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The Pacific environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.

Twelfth meeting of the Noumea Convention

Twelfth ordinary meeting of the contracting parties to the convention for the protection of the natural resources and environment of the South Pacific Region and related protocols (Noumea Convention)

Majuro, Marshall Islands

26 September 2014

Agenda Item 7.4: Pacific island countries and territories - Tier 3 response capability

Purpose

1. To provide information on Pacific Island Countries and Territories, current Tier 3 Response Capabilities.

Background

2. Marine pollution is widely recognised as one of the four major threats to the world's oceans, along with climate change, habitat destruction and over-exploitation of living marine resources. Spills of oil and other chemicals into the marine environment, both from ships and land-based sources, is a significant source of pollution.

3. In a region sometimes called 'Oceania', the health of the ocean is fundamental to the sustainability of all aspects of Pacific island life. The importance of coastal and marine environments to every aspect of the lives of Pacific islanders cannot be overstated, and the impacts of marine spills constitute a major concern for Pacific island peoples.

Pacific Islands Regional Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN) 2013

4. The 24th SPREP Meeting in Apia 2013 approved the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN) 2013. The International Oil Pollution Preparedness Response and Cooperation (OPRC) Convention and the Noumea Convention Emergencies Protocol provide the legal mandate for the formulation of the PACPLAN.

5. PACPLAN provides the framework for cooperative responses to major (Tier 3) marine spills in the Pacific islands region, including roles and responsibilities of relevant organizations, and mechanisms for accessing regional and international assistance. Tier 3 spills are defined as large spills that are beyond the response capability of one country or have the potential to impact on more than one country. PACPLAN sets out the technical and geographical scope for a regional response, and provides the guiding principles under which any regional response should be undertaken.

6. As a regional plan, PACPLAN applies only to spills where regional co-operation and/or supra-regional assistance are needed. Under PACPLAN, such spills are classified as Tier Three spills. PACPLAN does not cover Tier One and Tier Two spills.

Tier Three Spill Definition

7. Spills that are beyond the response capability and resources of the individual SPREP island member where the spill occurs; and/or Spills that impact or threaten to impact within the jurisdiction of two or more SPREP island members.

8. Response to Tier Three spills should initially be according to the relevant NATPLAN, then supported by PACPLAN. The response escalation process is detailed in respective Pacific island member government NATPLANS.

9. Set quantities and sizes of spills have intentionally not been used in the definition of Tiers. In some instances a relatively small spill may fit the Tier Two or even Tier Three category. Classification depends on the composition and source of the spill, the location and response capabilities and resources of the SPREP island member where the spill occurs, the prevailing conditions at the time of the spill, and the types of environments impacted or threatened.

Tier 3 Response Capabilities

10. Below in table 1 is a summary of the current status of NATPLAN's, oil spill equipment, legislation, advisory committees, and Pollution Fund.

Recommendations

11. The Meeting is invited to:

- **note** the PACPLAN 2013 as the framework for regional oil spill and hazardous and noxious substances spill response spill response; and
- **note** the current status of respective countries current Tier 3 response capabilities and commit to providing assistance, resources and information as required.

Table 1: Current Status of NATPLAN's, Oil Spill Equipment, Legislation, Advisory Committees

	NATPLAN		Oil Spill Equipment		Marine Pollution Advisory Committee		Pollution Fund		Supporting Legislation		
Country	Draft	Adopted	Insufficient	Sufficient	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Draft	Adopted
American Samoa		✓		✓		✓		✓			✓
Cook Islands		✓	✓		✓		✓				✓
Federated States of Micronesia	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
Fiji	✓		✓			✓		✓		✓	
French Polynesia		✓		✓		✓		✓			✓
Guam		✓		✓		✓		✓			✓
Kiribati	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓		
Marshall Islands	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
Nauru	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
New Caledonia		✓		✓		✓		✓			✓
Niue	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
Northern Mariana Islands		✓		✓		✓		✓			✓
Palau	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
Papua New Guinea	✓		✓		✓			✓		✓	
Samoa	✓		✓		✓		✓				✓
Solomon Islands	✓		✓		✓		✓				✓
Tokelau	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
Tonga		✓	✓			✓	✓				✓
Tuvalu	✓		✓		✓		✓				✓
Vanuatu	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		
Wallis and Futuna		✓		✓		✓		✓			✓

19 August, 2014