

Twenty Eighth SPREP Meeting of Officials

Apia, Samoa

19 – 21st September 2017

Agenda Item 14.2: Review of Draft CROP Charter

Purpose

1. To discuss proposed changes to the draft CROP Charter and possible implications for SPREP.
2. To respond to PIFS Circular No. 30/17 issued on 8May 2017, specifically:
 - (a) CROP Membership
 - *seeking governing council views as to the inclusion of their agency as a current member of CROP;*
 - (b) Proposed joint meeting between CROP Governing Council Chairs
 - *seeking governing council views as to the merit of a cross-CROP agency meeting of governing council Chairs, to strengthen whole-of-CROP governance, and appropriate meeting frequency, and*
 - (c) Ascertaining commitment to the CROP Charter
 - *seeking governing councils' in principle support for, and commitment to support, the revised CROP Charter, pending the Forum Leaders' endorsement.*

Background

3. The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders established the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP), in 1988 with the mandate to improve cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among the various intergovernmental regional organisations in order to work toward achieving the common goal of sustainable development in the Pacific region. In 1995 Forum Leaders mandated the Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat to be the Permanent Chair of CROP.
4. The CROP Charter was reviewed, in 2004 and 2012.
5. 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. At its core, the analysis sought to address how to effectively implement the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and posed two central questions:
 - (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?

6. In October 2015 the *Review of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) Working Group Mechanisms* by Jimmie Rodgers was finalised. The Review recommended revisions to the CROP Charter both in terms of arrangements and realigning the objectives of working groups to the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*. It proposed specific amendments to paragraph 13 of the CROP Charter, relating to Working Groups, which CROP Executives agreed to consider within the context of a broader review of the CROP Charter.
7. In November 2015 at their 38th Meeting, CROP Executives agreed to review and revise the CROP Charter. The review of the Charter would contribute to the regional governance and financing analysis, directed by Forum Leaders in September 2015.
8. On 22 March 2016 CROP Executives via teleconference endorsed the Terms of Reference for a review of the CROP Charter.
9. In response to the Forum Leaders directive of September 2015, the inaugural meeting of the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) was convened at the PIFS office in Suva, Fiji 21-22 July, 2016 and provided the opportunity to engage participants in open dialogue about the governance and financing mechanics of Pacific regionalism. Tentative consultations were also held regarding the Review of the CROP Charter.

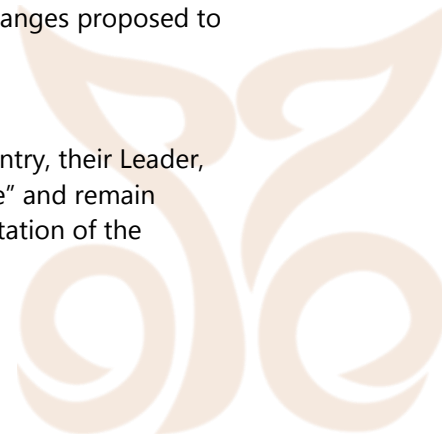
Review of CROP Charter: Purpose and Objectives

10. The purpose of the review of the CROP Charter was to revisit the role of the Council, and its membership arrangements, in relation to a prioritized regional agenda set by Pacific Islands Leaders through the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism* processes.
11. The overall objectives of the review were to:
 - (a) Identify the most effective arrangements, including membership of, for the CROP mechanism in delivering the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' vision for the region, as articulated by the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism*;
 - (b) Identify opportunities for greater alignment of regional resources to the regional policy agenda as set by Pacific Islands Leaders, in particular through the respective governing boards of the CROP membership; and,
 - (c) Identify opportunities to improve cooperation, coordination and collaboration among the various regional inter-governmental organisations to deepen regionalism in relation to the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, the Sustainable Development Goals, the SAMOA Pathway and other relevant regional-global policy instruments.
12. Four key issues were identified:
 - (a) An increasingly dynamic and complex regional landscape. While CROP is a Leaders' mandated coordination mechanism, the current membership represents a portion of a plethora of actors in the region.
 - (b) A more inclusive regional agenda-setting. The Framework for Pacific Regionalism introduces a more inclusive agenda-setting process for the region's policy priorities, within which CROP agencies' collective role is unclear.
 - (c) Engagement of CROP Governing Council Members. There is scope for member countries to play a more active and direct role in guiding the strategic focus of the CROP mechanism to deliver regional priorities
 - (d) Alignment of regional resources to policy priorities. There is still competition for, and fragmentation of, limited regional financial resources, and inconsistency in the application of regional policy decisions.

13. Consequently, the following key review questions were proposed:
 - (a) How relevant is the 2012 CROP Charter in addressing the issues outlined above?
 - (b) What are the most effective arrangements for CROP, including membership, in engaging with the Framework for Pacific Regionalism processes and priorities?
 - (c) Noting that there are a range of intergovernmental bodies where the Forum members form the majority, what is the role of these organisations in supporting Forum Leaders' regional policy agenda?
 - (d) What are the opportunities for greater alignment of regional resources to the Forum Leaders' regional policy agenda, in particular through the respective governing boards of the CROP membership?
 - (e) Consider the existing modalities for engaging non-CROP partners in the process of regional coordination under the Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals, the SAMOA Pathway, the Paris Agreement, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other relevant regional-global policy instruments, and propose ways to strengthen this the CROP Charter;
 - (f) Propose any amendments that might be made to the current terms of the CROP Charter in light of above findings.
14. An interagency CROP Review Team was established comprising SPC, FFA, USP, PIFS and SPREP.
15. A consultant to undertake the Review was confirmed in September 2016. A Questionnaire to CROP CEOs and Chairs was distributed on 6 Oct 2016 and a few weeks later the consultant began stakeholder interviews. A revised CROP Charter was written in December 2016 and reviewed by the Review Team before being submitted to CROP heads in February 2017. Following comments by CROP the Charter was revised by the consultant and circulated in March 2017 to the Review Team for comments.
16. The Draft CROP Charter was presented at the Analysis of Governance and Financing Options for the Pursuit of Pacific Regionalism: Progress Update & Second Meeting of the Joint Steering Committee held in Suva, Fiji on 27-28 April 2017. This was attended by the SPREP Deputy Director-General and the Chair of the SPREP Meeting.
17. Following that meeting it was decided that the Draft would be circulated to CROP agency councils for decision on the 3 matters posed above in paragraph 2.
18. It is expected that the Forum Leaders Meeting in September 2017 will endorse the new CROP Charter.

Implications for SPREP

19. The Draft Review of the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) Charter (see Attachment) is can be divided into 2 main parts: A to E.2 on the one hand and F on the other. Part, F, "Summary of Changes to 2012 Charter", lists the actual changes proposed to be made to the text of the Charter.
20. Items of relevance to SPREP from parts A to E.2 include:
 - para 13 - For CROP to be successful it is essential that for each country, their Leader, Ministers and government representatives to "speak with one voice" and remain consistently and fully committed to regionalism and the implementation of the decisions of Forum Leaders on regional priorities.



- para17.1 - the regional priorities, as determined by Pacific Island Forum Leaders, are discussed as part of the meeting agenda for each organisation's Governing Council and that where there are implications (financial and/or human resource capacity) on the relevant organisations work programme this is discussed in detail
- para 30 - while each agency develops an annual work programme based on the needs of its members, and as all Forum Island Countries are also their members, all are also ultimately expected to respond to the direction and priorities of the Pacific Island Forum Leaders
- para 54 - it is proposed that the CROP explore the potential for each organisation represented in the CROP to make a financial or in-kind contribution to the on-going work of the CROP

21. Items of relevance to SPREP from part F include:

- clause 6 - CROP will meet with Forum Leaders prior to and soon after the annual Leaders retreat and formal meeting to report on progress made in response to the Leaders' Framework for Pacific Regionalism priorities
- clause 8 - A CROP Deputies/Senior Management Group to be established
- clause 12 - Framework for Pacific Regionalism the main guiding principle for the CROP
- clause 19 - Leaders' decisions under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism to be implemented principally by CROP Taskforces
- clause 22 - CROP Executives will be accountable and report to their governing bodies on their membership and participation in CROP and on the performance of CROP in following-up on the decisions of Leaders under the Framework for Pacific Regionalism
- clause 24 - there will be a joint meeting, as and when required, between the CROP Executives and Heads or Chairs of the CROP Governing Councils

22. Items of relevance to SPREP from Annex 1:

- these are changes proposed from the 2015 "Review of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) Working Group Mechanisms" written by Jimmie Rodgers. Annex 1 is for reference only and does not part form part of the currently proposed amendments to the Charter.

Recommendations

23. The Meeting is invited to:

- **review** the revised CROP Charter;
- **confirm** the inclusion of SPREP as a current member of CROP;
- **approve** cross-CROP agency meetings of governing council Chairs, to strengthen whole-of-CROP governance, and appropriate meeting frequency; and
- **approve** in- principle support for, and commitment to support, the revised CROP Charter, pending the Forum Leaders' endorsement.

Attachment:

Draft Review of the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) Charter, April 2017.

18 August, 2017

