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

Twenty Fifth SPREP Meeting of Officials

Majuro, Marshall Islands

30 September – 2 October 2014

Agenda Item 11.3: Items Proposed by Members:

Ocean 21 Summit

(Paper presented by New Caledonia)

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Government of New Caledonia

Background Paper

Nouméa Communiqué

2nd Oceania 21 Conference

Nouméa, 2 July 2014

1. The 2nd Oceania 21 Conference ('Oceania 21'), organised by the New Caledonian Government, with the support of France, and was chaired in turn by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Vanuatu, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu and the President of the Marshall Islands, currently Chairman of the Pacific Islands Forum. The conference also brought together the Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, the Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa, the Lieutenant-Governor of American Samoa, ministers from Nauru, Niue, New Caledonia, Palau, the Kingdom of Tonga, Vanuatu, and the representative of Wallis and Futuna, along with heads of delegation and senior officials from the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea and French Polynesia. Also present were representatives of Australia, New Zealand, France, the Pacific Community and SPREP. His Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco and Mr Nicolas Hulot, the special representative of the President of the French Republic for the protection of the planet sent video messages of support for the conference.
2. Also in attendance were representatives from a number of regional partners, universities, civil society and private sector organisations and countries, including in particular the French Research for Development Institute (IRD) which co-hosted the conference and Green Cross and Ocean Futures Society represented by their president Jean-Michel Cousteau.
3. The participants express their gratitude to the New Caledonian Government for its excellent organisation of Oceania 21 and the warm welcome extended to them during their stay in New Caledonia. They also extend their thanks to the President of the Marshall Islands, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Vanuatu who chaired this conference with such success.

We, the peoples of Oceania, proud of our cultural values and identities, after meeting in Nouméa (New Caledonia) for the 2nd annual Oceania 21 Conference on Sustainable Development, hereby:

4. Recognise the importance of upcoming international events:
 - The year 2014, which has been dedicated by the UN as the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS);
 - The 45th Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) which will take place in Palau from 28 July to 1 August on the theme: 'The Ocean, Life and the Future';
 - The 3rd International Conference on SIDS, organised under the auspices of the UN and to be held in Samoa from 1-4 September 2014 which represents a unique opportunity for the region to highlight the specific challenges which it is facing and the opportunities available to it;
 - The 12th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in PyeongChang, (South Korea) in October 2014;
 - The 20th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Lima in December 2014;
 - The 21st Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Agreement on Climate Change to be held in Paris (France) in December 2015.

5. Welcome the completion of the South-South Initiatives and in particular the commitment of the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia to form a common working group responsible for defining the group to explore possible avenues for collaboration between the parties in managing jointly their maritime zones.
6. Confirm our commitment to the COP21 Meeting, by resolving to attend the Apia Small Islands Developing States Conference to develop positions of common interest¹, with support from SPREP.
7. Undertake to develop a joint regional development plan for a pilot 'holothurian' (sea cucumber/beche de mer) breeding programme, based on cooperation between Tuvalu, Vanuatu, American Samoa, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, New Caledonia and such other Pacific countries as may be interested. Noting the development of open data, we propose unrestricted availability of a maximum of scientific, economic, social, environmental and administrative data, by way of 'data observatories' using existing initiatives (pilot projects)².
8. Welcome the proposal to involve the youth of Pacific Island countries and territories in the work achieved here, the results of which comprise the 'Oceanian Call to the Youth of the World' launched in Nouméa on 2 July 2014. This work has been developed around four essential themes that were addressed during the Summit (oceans, renewable energy, waste, water /biodiversity /agriculture).
9. Undertake to organise an 'Oceania 21 Youth³' meeting in 2015.
10. Encouraged by the work achieved during the four thematic workshops at the conference, we consider that:

In relation to protecting and organising intelligent use of oceans:

11. Recognizing that scientific and economic data and understanding of traditional practices is in some cases lacking;
12. Considering the unequal resources available to the various Countries and Territories of the Pacific to implement the necessary management tools for Marine Protected Areas; and
13. Considering that climate change impacts will affect the ocean and ecosystem;

We recommend:

14. Strengthening and developing the activities of observatories producing scientific, economic and administrative data and public policy.

¹ Since this is a UN conference with specific requirements for participation, and the deadline for registration has now passed, the modalities for participation by Oceania 21 will need to be established with the UN, with support from SPREP

² Cf. presentation on GOPS (Observatory on Terrestrial and Marine Biodiversity in the South Pacific and O2C3 (Oceanian Observatory on the Consequences of Climate Change)

³ Youth is represented by students at high school and university, and young professionals

15. Strengthening participation by young people and native/indigenous peoples of both genders and encouraging them to take greater ownership of and responsibility for environmental issues.
16. Improving integration, participation and the sharing and exchange of local traditional knowledge.
17. Strengthening the collaboration between scientists, decision-makers and stakeholders involved in the responsible use and management of the oceans.
18. Developing throughout the entire Pacific more equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of marine resources.

Climate Change Forecasting

19. Establishing or maintaining an Ocean Observation Network in the South Pacific, similar to PacIOOS in the North Pacific or the array of TAO monitoring buoys deployed in the Equatorial region of the Pacific Ocean.
20. Establishing a comprehensive network to monitor Ocean Acidification in the Pacific Islands Region.
21. Providing further funding for modelling at a more precise and smaller scale ('downscaling').

Food Security

22. Urgently implementing and improving effective monitoring of coastal habitats and associated fish stocks.
23. Strengthening the international legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) through an implementing agreement for BBNJ under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Sustainable Utilisation of Marine Mineral Resources

24. Evaluating impacts:
 - Before any deep sea mining activities begin, a comprehensive body of knowledge is required to predict the likely impacts;
 - Surveillance, evaluation and monitoring of impacts is vital;
 - Damage to deepsea habitat caused by mining operations, should that occur, needs to be offset by the establishment of MPA networks.
25. Developing good governance procedures through the engagement of the local population.
26. Employing spatial planning tools to define the management effort required.

Marine Protected Areas and Protection of Vulnerable Species

27. Adopting similar commitments to the conservation of migratory species by all PICTs, because it is essential for the implementation of effective management strategies.
28. Encouraging governments to support well-managed community-based initiatives, such as whale-watching, to provide a valuable economic benefit for conservation; and LMMAs, to provide a community-based framework for sustainable resource management

29. Adopting increasingly integrated approaches, as recommended in the Pacific Oceanscape Framework and endorsed by Leaders, for the establishment of MPAs through the promotion of socio-ecosystemic methods, such as Marine Spatial Planning.
30. a) Promoting the development of a regional network of MPAs, that will contribute to the Aichi Targets of the CBD, through an effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected system of MPAs in the Pacific Islands region; and requesting CROP agencies to provide technical guidance and advice on achieving this objective, by strengthening the tools available at the regional level, including legal tools such as the Noumea Convention.
- b) Establishing a regional network of managers to facilitate this goal, with appropriate legal and technical tools to exchange information and experiences; and calls upon countries, donors and supporters to provide financial and technical support for such a network.

In relation to development of renewable energy:

31. Considering that access to energy services is fundamental to meet basic social needs, encourage economic growth and human development.
32. Considering that most Pacific Island countries and Territories have in common a strong dependence on fossil fuels and are the most dependent of all in the world on such fuels, this situation constitutes a serious burden on the budgets of these jurisdictions.
33. Considering that this problem should be viewed as an opportunity to develop renewable energy sources.

We recommend:

34. Strengthening cooperation through an enhanced regional platform, taking into account existing mechanisms and work programmes in this sector, with the goal of further improving cooperation through additional development of:
 - Exchanges of knowledge: atlas, observatory, costs, greenhouse gases etc.;
 - Exchanges of experiences: pilot projects (hybrid generation, storage etc.);
 - Exchanges of technology: development of family-scale installations and focusing on the energy rating of electrical equipment.
35. Setting ambitious common goals in terms of energy efficiency and for the share of renewables in the energy mix:
 - Developing hybrid systems allowing us to achieve in the short term an energy share of 40% for renewables;
 - Simultaneously, in order to reach energy independence from fossil fuels in the medium term, studying and developing immediately reliable renewable power generation such as hydro, biomass, geothermal and marine renewable energies.
36. Undertaking awareness-raising programmes with the public, and in particular youth, on controlling energy consumption in line with economic, social and environmental constraints.

In relation to waste management and re-use:

37. Considering that pollution and the growing volume of solid and hazardous waste are the principal threats to the environment and sustainable development in the Pacific Islands.

38. Considering that globalisation is accelerating the transition of Pacific communities to consumer economies, with the increase in urbanisation, migration and participation in international trade, this has led to an increase in the production of solid and liquid waste, which increases the risk of coastal and marine pollution.
39. Considering the lack of controls over imported chemical products and a lack of capacity to manage pollutants, in turn threatening to compromise the quality and health of vulnerable ecosystems on which the Pacific Islands rely.

We recommend:

40. Changing attitudes: waste is a resource:
 - Moving from a linear to a circular economy⁴;
 - Viewing waste in the future as a resource and not simply as waste, and adopting the same attitude in relation to invasive species and the by-products of economic activity, e.g. fisheries being one of the main industries of the Pacific, the results of the Lifou pilot project⁵ on the reclamation and re-use of fishing by-products could be shared with the countries of the Pacific.
41. Promoting participation and communication:
 - Raising awareness, educating and involving all stakeholders as a vital part in achieving the acceptance of solutions and costs.
42. Seeking out and developing appropriate, flexible and viable solutions:
 - Identifying and building on existing local practices, both in terms of accumulations of waste products and outlets for their use, and integrating those practices into the development of solutions;
 - Examining and setting up alternative funding methods based on Extended Producer Responsibility (eco-contribution).
43. Encouraging competent regional organisations to strengthen networks between the players involved in the management of waste products and allow access to information about major projects and experiences (e.g. composting).

In relation to agriculture, water management and terrestrial biodiversity in a background of global change in the Pacific:

44. Considering land ownership issues – government vs land owners' rights to water and the need for mutual agreements.
45. Considering the vulnerability of freshwater, agricultural and biodiversity systems (linked to demographic and economic pressures, climate variability and climate change).
46. Considering that 12 PICTs have now signed up to PoetCom and the program has strong political support from most countries.

⁴ A linear economy is characterised by manufacturing, production and distribution processes, whereas a circular economy is one where there is an emphasis on preventing and reducing waste, including changing peoples' systematic behaviours, where the focus is on quality and not quantity.

⁵ The Lifou project in the Loyalty Islands is a partnership between ADECAL and United Fisheries (Christchurch, New Zealand) which turns fish waste into fertilizer and other products. Once this pilot project has been successfully implemented, the partners are determined to establish similar projects throughout the region.

47. Institutional strengthening of POETCom, including resources to implement its Strategic Plan.
48. Considering the need for robust promotion of traditional farming techniques (permaculture, agroforestry, agriculture diversification, including crops and livestock) and subsistence farming systems or family agriculture.
49. Considering the need to develop education for young people, farmers and women on sustainable agricultural systems and solidarity of communities across the Pacific.
50. Considering the need to transpose international environmental law into domestic law.

We recommend that PICTs:

51. Develop and maintain participatory and inclusive water governance processes (develop negotiations with all stakeholders). Within this process governments should work with local authorities/land owners and also to engage communities in these water management efforts.
52. Promote the development and financing of Pacific-wide water, agricultural and biodiversity data observatories accessible to all.
53. Develop, promote and protect traditional sustainable farming practices. This includes the development of local seed production capability and adoption of regulations to manage risks to these vital food security systems (e.g. GMO contamination, biosecurity).
54. Establish a monitoring mechanism for GMOs in the Pacific region.
55. Promote the principles of participation, and the right to environmental information in PICTs on legal biodiversity protection systems.
56. Promote the principle of non-regression⁶ in the legal protection of biodiversity.

Cross-cutting recommendations:

57. Promote ecological and scientific solidarity between PICTs in order to share data, knowledge on the ongoing processes of global change to support public policy and decision-making for sustainable development, water management and preservation of biodiversity.
58. Develop and provide adequate financial resources that are sufficient to meet the extreme challenges faced by PICTs in terms of adaptation to climate change and sustainable development, including the above recommendations.

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⁶ The principle of non-regression guarantees that any protection given to the environment is not later withdrawn by a change to the legislation