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



## Twenty Seventh SPREP Meeting of Officials

Alofi, Niue

19 – 21 September 2016

### Agenda Item 6.13 : UNEP and SPREP Partnership

#### Purpose

1. To provide an update on the implementation of the 2015 approved strategic priorities by 26th SPREP Meeting for the UNEP Pacific Office and the UNEP-SPREP partnership
2. To seek endorsement for recommended changes to and continued implementation of the strategic priorities
3. To provide an update on the Outcomes and Resolutions of 2<sup>nd</sup> United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 2)
4. To inform the Meeting about the 3rd session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3) of UNEP and its preparatory process

#### Background

5. The 26<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting Agenda Item 6.8, endorsed the strategic priorities of the UNEP Pacific Office and the UNEP SPREP partnership and agreed to the development of a draft resolution for UNEA-2 on SAMOA Pathway and SDGs to be led by Samoa and other Members with advice from UNEP. In partnership with SPREP, Samoa and other Members, UNEP has implemented the above decisions of the 26<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting.

#### Implementation of the Strategic Priorities of the UNEP Pacific Office

6. The following activities have been carried out in the respective seven strategic priorities
  - a. Addressing climate change and enhancing resilience – the focus is to assist Pacific island countries with access to finance and with meeting their national obligations.
    - i. A Regional Forum for the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) to improve capacity of the Nationally Designated Entities (NDEs) was hosted by UNEP with Tonga. Tonga, Nauru and Papua New Guinea have since submitted or are in the process of submitting proposals to CTCN. UNEP will continue to provide assistance with these CTCN proposals.

- ii. The Cook Islands is congratulated for their success in becoming the first Pacific island country to receive Green Climate Fund (GCF) readiness funding and UNEP was glad to support the process with technical assistance. Congratulations also to the Federated States of Micronesia and Vanuatu for accessing their readiness grant.
  - iii. Nauru, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu have requested UNEP to assist in NAP formulation and also considering further assistance in the development of other project concepts through GCF. UNEP will engage with these countries on these support areas.
- b. Decoupling economic growth from resource use and pollution – facilitating a green/blue economy approach that is appropriate for Pacific Island states including through Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)
  - i. Pacific countries and potential partners are being explored by UNEP to replicate in the Pacific the successful EU funded SCP project called SWITCH Asia and SWITCH Africa that assists countries with their SCP Policy frameworks and Roadmaps, SCP National Action plans and SCP indicators for SDGs as part of overall SDG implementation support.
  - ii. As part of SWITCH Asia, SCP data was opportunistically collected for Fiji and Papua New Guinea. A national workshop was held in August 2016, hosted by UNEP, in Fiji to gauge the utility and need for SCP data and complementarity with related initiatives on Fiji's environmental indicators and SDG reporting. A similar national workshop is planned for PNG later in 2016. The outcomes of these pilot workshops will assist in the planning needed to strengthen SDG data assessment, monitoring and reporting, as well as in designing national and regional Pacific SCP concepts.
  - iii. UNEP in partnership with SPREP will host a Green/Blue Economy Workshop in October/November 2016 to exchange experiences and learn from each other on green/blue economy and green growth initiatives and explore concepts for resource mobilisation.
- c. Maintaining biodiversity and sustainable provision of ecosystem services – Continues supporting Pacific island countries with the implementation of Biodiversity MEAs in partnership with SPREP
  - i. A GEF 6 Concept has been submitted to GEF for the "Prevention, Control and Management of Invasive Alien Species in the Pacific Region, covering 4 countries - Marshall Islands, Niue, Tonga and Tuvalu."
  - ii. A GEF 5 regional project on the Ratification and Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in the countries of the Pacific Region was approved in May 2016. UNEP and SPREP are currently finalising the Project Cooperation Agreement for submission to GEF and will start implementation upon its approval.
  - iii. Completing the implementation of two regional GEF 4 projects – "Prevention, Control and Management of Invasive Alien Species in the Pacific Islands (9 countries)" and "Implementing the Island Biodiversity Programme – Cook Islands, Nauru, Tonga, Tuvalu. We also implemented a GEF 4 Kiribati National Project "Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA)."

- iv. The terminal review of the three above projects is currently underway. The main findings and lessons learnt of all three projects will be compiled, published and circulated.
  - v. A Joint Preparatory Meeting for the CBD and CITES Conferences of the Parties, hosted by SPREP with the CBD and CITES Convention Secretariats was held in Samoa in 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> August, 2016. These joint preparatory meetings for Biodiversity MEA's was first piloted in the Pacific in 2014 and in 2016 is being held in 5 regions around the world.
- d. Managing chemicals and waste – UNEP is a partner in the development and implementation of the Cleaner Pacific 2025 Framework approved at the 26<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting.
- i. UNEP continues to implement with SPREP the "GEFPAS POPs Release Reduction Project, 2013-2018" and the "Stockholm Convention Global POPs Monitoring Plan, 2015-2018."
  - ii. UNEP is commencing the process of assisting countries with updating the National Implementing Plans (NIPs) for the waste related Conventions – Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm
  - iii. UNEP has started to assist countries with "the Regional Minamata Convention Mercury Initial Assessments (MIA) Phase 1 – 2016-2018 covering Cook Islands, Kiribati, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu. A phase 2 covering FSM, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Niue is planned for 2018. UNEP is also supporting Papua New Guinea's Mercury Initial Assessment.
  - iv. UNEP is in consultation with SPREP to submit a medium sized project under GEF 6 to address marine litter and marine plastics.
  - v. Countries continue to be assisted with national implementation of the Montreal Protocol through UNEP's Ozonaction programme. In addition to funding national officers and activities, UNEP co-hosted with Fiji three regional events under this programme in 2016
    - a. Regional Asia/Pacific Ozone Officers Networks and Thematic Workshop on Survey of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) Alternatives 14-20 June, 2016.
    - b. Australian funded Refrigeration and Air-conditioning Technology Summit on Longer Term Energy Efficient Ozone and Climate Friendly Alternatives 16-18 June
    - c. European Union funded Train the trainer Workshops on Good Servicing Practices for Longer Term Alternatives, 20 June – 1<sup>st</sup> July. The Fiji National University has been equipped and trained to be a regional hub.
- e. 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.
- i. The nexus between environment and health are primarily addressed through activities to address Priority IV and includes waste and chemicals management, pollution prevention and the phase out of ODS.
  - ii. UNEP has developed low-cost air quality monitoring kits that could be included as part of the regional GEF Capacity Building Project (see Priority VII).

- f. Strengthening science-policy linkages – Continuing support to countries in strengthening capacity for environmental assessment, monitoring and reporting of national plans through the EU funded African Caribbean Pacific Multilateral Environmental Agreements (ACP MEAs) Capacity Building Project.
  - i. Assistance is provided to countries on request with formulation of State of Environment Reports, National Environment Management Plans and also with Environmental Impact Assessment training.
  - ii. The SCP Fiji workshop will assist UNEP to assess priorities for support to Fiji's environmental data assessment, monitoring and reporting
- g. Strengthen governance for delivery of the SDGs – The UN is providing coordinated support to countries through its three United Nations Country Teams based in Fiji, Samoa and PNG and is currently formulating its "UN Pacific Strategy." We are also coordinating support with the CROP agencies through the CROP Working Groups and regional partnerships.
  - i. UNEP is partnering with UNDP to assist Samoa with its SDG implementation planning building on Samoa's first voluntary report to the High Level Political Forum submitted in June 2016.
  - ii. Samoa is one of the pilot countries selected for the global roll-out of the UNEP Live and Indicator Resource Information System (IRIS) and funding has just been approved from the EU to further support the linkages to SDGs.
  - iii. Countries will be supported to establish national environmental databases through the GEF 5 MEA Capacity Building Project that was approved by the GEF Council in July and is now in the process of GEF CEO endorsement. This will be implemented with SPREP and will regionally roll out UNEP Live and IRIS being tested and adjusted to suit the Pacific through the Samoa pilot.
7. UNEP has also been in consultation with SPREP and other Pacific partners to develop a number of other project concepts to implement the strategic priorities including oceans planning and management; coral reef management; green/blue economy; SAMOA Pathway governance and implementation Arrangements; ODS destruction; ecosystem based adaptation and management (urban and coastal); energy efficiency and sustainable tourism. UNEP will be employing a consultant for 6 months to assist with this work. The related UNEA 2 resolutions will also be integral to these concepts
8. Recommended Changes to Strategic Priorities - During implementation we found 4 of the strategic priorities closely related and difficult to separate. It is recommended that in line with the integrated nature of SDGs that the regional priorities IV and V be merged and called "Managing chemicals and waste and developing integrated approaches to environment and health." Likewise it is also recommended to merge priorities VI and VII and call it "Strengthen governance for delivery of the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway including promoting science-policy linkages." Our five revised strategic priorities are:
  - a. Addressing climate change and enhancing resilience
  - b. Decoupling economic growth from resource use and pollution
  - c. Maintaining biodiversity and sustainable provision of ecosystem services
  - d. Managing chemicals and waste and developing integrated approaches to environment and health.
  - e. Strengthen governance for delivery of the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway including promoting science-policy linkages.

## Outcomes of UNEA 2

9. The second session of the UN Environment Assembly was held in Nairobi, Kenya 23-27 May 2016, under the theme "Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". More than two thousand delegates from 174 countries, 120 at the ministerial level, took part in UNEA-2 and associated side events on issues of global importance, including the Sustainable Innovation Expo and the Science-Policy Forum. Seven Pacific island countries were represented at UNEA 2 with Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga represented at the ministerial level and Fiji and Marshall Islands by senior officials. SPREP was represented by the Director General. The Samoa Pathway Resolution was one of 25 Resolutions that were agreed at UNEA 2 that are listed in Annex 1.
10. Samoa should be congratulated for the effective leadership role it took in guiding this resolution through the negotiations during the preparatory phase and during UNEA 2. They effectively coordinated with other SIDS regions utilising the SIDS networks within the New York based Permanent Missions to the UN as well as with other key countries and groupings. Resolution 2/4 on the "Role, functions and modalities for United Nations Environment Programme implementation of the SAMOA Pathway as a means of facilitating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals" encourages Member States to support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, particularly through partnerships on issues of importance to SIDS such as financing, trade, technology transfer, capacity-building and institutional support. It also requests UNEP's Executive Director:
  - a. To incorporate it into UNEP's Medium-term Strategy and its ongoing programme of work with an emphasis on partnerships, technology transfer, capacity-building, institutional support, monitoring, reporting and evaluation;
  - b. To enhance the provision of strategic and targeted support in areas covered by the environmental dimension of the SAMOA Pathway, including sustainable tourism;
  - c. To facilitate learning, exchange of information, and North-South and South-South cooperation between SIDS, regions and other developing countries, particularly on approaches such as sustainable consumption and production patterns and resource efficiency;
  - d. To build national and sub-regional capacity for reporting against the SAMOA Pathway and the Sustainable Development Goals, linking it to UNEP-Live and utilizing the UNEP's Indicator Reporting Information System (IRIS);
  - e. To support SIDS in actions to implement the SAMOA Pathway that will also contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
11. Steps taken by UNEP to support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway resolution include incorporation of its environmental dimensions into UNEP's new Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021 approved at UNEA 2 and specific actions to assist SIDS which are part of our ongoing programme of work. UNEP's Pacific focus will be on activities and resource mobilisation to build capacity, enhance access to finance, facilitate technology transfer and promote sustainable consumption and production. UNEP will also support integrated programmes to build national and sub-regional capacity for reporting to the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs that utilizes UNEP Live and IRIS through the Samoa pilot project and its regional rollout through the GEF 5 Capacity Building Project.
12. We are partners in Pacific partnerships to assist countries to implement the SAMOA Pathway contributing to the achievement of SDGs. We are also working together with other regional partners to formulate project concepts aimed at assisting countries with SAMOA Pathway and SDGs implementation.

13. Resolution 2/5 on "Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" sets out the framework in which the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP will integrate its contribution to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Environment Assembly's framework of cooperation to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda include the commitment contribute to the effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda in an integrated manner and to submit to the High-level Political Forum on a regular basis the main outcomes of its sessions and calls for the development of regular reporting on the contribution by UNEP to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
14. Resolution 2/6 on "Supporting the Paris Agreement" recognises climate change as one of the greatest challenges of our time, that continues to be a major driver of environmental action and threatens the attainment of global sustainable development. In addition to risks estimated on the basis of different temperature increase scenarios, the relationship between climate change and crucial aspects of human wellbeing, such as personal safety, health and nutrition, which are addressed in the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals 2, 3 and 11, among others, are better understood now than ever before.
15. The three resolutions related to marine and oceans issues are of specific interest to Pacific island countries providing guidance in the lead up to the Global Conference on SDG 14 to be co-hosted by Fiji in mid- 2017.
  - a. Resolution 2/10 on "Oceans and Seas", calls for cooperation among relevant fora in implementation of and reporting on SDG14; designation and active management of marine protected areas and other effective spatial management measures; and application of the ecosystem approach in marine management; and requests UNEP to assist countries in this regard, including through the Regional Seas, expansion of the regional seas programme and enhanced coordination, information sharing and communication across regions, in line with the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2017-2020.
  - b. Resolution 2/11 on "Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics", encourages product manufacturers and others to consider the lifecycle environmental impacts of products containing microbeads and compostable polymers, including possible downstream impact and requests UNEP to assess the effectiveness of governance strategies and approaches to combat marine plastic litter and microplastics, identify how to address gaps, and to help develop and implement national and regional action plans to target marine litter, with emphasis on those regions that are the largest sources.
  - c. Resolution 2/12 on "Sustainable Coral Reefs Management", calls for initiatives, cooperation and commitments to conserve and sustainably manage coral reef and mangrove forests; recognizes that education, capacity-building and knowledge transfer are crucial; and encourages integrated, ecosystem-based and comprehensive approaches including partnerships with industry, as well as establishment of MPAs and other spatial and sectoral approaches, to enhance climate change resilience and the development of indicators and support towards assessment of coral reef status and trends through the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN). A follow up meeting to further consider the implementation of this resolution was hosted by Indonesia (the proponent of this resolution) in June 2016 in Manado, North Sulawesi and was attended by Fiji and Tonga.



16. On the 13 May 2016, the UN General Assembly elected Mr Erik Solheim of Norway as Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for a four-year term. Mr Solheim was formally introduced to members at UNEA 2. Mr. Solheim was previously Chair of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and served as UNEP's Special Envoy for environment, conflict and disaster. Known as the 'green' politician, he held the combined portfolio of Norway's Minister of the Environment and International Development from 2007 to 2012, and served as Minister of International Development from 2005 to 2007.

### Preparations for UNEA 3

17. Resolution 2/22 on the "Review of the cycle of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme", decided that UNEA will hold its regular sessions in odd numbered years commencing with its third session in 2017. The cycle also applies to the open-ended session of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). The third session of UNEA (UNEA-3) will be held in Nairobi, Kenya from the 4th -6th December, 2017. The Assembly will be preceded by the Third Open-Ended Meeting of CPR which is scheduled for Wednesday 29 November 2017 to Friday 1 December 2017. The Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum will take place from Saturday 2 to Sunday 3 December 2017.
18. The inter-sessional preparatory process for UNEA is carried out primarily through the CPR. Only two Pacific Island Countries are members of the CPR by designating their Permanent Representatives to UNEP; Fiji has designated its Ambassador to Ethiopia and Samoa has designated its Permanent Representative to the UN, based in New York. UNEP Member States are encouraged to accredit their Permanent Representative to UNEP so that they can be fully engaged in the inter-sessional preparatory process leading to UNEA-3.
19. To follow up on one of the UNEA-2 resolutions 'Role and Functions of the Regional Forums of Ministers of Environment and Environment Authorities', UNEP is planning to organize the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific tentatively scheduled on 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2017. UNEP looks forward to continued support and active engagement of Pacific countries and will be welcoming your guidance on agenda in the preparations for the Forum.

### Recommendations

20. The Meeting is invited to:
- **note** with appreciation the progress in the status of implementation of the strategic priorities for the UNEP Pacific Office and the UNEP SPREP Partnership;
  - **endorse** the recommended changes to the strategic priorities merging priorities IV with V and VI with VII respectively;
  - **note** the outcomes of UNEA 2 and the steps taken to follow up on implementation especially the relevant resolutions;
  - **convey** appreciation and congratulations to Samoa for its effective leadership in guiding the SAMOA Pathway Resolution through to successful adoption at UNEA 2;
  - **urge** members to note the dates for UNEA 3, OECPR-3 and Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and fully engage with the preparatory process for UNEA 3 including proposing priorities and themes for the UNEA-3, accredit their Permanent Representatives to UNEP and attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific; and
  - **convey** its congratulations through the Chair of SPREP to Mr Eric Solheim on his election as the Executive Director of UNEP and our commitment to continued strengthening of our partnership with UNEP under his leadership.