

Twenty Eighth SPREP Meeting of Officials

Apia, Samoa
19 – 21st September 2017

Agenda Item 6.8.1: UN Environment - SPREP Partnership

Purpose

1. Provide an update on the implementation of the revised strategic priorities for the UN Environment Pacific Office and the UN Environment-SPREP partnership.
2. Inform the Meeting about the 3rd session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3) and its preparatory process

Background

3. This longstanding partnership predates SPREP's existence as an independent regional agency when SPREP started as a programme of UN Environment within the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Since then our partnerships have been governed through a series of MOU's with the current MOU expiring at the end of 2017. We are currently revising the MOU with a view to sign the new MOU at the 3rd United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 3) in December 2017. The revised MOU will incorporate the implementation of the strategic priorities for UN Environment Pacific Office and the new SPREP Strategic Plan.
4. As part of the implementation of decisions from Rio+20 to strengthen UN Environment, the UN Environment Pacific Office was opened within the SPREP campus in 2014 to mark the occasion of Samoa hosting the 3rd International SIDS Conference. The 27th SPREP Meeting revised and endorsed the strategic priorities of the UN Environment Pacific Office and the UN Environment- SPREP partnership.

Implementation of the Revised Strategic Priorities

5. The following activities have been jointly carried out in the respective five revised strategic priorities:
 - I. *Addressing climate change and enhancing resilience* - the focus is to assist Pacific island countries with access to finance and with meeting their national obligations.
 - We continue to work with countries to assist access to global funding mechanisms such as the GEF, GCF and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN).
 - We are working with Nauru, Niue and Vanuatu to assist in National Action Plan formulation.
 - We are working in partnership with the Governments of Vanuatu and Korea to formulate a CGF project for ecosystem based adaptation on Malekula Island, and have received formal request from Tonga to carry out similar project formulation for Eua Island.

II. Decoupling economic growth from resource use and pollution

- The pilot work and workshop in Fiji on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) data continues to bear fruit. Fiji is fully committed to the collection and analysis of environmental statistics for the formulation of national accounts under the System of Environmental Economic Accounts (SEEA) framework. This work is primarily supported by UN ESCAP.
- We assisted Pacific Islands Development Forum to 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.
- We discussed and submitted to EU a proposal to replicate the successful Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) regional project carried out in Asia and Africa that assisted countries with their SCP Policy frameworks, SCP National Action plans and SCP indicators. The EU was interested but currently unable to support but we agreed to explore again when resources become available. The EU also recommended we explore how it can be integrated with a green economy/circular economy approach.

III. Maintaining biodiversity and sustainable provision of ecosystem services

SPREP continues as the Pacific node for UN Environment's regional seas programme under the Noumea Convention. UN environment is committed to strengthening its regional seas programme and is actively working with SPREP to secure new resources. Together we have:

- completed implementation of GEF regional project on management and control of invasive species and continuing implementation of Palau's national GEF project on biodiversity conservation
- started implementation of regional GEF Project on the Nagoya Protocol to assist countries with its implementation. The inception workshop was held in June.
- obtained GEF approval for a project preparation grant for formulation of a second phase to the regional project for the management and control of invasive species.

IV. Managing chemicals and waste and developing integrated approaches to environment and health.

Together we are:

- implementing GEF regional project on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Reduction.
- implementing a GEF regional project on management of mercury for the Minamata Convention and a similar GEF national project for PNG
- assisting Pacific island countries through the UN Environment's regional Ozone-action Project to implement the Montreal Protocol for the phase out of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS). The project funds a network of national ODS officers and regional and national activities.
- formulating a pipeline of project concepts to contribute to the implementation of the Cleaner Pacific 2025 Framework endorsed by the 26th SPREP Meeting

V. Strengthening governance for delivery of the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway including promoting science-policy linkages.

Together we are:

- Assisting PICs to build capacity for implementation of MEAs through the EU funded Asia Caribbean and Pacific Multilateral Environmental Agreement Project. This includes national environmental legislation, policy, planning, EIA and State of



Environment reporting. This project is in its second phase and is currently negotiating a third phase.

- Planning an inception workshop in November 2017 for implementation of the recently approved GEF regional project to strengthen environmental monitoring and reporting. This project aims to establish national environmental databases and a regional network of databases.
- formulating a pipeline of project concepts to strengthen environmental governance.

Focus on Oceans

6. There was a focus on oceans issues in the lead up to the UN Oceans Conference. UN Environment Pacific Office and SPREP formed a focal "Blue Team" to coordinate our efforts to support Pacific island countries. This support was provided in the form of policy and thematic briefs for negotiators, support to the Pacific preparatory process and also a team that attended the conference to provide technical support to countries and participate and host special events. This was our contribution to the CROP agency, UN Agency and NGO partnership that assisted Fiji in its role as co-host as well as Pacific member island countries at the Conference. We also tabled a Voluntary Pacific Commitment on marine pollution as our response to the Clean Seas Campaign.

United Nations Environment Assembly

7. The UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, will gather for the third time in Nairobi, Kenya, from 4-6 December 2017 under the overarching theme of "Towards a Pollution Free Planet." Letters of invitation have been sent to all UN Environment member countries and Pacific island countries are urged to send ministerial delegations to UNEA to ensure the Pacific voice continues to contribute to global policy and initiatives.
8. The 3rd UNEA aims to deliver a number of tangible commitments towards ending the pollution of our air, land, waterways, and oceans, and to safely manage our chemicals and waste. All stakeholders including Member States, business, and communities are invited to make a pollution free planet a reality by 2030 and therefore pledge contributions and commitments to achieve the vision. The outcome of UNEA will include the following:
 - A political declaration on pollution, linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, to signal that humanity can work together to eliminate the threat of pollution and the destruction of our planet
 - Resolutions and decisions adopted by Member States to address specific dimensions of pollution
 - Voluntary commitments by Governments, private sector entities and civil society organizations to clean up the planet
 - The Clean Planet Pledge, a collection of individual commitments to take personal action to end pollution in all its forms.
9. The first Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment took place in Bangkok from 5 to 8 September 2017, jointly organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and UN Environment. The Summit is part of our Asia Pacific preparatory process for UNEA.



Recommendations

10. The Meeting is invited to:

- **note** the progress and planned activities for the implementation of the strategic priorities for the UN Environment Pacific Office and the new MOU being negotiated between UN Environment and SPREP; and
 - **urge** member countries to send ministerial delegations to the 3rd session of the United Nations Environment Assembly
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11 September, 2017

