

Twenty Third SPREP Meeting of Officials

4-6 September 2012
Noumea
New Caledonia

Agenda Item 9.4.1: Report on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) – Rio+20

Purpose

1. To **report** on SPREP participation and key outcomes relevant to the region.
2. To **endorse** the proposed process of Post Rio+20 implementation.

Background

3. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) or Rio+20 was held at the Rio Centro Convention Centre, Rio de Janeiro Brazil from the 20th-22nd June 2012. This was the third in a series of global conferences starting with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or the Earth Summit also held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in 2002. The Conference was preceded by the third session of the Preparatory Committee held at the same venue from the 13th - 15th June 2012 and a number of other side events that ran during the 9 day period from the 13th -22nd June.

4. All SPREP member countries except Cook Islands and Niue were represented by their Leaders or a high level delegation. Cook Islands and Niue did not attend because changes in the UN criteria downgraded them from the full status they enjoyed in the previous summits preventing them from having full state rights at the conference. A number of SPREP member territories namely New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Tokelau were also represented. The Secretariat attended as part of the Samoa Delegation.

Side Events

5. The main side events for SPREP were:
 - ***Pacific Islands – Applying the Green Economy in our Blue World*** –Side event coordinated by SPREP, it started with a speakers panel of 5 leaders – Samoa Minister MNRE (Pacific Issues for Rio+20); Kiribati President Tong (Pacific Oceanscape); FSM President Mori (Micronesia Challenge); Vanuatu PM Kilman (MSG Initiatives on Environment and CC) Tokelau Ulu Kalolo (Renewable Energy) followed by a moderated discussion. The event was attended by 150 people and we had to turn people away because the room was too small. It was a successful platform for presenting Pacific issues and initiatives.

- **SIDS Inter-regional Side event** coordinated by COMSEC and jointly run by SPREP, IOC and 5Cs. Explored scope and opportunities for cross regional learning, sharing and cooperation between SIDS regions culminated in signing of MOUs between three regional organisations. There was a follow up meeting on putting together joint programmes and proposals for funding through COMSEC and other partners.
- **UNEP MEAs Project Side event** - EU funded UNEP coordinated project in ACP countries. Three hubs in Africa, Caribbean (CARICOM) and Pacific (SPREP) to address capacity building for MEAs. Phase 1 is from 2009-March 2013. Presented outcomes and formal announcement of approval of 2nd project phase for 2013-2016.
- **Oceans Day**- coordinated by the Global ocean's forum and highlighted ocean issues including session focussed on small island developing states.

Outcomes Document

6. The Rio+20 Outcomes Document "The Future We Want" (attachment 1) was on balance good for Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS). PSIDS had two key issues leading in to Rio+20 and both were addressed more or less to our satisfaction.

- **Maintaining SIDS special case** – this was agreed with note of need to commit to fast tracking implementation of Barbados Plan of Action (BPOA) and Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation (MSI) especially given the less than flattering findings of the MSI+5 review regarding sustainable development of SIDS. It was agreed to have a Barbados+20 in 2014 with UN General Assembly to finalise arrangements in their meeting at the end of 2012. It is the Pacific's turn to host with Caribbean (Barbados) hosting in 1994 and Indian Ocean (Mauritius) in 2004. Fiji and Samoa along with Barbados have indicated interest in hosting.
- **Highlighting Oceans Issues** – The Blue Economy/Green Economy in a Blue World was very successful in getting support for oceans issues. Ocean is the largest thematic area in Outcomes Document. Many of the paragraphs almost exclusively refer to SIDS issues. It addresses both conservation and sustainable use/management of oceans resources. However, it does not fully address some concerns relating to the need to review the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to cover issues such as managing areas beyond national jurisdiction and sea bed mining but provides ways through which these contentious issues can be discussed further. Fisheries issues raised by PSIDS were adequately addressed and subsequently covered in 8 paragraphs. What did not come through was role of PSIDS in managing global pacific ocean resource

7. There were two themes for Rio+20. The first theme 'Green economy in context of sustainable development and poverty eradication' had the following key outcomes:

- Green economy seen as a key tool to achieve sustainable development
- Approach can vary but should be consistent with Rio Principles, Agenda 21, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and aim to achieve MDGs and defines in detail in Para. 58 standards that green economy policies should meet.
- Countries to choose approach that is most relevant to them but must address sustainable production and consumption, manage impacts and conserve natural resources
- Importance of inclusive partnership approach and need for technology transfer, financing and capacity building
- Role of regional commissions, regional organisations and private sector highlighted

8. The second theme was 'Institutional framework for Sustainable Development' and had the following key outcomes :

- Reaffirms need to strengthen and integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, environmental and social.
- Need to strengthen institutional structure at all levels – local, subnational, national, regional and global levels
- Need to strengthen UN system as a whole. Highlighted need for coherence and coordination with better accountability, reporting and cooperation between agencies.
- Called on General Assembly to further integrate sustainable development as a key element of UN activities
- Economic and Social Council remains as principal policy making body on economic and social issues.
- Decision to set up a high level political forum that will review and strengthen the Commission on Sustainable Development and ultimately replace it with body recommended by the forum.
- Committed to strengthening UNEP as lead global environmental authority and recommends measures for its strengthening for consideration by the UNGA at its 67th session.
- Call on MEAS to strengthen cooperation and coordination and reduce overlap and duplication.
- Stress need for continued SOE reporting and building capacity to support informed decision making
- Call on UN programmes, Funds, specialised agencies, UNCTAD and international financial institutions to incorporate initiatives for sustainable development.
- Role of regional and subregional organisations in sustainable development is recognised – not only UN regional Commissions
- Call for national sustainable development policies and strategies.

Follow Up to Rio+20

9. Regional follow up to Rio+20 will be coordinated through the CROP Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG). SPREP will continue to play a key role on this Working Group. The SDWG will liaise closely with all Member countries and territories and with the PSIDS missions in New York. The CROP SDWG has developed a matrix that will be developed into a more detailed regional roadmap for Rio+20.

10. Key dates for regional inputs into the global post Rio+20 process are noted and the SDWG and PSIDS missions in New York will facilitate our input.

Recommendations

11. The meeting is invited to:

- **Note** the report; and
- **Endorse** the coordination of post Rio+20 activities through the SDWG.