

Twenty Eighth SPREP Meeting of Officials

Apia, Samoa
19 – 21st September 2017

Agenda Item: 14.1: Framework for Pacific Regionalism

Purpose

1. The purpose of the paper is to update Members on the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

Background

2. In 2013, a review of the *Pacific Plan* led by Sir Mekere Morauta, former Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, assessed the effectiveness of the *Pacific Plan* and whether it continued to deliver on deeper regional integration and cooperation. In May 2014, a Special Leaders Retreat of the Pacific Islands Forum considered the recommendations of the *Pacific Plan Review*. A key decision was the re-casting of the Pacific Plan as the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR).
3. The FPR was adopted by the Forum Leaders Meeting in 2014. The Framework sets out a range of options for pursuing regionalism, including coordination, cooperation, collaboration, harmonisation, economic integration, and institutional integration. The FPR also establishes a new process of regional prioritisation by Leaders. SPREP's new Strategic Plan approved in last year's SPREP Meeting embeds the principles of the FPR within SPREP, and commits SPREP to working with the CROP¹ family to implement Leaders' priorities. The first 2-year Programme Implementation Plan presented for approval to this meeting (Agenda Item 7.1) builds implementation of Leaders priorities under the FPR and integrates the Small Island States' Strategy and Work Plan, into SPREP's work programme and budget for the next 2 years. Annex 1 records SPREP's actions in implementing relevant components of the Leaders' decisions (2016), Annex 2 records SPREP's actions in implementing the SIS Leaders' Decisions (2016).

Update

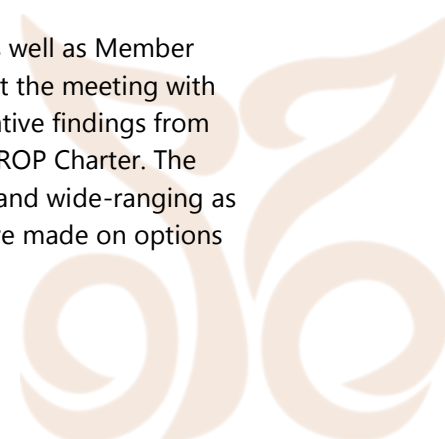
4. Since the Secretariat report to 27SM, the Secretariat has participated in:
 - the development of the PDP and FRDP process (See Agenda Item 6.7)
 - the PIFS-led review of the CROP Charter (see Agenda Item 14.2), and
 - further work on regional governance and financing (See below).

¹ The members of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) are: the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Pacific Islands Development Programme (PIDP), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), The University of the South Pacific (USP), Pacific Power Association (PPA), and the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO).

5. The focus of all this work has been the need for deeper and more participatory engagement with, and for, the Pacific region, and the establishment of a paradigm shift in regional approaches to development based on inclusivity. This aligns well with SPREP's mandate, strategic focus and commitment.

Regional governance and financing

6. Established by Forum Leaders in 1998, and guided by a CROP Charter, CROP (formerly known as SPOCC) is a regional mechanism that was developed to ensure coordination, cooperation and collaboration among intergovernmental regional organisations to jointly work toward achieving the common goal of sustainable development in the Pacific region.
7. With the recasting of the *Pacific Plan* by the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* (FRDP) in 2014, CROP's role within the regional public policy process, including in supporting implementation of Forum Leaders' priorities, has grown.
8. In October 2016, CROP Executives commenced a review of the 2012 CROP Charter to explore options to strengthen CROP arrangements in support of the FRDP.
9. In recognition of FRDP's greater expectations of CROP, CROP Executives developed a 2017 CROP Action Plan to guide focus areas for coordination, cooperation and collaboration between and across their agencies (see Annex 1).
10. In September 2015, Forum Leaders tasked the Forum Secretariat to undertake an analysis of governance and financing options for the pursuit of Pacific regionalism, in collaboration with Member states, CROP and its member agencies. The analysis explored how best to effectively implement the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and to identify opportunities for Pacific island countries and territories to achieve more effective leveraging of collective resources in support of Forum Leaders' vision for the region. Specifically:
 - (a) How do Forum member states link their regional priorities, determined at the highest level, to the governance of their regional organisations?
 - (b) How do Forum member states collectively ensure financing of the regional agenda?
11. Initial work analysed financing flows through CROP to understand how finance flows through the regional agencies over which Pacific island countries have the greatest influence and control, and analysed the collective governance of the network of regional organisations.
12. A first meeting of a Joint Steering Committee (JSC) was convened in July 2016 and provided the opportunity to engage participants (mainly officials from the CROP organisations) in open dialogue about the governance and financing mechanics of Pacific regionalism. The meeting explored potential methodologies for data/information collection to be used to support the analyses.
13. A second JSC Meeting, this time involving CROP Chairs and Executives as well as Member representatives was held in late April 2017. Participants were presented at the meeting with their first sight of most of the information gathered, and briefed on tentative findings from the analyses. Consultations were also held regarding the Review of the CROP Charter. The SPREP Chair and DDG participated in this meeting. Discussion was open and wide-ranging as participants reacted to the new information presented. No proposals were made on options to be presented to Leaders.



14. 3 key messages emerged from the discussions – the need for:

- high-level commitment by Pacific island countries and territories to whole-of-government coherence in engaging with the regional agenda to ensure consistent prioritising across all fora and at all levels.
- greater clarity on the expectations of Forum Leaders' decisions on regional agencies, including appropriate funding for priorities.
- greater alignment and effective use of regional resources – whether through CROP, donors or other stakeholders – in relation to Leaders' decisions.

15. PIFS subsequently developed options to strengthen Member ownership of, and engagement in, Pacific regionalism and presented these to the FOC and FFM meetings in the week of 7 August 2017. Ministers agreed on options including both improved whole-of-government engagement of Members, and collective governance of regional organisations. The results will be considered by Forum Leaders in Apia 4-8 September. Members will be updated on the outcome of Ministers' deliberations at the SPREP Meeting which is scheduled for 2 weeks after the Leaders meet.

Recommendations

16. The Meeting is invited to:

- **note** the process followed in developing recommendations to Leaders on the Framework for Pacific Regionalism; and
- **consider** the decisions of Leaders taken just prior to the SPREP Meeting.

29 August, 2017

