



## PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

### COUNCIL OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE PACIFIC FORTY-THIRD MEETING

SPC Headquarters  
Noumea, New Caledonia  
28 July 2017

#### FINAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING

##### Welcoming Remarks/Progress of Actions from 42<sup>nd</sup> CROP

1. The CROP Executives 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting was convened at the Pacific Community's (SPC) Headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia. The meeting was chaired by the Secretary General PIFS and attended by the: Director-General SPC and staff; Director-General SPREP; General Manager SPTO and PIFS and USP staff. The Deputy Director General FFA, General Manager PASO, and Vice-Chancellor and President USP participated via teleconference. PPA and PIDP provided apologies.
2. CROP Executives congratulated SPC on its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a successful 10<sup>th</sup> SPC Conference. They expressed appreciation for SPC's hospitality.
3. The Chair welcomed CROP Executives, CROP representatives and accompanying colleagues to the 43<sup>rd</sup> CROP meeting, and confirmed the agenda. A discussion of regional aviation and support for the Republic of Marshall Islands' National Nuclear Commission were added to Other Business.
4. CROP Executives confirmed the progress of actions from the 42<sup>nd</sup> CROP.

##### CROP Coordination and COP23

5. CROP Executives discussed agency efforts to date in support of COP23. CROP Executives **agreed** there will be a One CROP approach to assisting with Pacific island countries' preparations for COP23 and during the COP. They also **agreed** to offer support to Fiji as COP23 President and the High Level Champion. Executives **requested** that the Working Arm on Resilient Development (WARD) act as the forum to coordinate the support of the CROP agencies, under the overall leadership of SPREP in the UNFCCC negotiations process. They also noted the updates provided by USP on their work in preparation for the upcoming COP23.

##### Progress of the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF)

6. CROP Executives discussed ongoing challenges with programming the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF), including the reallocation of financing for regional economic integration and delays in facilitating CROP agencies' passing of the PAGODA assessments. They **requested** the Regional Authorising Officer (RAO) to write on behalf of CROP to the European Union **strongly recommending** consistent advice regarding proposed rebalancing of EDF expenditure, and ineligible expenditure. They **urged** the European Union to consider the cost implications and delays in facilitating CROP agencies' passing of the 7 pillars of the PAGODA assessment and **encouraged** the provision of additional capacity building to regional

agencies to allow them all to enter into co-delegation agreements with the European Commission (EC) in the future. CROP Executives **urged** the EC, through the EU Delegation, to continue to fast track regional programmes that have now completed the QSG2 stage, so that the majority of the programmes can get underway by the last quarter of 2017. They **noted** that SPC and FFA will not be in a position to sign project agreements under EDF11 until all issues regarding so called ineligible expenditure under EDF10 have been fully resolved. CROP will seek to meet with the Head of the EU Delegation in Suva to discuss this.

### **Current issues regarding the 2017 CROP Action Plan**

7. The Chair thanked CROP Executives for the good progress against the 2017 Action Plan. The Executives **endorsed** the establishment of the Regional Reference Group on Disability (RRGD) as a formalised disability taskforce under CROP for an initial period of three years<sup>1</sup>. In principle, Executives **agreed** to mainstream the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016-2025 (PFRPD) within their work programmes, noting the resourcing implications to be considered, and **reaffirmed** commitment to facilitating inclusive development in the region. CROP Executives will provide reports to subsequent CROP meetings on efforts to consider the rights of persons with disabilities within their work and across their network in the region, in line with reporting timeframes against the 2017 CROP Action Plan.

8. CROP Executives discussed key messages regarding the 2017 CROP Action Plan to take to their meeting with Pacific Island Forum Leaders on 8 September, 2017 in Apia, Samoa. PIFS **undertook** to follow up with the Government of Samoa regarding expectations and the preferred process for the meeting. The Executives **agreed** to meet in September in Apia, Samoa in the margins of the 48<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum to finalise key messages prior to their meeting with Forum Leaders.

### **CROP Perspectives on “The Blue Pacific”**

9. CROP Executives reflected on the 48<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum theme, “The Blue Pacific”, and discussed opportunities for CROP to be a resource during the series of Leaders’ panel dialogues. They noted that there is a high degree of misinformation on issues relating to Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) that is perpetuated by external stakeholders and sought advice on the composition of the relevant panels. Noting that no Forum observers have a formal role in MDA, FFA indicated the desire to assist panels and participate in the dialogue, where appropriate. PIFS **undertook** to finalise panel arrangements at the Forum Officials Committee from 8-9 August, 2017.

### **Other Business/ Summary of agreed CROP actions**

#### **(a) CROP Harmonisation on Remuneration**

10. CROP Executives **reaffirmed** their commitment, and that of their respective agencies, to the principle of harmonisation on remuneration, and noted the need to address a number of recommendations from the 2015 CROP Triennial Review on Remuneration. However, they discussed the practical and operational constraints that have so far made that impossible. They **agreed** to work through the harmonisation working group to develop a CROP position on the issues raised by the Review. Recognising that different agencies will require varying timeframes for pursuing harmonisation, CROP Executives **agreed** to progress the

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<sup>1</sup> This is when the *Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016-2025* is due for a mid-term review.

implementation of the Joint Remuneration Committee of Governing Councils through their respective governing councils by 3 November 2017.

**(b) Possible areas of support for Taiwan's regional assistance in 2018**

11. CROP Executives welcomed the availability of funding assistance by the government of Taiwan/ROC to support joint CROP initiatives. They discussed and **agreed** a proposal for funds to be allocated towards capacity-building of Smaller Island States (SIS), through short-term attachments with CROP agencies. They **requested** PIFS to coordinate the development of a joint concept proposal for submission to Taiwan.

**(c) Aviation Issues**

12. The Chair noted that the 47<sup>th</sup> CRGA raised the need for CROP to identify the appropriate platform for providing support to the aviation issues raised in the *Smaller Islands States (SIS) Strategy 2016-2020*. The Executives **requested** PIFS to convene a working group to develop a concept note identifying the various aspects of aviation support expected by the SIS.

**(d) Support to the Republic of Marshall Islands' National Nuclear Commission**

13. CROP Executives discussed plans for a CROP scoping mission to the Republic of Marshall Islands in the coming months, and noted that its National Nuclear Commission will advise of a suitable time. The Executives also recognised the opportunity to work with other partners, such as the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, once a plan of CROP support is developed.

**Closing remarks**

14. The Executives thanked SPC for hosting the 43<sup>rd</sup> CROP. The actions arising from the 43<sup>rd</sup> CROP are at [Annex 2](#). The Executives agreed to meet in September in Apia, Samoa in the margins of the 48<sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum prior to their meeting with Forum Leaders.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat  
28 July 2017  
Noumea, New Caledonia

## ANNEX 1

### Progress of Actions Arising from 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> CROP meetings

All agreed actions arising from the 40<sup>th</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup> CROP meetings have been completed, save for the following carryover actions relating to the 40<sup>th</sup> CROP of August 2016.

Relevant Paragraph	Action	Timeframe	Lead CROP Agency	Progress as at end June 2017
<b>Carryover Actions from the 40<sup>th</sup> CROP</b>				
<b>13 – Other Business (a) CROP Agency Mandates</b>	a) Executives agreed to update the 2012 document on regional climate change stakeholders, and tasked the Technical Working Group to work on an abbreviated version to climate change and finance roles and responsibilities.	Final quarter of 2016 – Revised deadline to be after CROP Deputies have met to discuss climate change mandate (first quarter of 2017)	a) WARD	a) Contributions to an updated document requested several times by PIFS since August 2016, with no feedback received. This issue was identified in the handover notes provided to SPC in 2017. With SPC now as WARD Chair, another attempt at redrafting the text can be made, for consideration. CROP agencies are invited to contribute to this text/refine it further as necessary.
<b>Carryover actions from the 42<sup>nd</sup> CROP</b>				
<b>7 – Review of the CROP Charter</b>	a) They noted PIFS advice that final endorsement of a revised CROP Charter would be at the Leaders' level, and <b>agreed</b> with the importance of socialising revisions	March – Dec 2017	b) All CROP agencies	IN PROGRESS - in principle endorsement for Charter revisions sought from CROP agency governing

	and recommendations with countries in advance of the 48 <sup>th</sup> Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting.			councils (CRGA, July; PPA, July; FOC, August; SPREP, Sept)
<b>14 – Progress Update: Analysis of Governance and Financing</b>	Executives: a) <b>agreed</b> to develop a CROP-wide cost recovery policy and a broader conversation with countries.	a) Throughout 2017	a) CROP Harmonisation group to progress work on a cost recovery policy through ad hoc CROP CFOs group	a) IN PROGRESS – CROP ad hoc CROP CFOS WG facilitating this work Harmonisation WG facilitating this work

## ANNEX 2

### Actions Arising from the 43<sup>rd</sup> CROP

Relevant Paragraph	Action	Timeframe	Lead CROP Agency
<b>6 – Progress Update: 11<sup>th</sup> EDF</b>	Executives <b>requested</b> the Regional Authorising Officer (RAO) to write on behalf of CROP to the European Union <b>strongly recommending</b> consistent advice regarding proposed rebalancing of EDF expenditure, and ineligible expenditure.	By 10 August, 2017	PIFS/RAO
<b>7, 8 - Current issues regarding the 2017 CROP Action Plan</b>	(a) Executives <b>agreed</b> to mainstream the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016-2025 (PFRPD) within their work programmes, noting the resourcing implications to be considered. (b) PIFS <b>undertook</b> to follow up with the Government of Samoa regarding expectations	(a) 2017-2019 (b) By 5 August, 2017	(a) All CROP agencies (b) PIFS

	and the preferred process for the meeting (between CROP and Forum Leaders).		
<b>9 – CROP Perspectives on a Blue Pacific</b>	PIFS <b>undertook</b> to finalise panel arrangements at the Forum Officials Committee from 8-9 August, 2017.	By 9 August, 2017	PIFS
<b>10 – CROP Harmonisation on Remuneration</b>	Executives:  (a) <b>agreed</b> to work through the harmonisation working group to develop a CROP position on the issues raised by the Review.  (b) <b>agreed</b> to progress the implementation of the Joint Remuneration Committee of Governing Councils through their respective governing councils by 3 November 2017.	(a) By end September 2017 (b) By 3 November 2017	(a) All participating CROP agencies, supported by the CROP WG on Harmonisation (b) As above
<b>11 – Taiwan’s proposed assistance</b>	Executives <b>requested</b> PIFS to coordinate the development of a joint concept proposal for submission to Taiwan.	By end September 2017	PIFS
<b>12 – Aviation Issues</b>	Executives <b>tasked</b> PIFS to convene a working group to develop a concept note identifying the various aspects of aviation support expected by the SIS.	b) By end October 2017	PIFS to coordinate PASO, SPC, SPTO to also engage