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

Twenty Sixth SPREP Meeting of Officials

Apia, Samoa
22nd – 24th September 2015

Agenda Item 6.8: Strategic Priorities for the UNEP Pacific Office and the SPREP-UNEP Partnership

Purpose

1. To seek the Meetings advice and endorsement of the strategic priorities for the UNEP Pacific Office and the SPREP-UNEP Partnership.
2. Agree on issues for a draft Pacific resolution (or inputs to global resolutions) for the 2nd United Nations Environment Assembly (2nd UNEA) and identify Pacific country/countries to lead the development of such a draft resolution.
3. To encourage Pacific input to UNEP's draft Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2018-2021.

Background

4. The SPREP-UNEP Partnership started with SPREP's establishment in 1992 as the Pacific node of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme. In 1993 SPREP members agreed to establish SPREP as an independent regional organization and since then the SPREP-UNEP partnership has been guided through regularly updated MOU's.
5. In 2014 UNEP established its Pacific Office within the SPREP campus as an extension of UNEP's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) based in Bangkok, Thailand. The Pacific Office currently has a two person team – a Pacific Coordinator and a GEF Task Manager. The call to institutionally strengthen UNEP to better support Member States is a key outcome of United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), "The Future We Want" held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2012 and by extension "The SAMOA Pathways" the Outcomes of the 3rd International SIDS Conference held in Samoa in 2014. The UNEP Pacific Office will also assist members to implement activities and monitor the Post 2015 development agenda including the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Another modality implemented to strengthen UNEP is the establishment of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) as UNEP's Governing body.

Strategic Priorities for SPREP-UNEP Partnership and the UNEP Pacific Office

6. The First Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific was held successfully from 19-20 May 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Forum was well attended by Pacific countries including Australia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga together with a number of CSO representatives from the Pacific. President Tong of Kiribati delivered the "Inaugural Address" and highlighted key issues for the Pacific region. This Forum identified priority issues for the Asia Pacific region that can feed into the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2) in 2016, UNEP's Medium Term Strategy 2018-21 and other relevant global and regional processes. A Pacific Roundtable held in the margins of the Forum was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Sovaleni of Tonga providing further valuable guidance on Pacific priorities. The identified priorities from the Forum and Pacific Roundtable relevant to the Pacific include:

i) Addressing climate change and enhancing resilience

Support the implementation of national commitments and obligations under the UNFCCC, the Strategy for Resilient Development in the Pacific and continue to work in partnership with SPREP and countries on regional and national projects supported under GEF 6 as well as by major donors and development partners such as the European Union, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Support countries to get accredited and access the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund.

ii) Decoupling economic growth from resource use and pollution

Facilitate a green economy approach that is appropriate for Pacific Island states working including Sustainable Consumption and Production through the development of 10YFP programmes in line with the Pacific context. Support will be provided through UNEP initiatives and also existing regional partnerships such as the National Sustainable Development Strategy Support Partnership.

iii) Maintaining biodiversity and sustainable provision of ecosystem services

Support the implementation of national commitments and obligations and related international agreements under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Framework for Nature Conservation 2014-2020, and the Pacific Oceanscape Framework drawing on the experience and knowledge of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme and combating illegal poaching including in protected areas and the economic valuation of ecosystems.

iv) Managing chemicals and waste

Support waste management including hazardous waste and e-waste in particular the Cleaner Pacific 2025 Framework, and the implementation of the Chemicals and Waste MEAs (Rotterdam, Basel, Stockholm, Minamata). Support work to prevent the importation of banned non-biodegradable plastics, the management of land-based sources of marine pollution through the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, addressing marine litter and microplastics and continued assistance for compliance to the Montreal Protocol through the phase out of ozone-depleting substances.

v) *Developing integrated approaches to environment and health, especially to address air quality*

Support countries to raise awareness, improve knowledge and highlight the nexus between environment and health. Strengthen collaboration between environment and health sectors including assessment of environment and health risks, development of policies and integrated health and environment regulatory frameworks. The theme for UNEA 2 is 'Healthy Environment-Healthy People' to facilitate high level global discussion and agreement on actions on this issue.

vi) *Strengthening science-policy linkages*

Support countries in strengthening capacity for environmental assessment, monitoring and reporting of national plans, MEAs, Samoa Pathways and SDGs through the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) and the UNEP Live and their regional process. UNEP-Live will provide a platform for sharing data, information and knowledge on environmental issues and trends.

vii) *Strengthen governance for delivery of the SDGs*

Support countries in their environmental governance for implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 including sustainable finance reforms drawing on the work of the UNEP Financial Inquiry. UNEP will continue to work through established regional partnerships and the UN country teams to support means of implementation, data assessment and reporting.

7. The outcomes of the Forum and the Pacific Roundtable above along with agreed global and regional strategic documents such as the SAMOA Pathways, UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2014-2017, SPREP Strategic Plan 2011-2015, the outcomes of the Post 2015 Development Agenda including the new SDGs and the Pacific United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Action Plan 2013-2017, will guide the priorities for UNEP's Pacific Office and the SPREP-UNEP Partnership.

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)

8. The first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEA-1) took place in June 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya. Some 160 countries attended with many from Asia Pacific including Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Palau and Samoa. The UNEA discussed some of the greatest challenges facing our global community today and adopted seventeen resolutions covering issues such as illegal trade in wildlife, science policy interface, chemical and waste, marine plastic debris and microplastics, air quality, and ecosystem based adaptation.

9. The 2nd UNEA will be held from the 23rd -27th May 2016 at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya under the overarching theme of 'Delivering on the Environmental dimension of the Post-2015 Development Agenda'. The Ministerial segment will focus on the theme 'Healthy Environment-Healthy People'. To reflect Pacific priorities in the UNEA-2, there is an opportunity to develop specific Resolutions and submit it through the Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR).

10. Member States need to submit an outline resolution following a prescribed template (proposing Member State, tentative title of draft resolution, objective of the draft resolution, and relevance to UNEA and/or UNEP Programme of work) to the UNEA secretariat (unep.sgb@unep.org) by Friday 18 September, 2015. At its third annual subcommittee meeting (23-27 October 2015) at Nairobi, Kenya the Sub-Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) will discuss and agree an initial list of resolutions and map out its Programme of Work during the intersessional period. Proposing Member States then need to develop their full draft resolution and submit their proposals to the UNEA secretariat by 31 January 2016. All draft proposals will be considered by the Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR-2) at their meeting to be convened from 15 to 19 February 2016. Texts of proposed draft resolutions/decisions considered by OECPR will be included in a compilation of draft resolutions/decisions submitted by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEA-2.

11. This Meeting is appropriate for the Pacific to consider and agree on issues for a draft Pacific resolution (or inputs to global resolutions) for the 2nd United Nations Environment Assembly (2nd UNEA). We also need to identify countries to lead the development of such a draft resolution and also represent our interests at the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ensure our resolution is tabled at UNEA 2.

UNEPs draft Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2018-2021.

12. UNEP operates on a four year strategic plan cycle. UNEP's current MTS is from 2014-2017 and UNEP is currently drafting its 2018-2021 MTS. The draft MTS will be considered for endorsement at OECPR and finally UNEA-2. A draft has been officially circulated to UNEP's National Focal Points by ROAP's Regional Director, Mr. Kaveh Zahedi on the 30th June 2015 requesting official comments by the 7th of August 2015. The UNEP side-event on Thursday 24th will include an overview presentation of the draft MTS. Even though the initial deadline is passed members are encouraged to provide comments before the 30th October 2015 and should be sent to sefanaia.nawadra@unep.org.

Recommendations

13. The Meeting is invited to:

- **consider and endorse** the Strategic Priorities for the UNEP Pacific Office and the SPREP-UNEP Partnership;
 - **agree on issues** for a draft Pacific resolution (or inputs to global resolutions) for the 2nd United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2) and identify Pacific country/countries to lead the development of such a draft resolution and to represent interests of the Pacific at the OECPR; and
 - **encourage SPREP** members and the SPREP secretariat to provide comments on the draft UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021.
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