

Twenty Fourth SPREP Meeting

17-19 September 2013
Apia, Samoa

AGENDA ITEM 6.6: Preparations for the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) Conference 2014

Purpose of Paper

1. To provide an update on Preparations for the SIDS Conference 2014.
2. To seek the Meeting's advice on proposed SPREP involvement.

Background

3. Rio +20 called for the hosting of an international SIDS Conference in 2014. In endorsing the **2014 SIDS Conference**, the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly held in September 2012, decided that the Conference should:

- i. **assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps** in the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI);
- ii. **seek a renewed political commitment** by all countries to effectively address the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS;
- iii. **strengthening of collaborative partnerships** between small island developing States and the international community;
- iv. **identify priorities for the sustainable development of SIDS** for the post-2015 UN development agenda.

4. The UN General Assembly also adopted a decision to declare 2014 the "International Year of SIDS." This conference will provide input into the ongoing development of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the post 2015 development agenda.

5. The Government of Samoa will host the conference from the 1st to 4th September, 2014 preceded by a week of preparatory activities and subsidiary meetings from the 25th – 29th August. The theme proposed by Samoa for the meeting is "The Sustainable Development of SIDS through Genuine and Durable Partnerships".

Preparatory Process

6. CROP and UN Agencies have worked together to support Pacific Island Countries in formulating their national and regional positions for the SIDS Conference 2014. This support has been integrated with support for the Post 2015 agenda/Sustainable Development Goals process. CROP support has been coordinated through the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) co-chaired by PIFS and SPREP and with membership also including SPC, UNDP, ESCAP, NGOs and other UN and CROP agencies .

7. In support of Pacific preparations the SDWG developed 29 thematic briefs across the range of sustainable development issues in the region (finalized and distributed in April 2013 and available on PIFS and SPREP website) and also has provided support to Pacific Island Countries and their Missions in New York in preparing for the SIDS Conference.

8. In support of the Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the SIDS 2014 Conference, hosted by the Government of Fiji, CROP representatives (PIFS, SPREP, SPC) together with UN Agencies in the region offered and provided support through a Pacific Regional Taskforce arrangement facilitated by ESCAP and Chaired by Fiji as the host government. This taskforce provided a collaborative arrangement to support Pacific preparations for the regional meeting including input to the Regional Synthesis Report and National Assessments of PICTs in the region.

9. The Pacific Preparatory Meeting was held in Nadi, Fiji from the 10th to 12 July 2013. The final agenda for the Regional meeting was developed, finalized and disbursed within two weeks of the regional meeting and was largely managed by Pacific SIDS Missions in New York. The Meeting was largely run as a closed meeting for States only. The Territories (American Samoa, New Caledonia and Tokelau) were excluded from some of the closed sessions but were invited to be part of the country delegations and later allowed to attend in their own right.

10. There were parallel sessions for all developed partners including CROP and UN agencies. The decision to have parallel sessions was made very late so it was not very clear what was expected out of the parallel sessions. There was an open session of the Meeting where the partners and other major groups presented the outcomes of their parallel sessions to the Meeting for its consideration. There was no finalised outcomes statement from the Meeting but mechanisms were agreed for it to be finalised out of session.

Proposed Engagement Modalities For SPREP:

11. The running of the Nadi Preparatory Meeting was a departure from how the preparatory meeting for Rio+20, WSSD, UNCED and the two previous SIDS conferences were run. In the past the Pacific has always adopted an open engagement with all partners in particular the CROP agencies as we are seen as an extension of our member states, providing technical, policy and regional advice as well as support for implementation.

12. Given this situation where SPREP and other CROP agencies may not be able to be directly involved with consultations through the continuing preparatory process and also at the Conference itself, we seek the meetings consideration and guidance on the following proposed modalities for SPREP engagement to ensure we provide the necessary support to members:

- SPREP places the highest priority to the SIDS Conference as the “Pacific’s” SIDS Conference and will do all it can to contribute towards a successful conference and outcomes;
- SPREP will continue to provide the required technical and policy advice throughout the preparatory process either directly or through the SDWG;
- Samoa as host of the SIDS Conference and also our host country has formally approached SPREP to assist with arrangements for the conference through waste management, media relations and in particular supporting the development of the partnerships focus. SPREP is committed to providing all the personnel and resources at its disposal to assist Samoa with this important global conference; and
- SPREP, consistent with past practice with Rio+20 and other Conference of the Parties will request accreditation in the national delegation of Samoa, as our host country.

Recommendation

13. The Meeting is invited to:

- **note** the progress with the preparatory process for SIDS Conference 2014; and
- **provide guidance** on the proposed engagement modalities for SPREP