

## Twenty Third SPREP Meeting of Officials

4-6 September 2012  
Noumea  
New Caledonia

### **Agenda Item 9.5: Building Leadership Capacity for Environment: The Pacific Emerging Environment Leaders' Network**

#### **Purpose**

1. To provide an update of Secretariat efforts to build capacity and leadership skills of young environment and sustainable development professionals, through the Pacific Emerging Environment Leaders' (PEEL) Network.
2. To outline proposed activities of the PEEL network and seek Member support to strengthen the initiative and identify new opportunities for building capacity of young professionals in environmental leadership.

#### **Background**

3. Building on past leadership capacity building initiatives, SPREP organised a symposium for young professionals in the area of environmental leadership in October 2011. Funding assistance was provided by the Commonwealth Foundation and the International Climate Change Adaptation Initiative of the Australian Government. 25 participants were selected from across the region on a competitive, merit-based approach.
4. A key outcome of the symposium was the establishment of the PEEL Network – a pool of qualified young people with a vision to “lead, generate and inspire environmental action in the Pacific region”.
5. These young professionals hail from a wide range of sectors, and include climate change and environmental scientists, lawyers, journalists, government officials, NGO officials, conservationists, teachers, economists, voyagers, and health and energy specialists. This interdisciplinary nature of PEEL encourages cross-sectoral professional links and friendships that foster Pacific-wide cooperation, and develops synergies and integrated thinking for addressing issues of long-term environmental protection and livelihood security.

6. Since its establishment in October 2011, PEEL network members have developed and launched the PEEL brand, organised a “buddy system” to provide peer support to each other, and carried out a number of national and local activities ranging from seminars on aspects of climate change to community water programmes. A media team ensures that stories on PEEL activities are highlighted and shared through the SPREP website and the PEEL blog.

### Future of PEEL and Support

7. The PEEL Initiative and Network represents a real opportunity to nurture the next generation of Pacific leaders who will be well-informed, educated and appreciative of environment issues, regardless of their work area. To this end, we propose a series of internships, short-term training and work attachments for current PEEL members and new recruits.

8. The Secretariat also proposes the PEEL network be encouraged to actively participate in relevant meetings and training opportunities. Several SPREP members are already using this approach to groom their young professionals for future career paths.

9. The success and sustainability of PEEL will depend on the recruitment of a coordinator position, which will focus on coordinating activities, raising funds, recruiting new members, and identifying opportunities for mentoring and training. Furthermore, Member support is required at the national level to empower PEEL membership through provision of opportunities to participate in key training and consultation events.

### Recommendation

10. The meeting is invited to:

- **endorse** the Pacific Emerging Environment Leaders’ Initiative and Network as an important mechanism through which the Secretariat can strengthen capacity of young emerging leaders for environment in the region;
- **involve** PEEL members in relevant national and regional meetings, where appropriate and relevant; and
- work with the Secretariat to **encourage** the further development of PEEL.