

**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

**THE INTERNATIONAL WATERS PROJECT
IMPLEMENTING THE
STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMME FOR THE INTERNATIONAL WATERS OF THE
PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (IWP)**

THIRD MULTIPARTITE REVIEW

**8-9 July, 2004
Central Bank Building,
Apia,
Samoa**

ATTACHMENT B

WELCOME REMARKS

**Mr Asterio Takesy
Director
South Pacific Regional Environment Programme**

Salutations

The Hon. Tagaloa Tuala Tagaloa, Minister for Natural Resources and Environment

Her Excellency Ms Joyce Yu, Resident Representative for UNDP in Samoa, Tokelau, Cook Islands and Niue,

Dr John Hampton from our sister CROP agency, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community – here on behalf of the Oceanic Fisheries Management Component of the Project and representing both FFA and SPC,

Samoan officials,

Distinguished representatives from Participating Countries,

Officials from the Implementing Agency, UNDP,

Observers,

Members of the SPREP Secretariat,

It is my honor to welcome you all to this, the third Multipartite Review for the International Waters Project.

It is particularly pleasurable to have the Honorable Tagaloa Tuala Tagaloa, Minister for Natural Resources and the Environment in Samoa here with us today. The Minister's association with this Project stretches back to 2001 when he opened the first regional consultation for the International Waters Project. That meeting was held at the FAO Conference Room also here in Apia under the guise of a Regional Task Force Meeting. The Minister's long contact with the Project is extremely encouraging.

Although Her Excellency Ms Yu and I meet regularly on a broad range of environment-related issues throughout the year, it is hard to appreciate that 12 months has already passed since we met in the last

Multipartite Review for this Project in Tonga in late June last year. In that 12 months we have witnessed increasing collaboration between our offices which is, in my view, at least partly due to the excellent working relationship that has evolved for the IW Project. Considerable thanks are due to the efforts of Tom Twining-Ward, Easter Galuvao and Veronica Levi from the Apia UNDP Office for this situation.

It is comforting to see so many familiar faces from the Tonga Multipartite Review gathered around this table today. For those of you who are new to this Multipartite Review process – you are in good hands. There are many of your colleagues around this table that have now had considerable involvement in this Project. I am sure that they will be more than willing to bring you up to speed on any issue that you require support on if they are requested.

As encouraged at last year's Multipartite Review, UNDP and the PCU have tried to ensure that this year's Meeting focuses a little less on process and administrative issues and concentrates more on the outputs and achievements for the Project.

I understand that the PCU has been in contact with you all in relation to this. Even though you still have approximately two years to learn more lessons, pilot best practice and generate information that others can use to improve the prospects for sustainable resource use and conservation in our region, I am sure that the results of your efforts to date will be of wide interest to a great number of people – both within and beyond the region. I certainly look forward to learning what you have been able to achieve.

The result of your work has the potential to have widespread impact. I do not say this lightly as potentially one of the most significant beneficiaries of this Project, after the participating countries themselves, will be the SPREP Secretariat. In fact, I am pleased to report that this is already happening.

The IWP has already had a positive impact on the way SPREP conducts its business in several key areas. The Project is encouraging us to look more closely at how we address environmental problems in the region – to encourage us to make sure we are actually addressing the root causes for environmental problems rather than just symptoms. In promoting this, the Project has contributed to our need to consider a 2-pronged approach to addressing environmental problems – some that can be supported through community-level action and others that require the attention of Governments – in areas such as policy, legislation and institutional arrangements.

In considering community-level action, the Project has also been successful in encouraging us to pay more attention, and try and secure more resources, for understanding the social and economic factors that impact on decision-making at the individual and community level. We see this as offering improved prospects for achieving sustainability at the conclusion of projects such as the IWP that benefit from a considerable level of external support.

Also, until the IWP commenced implementation we didn't really pay too much attention to communication. It is apparent, from the lessons already being generated by the Project, that this is a key area that impacts on the success, or otherwise of many resource management and conservation projects. In the past I would suggest that all of us have tended to take communications a little too much for granted. However, when we actually invest time in understanding our target audiences, and what their needs are, we find that we get a far better impact. Like all aspects of the Project that takes time, resources and strategic planning.

The results of many of these initiatives, piloted by the IWP, can already be seen in a range of SPREP key documents including the draft new Action Plan for Managing the Environment in the Pacific Islands Region and the Secretariat's Strategic Programmes.

The Oceanic Fisheries Management Component of the Project has also made significant progress during the last 12 months – and in fact the GEF Secretariat is now referring to this Project as a model having significant replication potential in other ocean regions.

The Management and staff at FFA and SPC are to be congratulated for the professional and efficient manner in which they have implemented the Project. It is fair to say that the IWP, under SPC's and FFA's guidance, has had a significant impact on the outcomes of the extended negotiation to establish new institutional arrangements for the management and conservation of the region's tuna resources. Now that Phase I activities have concluded at FFA, and SPC's will conclude within the next 12 months, we have already commenced a comprehensive planning process for the design of a followup, Phase II, Project to be implemented by FFA on behalf of FFA and SPC. I sincerely welcome Dr John Hampton to this Meeting and look forward to learning the key results from the Phase I component of the Project and plans for follow up activities.

Minister, Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, I will conclude my welcome remarks here. You have quite a demanding agenda ahead of you – not so much because I expect long and protracted discussion but more of the quality and interest the information being presented is likely to generate. I sincerely look forward to your discussions over the next day and a half.

It is now my pleasure to call on the Hon. Tagaloa Tuala Tagaloa, Minister for Natural Resources and Environment to deliver his Keynote Address.

Thank you for your attention.