine outcomes or sustainability.

### 2.1 Obj. 1.1 Establish and strengthen conservation networks and partnerships

The Roundtable Working Group responsible for this objective reported that good progress has been made overall towards establishing conservation networks and partnerships in the Pacific and each of the three Targets have been met.

Five nationwide networks and one regional network of conservation areas were targeted, and the Working Group reported that national networks were established or were in development in eight countries (Fiji, PNG, Solomon Islands, Palau, Tuvalu, Samoa, FSM and Vanuatu). Many of these are part of the successful Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) regional network. Overall, ten regional networks bring people together to work on shared conservation area issues (*e.g.* LMMA, Coral Reef Initiative in the South Pacific, Micronesians in Island Conservation, RAMSAR, etc).

While satisfied that the use of conservation area networks to support larger scale conservation efforts is well-underway in the region, the Working Group felt that most of these are networks of people, organizations and/or governments working on conservation areas. The conservation areas themselves do not form networks and are not yet designed for “biological connectivity”, which can be very important to long-term resilience to climate change and other widespread threats.

Also targeted was the expansion of three national networks to include “mainstreaming” partnerships that address environmental, economic and social interests. The Working Group found 13 cases where this has happened at the national level and three on a multi-country level. However, while the partnerships appeared in place, the Working Group was not sure that these three key interests had been truly integrated and fully achieved in any of them. The Pacific still needs real working examples of “mainstreaming” to guide future work.

The third target under this Objective was to establish at least 40 national and 20 regional sectoral and multi-sectoral partnerships to fund and implement conservation activities. The Working Group felt the numerical targets seemed arbitrary, but they were able to identify about 20 such partnerships at the national level and 15 regional ones. They were confident that there are more in place across the region, but the effectiveness and impact of these partnerships are not known.

The Working Group also identified a further nine Monitoring and Information Networks, four National Organizational Networks and three Learning Networks in the Pacific which had not been included in any of the specific Targets.

Most of the conservation networks and partnerships identified by the WG were established in the last five years, and future work should focus on increased effectiveness and conservation impact of all these networks.

**Conclusion:** implementation of Objective 1.1 has been highly satisfactory in that the targets have been met and exceeded. However, more work needs to be done on designing conservation area networks for biological connectivity.

## **2.2 Obj. 1.2 Increase the number of areas under effective conservation management**

The target under this Objective was to place at least 5% of coastal and terrestrial areas under effective community based conservation management in all Pacific Island Countries and Territories. Two Roundtable Working Groups have been addressing this Objective and the conclusion is that there are many areas throughout the region which are under some form of conservation management. One Group listed about 30 community based conservation areas that they believe are effectively managed, but could not estimate the percentage fraction that this represented.

One of the Working Groups noted that there is no shared definition for “effective conservation management” across the Pacific region. In order to really track this target, they recommended that the Conference (or the RT) should develop a range of simple “adaptive management” tools and identify and agree on minimum thresholds that define “effective management” for the Pacific. This could include the following three criteria:

- 1) periodic/regular self-assessment by management team
- 2) progress on identified priority areas for improvement
- 3) achieved some minimum level of capacity/performance

The Working Group also determined that groups were using various tools in the field to assess effective management, including the monitoring protocols developed LMMA, Micronesians in Island Conservation and others.

**Conclusion:** Implementation of Objective 1.2 has advanced significantly over the last five years, but progress against the target could not be assessed accurately although it is thought to be marginally satisfactory. There is a need to agree on a shared definition of “effective conservation management”.

## **2.3 Obj. 1.3 Bring each PICT’s priority invasive species under effective control, and prevent new introductions of marine and terrestrial alien, invasive species and regulate genetically modified organisms**

The Roundtable Working Group responsible for this Objective assessed progress towards each of the seven targets and found that for only one Target (Implement pilot eradication and control pilot programmes for selected priority species in at least five PICTs) was progress satisfactory. Of the remaining six Targets, two were assessed as unsatisfactory and four were only marginally satisfactory.

More specifically, pilot eradication and control pilot programmes were noted in ten countries (five were targeted) and involved weeds and other invasive plants, ants and other insects, pathogens, problem birds, freshwater fish and rats.

The Working Group found that the targeted improvements in 70% of PICTs, in port quarantine regulations and practices took place only in Palau and New Zealand although SPREP and other programmes assisted with training and capacity building in areas that related to this target. The Group listed 14 known attempts of national awareness programmes on existing invasive species and threats some of which were more active than others. On the other hand, the national awareness programmes on genetically modified organisms, which had been targeted in all PICTs, were only found to have taken place in three countries as well as through a UNEP/GEF initiative which is still ongoing and which covers 14 PICTs.

The development and implementation of marine and terrestrial invasive species management plans had been targeted in at least ten PICTs and the Working Group found that nine plans or strategies had been developed for six PICTs (including Hawaii and New Zealand) and a set of emergency response plans had been prepared by SPREP and PICTs.

The Working Group determined that the various databases and lists that had been developed by various agencies around the region did not constitute a regional mechanism for coordinating the monitoring of invasive species that had been targeted under this Objective and that for this target to be fulfilled a specific project is required.

Under this Objective, national biosafety frameworks were expected to be established in at least ten PICTs. The Working Group also noted the UNEP/GEF initiative mentioned above as well as some legislative frameworks in some countries.

**Conclusion:** The Working Group noted that the targets had been very ambitious in the first place thus making any assessment of progress in invasive alien species conservative. Therefore, while a great deal of excellent work on invasive species has occurred in the region, overall progress for Objective 1.3 has been assessed as marginally satisfactory.

## **2.4 Obj. 1.4 Safeguard and restore threatened species of ecological and cultural significance**

Targets under this Objective aimed to enact and implement legislation to protect and restore rare, threatened or endangered marine and terrestrial species in all PICTs. The Working Group has reported that there is legislation protecting turtles in many PICTs and there is a regional SPC programme to develop turtle by-catch mitigation. Mangrove protection and replanting is widespread, and trochus, giant clam and green snail protection programmes exist in many areas. In addition, Marine Protected Areas have been established throughout the Pacific in an effort to restore depleted species and CRISP has initiated a programme to pilot the restocking of grown-out post-larval coral reef species in MPAs.

Unfortunately, the effectiveness and current status of most MPAs is not certain, and surveillance and enforcement of legislation is often very weak, making the achievement of the objectives very difficult. As with much of this work, the level of enforcement is crucial before achievement can be claimed – indicators such as convictions, and levels of surveillance actually carried out as part of the laws, is necessary as legislation/national policy action is very different to the enforcement issue which is generally extremely poor in most PICTs.

Nine PICTs have established whale sanctuaries, mostly throughout their EEZs, totalling millions of square kilometres and this is just short of the target of 20 million square kilometres. In addition, all PICTs except Palau, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Nauru have supported the establishment of a Pacific-wide whale sanctuary.

Humphead wrasse (*Chreilinus undulates*) is protected by law in Palau, Fiji and New Caledonia which also has legal measures to protect humphead parrot fish (*Bobolmetopon muricatum*) and the blue-spotted grouper (*Epinephelus cyanopodus*). There is a ban on spearfishing (using SCUBA

gear) for parrotfishes in American Samoa and French Polynesia has placed a total ban on the harvest of all sharks (except mako sharks) and there are steps in New Caledonia to legislate against shark fisheries. Some reef spawning aggregations are protected in Palau (mixed grouper species), Fed States of Micronesia and New Caledonia (blue spot grouper). Tonga has placed a moratorium on the exploitation of *bêche-de mer* and the World Fish Centre has initiated a restoration project for some commercial species in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

On land, legislation provides protection for the dry-forest of New Caledonia and there is a restoration programme for the kakerori bird in Cook Islands. Fiji has created a sanctuary for the crested iguana and initiated *ex situ* breeding programmes. Samoa has initiated species recovery plans for threatened birds including the tooth-billed pigeon (*Manumea*) and the forest honey-eater (*Maomao*).

The Working Group also found that regionally significant threats to species and associated habitats have been identified and documented. This includes documentation of the status and effects of fishing on coral reef spawning aggregations in many Pacific Islands (Fiji, Palau, Fed States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands), as well as on exploitation of reef fish aggregations in Fiji, Palau, Fed States of Micronesia, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

Reports have been produced on the status of sharks and shark fisheries in the Pacific, on the threats facing coconut crabs, on the status of spearfishing including night-scuba spearfishing, and on the status of coral reefs and associated species throughout the Pacific. The Working Group also noted that in the many NBSAPs that have been developed and adopted in the region, the status of species and their habitats have been addressed extensively.

Unfortunately, the Working Group did not identify any particular attempts to safeguard and restore threatened species of cultural significance and the final target - to publish a Red Data list of rare, threatened and endangered species and habitats in the region, has not been met. However, SPREP, IUCN and CI are currently developing a project that will address this issue.

**Conclusion:** Given the Working Group report, progress towards this Objective is considered to have been marginally satisfactory which means it has been achieved in a few PICTs but with good potential if follow up enforcement and commitment to the objectives of the legislation/policy is maintained.

## **2.5 Obj. 1.5 Safeguard and restore threatened areas of ecological and cultural significance**

The Working Group responsible for this Objective has reported little progress. Some work has taken place to identify and map ecosystems and habitats that are threatened and/or culturally significant in New Caledonia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, but this is far short of the coverage “in at least 10 PICTs” which had been expected.

Likewise, the development and implementation of plans for the restoration of threatened ecosystems of cultural significance has not been significant. Some work is reported in coral reef restoration trials in New Caledonia, Solomon Islands and Fiji, and mangrove restoration in Fiji together with dry forest restoration in New Caledonia, but there is no indication that this has been targeted because of the cultural significance of the particular areas.

The Working Group concluded that it is very hard to define cultural significance when considering ecosystems, except for areas used for traditional harvesting activities, and it suggested that targets should be more specific and the cultural aspect should be more clearly defined.

**Conclusion:** Progress towards this Objective is considered to have been unsatisfactory. Criteria need to be determined in order to identify areas of “cultural significance”.

## **2.6 Obj. 1.6 Address the impacts of climate change on the natural environment and biodiversity**

The Roundtable did not assess progress towards this Objective in view of the fact that climate change is being addressed by the Pacific Islands Climate Change Roundtable.

## **2.7 Obj. 1.7 Improve knowledge and understanding of the state of the Pacific's natural environment and biodiversity**

The first target under this Objective was to develop standardized and practical biological indicators and monitoring methods for all major ecosystems and resources systems including coral reefs, forests and mangroves. The Working Group noted that the Action Strategy has 18 Objectives and 77 Targets making direct measurement of success virtually impossible. Because of this situation, the use of well defined, measurable indicators was considered as a possible surrogate to illustrate the overall status and trends of conservation objectives.

An invitation was released in September 2006 calling on members of the Roundtable to offer suggested indicators for the Action Strategy. From that call and the work of a consultant to the Roundtable, ten possible indicators were identified and defined and a meeting was held in Maui to discuss the indicators and prepare a final list of potential indicators to suggest to the Roundtable. Further action on the final indicator list was put on hold because the Roundtable Management Group has decided to review the Action Strategy and make recommendations on paring down the level of detail provided by the 77 targets and allow more flexibility as to how each Objective is monitored. The Working Group will revisit this task pending the final drafting of the recommendations by the Roundtable Management Group and action taken by participants at the 8<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference for Nature Conservation in October 2007.

A similar situation exists regarding the second target namely to initiate and maintain an on-going monitoring programme targeting the level of use and the health of key natural resource systems and biodiversity values.

The third target was to compile and distribute widely regular state of the environment and biodiversity reports. In this regard, the Working Group noted that state of the environment reporting was quite extensive in the Region in and around 1993. It appears that during this same time, attention shifted from assessments to the development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans to better guide conservation planning and implementation. Hence the number of assessments has declined with time.

A systematic search of the internet found only 17 documents relevant to the state of the environment, two online "State of the Environment Reports" (American Samoa 2002 and Palau 2004) and four online NBSAP reports (Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Niue, and Vanuatu). Further investigation found that the SPREP Information Resource Centre houses several copies of SoE reports (Marshall Islands 1992, Palau, Niue, Tokelau, Western Samoa 1993, Tuvalu 1993, Kiribati 1994, Cook Islands, and Solomon Islands) however only four are available for distribution and none are available online. NBSAP reports for Palau and Cook Islands are available in hard copy.

The fourth Target was to identify research needs in all PICTs to address gaps in knowledge in key areas of biodiversity conservation and the Working Group reports that both the consultant to the Roundtable and the Pacific Biodiversity Information Forum (PBIF) reviewed available NBSAPs and State of the Environment reports in search of themes, objectives, or other targets that are common to most or all PICTs. Each review produced summary lists of priority threats to biodiversity and a list

of information needs to guide future scientific research efforts. In addition, there were two workshops held (Tsukuba, Japan 2003 and Wellington, New Zealand 2004) to identify the needs for information related to conservation in the region. A discussion paper on PICT research needs is being coordinated with the national contacts for natural resources management and will be issued later in the year.

The fifth Target required the documentation and dissemination of lessons learned from the experiences from all major regional and conservation initiatives. According to the Working Group, the Austral Foundation proposed a review and analysis of the Pacific conservation sector to the July 2006 Roundtable meeting. A group of Roundtable participants met to discuss this concept, and concluded that while a regional review would be both valuable and interesting, it was more feasible to conduct an in-depth analysis of a single country in the region. Such a focus would also provide the best chance of positively influencing conservation outcomes. The group proposed Fiji as the study country and the Foundation found widespread support for the review with the expectation that conservation outcomes for Fiji could be improved by such a project. There appear to be two primary themes that would benefit from review and analysis: (1) The overarching national strategic direction for conservation including government leadership, priority-setting from a Fijian perspective, coordination of effort, and effectiveness and accountability for those governing, working in and funding the biodiversity sector in this country, and (2) Best practice models for effective conservation. The proposed completion date for this analysis is April 2008.

The development of a map of the region using the eco-regional approach to show areas of high conservation value was the final Target under this Objective and several NGOs are known to have created maps, however, many are not yet accessible on the web or elsewhere. Conservation International designed a Polynesia-Micronesia hotspot map in 2005, but at the time of writing (March 2007) the map was undergoing modification and was not yet available online. A similar map is under development for the New Caledonia hotspot.

**Conclusion:** Progress towards this Objective has been marginally satisfactory which means it has been achieved to a limited extent. However, the foundation has been laid and given time, there is good potential for it to be fully achieved.

### **2.8 Obj. 2.1 Develop multi-sector partnerships for sustainable resource use and management**

The Working Group entrusted with the responsibility for this Objective was made up of the national NBSAP Coordinators. The Group reported that multi-sector partnerships to promote sustainable use and good governance of natural resources and leverage private enterprise involvement in conservation at the regional level, are being facilitated through regional initiatives such as the Pacific Biodiversity Information Forum (PBIF), the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) for the Polynesia and Micronesia Conservation Hotspot, the Pacific Programme of Cooperative Island Initiatives (PPCII), and the recently established Pacific Invasive Learning Network (PILN). However, the Group could not determine whether the specific target to launch, strengthen or maintain at least one effective multi-sector partnership to promote sustainable use and good governance of a selected natural resources in each PICT, had been carried out.

In addition, the mainstreaming, building of multi-sectoral partnership, and improvement of decision-making processes on biodiversity conservation are noted as being increasingly achieved through the integration of NBSAP and biodiversity priorities into the relevant national priority action strategies and policies such as – NAPA (National Adaptation Plan of Action) on climate change impact; NAP (National Action Plan) on land use management; NIP (National Implementation Plan) on organic pollutants; NCSA (National Capacity Self-Assessment) actions; various National Development Strategies; NBF (National Biosafety Framework); and relevant legislation and administrative procedures and policies. But, no specific mechanism has been established for high

level private enterprise involvement in conservation at the regional level as targeted but the issue is under consideration by SPREP and IUCN.

**Conclusion:** While little progress has been achieved with this Objective, this is considered to have been marginally satisfactory because there appears to be good potential for further progress.

## **2.9 Obj. 2.2 Develop and enforce integrated environmental, economic and social planning policy and legal frameworks**

The Working Group responsible for this Objective has been hampered in its assessment of progress by a lack of information.

Among the targets expected to be achieved under this Objective, was the implementation of NBSAPs or their equivalent through a national co-ordination mechanism in all PICTs, the integration of NBSAPs into the development plans of at least five PICTs, and the application of environmental, social, and economic assessment legislation and policies in all PICTs. The Working Group found that these targets are achievable but at this stage more information was needed to ascertain the level of implementation of NBSAPs or similar frameworks in each PICT.

Another target was to determine sustainable harvest rates of critical commercial resources and ensure that these are not exceeded in at least five PICTs. The Working Group saw this as a more complicated issue which may be beyond the capacity of most PICTs. However, the Group still felt that it is a priority and that it should be pursued.

The preparation of legislative, regulatory, economic and moral suasion instruments for sustainable development of each major resource sector – fishing, forestry, agriculture, mining and tourism – in five PICTs and the effective compliance and enforcement of conservation legislation, instruments and authorities in all PICTs, were also targeted. According to the Working Group, this is happening but may not be formally recognized under the NBSAP or its equivalent.

The development of mechanisms for equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources, and the enactment of intellectual property rights legislation which recognizes traditional rights and ownership, were also targets. The Working Group feels that while PICTs have recognized the importance of these instruments, there is very little progress.

The Working Group concluded that most PICTs have, during the lifetime of the current Action Strategy accepted the value of having an NBSAP or its equivalent. Twelve PICTs have developed an NBSAP or equivalent strategy while others are in the process of developing theirs.

**Conclusion:** Progress overall towards this Objective is marginally satisfactory. Implementation is proving difficult and assistance is required.

## **2.10 Obj. 2.3 Foster economic instruments that create incentives for conservation and remove those with negative impacts**

**Obj. 2.4 Strengthen resource and environmental valuation for effective decision making**

**Obj. 2.5 Engage business in environmentally sound practices and support for conservation**

**Obj. 2.6 Create sustainable financial mechanisms**

## **Obj. 2.7 Promote sustainable livelihoods to eradicate poverty**

Objectives 2.3 to 2.7 were covered by the Working Group originally established to focus on Objective 2.6 Sustainable Financing Mechanisms. This made sure that efforts in these important areas of financial and economic incentives and related mechanisms for conservation success in the region were encouraged and captured for reporting and broader dissemination. However, the main focus of the Working Group has remained Objective 2.6 and more recently, Objective 2.7.

With regard to progress on Objectives 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, the Working Group has struggled to identify specific actions in the region which would indicate even minor achievements in any of these economic based incentive areas. Exceptions include the efforts by the New Britain Palm Oil Company in West New Britain to improve plantation establishment methods and mitigate downstream impacts from soil loss.

On this basis it would be fair to say that the environmental and conservation community has failed to effectively engage the economic sector and national finance and commerce institutions throughout the region. Their successful advocacy requires a high level of economic and business knowledge, professional backup and a convincing case to support high level lobbying. All of these are not traditional skills within the conservation community and the introduction of sophisticated incentive models may be beyond some countries' capacity at this point in time.

However, there are promising signs that the climate for introducing economic and business incentives in parts of the region is improving. Growing interest and high level political commitment to conservation and sustainable resource management is evident in the momentum generated for conservation by the Micronesia Challenge in 2006. This has opened the door to explore incentive-based and other sustainable finance mechanisms as part of the overall package of activities needed to sustain national networks of conservation areas. It is in these areas which directly relate to Objective 2.6 that most progress can be reported.

In a regional first, The Nature Conservancy, working with the Palau Government and local partners, completed a national plan for the sustainable financing of Palau's Protected Area Network (See 2.6.5). The plan identifies the costs of effective management of the network and recommends a range of financing mechanisms for meeting these costs including a substantial visitor tax, user pays fees, and the establishment of an endowment (Targets 2.6.3 and 2.6.4). Legislation to establish the tax is currently before Parliament and fundraising for the endowment is underway. Similar sustainable financing plans will be drawn up for the other Micronesian jurisdictions (Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Is, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Is, Fed State of Micronesia) in the Challenge.

Progress has also been made with other sustainable financing mechanisms supporting conservation (Target 2.6.3). In Micronesia, the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) has been operating effectively with support from UNDP, private individuals and foundation donors for two years now while the establishment of the Sovi Basin Trust Fund in Fiji is well underway. The MCT has an established management structure and has recently positioned itself to support the Micronesia Challenge by expanding its geographical scope beyond FSM to embrace all of Micronesia. Similarly, with the help of private individuals and foundation donors, the Mama Graun CTF in PNG has been restructured and is now functioning effectively with a small management team and a small grants programme in place.

In addition to these mechanisms, progress has been made with sustainable financing at a site based level (Target 2.6.2). Two examples come from the Solomon Islands where, in a regional (and possibly global) first, an endowment has been established for the Arnavon Islands Community Marine Conservation Area which will fund the recurring management costs of this site in perpetuity. In the Western Province, a Trust Fund has been established with the Tetapare Island Landowners Association which provides education scholarships in exchange for the conservation of the magnificent rainforest on the island. There may well be more such examples that the Working

Group is not aware of. In general, it is reasonable to say that quite exciting progress has been made with Objective 2.6.

The Working Group has also addressed Objective 2.7 Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods to Eradicate Poverty. Clearly, in the Pacific this objective is fundamental to the work of all conservation organisations but it is only in the past two years that the conservation community has begun to evaluate and articulate its work in these terms. Massive progress has been made throughout the region with the establishment of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) to support sustainable fisheries and food security at the village level. Much is being done through the LMMA networks to document these experiences, provide technical support to communities and share learning experiences. Videos (e.g. Bung Karim Bilong Oi Bikmaus produced by TNC) which capture the issues facing communities as they make LMMA decisions are available as well as a host of other written and visual material.

Finally, with regard to Target 2.7.2, field work for a study of four sites in the Pacific (Fiji and Solomon Islands) and in SE Asia, was completed in late 2006. The study aims to document and disseminate the contribution of four community conservation projects to the basic needs and livelihood of the communities in the region. The results of this groundbreaking study should provide a strong case for ongoing support for natural resource conservation to policy makers concerned with poverty alleviation and food security in our region.

**Conclusion:** Progress with Objectives 2.3 to 2.5 is unsatisfactory while Objective 2.6 is highly satisfactory and Objective 2.7 is marginally satisfactory.

### **2.11 Obj. 3.1 Empower local people, communities and institutions to effectively participate in decision making and action**

This Objective targeted an increase in the number of tertiary trained graduates in conservation and environment sciences that are employed in all PICTs and the further training and skill development for all conservation officers in identified priority areas. In addition, the appointment of women to at least 25% of the senior nature conservation roles and the introduction of an environmental education component in primary and secondary school programmes, were also targeted. Finally, at least one peer learning network was expected to be established to promote the rapid dissemination of new skills and tools in the region.

The Working Group assigned this task has been unable to assess progress towards four of the five targets towards this Objective. Target 3.1.5 (peer learning networks) was achieved with the start of at least three successful networks. These include LMMA, Micronesians in Island Conservation and the Pacific Invasives Learning Network.

**Conclusion:** While progress with the establishment of peer learning networks was satisfactory, further effort must be made to assess progress towards the other targets.

### **2.12 Obj. 3.2 Recognize and integrate customary structures and processes in natural resource and environmental governance systems**

The Working Group responsible for this Objective has found that traditional governance systems have been integrated into national and local authority decision making e.g. in Samoa, Tuvalu, Fiji and Solomon Islands (FLMMA, FSPI). However, this is far short of the ten PICTs that had been targeted and lessons learned need to be better documented and good examples need to be more widely disseminated and extended.

Likewise, traditional knowledge and management practices that promote sustainable use of resources in management plans for conservation areas, have been observed in some PICTs, but not in ten of them as targeted.

The Working Group is unsure whether community based conservation approaches are being recognized in national conservation and development plans. In addition, significant local, national and regional conservation documents are not being translated into local languages in all PICTs as targeted.

**Conclusion:** The overall conclusion of the Working Group for this Objective is that progress is unsatisfactory.

### **2.13 Obj. 3.3 Safeguard and strengthen traditional knowledge and practices**

The Roundtable Working Group responsible for assessing progress towards this Objective has noted no clear or organized strategy to document and disseminate traditional knowledge, practices and innovations. The Group also found that while it is seen as a priority issue, effective mechanisms and regulations to recognize and protect customary land tenure, traditional knowledge, practices and innovations, have not been put in place.

Regarding the target to empower traditional knowledge holders to promote, facilitate and regulate access to and use of traditional knowledge, the Working Group found that access to traditional knowledge may be increasing but crucially, the regulation of access is not being effectively addressed except in a few small examples such as the LMMA social contract, and the FSPI governance projects. There are worrying signs that regulation of access to traditional knowledge is not being given importance and regulatory mechanisms are absent.

PICTs are exploring options for managing access to genetic resources in the context of the CBD.

**Conclusion:** Progress towards this Objective is considered as unsatisfactory.

### **2.14 Obj. 3.4 Raise awareness and promote conservation values**

The Roundtable finds this Objective to be extremely broad and is aware that only elements of some of the Targets are being implemented. For example, under Target 3.4.5 (Communicate conservation and sustainable resource use principles) most projects are known to incorporate public awareness activities and increasing effort has been directed in the past five years towards social marketing rather than awareness. Examples of this include the GEF International Waters Project, initiatives by the Rare Conservation NGO and SPREP's environmental education and awareness programme. SeaWeb is implementing a media training programme in Fiji and PNG.

**Conclusion:** Given the broad scope of this Objective and the over-ambitious nature of the Targets, progress overall is marginally satisfactory.

### 3 SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACTION STRATEGY

As the following summary table shows, of the 18 Objectives targeted by the Action Strategy, the Roundtable Working Groups reported that progress has been highly satisfactory for two Objectives and satisfactory for another Objective. Progress with eight Objectives was found to be marginally satisfactory and six were unsatisfactory. One Objective was not assessed.

**Table 1. Summary of progress achieved towards the Action Strategy Objectives**

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTION STRATEGY	PROGRESS AS ASSESSED BY ROUNDTABLE WORKING GROUPS
<b>Environment Objectives</b>	
1.1 Establish and strengthen conservation networks and partnerships	Implementation has been <b>highly satisfactory</b> in that the targets have been met and exceeded.
1.2 Increase the number of areas under effective conservation management	Implementation could not be assessed accurately but it was thought to be <b>marginally satisfactory</b>
1.3 Bring each PICT's priority invasive species under effective control, and prevent new introductions of marine and terrestrial alien, invasive species and regulate genetically modified organisms	Targets were very ambitious and while a great deal of excellent work on invasive species has occurred in the region, overall progress has been <b>marginally satisfactory</b>
1.4 Safeguard and restore threatened species of ecological and cultural significance	Progress towards this Objective is considered to have been <b>marginally satisfactory</b>
1.5 Safeguard and restore threatened areas of ecological and cultural significance	Progress towards this Objective is considered to have been <b>unsatisfactory</b>
1.6 Address the impacts of climate change on the natural environment and biodiversity	Not addressed by the Roundtable and no assessment of progress
1.7 Improve knowledge and understanding of the state of the Pacific's natural environment and biodiversity	Progress towards this Objective has been <b>marginally satisfactory</b> which means it has been achieved to a limited extent
<b>Economy Objectives</b>	
2.1 Develop multi sector partnerships for sustainable resource use and management	While little progress has been achieved with this Objective, this is considered to have been <b>marginally satisfactory</b> since there appears to be good potential for further progress
2.2 Develop and enforce integrated environmental, economic and social planning, policy and legal frameworks	Progress overall towards this Objective is <b>marginally satisfactory</b>
2.3 Foster economic instruments that create incentives for conservation and remove those with negative impacts	Progress with each of these three Objectives is considered to have been <b>unsatisfactory</b>
2.4 Strengthen resource and environmental valuation for effective decision making	
2.5 Engage business in environmentally sound practices and support for conservation	
2.6 Create sustainable financial mechanisms	Progress with this Objective is considered to have been <b>highly satisfactory</b>
2.7 Promote sustainable livelihoods to eradicate poverty	Insufficient progress has been achieved against the targets and it is assessed as being <b>marginally satisfactory</b>
<b>Society Objectives</b>	
3.1 Empower local people, communities and institutions to effectively participate in decision making and action	Progress on very specific targets was unsatisfactory. But progress overall can be said to have been <b>satisfactory</b>
3.2 Recognize and integrate customary structures and processes in natural resource and environmental governance systems	The overall conclusion of the Working Group for this Objective is that progress has been <b>unsatisfactory</b>
3.3 Safeguard and strengthen traditional knowledge and practices	Progress towards this Objective is considered as <b>unsatisfactory</b>
3.4 Raise awareness and promote conservation values	Progress towards this Objective has been <b>marginally satisfactory</b>

Highly Satisfactory  
Satisfactory  
Marginally Satisfactory  
Unsatisfactory

Objective achieved as targeted  
Objective achieved in many PICTs, but short of targets  
Objective achieved in a few PICTs but with good potential to achieve targets in future  
Very little or no progress with Objective

## 4 CONCLUSION ON PROGRESS WITH THE ACTION STRATEGY

The Roundtable believes that its assessment of progress towards each of the Action Strategy Objectives and ultimately, the Goals, is a correct reflection of the situation even if it lacks precision.

### 4.1 On progress towards the Objectives and Targets

This is the first time that targets have been set in the Action Strategy in the expectation that they would apply right across the region. The Roundtable concludes that they did not work as well as expected. The implementation was likely hampered by the volume of targets identified and the very ambitious time line. In addition, some targets were not clearly formulated which left them open to interpretation. The Roundtable also found that it was difficult to apply each specific target equally to all PICTs.

The Objectives were also too numerous and some were overlapping. Like the Targets, their specificity made them difficult to apply to the variety of circumstances prevailing in the PICTs. This has influenced the extent of satisfactory progress possible and is reflected in the gradings determined by the Roundtable.

In addition, the system available for reporting progress was not strong or comprehensive enough and there is a need for contacts at the PICTs level. Furthermore, the information base is not thought to be entirely reliable.

Of the 17 Objectives assessed, the Roundtable Working Groups reported that progress has been satisfactory or highly satisfactory for only three Objectives. Progress with eight Objectives was found to be marginally satisfactory and six were considered unsatisfactory.

### 4.2 On progress towards the three 30-year Goals

The Roundtable concludes that the economic and social Goals have diluted the effort of PICTs towards the environment Goal and that it may be more effective for the Action Strategy to focus on the environment Goal in the future while acknowledging parallel initiatives in the region which focus more specifically on the economy and society.

Based on its assessment of progress towards the Objectives, the Roundtable concludes that progress towards the three 30-year Goals of the Action Strategy has been uneven and ranges from satisfactory to unsatisfactory.

Progress towards the Environment Goal, *The biodiversity and natural environment of the Pacific region are conserved*, has been satisfactory. This is not surprising, since it is based on the continuation, improvement and expansion of “core” conservation work.

Progress towards the Economy Goal, *Nature conservation and sustainable resource use are integral parts of all island economies* is probably only marginally satisfactory overall. Engaging the economic sector is a new challenge for the conservation community, and this suggests that it will require more investment and new skills in order to be successful.

Progress towards the Society Goal, *Pacific peoples, their governments, and institutions are leading activities for the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources in the Pacific region*, is deemed to have been unsatisfactory. This is surprising because in the Pacific context, nature conservation is inextricably linked with communities and society in general, and the Roundtable suspects that progress has indeed taken place but may not have fitted the descriptors established by the Objectives and Targets of the Action Strategy.

## **ANNEX 1: Resolution 7 of the 7<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas – The Pacific Island Roundtable for Nature Conservation**

*The 7th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:*

**Recognising** that the Pacific Island Roundtable for Nature Conservation is a coalition of conservation organizations and donor agencies launched at the 6th Pacific Island Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in Pohnpei in 1997;

**Noting** that the Roundtable has played a valuable role in promoting and implementing the Action Strategy and increasing collaboration for nature conservation over the last five years;

**Noting further** that the Roundtable has developed useful tools for coordination of conservation activities in the region, including the Inventory, Monitoring Matrix, and 12 Working Groups;

**Recognising** that Roundtable members represent international and regional organizations that implement or fund Action Strategy activities toward more than one goal or in two or more countries;

**Further recognising** that the voluntary membership of the Roundtable is a great strength that should continue;

**Commending** the commitment of the Roundtable members to provide a more inclusive approach to their work.

**Now therefore** resolve as follows:

- The Pacific Island Roundtable for Nature Conservation is maintained as a mechanism for promoting, facilitating and monitoring the implementation of Action Strategy.
- The Roundtable adopts mechanisms for making its membership more inclusive for meaningful participation of regional and national bodies.
- The Roundtable's mandate for the next five years is to increase effective conservation action in the Pacific islands by:
  - Fostering greater coordination and collaboration among national, regional and international organizations;
  - Identifying critical gaps in the Action Strategy and developing new conservation activities in the region;
  - Communicating and linking with countries through NBSAPs or alternative processes to promote implementation and monitoring of the Action Strategy;
  - Strengthening linkages with CROP agencies to promote multi-sectoral mainstreaming at the regional level;
  - Strengthening linkages with regional and national NGOs for more effective coordination.

*The Roundtable reports to the 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas on the implementation of the Action Strategy*