

Twenty Eighth SPREP Meeting of Officials

Apia, Samoa
19 – 21st September 2017

Agenda Item 6.5 : UN Oceans Conference: Outcomes and Next Steps

Purpose

1. To inform the Meeting of the outcomes of the UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (UN Ocean Conference), SPREP's support to Members leading up to and during the Conference, and next steps.

Background

2. The Pacific Islands led the fight to have an ocean goal included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development), and continued to lead the global implementation of this goal through the organizing of the UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (UN Ocean Conference). The UN Ocean Conference was co-hosted by the Governments of Fiji and Sweden and was held at the UN Headquarters in New York. The stated goals of the conference were to:
 - i. Identify ways and means to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14;
 - ii. Build on existing successful partnerships and stimulate innovative and concrete new partnerships to advance the implementation of Goal 14;
 - iii. Involve all relevant stakeholders, bringing together Governments, the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the scientific community, the private sector, philanthropic organizations and other actors to assess challenges and opportunities relating to, as well as actions taken towards, the implementation of Goal 14;
 - iv. Share the experiences gained at the national, regional and international levels in the implementation of Goal 14; and
 - v. Contribute to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by providing an input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.
3. In the lead-up to the Conference a preparatory meeting was held at the UN Headquarters in New York in February to discuss the format of the Conference and its key outcomes – the Call for Action, Voluntary Commitments, and the Partnership Dialogues:

- i. The Call for Action is a high-level declaration by global leaders on their commitment to achieving SDG 14.
 - ii. The Voluntary Commitments is a registry of commitments by governments, IGOs, NGOs, and CSOs on how they will work to achieve SDG 14. These commitments are time bound and have achievable goals to help ensure that they are achieved.
 - iii. The Partnership Dialogues were high-level discussions themed on the SDG 14 targets, held in parallel with the plenary discussions at the conference.
4. The Conference Preparatory Committee (prep-comm) was attended by SPREP and the other CROP agencies where we worked to support Members on technical and policy issues and to prepare for the regional preparatory meeting.
5. A regional preparatory meeting for the Conference was held in Suva, Fiji in March. High-level representation from the region, including leaders and the President of the UN General Assembly, CROP agencies and regional partners were in attendance. The meeting discussed the SDG 14 targets, reviewed the draft Call for Action declaration, and Pacific engagement leading up to and during the Conference. SPREP led on discussions related to the following priorities – integrated ocean governance, marine debris and pollution, marine biodiversity and conservation, and ocean acidification and climate change impacts on the ocean, including advising Members on key aspects of the Call for Action declaration. We also worked closely with partners on discussions related to marine science and research and support for UNCLOS and other MEAs. The Secretariat also provided logistical support to the Government of Fiji in helping organize the conference, and rapporteuring. Throughout this process and during the Conference SPREP worked closely with UN Environment to provide 27 technical briefings and multiple communications materials for use by all Members.
6. In the lead up the Conference SPREP and UN Environment engaged in a communications campaign using social media and media tools to raise awareness and understanding of issues and concerns, including developing a website to host technical briefings and relevant information. The Secretariat met regularly to strategize and plan attendance at key events, prepare bilaterals, identify new partners to engage with, and prepare circulars and other resources for Members. A Conference Survival Guide, a Compass booklet containing key information on the meeting and SDG 14 targets, and flyers were prepared in advance and distributed to Member delegations at the start of the Conference.
7. Key SPREP activities during the conference include:
 - a. **SPREP Side Event:** The Pacific Voyage - Our Ocean, Our People, Our Pacific. Side event focused on ocean pollution, ocean conservation, and climate change including ocean acidification. Key note speakers included Prime Ministers of Fiji and Samoa, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, Ulu o Tokelau (Titular Head), Minister of Foreign Affairs for RMI and Minister of Environment for Palau. Two framed photographs were gifted in person to the Prime Minister of Fiji and the Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden as the co-hosts of the UN Ocean Conference.
 - b. SPREP members also presented in numerous other side events related to our priority areas including events organized by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Wildlife Conservation Society World Animal Protection (through the Global Ghost Gear Initiative), and US NOAA (where we also secured a key note speaking opportunity for the Ulu o' Tokelau).



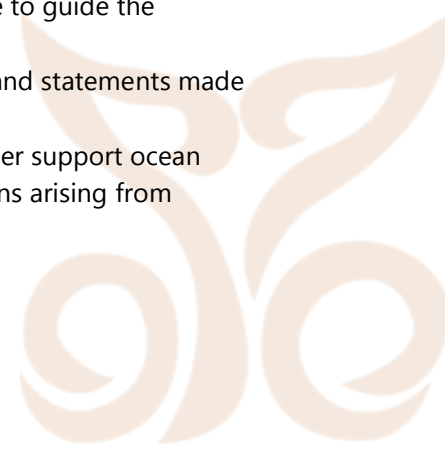
- c. **SPREP and Partnership Dialogues:** SPREP was a panellist for the Partnership Dialogue 1 on the theme "Addressing Marine Pollution". SPREP also spoke on Partnership Dialogue 2: Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems in Conference Room 4, UN Headquarters.
- d. **SPREP and Voluntary Commitments:** in the Ocean Conference Registry,, SPREP is a key proponent of the following Voluntary Commitments:
 - i. Cleaner Seas for a Cleaner Pacific #OceanAction15962
 - ii. Pacific Ocean Research Alliance #OceanAction15810
 - iii. Pacific Partnership on Ocean Acidification #OceanAction15798
 - iv. Protecting, conserving and restoring whale populations in the Pacific islands #OceanAction16006
- e. A comprehensive list of Pacific voluntary commitments and a brief analysis is provided in Annex 1.
- f. **Photo Exhibition:** Our Pacific islands, Our Ocean, Our Home. The exhibition was a joint partnership between the Government of Fiji and SPREP, exhibiting images from the Pacific islands taken by Stuart Chape. The exhibition brought 'Our Pacific islands, Our Ocean, Our Home' to the heart of the UN, linking the very essence of SDG 14 and the intrinsic value of the Pacific Ocean to the Pacific way of life. Exhibition captions under each image described the environmental context of the Pacific islands and were complemented by the words of Pacific Island Leaders extracted from the UNGA and the regional preparatory meeting for the UN Ocean Conference. Note two photographs from Fiji and Samoa were sponsored by the BIOPAMA project.
- g. At the conclusion of the Exhibition the photographs were gifted by SPREP as follows: five (5) photos of Fiji for the Fiji Permanent Mission; two (2) photos of Samoa to the Samoa Ambassador of the Permanent Mission; two (2) photos of Tonga to the Hon. Minister of Fisheries for the Tonga Permanent Mission; one (1) photo of Vanuatu for the Vanuatu Permanent Mission; one (1) photo of Palau to the President of Palau for the Palau Permanent Mission and one (1) photo of Hawaii to Conservation International in recognition of their longstanding partnership with SPREP.
- h. **SPREP booth:** Pacific Actions, Pacific Ocean, Pacific People Showcased. The location of the booth was next to French Polynesia and the FFA booth (Nauru) where staff of both CROP agencies worked collaboratively in promoting the Pacific. The SPREP booth disseminated brochures about the ocean work of SPREP, SPREP Strategic Plans 2017-2026, SPREP Annual Reports 2015, SPREP work on whales, including a 9-minute video on the Whales in a Changing Ocean conference in Tonga, SPREP bags, business cards and USBs with various information on SPREP. A SPREP database was developed of all visitors to the booth with business cards and written details collected, this will be added to the SPREP Environment Friends distribution list used by the Communications and Outreach Unit for sharing of SPREP news (as per usual practice). The SPREP booth was also used as a meeting place for staff and bilaterals, and for Pacific delegates to uplift their UNOC Compass.



- i. **SPREP media partnership** with:
 - i. Ms. Makereta Komai, Senior Editor and Manager of PINA/PACNEWS Agency; and
 - ii. Mr. Samisoni Pareti, Managing Editor of Islands Business International.
- j. The experienced media team worked alongside Nanette Woonton, SPREP Media and Public Relations Officer for daily coverage of the UN Ocean Conference. Articles were published daily in the lead up and during the conference. Pre-coverage in the Islands Business magazine will also be followed up with post UNOC coverage.
- k. **Bilaterals:** SPREP was also engaged in numerous bilateral discussions, including meetings with Republic of Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand Minister for Conservation, Sweden, the Ocean Foundation, UNESCO-IOC, IRD, UK Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Services (Cefas) and DEFRA, the Ocean Foundation, the Wildlife Conservation Society.

8. Key outcomes from the Conference include:

- a. The Call for Action from the UN Ocean Conference (Annex 2) recommended that it be endorsed at the 71st session of the UN General Assembly. An analysis of key implications for SPREP and Members from the Call for Action declaration and statements made by Members and partners. The Ocean Registry of 1374 Voluntary Commitments which can be found at: <https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/>. Portugal will host the next UN Oceans Conference in three years' time (2020).
 - b. Closer working relationships were forged with UN PSIDS Missions and government delegations, who were generally very grateful for preparatory drafts prepared by SPREP for presentation. There was also constructive collaboration with CROP Agencies.
 - c. Commitments to follow up on specific actions from bilateral meetings, including:
 - i. Further work with the UK to support action through the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme (CMEP). Clarity was provided on how the CMEP programme of work would benefit non-Commonwealth Members as well. UN Environment partnership would also strengthen the results of CMEP.
 - ii. Establish a working relationship and eventually an MOU with The Ocean Foundation <https://www.oceanfdn.org/> to support ocean acidification, an ocean science network and other collaborative actions.
 - d. Engagement at the SPREP booth resulted in direct contacts and concrete ideas for specific partnerships including research projects, learning exchanges, and programme development. Joining space with the FFA booth also allowed for better flow and integration of messages. This also resulted in strengthened relations with FFA staff and foundations for closer working relationships on fisheries and environment issues.
9. Next Steps for SPREP following the Conference include:
- i. Aligning our workplans and activities to help achieve our voluntary commitments, including use of the SPREP Blue Team in the new SPREP structure to guide the integrated delivery of SPREP's work on oceans;
 - ii. Supporting members in achieving their voluntary commitments and statements made during the Conference; and
 - iii. Building on existing partnerships and pursuing new ones to further support ocean work in the SPREP region, including new commitments and actions arising from bilateral meetings.



Recommendations

10. The Meeting is invited to:

- **acknowledge** the leadership and effort put forth by Fiji in co-hosting the UN Ocean Conference with Sweden;
- **note** with appreciation the support received from Sweden which allowed the Secretariat to support our members throughout the UN Ocean Conference process;
- **acknowledge** the logistical support provided by the UN Missions of Fiji and Samoa to SPREP for the UN Ocean Conference;
- **reaffirm** our commitment as SPREP members to achieving SDG 14; and
- **request** that the Secretariat work with Members to ensure that we achieve the commitments made during the Conference.

15 August, 2017

