### Report of the Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting of Officials and High Level Ministerial Segment

### Introduction

1. The Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting of Officials and High Level Ministerial Segment (27SM) was held from 19-22 September, 2016 in Alofi, Niue.

### Present at the Meeting were representatives from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, United Kingdom and United States of America. Apologies were received from French Polynesia, Guam, Solomon Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna. A full list of participants, including observers, is available in Annex 1.

**Agenda Item 1: Opening**

1. The official opening ceremony was held on 17 September at Millennium Hall in Alofi, Niue. The ceremony commenced with an opening prayer and blessing by Rev Vili Kamupala Viviani and was followed by welcoming remarks from the Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Mr Kosi Latu. The Director General's speech is attached as Annex 2.
2. The Meeting was officially opened by the Honourable Premier Toke Talagi of Niue. The Honourable Premier's opening address is attached as Annex 3.

### Agenda Item 2: Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

1. In accordance with the *Rules of Procedure of the SPREP Meeting,* the Meeting host Niue was appointed as Chair and Federated States of Micronesia was appointed as Vice Chair of the 27SM.
2. The Chair of the Twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting (26SM), HE Ms Jackie Frizelle representing New Zealand, thanked Members and the Secretariat for the privilege of serving as Chair in the preceding 12 months. The Chair of the 26SM noted that the previous year had been an historic one for the Pacific environment and that SPREP had been at the centre of many key successes.
3. Ms Josie Tamate, representing Niue, thanked the Chair of the 26SM for her leadership and took the Chair.

The Meeting:

* **confirmed** the Representative of **Niue** as **Chair**; and
* **confirmed** the Representative of **Federated States of Micronesia** as **Vice Chair**.

**Agenda Item 3: Adoption of Agenda and Working Procedures**

1. The Meeting reviewed the Provisional Agenda and the suggested hours of work.
2. The Meeting appointed a Report Drafting Committee comprising Australia, United States, Niue, France, American Samoa and New Caledonia to be chaired by the Vice Chair.
3. France conveyed apologies from French Polynesia. France also commented that working papers for the 27SM were distributed too close to the commencement of the Meeting and further noted that the full complement of French language papers were yet to be received. The Director General apologised to France and to all Meeting delegates for the delay in distributing papers and assured the Meeting that steps had been taken to ensure that the issue does not happen again.

The Meeting:

* **considered** and **adopted** the Provisional Agenda (attached as Annex 4);
* **agreed** on hours of work; and
* **appointed** an open-ended Report Drafting Committee comprising Australia, United States, Niue, France, American Samoa and New Caledonia to be Chaired by Federated States of Micronesia as Vice Chair of the 27SM.

**Agenda Item 4: Action Taken on Matters Arising from the Twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting**

1. The Secretariat reported, by way of a Working Paper, on actions taken against the decisions and directives from the Twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting (26SM) which was held in Apia, Samoa from 22-24 September, 2015.
2. In response to a request from Australia, the Secretariat agreed that actions arising from Agenda Item 7.2 relating to budgetary matters would be addressed during the Meeting.

The Meeting:

* **noted** actions takenagainst the decisions and directives of the 26SM.

**Agenda Item 5: 2015 Overview**

**Agenda Item 5.1: Presentation of Annual Report for 2015 and Director General’s Overview of Progress since the Twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting**

1. The Director General presented the *2015 SPREP Annual Report* to Members and provided an overview report on progress since the 26SM.
2. United Kingdom, France and Australia thanked the Director General for the report and congratulated SPREP on all the actions undertaken in 2015.
3. France acknowledged the key role played by SPREP in working with Pacific nations to mobilise and present a common voice at COP21 in Paris. France noted that many Pacific island Members had ratified the Paris Agreement, but that more nations would need to ratify the Agreement to ensure that it becomes a Treaty.
4. Australia said that it was pleased to be able to support the Secretariat’s activities through multi-year funding and noted two additional partnerships not covered in the report, namely the partnerships with the Australian Bureau of Meteorology and Griffith University. The Director General noted the strong platform of partnerships that SPREP has established with Australian entities and commented that these would be discussed in more detail throughout the Meeting.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the report.

**Agenda Item 5.2: Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER) on the 2015 Work Programme and Budget**

1. In accordance with the *SPREP Meeting Rules of Procedure*, the Secretariat presented its Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER) on the 2015 Work Programme and Budget.
2. New Zealand noted that the report shows the breadth and depth of the work of the Secretariat in 2015, but encouraged reporting against outcomes rather than activities which would lead to simpler reports focused on the difference that SPREP is making in the Pacific. Samoa, United States, New Caledonia and France agreed that SPREP's monitoring of results and reporting can be improved.
3. New Caledonia stated that the new SPREP Strategic Plan reflects the need for better measuring of the outcomes and results and noted that giving effect to this will require a changed mindset by Secretariat staff and Members as to how reporting is carried out. New Caledonia suggested that a summary report is sent to Ministers.
4. France concurred, and stressed the importance of the PMER highlighting the achievements of the year in concrete terms. France also noted that the delayed receipt of the Meeting papers did not allow for a more comprehensive comment.
5. The Director General noted that this would be the last time that the Secretariat will report in this format and that the new SPREP Strategic Plan,scheduled for discussion in Agenda Item 6.8,would guide the development of a Performance Implementation Plan (PIP) and associated Results Framework to improve SPREP’s results planning, performance reporting and learning.
6. With reference to the budget, New Zealand sought clarification on the reference to 87% of the approved budget being spent and enquired as to what happens to the unspent portion. In response, the Director General explained that the spending of funding depends on the time of receipt during the year and the time allowed for expenditure. The Secretariat further noted that some funds can be rolled over to the following year, while others need to be returned to the donor.

The Meeting:

* **noted** achievements as presented in the 2015 PMER.

**Agenda Item 5.3: Audited Annual Accounts for 2015**

1. In accordance with Financial Regulation 27(e), the Secretariat presented its Audited Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 December, 2015, and noted that the auditors had provided an unqualified opinion of the Secretariat’s financial operations for 2015.

1. Australia noted the issue of the current deficit and advised that further comment on this would be provided in Agenda Items 7.2 and 9.5. Australia noted that it does not owe additional funding under the 'extra extra budget' line. The Secretariat noted this clarification and thanked Australia for its continued support of SPREP.
2. In response to a question from New Caledonia, the Secretariat explained that a table outlining SPREP expenditure by country or territory would be provided before the end of the Meeting.
3. While acknowledging concerns regarding the budget deficit, the Secretariat explained that the core budget deficit is a common issue across CROP agencies and provided assurance that it would be eliminated by the time of the next SPREP Meeting in 2017.

The Meeting:

* **reviewed** and **adopted** the audited Financial Statements and Auditors’ Report for 2015.

**Agenda Item 6: Institutional Reform and Strategic Issues**

**Agenda Item 6.1: Strengthening Regional Linkages update**

1. The Secretariat updated Members on SPREP in-country Officers employed through the Pacific Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change (PEBACC) project, the signing of the Host Country Agreement with Fiji (and subsequent launch of the Fiji Office), the signing of the Host Country Agreement with Federated States of Micronesia and the current status of Desk Officers in Republic of the Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia.
2. New Caledonia noted that the sub-regional presence had enabled the Secretariat to provide dedicated and direct assistance in-country and acknowledged efforts of the Secretariat to reduce costs through the co-location of offices. New Caledonia emphasised that the Secretariat's sub-regional presence would become more crucial as it moved into a biennial SPREP Meeting format.
3. Federated States of Micronesia noted the success of the current arrangement in Federated States of Micronesia and suggested that additional Desk Officers, with specialties in different areas, would amplify this success.
4. Fiji acknowledged the value of the recent establishment of a SPREP office in Suva.
5. United States requested that the Secretariat provide details of the responsibilities and accomplishments of the Desk Officers to assess the impacts, benefits and resource implications of the trial arrangement. New Caledonia, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, American Samoa, France and Fiji supported this proposal.
6. New Zealand proposed a light study be undertaken to obtain information on the impacts of the Desk Officers, stressing that such a study could be carried out in-house to minimise costs. United States proposed that the study could be done without any additional travel required and United Kingdom suggested that the study could potentially be based on existing reports already available with the Secretariat.

The Meeting

* **noted** the signing of the host country agreement with the Government of Fiji and official launch of the SPREP Fiji Office in 2016;
* **noted** the signing of the host agreement with the Government of Federated States of Micronesia;
* **noted** that SPREP is finding innovative ways to reduce the costs of sub-regional offices including aligning to project activities and budgets, and co-location with other organisations; and
* **directed** the Secretariat to provide an in-house report on the roles, achievements, and costs of the Desk Officers and report back to the SPREP Meeting in 2017, and to provide advice on the need for, cost and proposed timing of undertaking a cost-benefit analysis of the Desk Officers arrangement.

**Agenda Item 6.2: Access to Climate Finance – Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund**

1. The Secretariat reported to the Meeting with an update on SPREP's delivery as a Regional Implementing Entity (RIE) for the Adaptation Fund (AF), Green Climate Fund (GCF) and associated climate finance matters.
2. The Secretariat noted its intention to continue to pursue programmatic approaches to climate action driven by country priorities, and continue to deliver key ‘readiness’ support for countries.
3. United States and Australia expressed appreciation to France for its support and leadership in organising and hosting COP 21. The Meeting recognised the efforts of the Pacific island community in building consensus for an Agreement.
4. Kiribati, Nauru, Cook Islands, Tokelau, and Samoa thanked SPREP for its support in project development and capacity building, and Kiribati and Australia expressed their gratitude for support provided by the GCF Pacific Coordinator. The Meeting agreed that building capacity within the Secretariat and Members is a priority.
5. Federated States of Micronesia noted that leaders endorsed the FRDP during the Pacific Island Forum meeting in Pohnpei, and that SPREP should therefore align its activities and programmes with this decision. This suggestion was supported by Cook Islands and New Zealand.
6. United States detailed several of its programmes dedicated to building capacity for participants to access climate change funding including ADAPT Asia Pacific, Institutional Strengthening in PICs to Adapt to Climate Change, and the newly announced Climate Ready programme.
7. The Meeting noted that as the only RIE in the region, SPREP needs to take the lead on collaboration, coordination and cooperation with other regional agencies and Implementing Entities.
8. Kiribati, Samoa and Fiji expressed support for SPREP's programmatic approach. The Secretariat noted that this will streamline its support to Members, and encouraged Members to work with the Implementing Entity that is most appropriate to their needs.
9. New Caledonia and Tokelau noted that as territories they are not eligible for GCF and AF funding and requested that the Secretariat consider other sources of support and to work to include them in climate change activities. The Secretariat agreed that efforts will be made to ensure that all Members benefit from activities being undertaken.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the issues raised, including the preferred programmatic approach to delivery, and provided feedback;
* **considered** and advised the Secretariat on country and/or regional priorities that it would like to see addressed through the AF or GCF;
* **tasked** the Secretariat to strengthen its own capacity to support Members' ability to access climate finance including through readiness support from the GCF; and
* **tasked** the Secretariat to compile information about existing initiatives to build SPREP Members' capacity to access climate finance.

**Agenda Item 6.3: GEF MSP Accreditation Update**

1. The Secretariat provided an update on the GEF Council’s accreditation pilot and the implementation of the medium size project (MSP) for SPREP to become an accredited agency to the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
2. Niue noted the issue of the shortfall of GEF-6 resources and reported that it is using its USD 3.8 million allocation to develop proposals with UNDP in order to mobilise resources quickly.
3. United States acknowledged the Secretariat’s progress towards achieving accreditation with GEF and expressed the view that such accreditation would be of significant benefit to the Pacific region in improving access to the fund.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the MSP deliverables and results towards building the Secretariat’s capacity to comply with GEF accredited standards and that the MSP will be completed by the end of 2016;
* **noted** the GEF’s Governing Council decision to defer the discussion on the future of the GEF accreditation towards the end of GEF-6, 2018 and that the Secretariat would follow-up and prepare its application in due time;
* **noted** the potential shortfall of GEF-6 resources and **encouraged** Member countries to liaise with their council representative and alternate representative to engage effectively on this matter and **requested** the Secretariat to monitor and report back to Member countries the decision of the GEF council meeting in October 2016;
* **considered** the programmatic approach pathway for GEF-7 programming by Pacific island Countries;
* **invited** Member countries to identify and request support needed to expedite full programing of their GEF-6 STAR; and
* **agreed** that the Secretariat must maintain improved capacity and continue to strengthen its function as an Executing Agency and Implementing Agency.

**Agenda Item 6.4: Pacific Climate Change Centre**

1. The Secretariatupdated Members on the progress of planning for the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) and reported on preliminary discussions about the Centre's potential role within the region.
2. The Chair commended SPREP for its vision in considering the PCCC as much more than simply a building. New Caledonia, Federated States of Micronesia, Australia, Cook Islands, United States, New Zealand, Niue, United Kingdom and France commended the progress made on the PCCC and noted the support provided by the Government of Japan and the Government of Samoa.
3. Australia proposed that the Steering Committee should include representatives of other CROP agencies and metropolitan Members. The suggestion to include other CROP agencies was supported by New Zealand.
4. New Caledonia, Federated States of Micronesia, Australia, Cook Islands and United States expressed support for the establishment of a Steering Committee to develop a governance and operating model for the PCCC and Federated States of Micronesia, Australia, United States, and New Zealand expressed interest in being part of the Steering Committee. France also expressed interest in participating in the Steering Committee, potentially through IRD or SPC.
5. New Caledonia suggested that the Steering Committee could be the same as the PRP and that a report could be submitted to the PRP meeting in December. Cook Islands agreed and added that the Steering Committee should work closely with working groups set up by the Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting.
6. New Zealand recommended tabling the PCCC proposal at the next meeting of the CROP Chairs and CEOs Joint Steering Committee on Governance and Financing Review. New Zealand further suggested that the Secretariat may wish to consider updating and strengthening the July 2015 business case for the PCCC.
7. Niue highlighted the need to build capacity on the ground and suggested looking at a 'one-stop shop' for mobilising financing and identifying how small island countries can be best supported.
8. United Kingdom noted that climate change is a cross cutting issue and that it is important to send a clear early signal about the PCCC's operational priorities. United Kingdom stated that it would welcome a coordinating role and recommended networking opportunities with universities in the United Kingdom.
9. The Secretariat thanked the Members for their enthusiasm, and agreed that the Steering Committee should to be broadened to include CROP agencies and metropolitan Members. The Secretariat also noted the importance of integrating activities with the FRDP and the PRP.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the progress of the Pacific Climate Change Centre;
* **endorsed** the role of the Pacific Climate Change Centre as a shared regional hub for inclusive collaboration to meet the priority adaptation and mitigation priorities of Pacific island countries and territories;
* **endorsed** the Pacific Climate Change Centre as a platform for fostering and enhancing genuine partnerships and collaboration for addressing the challenges of climate change resilience for the Pacific region;
* **noted with** appreciation the Governments of Japan and Samoa for their generous support of the Pacific Climate Change Centre, and requested for the Chair of the SPREP Meeting to convey to Japan and Samoa a note of appreciation; and
* **endorsed** the proposal that SPREP convene a small Steering Committee of Members and CROP agencies to drive the regional consultation on the regional vision, operating model, and governance arrangements for the PCCC, and to engage with the Leaders mandated working group process to elaborate on the Pacific Resilience Partnership to implement the FRDP.

**Agenda Item 6.5: Framework for Pacific Regionalism**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the progress of initiatives related to the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, noting its submission of two regional policy initiatives for consideration of the Specialist Sub-Committee on Regionalism (SSCR), its involvement in the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) led review of the Governance and Financing Framework for the CROP and progress made towards CROP harmonisation.
2. The representative observer from the PIF welcomed SPREP’s efforts to integrate the SSCR findings into its new strategic plan. The observer acknowledged that this process is ongoing and would require continued engagement by SPREP through the SCCR work and the Governance and Financing Framework for the CROP review.
3. New Caledonia, New Zealand and Cook Islands expressed support for the Framework, particularly for its principle of inclusive participation and its thematic areas.
4. New Zealand noted the challenges of resourcing among multiple CROP agencies and of aligning agency priorities with the Framework. New Zealand expressed the opinion that the timing of the two reviews is appropriate and timely given the development of the new SPREP Strategic Plan.
5. Cook Islands expressed the desire to receive clear recommendations from both reviews and requested advice on the implications of the cost recovery on Members. The Secretariat responded that the CROP CEOs had held initial discussions on harmonisation and cost recovery, particularly on a standard fee for services.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the update on the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and its implications for SPREP; and
* **provided** advice and guidance as per the above.

**Agenda Item 6.6: Sustainable Development Goals**

1. The Secretariat provided an update on progress made towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. France welcomed the engagement of the Secretariat in the SDGs, noting the widespread global consultation process used in their development, and hence their global applicability.
3. New Caledonia acknowledged the participation of the Secretariat in the Sustainable Development Working Group, and commended the work by this group, notably the development of the SPC bilingual database (NMDI) to record the monitoring of implementation of the SDGs.
4. New Zealand observed that many national development plans are aligned to the SDGs, hence with so much investment in the SDGs, SPREP should consider adopting the relevant SDGs into its results framework for streamlined reporting.

The Meeting:

* **noted** progress with the SDG process; and
* **endorsed** SPREP’s involvement with the delivery of the environmental dimension of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.
* **requested** the Secretariat aligns the SPREP results framework to relevant SDGs.

**Agenda Item 6.7: Priorities under the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape**

1. The Secretariat provided the Meeting with an update on current ocean priorities under the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape (FPO).
2. Australia, United States, New Caledonia, Nauru, Niue, Tonga, Federated States of Micronesia and Samoa thanked the Secretariat for the comprehensive paper and congratulated SPREP for its work in this area. Nauru expressed its appreciation of assistance provided to Nauru by SPREP in Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) negotiations.
3. Australia sought clarity on the meaning and intent of the term 'major regional oceans initiative', noting the need for securing a more stable funding base. The Secretariat explained that this recommendation was to develop a programmatic approach to addressing oceans issues and to secure more long-term or sustainable funding, for example through large proposals to the GCF and other major donors.
4. United States noted the many significant outcomes of the Our Oceans conference held in Washington DC in 2016 including both public and private initiatives.
5. The Meeting noted the recent creation of the world’s largest Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Hawaii and the second largest MPA in Pitcairn Islands and congratulated United States and United Kingdom for these developments.
6. United Kingdom advised that Pew will be funding satellite monitoring in the Pitcairn Islands MPA for the next four years and thanked SPREP for securing funding to support this surveillance.
7. In response to a question from Samoa, the Secretariat explained that the UN Oceans Conference will be held in New York, United States. The Secretariat further explained that the venue of the conference was determined by leaders and by the UN.
8. Samoa and New Caledonia expressed regret that the Conference would not be hosted in the region. Fiji clarified that while the conference will no longer be held in Fiji, the Government of Fiji will be co-hosting the New York conference with the Government of Sweden.
9. New Caledonia advised the Meeting of its collaboration with Cook Islands and Australia and stressed the importance of sharing knowledge with other states and neighbouring states sharing the same space.
10. New Caledonia commended the strong commitment for oceans shown by PIF Leaders at their recent Pohnpei meeting and Federated States of Micronesia shared the statement made by PIF Leaders in the Meeting Communiqué. New Caledonia further noted the initiative of SPC to propose to its members to discuss a regional agreement for cooperation among Pacific island countries and territories to support responsible deep sea mineral management in the Pacific region.
11. Niue sought clarification on which agency was taking the lead in providing technical support on high seas and BBNJ. The Secretariat advised that as the lead regional organisation on the environment it provides the lead on a range of related technical issues on BBNJ, but noted that this technical advice is most effective for Members when delivered in concert and close collaboration with the technical advice from the other CROP agencies

The Meeting:

* **noted** SPREP’s efforts to advance the interests of Members on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) and integrated ocean management, including through participation in the 2017 UN Oceans Conference;
* **encouraged** Member participation in the upcoming CBD-Sustainable Oceans Initiative (and Pacific Ocean Alliance) regional workshops on integrated ocean management and marine Aichi Targets;
* **encouraged** SPREP to collaborate with partners in the spirit of the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape, to mobilise resources to support the operation of regional activities and mechanisms such as the Marine Sector Working Group (MSWG) and the Pacific Ocean Alliance (POA), and to provide technical support in cooperation with the Office of the Pacific Oceans Commissioner (OPOC); and
* **endorsed** the Secretariat to collaborate with partners and coordinate with the OPOC, the MSWG and the POA to develop a major regional oceans initiative for substantive action on achieving sustainable ocean economies, balanced with conservation of biodiversity and mindful of Pacific cultural and social values, consistent with the Pohnpei Oceans Statement.

**Agenda Item 6.8: SPREP Strategic Plan**

1. The Secretariat presented the draft*SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2027*, as requested at the 26SM in 2015, for the Meeting's discussion and endorsement.
2. The Meeting acknowledged the excellent work of the Secretariat and all other parties involved in developing the *SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2027* and made special reference to the thoughtful and highly consultative process employed in its development.
3. The Meeting also applauded the strong emphasis that the Plan places on the issues of oceans and climate change.
4. Tonga, Samoa and Niue expressed concern that the plan does not include any reference to work in the realm of Ozone Depleting Substances. The Secretariat explained that work in this area is covered by the broader themes outlined under Waste Management and Pollution Control.
5. New Zealand, United States, New Caledonia, Niue and United Kingdom made suggestions for minor amendments to the text of the report, all of which were supported by Members and incorporated into the Plan.
6. The suggestion from United States made reference to the need for a balanced and sustainable budget.
7. Samoa made a suggestion for the diagram of the fale to include a 'foundation'. This suggestion was supported by the Meeting and the Secretariat agreed to incorporate a foundation on the fale that references Pacific island cultures and values. This amendment was also incorporated into the Plan.
8. Australia noted that it looks forward to working with SPREP in the implementation of the Plan through the provision of continued technical and financial support.
9. The Secretariat thanked the Meeting for its positive comments, guidance and support.

The Meeting:

* **adopted** the*SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2027*;and
* **directed** the Secretariat to work closely with the FoC to complete the Performance Implementation Plan (PIP) and the Results Framework and to report back to the 2017 SPREP Meeting.

**Agenda Item 6.9: Audit Committee Report**

1. New Zealand, on behalf of the Audit Committee, reported on activities performed by the Audit Committee during the period 1 July, 2015 – 30 June, 2016 as per the Internal Audit Policy and the Audit Committee Charter.
2. New Zealand noted that the Secretariat had received an unqualified audit opinion but emphasised that the issue of repeated deficits needed to be addressed. The Director General acknowledged that the budget deficit is an important issue, but also noted that the deficit had been reduced significantly in the past year and that the Secretariat was confident of reducing the deficit further.
3. New Zealand queried whether it may be beneficial to have additional members appointed to the Audit Committee. The Secretariat noted that this issue was being discussed by the Audit Committee.
4. New Caledonia noted that the diagrams in the report were useful and requested whether it would be possible for the reports to be shared more widely. The Secretariat agreed to raise this query with the Audit Committee and reiterated the fact that the Audit Committee operates independently.
5. In response to a question from New Caledonia about policies in place for fraud, foreign exchange losses and other issues, the Secretariat explained that a large number of policies had been developed with assistance from the MSP and that many of these were currently being trialed. The Secretariat further confirmed that a fraud policy is in place.
6. In response to a comment from Australia regarding enterprise risk management, the Secretariat stated that it is considering a dedicated full time role responsible for implementing a risk management plan as recommended by the Audit Committee. The Secretariat further noted that this responsibility is currently delegated to the Deputy Director General.

The Meeting:

* **endorsed** the report from the Audit Committee for the period July 2015 – June 2016, and **requested** an update to Members on the Secretariat’s response to the recommendations of the Audit Committee by March 2017.

**Agenda Item 6.10: EDF11**

1. The Secretariatupdated Members on the progress of the Pacific European Union Marine Project (PEUMP) and the waste management component of the Eleventh European Development Fund (EDF11) Pacific Regional Indicative Programme (RIP).
2. New Caledonia thanked the Secretariat for the information provided on EDF 11 for the overseas territories component of this fund noting its involvement in programming for this fund (regional authority). New Caledonia expressed its support in maximising implementation of these funding sources for the region.
3. New Caledonia asked the Secretariat if it was involved in discussions on how the European Union will interact in the region when the Cotonou Agreement finishes in the near future. The Secretariat advised it has not been involved in discussions on the Cotonou Agreement
4. Niue thanked SPREP and the European Union for the support already provided through the EDF10 PacWaste project, particularly in the areas of asbestos and healthcare waste, and looked forward to the continuation of this through the EDF11 projects being developed. Niue asked France to convey its gratitude to the European Union.
5. The United Kingdom advised that its commitment in the current EDF funding cycles (EDF11) include a 15% contribution from the United Kingdom despite the recent Brexit result and confirmed its continued commitment to the region.
6. France thanked Niue for acknowledging the financial support from the European Union and assured Niue that it will convey this to the European Union Ambassador in Suva. France further advised that it also provides an 18% contribution to the EDF11 funding cycles. France also welcomed the comments provided by the United Kingdom.

The Meeting:

* **noted** that although the EDF 11 project on sustainable use of marine resources, PEUMP, has been delayed, it appears to now be on track for implementation to begin in late 2017 or early 2018;
* **noted** that the Government of Sweden may contribute significant further funding to PEUMP;
* **agreed** to collaborate with the Secretariat once implementation begins, specifically to investigate the mitigation of turtle by-catch in commercial fisheries and to undertake a range of activities to promote ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change and conservation of coastal biodiversity; and
* **noted** the progress of the EDF11 Management of Waste component is on schedule to commence early 2018 with a continuation of stakeholder consultations throughout 2016/2017.

### Agenda Item 6.11: Update on the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management

### The Secretariat provided an update on the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) noting that the revised FRDP had recently been submitted to, and endorsed, by Leaders at the Forty-seventh Pacific Islands Forum in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.

1. Noting that successful implementation of the FRDP depends on the development of strong partnerships, the Secretariat sought support from the Meeting for the proposed Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP) which would be responsible for measuring progress, overseeing monitoring and evaluation, and developing a communication strategy for the FRDP.
2. The Secretariat, by way of a Working Paper, also provided details of a proposed tripartite arrangement between PIFS, SPREP and SPC to coordinate FRDP implementation and manage the PRP, thus harnessing the strengths and comparative advantage of each of the three CROP agencies to build resilience to climate change and disasters in the Pacific region.
3. New Zealand, Tonga, New Caledonia, France, Australia and Samoa commended the Secretariat for its role with engaging in the development process of the FRDP and PRP and acknowledged further work is needed to strengthen collaboration among CROP agencies and relevant partners to ensure successful implementation of the Framework.
4. Australia noted that Pacific Island Forum Leaders tasked PIFS with coordinating with agencies partners and stakeholders to progress the working group for the FRDP.
5. Some Members noted that the PCCC could be a platform to link strategies and coordinate efforts to implement the Framework.

The Meeting:

* **supported** the FRDP as approved by the Leaders Meeting;
* **supported** the Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP) as the new partnership formed under the FRDP;
* **tasked** the Secretariat to continue working in close collaboration with Members, CROP agencies and relevant partners in the implementation of the FRDP to ensure integrated good governance of the FRDP, and the best use of the region’s technical and political resources to build Pacific resilience to climate change and disaster risk reduction; and
* **tasked** the Secretariat to report back on progress to the SPREP Meeting in 2017.

**Agenda Item 6.12: Governance arrangements for Biennial SPREP Meetings**

1. The Secretariat, by way of a Working Paper, presented three potential options (with variations) for governance arrangements for biennial SPREP Meetings and invited Members to consider the options and provide feedback.
2. New Zealand expressed its preference for a simplified option that supports the reasoning behind holding biennial SPREP Meetings, notably to achieve cost savings and productivity efficiencies for the Secretariat. New Zealand added that the governance option must ensure that Members can monitor performance and enable important decision-making in non-SPREP Meeting years. For this reason, New Zealand supported the idea of an Executive Board noting that the Troika could still operate within the Executive Board and the Chair could be the same person.
3. France suggested that a board or committee should comprise sub-regional representation (Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia plus Metropolitan countries) with the Chair position rotating between the groups. France noted that these points assist with the current challenges of bilingual representation as it would enable Francophile representation within each sub-regional group.
4. Australia expressed confidence in a suitable governance mechanism being found and agreed with New Zealand that this requires principles to determine the governance structure needed and well-defined Terms of Reference.
5. United Statesnoted that an Executive Board would allow for a greater and broader representation of SPREP Members at discussions of essential items of business such as the budget or review of the annual work.
6. New Caledonia supported the suggestions of New Zealand and others to simplify the governance arrangement and expressed a preference for an Executive Board. New Caledonia added that the mandate and Terms of Reference for the chosen governance option must be endorsed by the full SPREP Membership.
7. The Secretariat, in response to a question from New Caledonia, clarified that the biennial SPREP Meeting cycle will commence from the 2017 SPREP Meeting in Apia.
8. United Kingdom noted that an Executive Board would bring multiple co-benefits, but that it should be a simplified arrangement with a clear mandate and Terms of Reference.
9. New Zealand noted that the Troika role is needed for consistency of engagement and monitoring, whilst the Executive Board role is needed for review and decision making. New Zealand further noted that Troika function is nimble and provides continuity in operation during both SPREP Meeting and non-SPREP Meeting years, and the Executive Board is more representative and has oversight and monitoring tasks in years between SPREP Meetings. New Zealand suggested that both roles are needed.
10. The Chair called for the formation of a Friends of the Chair (FoC) group - comprising Australia, Cook Islands, France, United States, New Caledonia, New Zealand and Niue - to meet on the margins of the SPREP Meeting to progress the discussion further.
11. The FoC reported back to the Meeting with a set of recommendations which were endorsed by the Meeting.

The Meeting:

* **agreed** to the establishment of an Executive Board (EB) to be the SPREP decision-making body in the alternate years of Biennial SPREP Meetings;
* **agreed** that the Executive Board would be comprised of the Troika plus 4 additional Members representing Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia and Metropolitan Members;
* **agreed** that the Secretariat, in conjunction with the FoC develop TOR for the EB based on the following principles:
1. A body to take key governance decisions in years alternate to the SPREP Meeting
2. Membership based on Member representation and equity, including bilingualism
3. A mechanism that is cost effective and sustainable
4. A mechanism that is flexible to include other membership as necessary
5. A mechanism that ensures that the Secretariat remains accountable to Members
6. Other existing governance mechanisms (Troika and Audit Committee) remain
* **noted** that the TOR should include rules of procedure including for:
* representation by sub-regions and metropolitan Members
* EB reporting to Members
* Initial review of the arrangement at 2019 SM
* **requested** that the FOC report the proposed structure and TOR for the EB to the 2017 SPREP Meeting and include a comparative assessment of costs relative to Apia-based SM and non Apia-based SPREP Meeting
* **agreed** the initial meeting of the EB will be immediately following the 2017 SPREP Meeting, thereafter meeting annually face to face taking opportunities of other regional meetings to save costs with back-to-back meetings as well as by electronic means.

**Agenda Item 6.13: SPREP and UNEP Partnership**

1. Mr Sefanaia Nawadra of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) updated the Meeting on the implementation of the strategic priorities, approved by the 26SM, for the UNEP Pacific Office and the UNEP-SPREP partnership.
2. New Caledonia thanked SPREP and UNEP for their collaboration and sought further information on the workshop on Green Economy/South-South Cooperation. UNEP explained that the workshop will fund seven countries to exchange ideas on green economies and that it is open to territories at their own cost. It was further explained that a series of workshops are planned, including one in the north Pacific.
3. Niue thanked UNEP for facilitating the GEF-PAS 'Prevention, control and management of invasive alien species in the Pacific islands' project and noted that Niue is looking forward to the next invasive species project under GEF-6.

The Meeting:

* **noted** with appreciation the progress in the status of implementation of the strategic priorities for the UNEP Pacific Office and the UNEP-SPREP Partnership;
* **endorsed** the recommended changes to the strategic priorities merging priorities IV with V and VI with VII respectively;
* **noted** the outcomes of UNEA 2 and the steps taken to follow up on implementation especially the relevant resolutions;
* **conveyed** appreciation and congratulations to Samoa for its effective leadership in guiding the SAMOA Pathway Resolution through to successful adoption at UNEA 2;
* **urged** Members to note the dates for UNEA 3, OECPR-3 and Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and fully engage with the preparatory process for UNEA 3 including proposing priorities and themes for the UNEA-3, accredit their Permanent Representatives to UNEPand attend the Second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific; and
* **conveyed** its congratulations, through the Chair of SPREP, to Mr Erik Solheim on his election as the Executive Director of UNEP and our commitment to continued strengthening of our partnership with UNEP under his leadership.

**Agenda Item 7: Strategic Financial Issues**

**Agenda Item 7.1: Report on Members’ Contributions**

1. In accordance with Financial Regulation 14, the Secretariat reported to the Meeting on the status of Member contributions as at 31 December, 2015 and provided an update on the status of Member contributions as at the time of the Meeting.
2. The Secretariat noted that outstanding contributions, as at 15 September 2016, amounted to USD 695,622 and clarified that the voluntary contributions of USD 21,478 were received as a result of the 5% voluntary increase decided last year.
3. France noted that Members’ contributions are a recurring problem, and that it’s unfair to ask for voluntary contributions, when it is generally the same Members who don’t pay their contributions. Rather than call for voluntary contributions, France believed that it would be better to find ways to encourage Members to pay their contributions promptly.
4. United States, Federated States of Micronesia and United Kingdom clarified their financial arrangements that relate to their contributions.
5. The Secretariat acknowledged points made by the Meeting and thanked those Members who had made arrangements for the payment of outstanding contributions.

The Meeting:

* **considered** the report and **addressed** the problem of outstanding Member contributions; and
* **committed** itself collectively and individually to paying current and outstanding contributions in full in 2016.

**Agenda Item 7.2: Sustainable Financing**

1. The Secretariat presented a report to Memberson actions undertaken by SPREP to achieve sustainable financing for the organisation.
2. Australia requested the Secretariat to furnish budgetary information early in the year to inform discussions on budget and further requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft budget for 2018-2019 to be tabled at the 2017 SPREP Meeting.
3. New Zealand reinforced the importance of financial sustainability being built into every governance and management mechanism at the Secretariat and suggested that the Secretariat provide a brief quarterly update to the Troika on performance against budget for core, reserve and project funding.
4. Niue expressed concern at the potential burden that additional reporting may place on the Secretariat. New Zealand clarified that the reports could be very brief and that, potentially, they could be considered as a temporary measure. France expressed the view that quarterly financial updates should be a regular occurrence, not a temporary measure.
5. New Caledonia expressed concern about the suitability of project-funded consultants to match country needs and context and requested that all projects managed by the Secretariat should consult national counterparts in the selection process of consultants.

The Meeting:

* **reviewed** and **noted** the update report by SPREP on Sustainable Financing;
* **noted** the progress made on measures to ensure a sustainable budget and **directed** the Secretariat, working with the Friends of the Chair, to further report to Members on options and actions that address the Secretariat’s core budget pressures, by the end of March 2017. The options developed will be considered and used by the Secretariat to inform preparation of the 2018 – 2019 budget where considered appropriate;
* **noted** that the Secretariat will provide a brief quarterly update to the Troika and Members on performance against budget for core, programme, reserve and project funding; and
* **directed** the Secretariat to complete the policies on foreign exchange, reserves, and cost recovery by December 2016 and to report back to Members on any exemptions to these policies.

**Agenda Item 8: Corporate Services**

**Agenda Item 8.1: SPREP Director General's Performance Assessment**

1. This was a closed session.

The Meeting:

* **noted and endorsed** the review completed by the Troika of the DG’s PDP for the period Jan-Sept 2016;
* **endorsed** the proposed draft annual PDP for the DG for the period Sept 2016 – Sept 2017 and request the Troika to work with the DG to finalise this Plan;
* **noted** the valuable contribution that members of the Troika provide in the work of the Secretariat through active participation and regular constructive feedback; and
* **approved** adoption of a 360 degree process as part of the DG’s appraisal.

**Agenda Item 8.2: CROP Triennial Review of Staff Terms and Conditions**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the Secretariat’s position on the Report of the 2015 CROP Triennial Review of Staff Terms and Conditions.
2. The Secretariat also informed the Meeting of key developments that have taken place within the participating CROP agencies over the past year, including an invitation from the Chair of the 2015 Forum Officials Committee (FOC) to consider the concept of a Joint Members Sub-Committee on Remuneration, and invited the Meeting's views and suggestions on this proposal.
3. The Secretariat noted that there had been no progress in the Triennial Review, that there was no longer a unified position on harmonisation and that some CROP agencies were considering withdrawal from the process. The Secretariat noted that it continues to be committed to the principles of harmonisation, although affordability and keeping up with the market are problems.
4. New Zealand stated that the current recommendations posed a difficulty as the recommendations of CROP Executives were not in line with the messages that New Zealand is receiving from its Governing Councils. New Zealand requested clarification about whether SPC was proposing abandonment of harmonisation, and suggested that the Secretariat should accept the invitation to join the FOC Joint Members Sub-Committee on Remuneration.
5. Cook Islands agreed with New Zealand and urged the Secretariat to continue work on this process.
6. New Caledonia noted that harmonisation comes at a cost, and that this needs to be considered before finalising a position.
7. The Secretariat reiterated that it supports harmonisation, but acknowledged that some CROP partners have had difficulties, because of their financial capability, and that this has been discussed for some time.
8. France noted the need to harmonise remuneration among CROP agencies, but observed that there is substantial competition, with both regional and international organisations namely, in terms of salary.
9. The Meeting agreed on the establishment of an inter-sessional Friends of the Chair (FoC) working group comprising Australia, Cook Islands and New Zealand, to propose next steps for engaging in the regional process for harmonisation of remuneration.

The Meeting:

* **noted** that the Secretariat continues to support the principles of CROP Harmonisation of Remuneration;
* **tasked** the Secretariat to set up an inter-sessional Friends of the Chair on next steps for engaging in the regional process for harmonisation of remuneration; and
* **directed** the Secretariat to accept the invitation from the Chair of the Forum Officials Committee 2015 to participate in the sub-committee.

**Agenda Item 8.3: Appointment of External Auditors**

1. In accordance with Financial Regulation 29, the Secretariat updated the Meeting on the appointment of external auditors, noting theterm of office of the Secretariat’s current external auditor will expire on 31 October, 2016.
2. The Secretariat advised that a tender had been advertised for the audit of its 2016 and 2017 accounts. Six tender proposals had been received and all six tenders satisfied the required criteria. The tender evaluation committee recommended that the contract be awarded to BDO Samoa for the financial year ending 31 December 2016 and then to tender again next year for the external audits for the two (2) years 2017 and 2018.
3. United States requested the Secretariat to provide more explanation on the selection of BDO Samoa as the recommended auditor to the financial audit for 2016. United States noted that the evaluation report stated that all bidders were capable of doing the job. Given this, the United States requested clarification on why the tender should not be awarded to the lowest bidder.
4. Following clarification, United States noted that the 25SM had recommended against awarding the contract to BDO in 2016 and expressed hope that this commitment would be honoured in 2017.
5. The Secretariat advised that the panel had considered recommending the lowest bidder for the audit, however, due to the change in personnel at SPREP it was felt that continuity was of prime importance.
6. In response to a query from American Samoa about whether the full proposals could be provided, the Chair urged the Meeting to base its decision on the summary information already provided.

The Meeting:

* **considered** the paper and **endorsed** the appointment of BDO Samoa for one (1) year only, to audit SPREP’s 2016 financial accounts, reiterating that BDO not be selected the following year and a competitive tender be issued for 2017.

**Agenda Item 9: 2017 Work Programme and Budget**

**Agenda Item 9.1: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division - 2017 Overview**

1. The Secretariat presented an overview of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division's work programme activities for 2017 in the areas of island and oceanic ecosystems, threatened and migratory species and invasive species.
2. The Secretariat also updated the Meeting on the outcomes of the Pacific Environment Forum which preceded the 27SM.
3. France thanked the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division for its important work, and applauded the initiatives planned, and already undertaken, for the Year of the Whale.
4. In response to a comment from France on the need for increased attention for marine turtles, the Secretariat explained that SPREP has maintained a turtle programme for many years and although this is currently in hiatus, the associated database is still maintained and regularly utilised.
5. The Secretariat further noted that the issue of turtles as by-catch will be an important component of the EDF 11 funded Pacific European Union Marine Project (PEUMP).

The Meeting:

* **noted** the 2017 work programme for the SPREP Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division.

**Agenda Item 9.1.1: Outcomes of the regional joint CBD COP13 and CITES COP17 preparatory meeting**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the outcomes of the joint preparatory meeting for Thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 13) and the Seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP17) which was held from 15-16 August in Apia, Samoa.
2. Tonga, New Caledonia, United States and New Zealand thanked the Secretariat for their work in this area.
3. New Caledonia and France expressed an interest in participating in future preparatory meetings for the CBD and CITES. France noted that an invitation to the meeting had not been received but that if it had, it would have most certainly been accepted.

The Meeting:

* **welcomed** the outcomes of the joint preparatory meeting for CBD COP13 and CITES COP 17 including the Pacific Voyage: One Pacific Voice campaign and approach.

**Agenda Item 9.1.2: Year of the Whale Update**

1. The Secretariat updated Members on activities conducted as part of the Year of the Whale programme and invited the Meeting to review and discuss initiatives proposed for 2017, including an exhibition at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Noumea and a major regional conference called ‘Whales in a Changing Ocean’ to be held in Tonga.
2. Tonga noted the economic importance of whales to Tonga’s economy and the exponential increase in activities from eco-tourism linked to whales.
3. New Caledonia expressed its gratitude in being able to host the whale exhibition at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Noumea and gave special thanks to New Zealand to giving this exhibition a regional perspective.
4. Australia informed the Meeting that Australia and New Zealand are co-sponsors of the forthcoming resolutions that will be introduced to the International Whaling Commission. Australia also advised that notable Australia experts will be attending the conference in Tonga and that it intends to report on SPREP's activities at the upcoming International Whaling Commission Meeting.
5. In response to a question from France about the processes set up for the conference in Tonga, the Secretariat advised the conference is a fully funded event at the technical level and that the Secretariat would be seeking participation from scientists from French Polynesia, New Caledonia and France.
6. Samoa inquired as to whether there are any strategies developed on minimising noise impacts on whales. Samoa further commented they would be interested in piloting such a strategy and noted the economic importance of this for eco-tourism. The Secretariat advised that the main noise issues are from large vessels and military applications, but sponsors are promoting traditional craft of electric motors (powered by solar) and small diesel (powered by coconut oil) which are useful for pilot applications and could be scaled up in the future.
7. United States noted its expenditure of USD 9.2 billion to ocean-related issues and the nine million square kilometres of ocean that is now protected by United States within its territory.

The Meeting:

* **noted with approval** the implementation of activities organised by the Secretariat for Year of the Whale, and agreed (subject to the provision of funding support) to ensure their representation at the conference, Whales in a Changing Ocean, to be held in Nuku’alofa in March-April 2017; and
* **invited** Members, supporters and potential collaborators, including the International Whaling Commission and the Convention on Migratory Species, to provide technical and financial assistance in the planning and implementation of 2016 - 2017, Pacific Year of the Whale, in particular for Whales in a Changing Ocean, to be held in Nuku’alofa in March-April 2017.

**Agenda Item 9.1.3: Revision of Marine Species Action Plans**

1. The Secretariat reported to Members on recent initiatives related to the conservation of threatened and migratory marine species covered in SPREP's Marine Species Action Plan.
2. Australia, New Caledonia and New Zealand expressed their support for the recommendations.
3. Australia noted that the Secretariat was seeking support to convene a regional workshop in 2017 or 2018 on marine species to develop a revised Marine Species Action Plan and requested a clearer picture on the development of the next Plan for 2018-2023, with budget options. Australia also noted that the Whales Symposium in Tonga could provide a useful opportunity to begin this process and affirmed its offer to provide technical assistance in the revision of the action plan.
4. New Caledonia noted that the National Museum of Biodiversity in Paris is organising a workshop on turtle nesting in New Caledonia. It expressed its disappointment about the recent visit to Noumea of the consultants appointed to provide a comprehensive report on ecotourism in the region, which they thought had been ill-prepared. They also requested SPREP to provide any relevant MOUs and protocols that could be shared on nesting turtles and to provide all relevant data on the Secretariat’s TREDS database programme on marine turtles and reporting network to help to provide a roadmap for turtle conservation in New Caledonia. It also suggested for SPREP to be involved in informing people of New Caledonia and assisting working groups on properly managing marine species.
5. New Zealand noted its strong support of the conservation of sharks and other vulnerable species and noted that the five species of turtle that frequent New Zealand waters are fully protected under the Wildlife Act. While recognising the constraints for Pacific island countries in becoming signatories to CITES, New Zealand supported and encouraged efforts by SPREP to increase membership. It also expressed its support for the reduction of marine debris and said that it is working closely with SPREP in the lead-up to the next meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission.
6. The Secretariat thanked Members, welcomed Australia’s offer of technical support in revising the Marine Species Action Plan and assured New Caledonia that it would be happy to respond and engage on their request. The Secretariat also recognised the support and effort of New Zealand and Australia in supporting Members on CITES issues, especially in the recent pre-COP meetings.
7. The Secretariat noted that there is an ongoing programme with Wallis and Futuna on invasive species and biodiversity and informed the Meeting about an upcoming visit to Wallis and Futuna, jointly with New Caledonia, and agreed to provide updates. It also noted the partnership with Noumea Convention and the upcoming meeting of Melanesian invasive species practitioners.
8. United States commended the conservation efforts of the Secretariat and valued the contribution of the Pew Charitable Trusts in supporting a Sharks and Rays Officer. It also supported the need to comprehensively tackle marine debris.

With reference to **dugong**, the Meeting:

* **noted** the engagement of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in the global initiative for the conservation of dugong and seagrass habitat funded by the Global Environment Facility and the Convention on Migratory Species.

With reference to **turtles**, the Meeting:

* **reaffirmed** SPREP's commitment to a programme under the EDF 11 PEUMP project, to reduce and mitigate the by-catch of turtles in commercial fisheries; and
* **endorsed** the Secretariat’s engagement in a new regional initiative on hawksbill turtles, led by WWF.

With reference to **sharks and rays**, the Meeting:

* **noted with approval** the progress made through the appointment of a Shark and Ray Conservation Officer and **agreed** that the Secretariat should continue to actively support Fiji in its proposal to list mobula rays on CITES Appendix II.

With reference to **International Conventions**, the Meeting:

* **endorsed** SPREP's increased level of engagement with the CITES Secretariat and **called on** donors and supporters to consider funding the establishment of a CITES Officer at SPREP.

With reference to **marine debris**, the Meeting:

* **endorsed** efforts to reduce the amount of non-degradable marine debris, in particular that which is generated by the fishing industry.

With reference to **regional cooperation**, the Meeting:

* **agreed** to encourage those government agencies of Members who have not already done so to approve the release to the Secretariat of the GEN-3 Observer Reports, held by SPC, on by-catch of non-target threatened species and species of special interest in commercial fishing operations in Members’ EEZs.

With reference to **ecotourism**, the Meeting:

* **agreed** to participate in the Secretariat’s review of ecotourism in Member countries.

**Agenda Item 9.1.4: Outcomes of the Nineteenth Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation**

1. The Secretariat provided an update to Members on the work of the Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation, with a view to informing the Meeting on the outcomes of the Nineteenth Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation on mainstreaming biodiversity.
2. United States congratulated the efforts of the Secretariat on its work on biodiversity and agreed that efforts should be undertaken in an integrated and comprehensive manner.
3. Niue enquired whether FAO was invited to Round Table and if they made a presentation on agriculture related work including the FPAM project. The Secretariat confirmed that this was the case.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the key role of the Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation as a coordination mechanism for implementing the Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the Pacific Islands region 2014-2020;
* **agreed**that mainstreaming biodiversityshould be an integral part of the revised and updated NBSAPs; and that it should be implemented in a more coordinated, inclusive and integrated manner involving key stakeholders at national, sectoral, and local levels; and
* **noted with appreciation** the outcomes of the Nineteenth Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation on Mainstreaming biodiversity.

**Agenda Item 9.2: Climate Change Division - 2017 Overview**

1. The Secretariat provided an overview of the Climate Change Division's work programme activities for 2017 in the areas of implementing adaptation measures, improving capacity, knowledge and understanding of climate change risks and reduction and contributing to greenhouse gas reduction.
2. Niue, New Zealand, Tonga, Australia, Samoa and France thanked the Climate Change division for its report and for its ongoing work in this important field.
3. Niue expressed the view that SPREP should be working to ensure that it is seen as the champion of climate change issues in the Pacific region. New Zealand and the Secretariat endorsed this view and noted the elevation and increased emphasis on climate change in the new SPREP Strategic Plan.
4. Australia noted the recent announcement from the Australian Prime Minister of AUD 300 million over the coming four years towards climate change related initiatives in the Pacific region. Australia further noted that a fundamental theme emerging from the subsequent consultation process has been the importance of coordination at the national, regional and global level. The Secretariat agreed that coordination is crucial and emphasised SPREP's willingness to work transparently and cooperatively with multiple partners to coordinate initiatives at a regional level.
5. Samoa expressed appreciation for the pre-COP training provided by SPREP, and noted the work and progress of the FINPAC and COSPAC projects. Samoa further acknowledged the assistance provided by NOAA on capacity building for Pacific Meteorological staff and the valuable assistance provided by the Meteorological Services of both New Zealand and United Kingdom.
6. United Kingdom commented that the United Kingdom Meteorological Services was pleased to be providing targeted support on upper air data to the Pacific region, and noted the importance of building predictive capacity to increase understanding of global climate changes.
7. France informed the Meeting of its involvement in an international working group that has been formed to explore the reduction of greenhouse gases in the area of marine transport. Niue thanked France for raising this issue. The Secretariat also noted this development and advised the Meeting of an International Maritime Organization (IMO)/European Union initiative that is looking at the issue of shipping and greenhouse gas emissions globally. The Secretariat advised the Meeting that SPREP and SPC have submitted a joint EOI to the European Union and the IMO and is awaiting an outcome.
8. United Kingdom advised the Meeting of an upcoming Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Association (ICAA) and urged Pacific island Members to bring a strong voice to this gathering, noting that a funding source for climate change mitigation projects will be created through the ICAA.
9. Tonga informed the Meeting of the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency located in Tonga.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the 2017 work programme for the SPREP Climate Change Division.
* **thanked** IUCN members for the adoption of motion 060 Pacific Region Climate Resilience Action Plan.

**Agenda Item 9.2.1: Outcomes of the Finland-Pacific Project on Reducing Vulnerability in Pacific Island Countries**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the outcomes and lessons learned from the implementation of the Finland-Pacific Project on Reducing Vulnerability in Pacific Island Countries (FINPAC).
2. Samoa, Niue and Tonga thanked the Secretariat and the Government of Finland for the FINPAC project.
3. Samoa noted the assistance provided by FINPAC in improving forecasting, awareness and early warning systems in Samoa. Niue also noted the benefits the project has provided including a new weather station, two metrological displays for awareness, a compendium and two village pilot projects.
4. Both Samoa and Niue commented that the FINPAC project finishes at the end of this year and expressed strong interest in a continuation of this first phase potentially through further funding from the Government of Finland, Government of Sweden or other non-traditional donors.
5. New Caledonia supported the comments made by Samoa and Niue and requested that lessons learned from the FINPAC project be shared with the Meteo-France service.

The Meeting:

* **noted with appreciation** the Government of Finland financial and technical support to the Pacific, the NMS and partners;
* **noted** the outcomes of the FINPAC Project; and
* **encouraged** SPREP to explore opportunities through a new project proposal to the GCF or other donors to replicate the lessons learned and address the gaps from the FINPAC Project.

**Agenda Item 9.2.2: Paris Agreement and Preparation for COP 22**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting, by way of a Working Paper, on the Paris Agreement and SPREP’s support for Pacific island Members attending the Twenty-second Conference of the Parties (COP 22) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
2. The Meeting commended France for its leadership in Cop 21.
3. France thanked the Meeting for recognising its efforts at COP 21, thanked the Small Island Developing States for support during the conference and praised the Pacific island nations for raising the profile of climate change impacts.
4. France noted the importance of Pacific island nation contributions to the success of COP 21 and, noting the ratification by seven Pacific island nations already, urged the remaining Pacific island nations to also ratify the agreement by the December 2016 deadline. France advised that the European Union is also very active on this issue and aims for all European Union members to ratify the Agreement by the end of the year.
5. France advised that its overseas territories will also be included through a specific contribution which indicates the high level of support France and its territories have for the Convention. New Caledonia has been invited to provide a list of activities it will undertake to meet this Convention by October 2016. New Caledonia advised that this information will also be provided to the Secretariat.
6. Tonga noted its past support for COP 21 and continued support for COP 22 and its intent to ratify the Convention during this week.
7. Australia advised that it signed the Paris Agreement on 22 April 2016 and is working hard to ratify it by the end of this year. Australia stated that it remains deeply committed to the Paris Agreement and actions on climate change and noted its continued support through capacity building of negotiators particularly for female contributors. Australia advised that together with New Zealand they would be hosting ‘Pacific drinks’ in Marrakesh this year.
8. United States noted their agreement with China to reach the 55 countries representing 55% of carbon emitters and their continued efforts to assist Pacific nations and other vulnerable nations to overcome the impacts of climate change.
9. United States advised of its pledge of USD 3 billion to the GCF and its recommendation that 50% of this is provided to more vulnerable countries, which includes Pacific island countries, and reminded the Meeting of President Obama’s recent pledge for USD 40 million to be provided in new programming to combat climate change.
10. United States also urged those nations that will be attending the next Montreal Protocol meeting to support the phase down in HCFCs which, if eliminated, can reduce global warming by 0.5 degrees Celsius.
11. United Kingdom advised the Meeting of its deep commitment to COP 22, stated that United Kingdom is committed to reduce its own emissions by 80%, and said that it expects to ratify the Convention shortly.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the information presented in this paper;
* **provided** additional comments regarding ways in which SPREP can support PICs to implement the Paris Agreement;
* **provided** additional comments regarding ways in which SPREP can support PICs at COP 22; and
* **encouraged** those in a position to do so to provide additional resources to support SPREP’s work in this area.

**Agenda Item 9.2.3: New Zealand Pacific Partnership on Ocean Acidification**

1. The Secretariat updated Members on the New Zealand Pacific Partnership on Ocean Acidification (PPOA) project and its efforts to expand the project into a regional programme with support from the GCF.
2. New Zealand and United States thanked the Secretariat and other partners and acknowledged contributions by the Principality of Monaco and involvement of NOAA, NIWA and others.
3. New Zealand and Australia also welcomed the recent progress on development of the GCF coastal ecosystems resilience programme of work.
4. Australia noted the involvement of the Pacific region in the Fourth Global Symposium on Ocean Acidification in a Changing World in Melbourne, Australia.
5. United States noted the wide range of activities it is undertaking in the area of ocean acidification such as the Argo (ocean buoys) programme, training personnel in management and monitoring of ocean acidification, and committing funds for ocean acidification response in ACP countries.
6. Niue urged the Secretariat, Members and partners to continue increasing Member and partner involvement in the ocean acidification issue.

The Meeting:

* **noted with appreciation** the support for the PPOA project from New Zealand and the Principality of Monaco;
* **encouraged** SPREP and Member countries and territories to prioritise ocean acidification monitoring and adaptation efforts under climate change, and to coordinate their efforts regarding ocean acidification; and
* **encouraged** SPREP to continue to work to develop the PPOA project into a full regional programme of work through support from the GCF and other donors.

**Agenda Item 9.2.4: Progress and Future of the SPCR Pacific Regional Track: Mainstreaming and the Regional Technical Support Mechanism**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the progress of work being undertaken as part of the Strategic Program for Climate Resilience; Pilot Program for Climate Resilience - Pacific Regional Track (SPCR-PR) components and sought the Meeting's support to ensure that mainstreaming work is further progressed in other countries.
2. Noting that the SPCR-PR components implemented by SPREP and administered by Asia Development Bank ends on 1 June, 2017, the Secretariat invited direction from Members on the Regional Technical Support Mechanism (RTSM) and how it could best continue to provide support to Members into the future.
3. Samoa acknowledged the support through the RTSM but expressed concern about technical difficulties with the online submission of proposals. The Secretariat apologised for the technical problem and advised the Meeting that it would endeavour to resolve the issue.
4. New Zealand thanked the Secretariat on the update and welcomed the mainstreaming approaches used. New Zealand further expressed interest in hearing from countries that are part of the RTSM on the usefulness of the mechanism to meet country needs. The Secretariat noted that Federated States of Micronesia was the only RTSM-participating Member present and therefore agreed to prepare a report on the usefulness of RTSM and circulate it to Members.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the progress made under the SPCR-PR track;
* **directed** the Secretariat to ensure that the mainstreaming tools and approach developed under the SPCR-PR are built into the suite of SPREP technical services to assist its members address CCA and associated DRR;
* **invited** direction from the Meeting on the future of the RTSM when the SPCR-PR program ends on 1 June, 2017; and
* **requested** the Secretariat to provide the report on the usefulness of the mainstreaming tools and the RTSM by the end of October 2016.

**Agenda Item 9.3: Waste Management and Pollution Control Division – 2017 Overview**

1. The Secretariat provided an overview of the Waste Management and Pollution Control Division's work programme activities for 2017 in the areas of solid waste management support, pollution management support and hazardous waste management support.
2. Niue, Tonga and Federated States of Micronesia acknowledged the ongoing support provided by the Waste Management and Pollution Control Division.
3. Niue expressed particular appreciation for the efforts of the European Union-funded and SPREP-administered PacWaste project. Niue further acknowledged the assistance provided by Australia and New Zealand for the waste recovery facility.
4. Tonga and Niue requested SPREP support with the development of national waste management strategies and plans. The Secretariat noted these requests.
5. New Caledonia noted the fruitful relationship that the Waste Management and Pollution Control Division has established with the INTEGRE project and commented that New Caledonia looks forward to working closely with the Division through the forthcoming EDF 11 funded projects.
6. In response to a question from New Caledonia about the SPREP/SPC proposal for a Maritime Technical Centre, the Secretariat advised that the proposal seeks to explore low carbon transportation options in the Pacific region.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the 2017 work programme for the SPREP Waste Management and Pollution Control Division.

**Agenda Item 9.3.1: Outcomes of the 2016 Clean Pacific Roundtable**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the successful outcomes of the inaugural Clean Pacific Roundtable and the *2016 Clean Pacific Roundtable Outcomes Statement*.
2. Federated States of Micronesia noted its participation in the Clean Pacific Roundtable and indicated its support of the Outcomes Statement.
3. Kiribati thanked the Secretariat and acknowledged the funding provided to the Clean Pacific Roundtable by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the European Union.
4. New Caledonia offered its apologies for not being present at the Clean Pacific Roundtable. The Secretariat thanked New Caledonia and accepted its apologies.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the successful outcomes of the inaugural Clean Pacific Roundtable;
* **commended** the financial support provided by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the European Union towards the inaugural Clean Pacific Roundtable;
* **noted with appreciation** the *2016 Clean Pacific Roundtable Outcomes Statement*; and
* **endorsed** the proposal for the Clean Pacific Roundtable to be held every two years, under the direction of a Cleaner Pacific Steering Committee.

**Agenda Item 9.3.2: Marine Plastics and Debris Management**

1. The Secretariat provided a detailed update with recommendations, by way of a Working Paper, on its recent research and analysis on plastic ingestion by marine fish.
2. France and Australia welcomed the action on marine plastics and thanked the Secretariat for its presentation.
3. France noted that this issue has great significance to the Pacific region. France informed the Meeting that it has adopted a law banning plastic bags.
4. Australia noted that marine debris is a global problem, and that while different nations have differing capacities, smaller countries could benefit from observing and learning from the solutions of others. Australia reported that it is currently updating its Plastics Threat Abatement Plan for Marine Life which may have a useful approach for countries to use. Australia also noted that it is working with Australian states, territories and industry to phase out the use of micro-plastics in care products by 2018.
5. United Kingdom informed the Meeting of its legislation to ban micro-beads in cosmetics and noted that United Kingdom has introduced a plastic bag charge which has resulted in an 80% reduction in plastic bag use.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the progress of the analysis of plastics ingestion by fish in the South Pacific. The report will be made available at the end of 2016 upon completion of all sample analysis from Samoa, French Polynesia and Easter Island;
* **noted** the progress on raising the issue and coordination with Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) in the region to address pollution violations from distant water fishing nations (DWFNs);
* work with SPREP to **encourage** the relevant member country departments to support the inclusion of fishing vessels into the text of the Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control in the Asia-Pacific Region (Tokyo MOU) and urged for ratification and improved implementation of key international instruments on fishing vessel safety, including the 2012 Cape Town Agreement, STCW-F, and the Work in Fishing Convention (No. 188);
* **supported** the ongoing modelling, monitoring and investigation of fates and effects of marine debris to identify sources of both local accumulation points and far-field dispersal pathways of marine debris from potentially significant source points including fishing vessels;
* **endorsed** the Secretariats efforts establish itself as the regional node for marine litter to investigate further marine debris impacts, and monitoring of micro plastic ingestion in most common fish species stomachs and commercial fish species for persistent organic pollutants; and
* **endorsed** and **supported** the development of a Marine Debris and Plastics Action Plan to implement marine debris management practices, enhance community based removal programmes and implementation of the Pacific Regional Port Reception Facilities Plan.

**Agenda Item 9.3.3: Establishment of a Regional Coordinating Mechanism on Disaster Waste Management**

1. The Secretariat updated Members on recent activities related to disaster waste management and sought the Meeting's endorsement for the establishment of a Regional Coordinating Mechanism on Disaster Waste Management in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, that incorporates the principles of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and facilitates the provision of timely technical and financial assistance for disaster waste management to affected SPREP Member countries and territories.
2. Samoa thanked the Secretariat for the report and acknowledged its support for the Regional Disaster Waste Management Guidelines. In response to a question from Samoa, the Secretariat advised that disaster waste management is covered under Goals 1 and 2 of the FRDP.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the development of the Regional Disaster Waste Management Guidelines to be linked to the regional context through the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP); and
* **endorsed** the development of a Regional Coordinating Mechanism on Disaster Waste Management by the Clean Pacific RT established Disaster Waste Management Working Group (DWM-WG), consistent with established principles of CROP harmonisation.

**Agenda Item 9.3.4: Asbestos in the Pacific**

1. The Secretariat presented to the Meeting on asbestos in the Pacific region, noting that asbestos is widespread in seven Pacific island countries, that asbestos materials are being reused and resold in at least five locations and that 'new asbestos’ materials are being sold at retail outlets in at least two locations. Detailed information on these findings is outlined in the PacWaste publication, circulated to all delegates, called *The State of Asbestos in the Pacific*.
2. The Secretariat invited the Meeting to discuss these findings and to consider endorsing a Pacific-wide ban on asbestos imports and the resale/reuse of existing asbestos materials.
3. Australia, Nauru, France, New Zealand, Kiribati and Federated States of Micronesia expressed strong support for a Pacific-wide ban of asbestos.
4. Samoa, Tonga and Cook Islands voiced concern about the resources required to implement an asbestos ban.
5. Samoa queried what the implications of such a ban would be on World Trade Organization (WTO) membership.
6. New Zealand noted that its legislation to ban the manufacturing and importation of asbestos was approved recently and offered to share the relevant text and its analyses with Pacific island Members. New Zealand further noted that it is member of the WTO and could also provide advice in this area. Australia also offered to share information on this topic.
7. Australia further advised the Meeting of an upcoming conference convened by its Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency to take place in Adelaide in November through which information would be shared on communication and best practice in dealing with the challenges associated with asbestos. The Secretariat thanked Australia for this information and noted that it would be attending the conference.
8. Noting that its laws would not permit it to endorse a ban on asbestos in the Pacific, United States suggested that the recommendation could be changed from 'endorse' to 'consider'.
9. In acknowledgement of concerns voiced by some Members around a proposed Pacific-wide asbestos ban, the Meeting endorsed a re-worded recommendation.

The Meeting:

* **noted** *The State of the Asbestos in the Pacific* synthesis report produced under the PacWaste project which summarises the findings of the project's Regional Asbestos Baseline Survey;
* **welcomed** the outcomes of the Clean Pacific Roundtable;
* **noted** Pacific island Members' interest in banning asbestos imports in the context of a healthy and clean Pacific; and
* **directed** the Secretariat to provide advice to members on the implications and mechanisms of managing issues around asbestos.

**Agenda Item 9.3.5: Update on the formulation of J-PRISM Phase II**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the formulation, outline and objectives of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funded Japanese Technical Cooperation Project for Promotion of Regional Initiative on Solid Waste Management in Pacific Island Countries Phase II (J-PRISM II).
2. Kiribati noted that while it is not part of J-PRISM Phase II, it is pleased to be still participating in the regional training component and thanks JICA for this opportunity.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the outline and objectives of J-PRISM II both regionally and in individual Pacific island countries;
* **acknowledged** the opportunities presented by J-PRISM II to develop individual and institutional capacity for the improvement of solid waste management in the Pacific region; and
* **encouraged** other development partners to collaborate with J-PRISM II through SPREP.

**Agenda Item 9.4: Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division – 2017 Overview**

1. The Secretariat provided an overview of the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division's work programme activities for 2017 in the areas of enabling frameworks, strengthening environmental legislation, mainstreaming, building capacity and monitoring and reporting.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the 2017 work programme for the SPREP Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division.

**Agenda Item 9.4.1: Strategic Environmental Assessment**

1. The Secretariat provided an update on SPREP’s strategic environmental assessment (SEA) work and sought endorsement from the Meeting of SEA awareness-raising and capacity-building for SPREP Members.
2. Kiribati acknowledged the Secretariat’s effort in this work and welcomed the proposed assistance, noting that it will also serve to raise awareness and significantly build capacity at the national level.
3. New Caledonia acknowledged the usefulness of this work and reminded the Meeting of the issue of the Secretariat’s cost recovery effort. New Caledonia encouraged the Secretariat to consider applying a fee for projects that have an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) component in it. New Caledonia further encouraged the Secretariat that all publications it produces under projects should also have a French version as well which would consequently reduce the translation cost of the Secretariat.
4. Niue advised the meeting that the recent EIA training greatly assisted in its preparation of official documents that went through the Government process for endorsement.

The Meeting:

* **endorsed** SEA awareness-raising and capacity-building for Member countries, through inclusion of an SEA module in the regional EIA Training Manual and through SEA-focused workshops.

**Agenda Item 9.4.2: BBNJ Negotiations**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the progress of work in Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) negotiations and sought endorsement from Members of SPREP’s role in the development of an International Legally Binding Instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.
2. Nauru expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for building capacity and technical understanding in the important area of BBNJ.
3. Australia echoed the comments from Nauru about the importance of this work and thanked the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division for its report. Australia highlighted its active engagement in the area of BBNJ and acknowledged the support of the Secretariat and other regional agencies.
4. The Secretariat thanked the Meeting for its comments.

The Meeting:

* **welcomed** SPREP's role providing technical assistance to Members in the BBNJ process;
* **noted with appreciation** SPREP's continued technical support of Pacific island Members in collaboration with other regional agencies and partners, in particular the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner, to keep Members informed; and
* **encouraged** more active engagement of Members in the BBNJ process.

**Agenda Item 9.4.3: Environmental monitoring data collation support services**

1. The Secretariat updated the Meeting onenvironmental monitoring data support services provided by SPREP to Members and sought endorsement for continued environmental monitoring data support services.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the environmental data management services provided to Members through the various platforms noted above;
* **endorsed** SPREP's efforts to continue working with Members to collate, store and manage environmental data; and
* **undertook** to facilitate, through appropriate data-sharing agreements, access to data in order to determine baseline information and to allow for updating of currently held data.

**Agenda Item 9.5: Consideration and Approval of Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2017**

1. The Secretariat presented its proposed annual Work Programme and Budget for 2017.
2. New Zealand stated that the forward budget projections did look promising, but queried the overall fiscal situation of SPREP going into 2017, and the balance at end 2017. The Secretariat responded that the overall budget deficit at the start of 2017 is not certain at this point in time, but that the actual expenditures projected against budget will be brought up to date in coming weeks. It was noted that income is excluded from the budget if not fully guaranteed.
3. On the issue of reserves, New Zealand queried whether the 5% voluntary increase in contributions was now being allocated to reserves or whether it was being used to offset the deficit. The Secretariat clarified that reserves have never been included in the budgetary consideration as they are built up over time, noting the resolution from the 26SM to use the voluntary contributions towards the reserve. However, as these have been received in different timeframes, the Secretariat has awaited inclusion of the reserve until there is greater confidence in the amounts received.
4. With regard to arrangements with European Union, New Zealand queried whether SPREP would be receiving a 7% management fee instead of 12%, and if so what would be the impact on programme support. The Secretariat noted that there is a common position of CROP, and that this position will be negotiated as a common approach to in order to ensure that a fair fee is received for undertaking work.
5. New Zealand noted the opportunity to ensure that the strategic plan is properly resourced, and not to rely on funding opportunities alone. New Zealand further suggested that this requires a degree of selectivity in deciding on funding opportunities. The Secretariat agreed that the strategy needs to be resourced and funding aligned with the strategy. In discussions with the Government of Sweden, it became clear that SPREP has been under their consideration as a partner for some time. The Secretariat noted that the Government of Sweden has been given an appreciation for the work of SPREP and the new Strategic Plan, so that this new partnership is based on priorities identified by Members. The Secretariat will continue to ensure that new and existing partners add value to the strategic plan.
6. Australia queried certain terms used in the budget, in particular unsecured income which has a substantial increase, as well as the term other income. The Secretariat clarified that the term unsecured income represents what would be injected into core income, and relates to programme management fees that are expected to be received from new projects such as that from Sweden. Australia encouraged the use of footnotes in future budget papers in order to better explain terms used.
7. New Caledonia noted that while there is a decrease in the budget from 2015, it does not consider this as a major problem given the adoption of the strategic plan and the forecast contained in the pipeline of projects. New Caledonia also noted the increase in workload for the Secretariat, and noted that SPREP needs to continue to build its capacity to be reactive and continue to do real work on the ground.
8. Australia confirmed that it looks forward to signing a new multi-year agreement now that strategic plan is adopted.
9. New Caledonia noted that it had not had sufficient time to consult fully on the budget, and will revert to the Secretariat in due course to indicate any topics or issues that are of particular interest.
10. Niue acknowledged the efforts of the Secretariat, and noted that there would be opportunities for the Secretariat under the GEF and GCF to support projects for Members.
11. The Secretariat noted that such an effort is underway as part of the Smaller Island States Strategy for developing a joint proposal for GCF together with PIFS, and indicated readiness to work with Members for projects for the unallocated GEF funds.

The Meeting:

* **considered** and **approved** the proposed Work Programme and Budget of USD **15,164,886.**

**Agenda Item 10: Items Proposed by Members**

**Agenda Item 10.1: Regional Hydrology Programme**

1. Samoa presented a proposal for the establishment of a Regional Hydrology Programme within SPREP, and invited the Meeting to discuss and endorse the proposal.
2. New Caledonia noted its strong interest in hydrology matters and made reference to a recent meeting with the WMO where it was proposed that a new project is established through which the HYCOS programme can be revived. New Caledonia stated that it would favour a broader recommendation to allow regional organisations and WMO to implement the recommendations of the PMC3.
3. Samoa explained that the proposal concept for a Regional Hydrology Programme arose from the Nuku’alofa Declaration. Samoa further commented that the SPC water and sanitation programme mainly focuses on water management but is not very active in the area of hydrology.
4. The observer from SPC thanked Samoa for raising the issue and acknowledged that there is a need for further attention in this area. Samoa emphasised the excellent work of HYCOS but raised the issue of sustainability and continuity.
5. New Zealand noted the strong regional interest in hydrology and the need for the gap in this area to be acknowledged.
6. Niue and Tokelau supported the initiative proposed by Samoa. Tokelau further expressed appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Samoa for assisting with training Meteorological Services staff.

The Meeting:

* **endorsed** the request from Samoa for support for a hydrological services program;
* **recommended** that SPREP, SPC and WMO discuss the implementation of the PMC3 recommendation, and work out the details for ensuring that there is a clear demarcation of mandates; and
* **commended** SPREP, SPC and WMO for their partnership, and requested them to continue to strengthen their collaboration and partnership in cross cutting issues such as meteorological and hydrological services.

**Agenda Item 11: Regional Cooperation**

**Agenda Item 11.1: CROP Executives Meeting Report**

1. The Director General provided a verbal briefing on the outcomes of the CROP Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Meetings in 2016, noting that these meetings are a valuable mechanism for sharing information and developing ways of working together.
2. In response to a query from New Zealand, the Director General explained that a consolidated written report would be made available to Members.
3. Tonga thanked the Director General for the verbal report and noted Tonga's appreciation of the CROP approach to support it received during COP 21.

1. Samoa also expressed its appreciation of the regional cooperation approach taken by CROP agencies, especially in assisting with meteorological services and climate change efforts, and thanked the Director General for the verbal report.

The Meeting:

* **noted** the verbal report of the Director General on CROP CEOs meetings in 2016.

**Agenda Item 12: Statements by Observers**

1. The 27SM was attended by a range of observers which included CROP agencies, NGOs and other conservation and environment groups. Observers made statements outlining their areas of work and potential partnerships with Members and the Secretariat. The list of observers and the observer statements are attached as Annex 5.

**Agenda Item 13: Other Business**

1. There was no other business.

**Agenda Item 14: High Level Ministerial Segment**

1. The High Level Ministerial Segment of the 27SM was held on 22 September, 2016 with Ministers and other High Level officials attending. The Meeting was chaired by The Hon. Billy Talagi, Niue's Minister for Natural Resources.

**Agenda Item 14.1: Opening and Prayer**

1. The High Level Ministerial Segment commenced with a musical performance from students of Niue Primary School and continued with an opening prayer by Reverend Navy Salatielu.
2. Opening remarks from The Hon. Billy Talagi are attached as Annex 6.

**Agenda Item 14.2: Sustainable Development Goals**

1. Ministers and High Level delegates discussed the SDGs, the challenges of implementation for the Pacific, and how best to contextualise global issues into a regional and national context for a resilient Pacific.
2. Presentations were made by: The Hon. Siaosi Sovaleni, Deputy Prime Minister of Tonga; The Hon. Taefu Lemi Taefu, Associate Minister, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment; The Hon. Vodrick Detsiogo, Assistant Minister, Government of Nauru; and HE Jackie Frizelle, New Zealand High Commissioner, Samoa.

**Agenda Item 14.3: Climate Change**

1. Ministers and High Level delegates discussed the challenges and opportunities for the Pacific post COP 21 and progress towards implementation of the Paris Agreement.
2. Presentations were made by: Mr Jean-Luc Faure-Tournaire, Représentant permanent adjoint de la France auprès de la CPS et du PROE; and The Hon. Wilbur Heine, Minister of Education, Government of Republic of the Marshall Islands.

**Agenda Item 14.4: Oceans**

1. Ministers and High Level delegates discussed theUN Oceans Conference which will be held in New York in June 2017 and co-hosted by Fiji. Delegates noted that the Conference provides an opportunity to articulate key ocean issues for the Pacific including the Blue Economy, Marine Protected Areas, Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdictions (BBNJ), and Conservation for Sustainable Livelihoods.
2. Presentations were made by: The Hon. Lorna Eden, Assistant Minister, Local Government, Housing and Environment, Government of Fiji; The Hon. Tebao Awerika, Minister, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development, Government of Kiribati; The Hon. Kiriau Turepu, Minister, National Environment Services, Government of Cook Islands; and Ms Deb Callister, Assistant Secretary, Marine and International Heritage Branch, Australian Department of the Environment and Energy.

**Agenda Item 14.5: Alofi Communiqué**

1. Ministers and High Level delegates agreed to a communiqué, which is attached as Annex 7.

**Agenda Item 15: Date and Venue of the Twenty-eighth SPREP Meeting**

1. The Meeting:
* **agreed** that the Twenty-eighth SPREP Meeting would be held in Samoa in 2017 at a date to be advised by the Secretariat.

**Agenda Item 16: Adoption of Report of the Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting**

1. The Meeting:
* **adopted** the **recommendations and decisions** from the Report of the Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting.

**Agenda Item 17: Close**

The Meeting was formally closed at 5.20pm on 22 September, 2016.