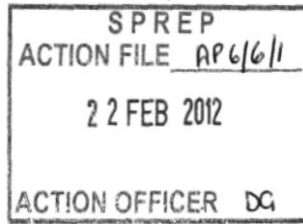


République française

**Presidency**Regional Cooperation
and External Affairs

CS 12-3007- 002

*Followed up by:
Anne-Claire GOARANT*

Noumea

30 JAN 2012

Subject: Consultation of SPREP Member countries on French Polynesia's proposal to establish, at SPREP, a panel of experts to assess the environmental consequences of nuclear testing in the Pacific.

Ref: Circular 11/108 of 16 December 2011

Dear Director,

Further to Circular 11/108 dated 16 December 2011, I am pleased to advise you of New Caledonia's position regarding the abovementioned proposal made by French Polynesia.

It is undeniable that nuclear tests have environmental consequences. However, I believe that such consequences should be investigated and assessed independently by the recognised experts from existing agencies, such as the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency).

The experts' reports could be forwarded to SPREP to ensure it is fully informed on this issue. SPREP would then be able to propose appropriate action plans for the protection of the Pacific environment, with a view to achieving sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations.

These reports should also be sent to the Pacific Islands Forum to ensure proper political backing.

It seems to me that it would be inappropriate for SPREP, as a technical and scientific operational organisation, to host an initiative with such political overtones.

This is why the New Caledonian government does not agree with the current proposal. However, New Caledonia is convinced of the significance of this issue and is willing to collaborate on the organisation of a regional discussion of the matter.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Mr David Sheppard
Director General
PO Box 240- Apia
SAMOA

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