

Report of the Twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting of Officials

22 – 24 September, 2015
Apia, Samoa



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The Pacific environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.

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Introduction

1. The Twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting of Officials (26SM) was held from 22 - 24 September, 2015 in Apia, Samoa.
2. Present at the Meeting were representatives from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States, Vanuatu and Wallis and Futuna. A full list of participants, including observers, is available in Annex I.

Agenda Item 1: Opening

3. The opening ceremony of the 26SM was held on the evening of 21 September 2015. The ceremony commenced with an opening prayer by Pastor Samoa Uno'i and was followed by welcoming remarks from the Director General of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). The Director General noted that a record-breaking 24 of SPREP's 26 Members were present at the Meeting, along with more than 15 partner organisations. The Director General's Opening Statement is attached as Annex II.
4. The Meeting was officially opened by the Prime Minister of Samoa, the Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi. In his keynote address, the Prime Minister noted the importance of environmental management to sustainable development. The Prime Minister also noted his sincere appreciation of the contribution made by outgoing Director General, Mr David Sheppard, and commended his outstanding service to SPREP and the Pacific region. The Prime Minister's keynote address is attached as Annex III.

Agenda Item 2: Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

5. In accordance with the *Rules of Procedure of the SPREP Meeting* which call for alphabetical

rotation of the Chair and Vice Chair for Meetings hosted by the Secretariat, New Zealand was appointed as Chair and Cook Islands as Vice Chair of the 26SM.

6. The Chair of the Twenty-fifth SPREP Meeting (25SM), representing Republic of the Marshall Islands, thanked the Members and the Secretariat for the privilege of serving as Chair in the preceding 12 months and took the opportunity to recognise the work and legacy of the late Bill Raynor from The Nature Conservancy.
7. The incoming Chair, HE Ms Jackie Frizelle representing New Zealand, assumed official duties as Chair.

8. The Meeting:

- **confirmed** the Representative of **New Zealand** as **Chair**; and
- **confirmed** the Representative of **Cook Islands** as **Vice Chair**.

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of Agenda and Working Procedures

9. The Meeting reviewed the Provisional Agenda and the suggested hours of work.
10. Australia requested the inclusion of an additional agenda item under *Other Business* to be dedicated to preparing items for consideration at the Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting in particular, the items for the ministerial component. The Meeting agreed to this request.
11. Australia further suggested the establishment of a Working Group to explore *Agenda Item 6.6: Development of the Next SPREP Strategic Plan*. The Meeting agreed to this request.
12. The Chair subsequently requested that the Working Group also explore *Agenda Item 7.2: Membership Contributions Report of the Friends of the Chair*.

13. The Meeting:

- **considered** and **adopted** the Revised Agenda (attached as Annex IV);
- **agreed** on hours of work;
- **appointed** an open-ended Report Drafting Committee comprising New Zealand, United States, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, American Samoa, Australia, Guam, French Polynesia, France, Samoa and Federated States of Micronesia to be Chaired by Cook Islands as Vice Chair of the 26SM; and
- **appointed** a Working Group to discuss the development of the next SPREP Strategic Plan and the Membership Contributions Report of the Friends of the Chair comprising Australia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, United States, France, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Cook Islands, United Kingdom and French Polynesia.

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

14. The Secretariat reported on actions taken against the decisions and directives from the 25SM which was held in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands from 30 September - 2 October, 2014.

15. New Caledonia congratulated the Secretariat on the number of actions undertaken, noting that a number of these require long-term consideration and that this implies further intensive collaboration amongst Members.

16. Solomon Islands commended the progress made by the Secretariat, particularly with regard to strengthening regional linkages and the establishment of in-country posts, such as in Solomon Islands.

17. The Meeting:

- **noted actions taken** against the decisions and directives of the 25SM.

Agenda Item 5: 2014 Overview

Agenda Item 5.1: Presentation of Annual Report for 2014 and Director General's Overview of Progress since the Twenty-fifth SPREP Meeting

18. The Director General presented the 2014 SPREP Annual Report to Members and provided an overview report on progress since the 25SM, noting that this would be his last report to SPREP Members in his capacity as Director General.

19. The Director General reported that the past six years had seen a major increase in the level of SPREP's support to Pacific island countries and territories, with financial and technical support increasing from USD 9.3 million in 2010 to USD 21.1 million in 2014. The Director General also acknowledged the extra voluntary contributions provided by Papua New Guinea and Samoa and the assistance provided by Japan for the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC).

20. Papua New Guinea, Fiji, New Caledonia, Australia, France, New Zealand, United States, Tuvalu, Tonga, Tokelau, Federated States of Micronesia, Niue, Samoa, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, Guam, French Polynesia, American Samoa and Wallis and Futuna congratulated the Secretariat for its report and acknowledged the significant contribution made by the Director General over the past six years.

21. The Meeting:

- **noted** the report.

Agenda Item 5.2: Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER) on the 2014 Work Programme and Budget

22. In accordance with the *SPREP Meeting Rules of Procedure*, the Secretariat presented its Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report (PMER) on the 2014 Work Programme and Budget. The Secretariat noted that the 2014 PMER included, for the first time, a summary of overall progress towards each of the Strategic Goals as set out in the SPREP Strategic Plan.

23. Papua New Guinea, Tonga, New Caledonia, Fiji and Australia thanked the Secretariat for its report.

24. Papua New Guinea enquired about the differing levels of technical and financial support provided to Members. The Secretariat explained that overall support to SPREP Members had increased, but that levels of support between Members differ depending on engagement, project activities and other factors.

25. The Secretariat clarified that the high level of support to Tonga in 2014 was due to major project activities undertaken through the PACC and PIGGAREP projects. Tonga acknowledged the work undertaken by Australia, UNDP and SPREP on the successful implementation of PACC Projects in Tonga.

26. New Caledonia recognised the work done in French territories. All the French territories thanked the SPREP Focal Point for French Territories, Ms Pascale Salaun, for the work done in coordinating actions and thanked France for supporting these actions.

27. New Caledonia noted the significant number of activities that had been undertaken by the Secretariat and advised of New Caledonia's participation in waste management data collection and biodiversity activities.

28. Fiji suggested that it would be beneficial for the Secretariat to report more rigorously on the outcomes and impact of projects such as PACC and PIGGAREP. The Secretariat acknowledged scope for further improvement in monitoring and reporting on results and advised that this work is being facilitated by SPREP's Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser. The Secretariat also clarified that achievements under the PACC and PIGGAREP projects had been summarised and quantified and could be provided to interested parties.

29. Australia congratulated the Secretariat for the substantial amount of work undertaken in 2014 and reiterated the importance of outcome-based reporting.

30. Australia further noted in the PMER reporting the decline in core funding and requested the Secretariat to outline the impact this decline has in delivering this work and the actions undertaken by the Secretariat to allocate its resources appropriately. The Secretariat advised that an unusually high number of expensive meetings, reviews and medical evacuations had contributed to the decline in core funding. The Secretariat further advised that this issue would be discussed in detail during Agenda Item 7.2.

31. The Meeting:

- **noted** achievements as presented in the 2014 PMER.

Agenda Item 5.3: Audited Annual Accounts for 2014

32. In accordance with Financial Regulation 27(e), the Secretariat presented its Audited Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 December, 2014. The Secretariat noted that the Audited Annual Accounts for 2014 had been prepared in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

33. The Secretariat advised that the auditors had provided an unqualified opinion of the Secretariat's financial operations for 2014.

34. Papua New Guinea noted that its Member contributions had not been made and committed to following this up with the Government for further action.

35. New Zealand expressed concern about the net deficit within the core budget and requested information from the Secretariat about what progress had been made to address this.

36. The Secretariat noted that in 2014 there were significant expenses incurred for the Independent Corporate Reviews, medical evacuations, translation, interpreting and SPREP Meeting costs. The Secretariat reminded the

Meeting that options for addressing the deficit would be discussed during Agenda Item 7.2.

37. France reminded the Meeting that SPREP is officially a bilingual organisation and emphasised that any cost reduction should not be at the expense of French language translation or interpreting and that these activities should be a part of the core budget for SPREP.

38. New Caledonia also expressed concern about the deficit in the core budget, and noted its willingness to work with the Secretariat and Members to address the issue.

39. The Secretariat thanked Members for their comments, emphasised the contribution to diversity and quality made by Francophone Members, and clarified that the issue of the core budget deficit would be discussed during Agenda Item 7.2.

40. The Meeting:

- **reviewed** and **adopted** the audited Financial Statements and Auditors' Report for 2014.

Agenda Item 6: Institutional Reform and Strategic Issues

Agenda Item 6.1: Strengthening Regional Linkages Update

41. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on activities designed to strengthen regional linkages. The key components of this initiative, endorsed at the Twenty-third SPREP Meeting (23SM) in 2012, relate to the establishment of a sub-regional presence for SPREP and enhanced coordination with the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) and also SPREP Members situated in the north Pacific.

42. Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Federated States of Micronesia thanked the Secretariat for its report and for the 2014/15 establishment of Desk Officers in

Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands.

43. Republic of the Marshall Islands noted that the Desk Officer in Republic of the Marshall Islands has proven instrumental in progressing work in both the water sector and in other critical areas including GEF 5 and the PacWaste project.

44. Republic of the Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia requested information from the Secretariat with regard to progressing operational funding for the Desk Officers. The Secretariat expressed its commitment to the continued funding of the Desk Officer positions, but noted that the provision of additional funds is a challenge, given current constraints to the core budget.

45. New Caledonia acknowledged the value of Desk Officers in increasing engagement, and expressed concern at the idea of the positions being funded through the core budget. New Caledonia recommended that the Secretariat seek alternative sources of funding to support such positions and suggested that the proposed cost benefit analysis may not be a viable solution at this point in time. The Secretariat advised that alternative approaches to funding the positions were being pursued.

46. Papua New Guinea acknowledged the efforts of the Secretariat in strengthening regional linkages and expressed a desire for a Desk Officer to be located in Papua New Guinea. The Secretariat noted that a potential SPREP country presence in Papua New Guinea had been discussed on the margins of the recently concluded 46th Pacific Islands Forum with the Papua New Guinea Minister for Environment and further advised the Meeting that this option was being explored.

47. Australia re-emphasised the importance of this review in determining the successful implementation of the Desk Officer positions. Australia encouraged the Secretariat to have the analysis done before 2017 and requested the

Secretariat to advise on whether there were other options to fund the analysis.

48. Fiji raised concerns about the proposed deferral of the cost benefit analysis and sought clarification on the associated costs.

49. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that a similar analysis undertaken in 2012 had cost USD 200,000.

50. France supported the proposed deferral of the cost benefit analysis, noting that a delayed analysis would provide time for alternative funding models to be explored.

51. United States requested that the Secretariat provide routine updates of work carried out by Desk Officers.

52. Solomon Islands, as Chair of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, sought additional information with regard to linkages with the MSG Secretariat. The Secretariat explained that a MOU had been signed with the MSG Secretariat.

53. Federated States of Micronesia advised the Secretariat that its host country agreement with SPREP is being reviewed by the Department of Justice and is likely to be finalised after it is referred to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

54. The Meeting:

- **noted** the progress of the Desk Officers in Republic of Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia;
- **noted** the establishment of the project based staff in Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu;
- **directed** the Secretariat to follow-up with Federated States of Micronesia on the finalisation of the host country agreement;
- **deferred** the undertaking of a cost benefit analysis of the Desk Officers arrangement until no later than 2017.

- **directed** the Secretariat to explore opportunities for alternative funding including operational funds for regional Desk Officers in Pacific island Member countries and territories.

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

55. The Secretariat reported on opportunities and processes for accessing climate finance through SPREP for the Adaptation Fund (AF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and invited feedback from Members on how SPREP can best execute its Regional Implementing Entity (RIE) role to support services to the region. The presentation included an overview of the key issues and recommendations that came out of the Pacific Environment Forum.

56. United Kingdom, United States, Fiji, New Caledonia, Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, France, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea, Tokelau, and Niue congratulated the Secretariat on achieving accreditation as an RIE for the AF and the GCF.

57. Fiji requested clarification on SPREP's roles as both Implementing Entity and Executing Agency. The Secretariat clarified the scope of the two roles, and acknowledged the issue of balancing its role in supporting project delivery and continued delivery of other core organisational functions.

58. Australia encouraged the Secretariat to work with Members, through the strategic planning process, to further clarify the two roles of Implementing Entity and Executing Agency held by the Secretariat.

59. New Caledonia requested information on how the new proposed climate finance positions within the Secretariat will be funded and requested the Secretariat to advise which funds could be made available for those who are not eligible to access the GCF. The Secretariat clarified that the

Green Climate Fund Adviser position is funded from the existing multi-year funding agreement, two further positions will be funded under the USAID-ADAPT Asia Pacific programme, and a third will be funded through the Commonwealth Secretariat.

60. Federated States of Micronesia enquired about the status of a proposal to the AF, which has been in development for the past two years. The Secretariat noted that the proposal is nearing completion and it will be submitted to the Adaptation Fund Board by next year. Capacity within the Secretariat was noted as having contributed to the lengthy proposal development process.

61. United States encouraged SPREP to further support the Pacific SIDS to develop the relevant policies and procedures in particular, financial due diligence of executing entities and environmental and social safeguards, in a timely manner and building on international best practices. United States noted its USAID-ADAPT Asia Pacific programme which collaborates with SPREP to help Pacific Governments to access GCF support and has also helped Pacific SIDS access nearly USD 70 million from multilateral adaptation funds through project support.

62. Solomon Islands noted that projects submitted to both the GCF and AF should be country-driven and aligned with country priorities.

63. Tuvalu noted that accessing climate finance is still an issue for small island states, and urged the Secretariat to explore a 'fast track approach' to overcome this issue.

64. Papua New Guinea noted that significant support from the Secretariat would be required throughout the project development process, from concept through to implementation, and also the reporting phase.

65. Tokelau called on other Members to step up commitments in supporting the Secretariat in the role of RIE.

66. Niue requested that the Secretariat explore ways in which Members, which do not have access to support mechanisms, can access other funding support mechanisms. The Secretariat confirmed that it will explore opportunities for all SPREP Members to participate in climate funding readiness workshops and that, for the French territories of the Pacific, the Secretariat is working with the French Government to provide this support.

67. The Meeting:

- **provided** feedback on SPREP's approach to GCF and AF implementation;
- **requested** further clarification from the Secretariat on SPREP's roles as an Executing Agency and Implementing Entity;
- **directed** the Secretariat to develop, in consultation with National Designated Authorities and other accredited agencies and CROPs, a schedule for assistance to countries to get accreditation as a National Implementing Entity;
- **directed** the Secretariat to assist Members who do not have access to the Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund and other support mechanisms, to benefit from other existing climate funds; and
- **invited** other development partners to contribute to the Rapid Response Fund so as to enable coverage of non-ADB SPREP Members.

Agenda Item 6.3: Pacific Climate Change Centre Update

68. The Secretariat provided a progress report on the establishment of the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) at SPREP, funded by the Government of Japan with the support of the Government of Samoa.

69. The Secretariat, New Caledonia, United States, Guam, Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand, France and Fiji specifically thanked the

Governments of Japan and Samoa for their support for the PCCC.

70. New Caledonia expressed hope that the PCCC will be open to all stakeholders who need space for climate change activities.

71. United States, Australia and United Kingdom commended the Secretariat on its progress with the PCCC and thanked the Secretariat for the update.

72. United States, Guam, United Kingdom requested further information on the role of, and planning for, the PCCC and its provision of climate services to Members.

73. United States also requested that the supporting documents, such as the business plan that was mentioned in the working paper, be made available for reference.

74. United Kingdom encouraged interaction between the PCCC and United Kingdom universities and centres of excellence, including incorporation of the current agreement between the UK Met Service and SPREP in future PCCC planning.

75. Fiji noted the importance of hiring good staff to support the PCCC and highlighted the need to be clear about the research and development that will be done through the PCCC and how it will harness existing work and further build regional capacity.

76. Guam and Fiji sought additional information on how the PCCC will work with other centres and research agencies. The Secretariat advised that the PCCC will act as a coordinating and synergistic mechanism for the region, bringing together existing and planned climate change activities in line with the priority needs of Members, for example, disaster risk reduction, the Climate Portal, JNAPs, SIDS Dock, renewable energy, climate change mitigation and climate change financing. In addition, the Secretariat noted the PCCC will house Climate Change division staff, the World

Meteorological Organization Office, researchers and interns, and explained there is an open invitation to tertiary institutions to work with SPREP.

77. The Secretariat further stated that the PCCC will be a centre for partnership and coordination within the region and also with Japanese, United Kingdom and Australian agencies.

78. Australia requested the Secretariat to disseminate the business plan of the PCCC to Members. In response to this request, the Secretariat advised that the business plan for the PCCC would be shared with Members.

79. New Zealand emphasised the importance of examining the liabilities of adding the PCCC to SPREP and in particular, the impact it might have on SPREP's reserves. The Secretariat advised that USD 12,000 per annum is being used as a guide for the ongoing maintenance cost of the PCCC, based on the costs of running the existing TEC building at SPREP.

80. The Secretariat advised the Meeting that the Commonwealth Secretariat has agreed to designate SPREP as its Pacific hub for climate change finance.

81. Samoa informed the Meeting that during the PALM7 Leaders meeting in May 2015 in Iwaki, Japan, the PCCC was endorsed by all Forum leaders including the Prime Minister of Fiji as well as the Prime Minister of Japan.

82. The Meeting:

- **noted** the progress made with the development of the Pacific Climate Change Centre and envisaged strengthened services from SPREP to its Pacific Member countries;
- **noted with appreciation** the support from the Governments of Japan and Samoa;

- **directed** the Secretariat to report to the next SPREP Meeting on the status of the implementation of the PCCC
- **directed** the Secretariat to disseminate the business plan to Members.

Agenda Item 6.4: Framework for Pacific Regionalism

83. The Secretariat provided an update on the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and outlined implementation activities to date.

84. New Caledonia noted its interest in the initiative for a study on regional governance and financing. The Secretariat noted that this will be deferred until 2016.

85. The Meeting:

- **noted** the update on the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and its implications for SPREP.

Agenda Item 6.5: Implementation of Recommendations from the Second Independent Corporate Review and Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan

86. The Secretariat provided a detailed update on the implementation of the Second Independent Corporate Review (ICR) and Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan (MTR), as agreed at the 25SM in 2014.

87. Australia and New Caledonia thanked the Secretariat for its update.

88. Australia noted Recommendation 10 of the ICR on monitoring and evaluation, and suggested that more work should be done in this area. The Secretariat advised the Meeting that its monitoring and evaluation capacity has been strengthened through recruitment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser. The Secretariat also noted the increased capacity in this area that would be

provided through the GEF Medium Sized Project. The Secretariat welcomed guidance from Members on how to further strengthen capacity in this area.

89. Australia noted Recommendation 6 of the ICR, and suggested that core governance issues should be considered as an integral part of SPREP's long-term work, and the costs of this work should be included in SPREP's long term financial planning.

90. New Caledonia acknowledged the success of the internal audit function and suggested that there may be opportunities to share this audit function with other agencies. The Secretariat noted that it had previously considered sharing an auditor with other CROP agencies but this had proven challenging due to the different needs and requirements of each agency. The Secretariat suggested that the issue of sharing an auditor could be raised in later discussion.

91. New Caledonia congratulated the Secretariat on the mechanisms put into place on professional training and capacity building.

92. On the issue of translating documents into French, New Caledonia suggested that more emphasis could be placed on the translation of technical documents, which would be of use to wider audiences and have a longer life span (as opposed to SPREP Meeting documents).

93. France also noted that the Secretariat, as a bilingual organisation, should have bilingual documents as a matter of course.

94. The Secretariat noted and welcomed the recommendations on French translation, and agreed that less focus could be placed on the allocation of resources to the SPREP Meeting documents and more to other documents with wider currency and circulation.

95. The Meeting:

- **noted progress** on the implementation of the ICR and MTR recommendations.

Agenda Item 6.6: Development of the Next SPREP Strategic Plan

96. The Secretariat informed the Meeting, by way of a Working Paper, on the processes involved in developing the next SPREP Strategic Plan which is due to be completed at the end of 2016. The Working Paper outlined a number of challenges with regard to timing and cost.

97. As outlined in Agenda Item 3, a Working Group was established to review and discuss the development of the next SPREP Strategic Plan. Australia reported back on the outcomes of the discussions.

98. The Meeting:

- **noted** that a current and up-to-date Strategic Plan is essential in providing a framework for delivery of SPREPs mandate and the Secretariat's operations in support of its Members;
- **acknowledged** ongoing pressures on the Secretariat's core budget and that the development of a new Strategic Plan may come at a cost, including to the core budget, staff time and resources;
- **requested** the Secretariat to develop a new Strategic Plan, to be endorsed at the 2016 SPREP Meeting, with a view to commence in 2017;
- **requested** that, the development of the Plan be led by the Secretariat with an operating budget of no more than USD 150,000 (excluding staff costs), to support the process;
- **requested** that in undertaking the development of the Plan, the Secretariat takes into account the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, the SDGs, the SAMOA Pathway, and other relevant strategies and frameworks, and the recommendations of the 2014 mid-term review of the Strategic Plan and the independent corporate review;
- **requested** the Secretariat to explore resourcing opportunities such as the

Regional Advisory Service, and other potential sources, to support development of the Plan;

- **requested** that through the process, the Secretariat, in consultation with Members, will explore the strategic and operational benefits of setting the longevity of the Plan at different timeframes;
- **requested** that the new plan be outcomes focused, in keeping with recommendations from the 2014 ICR and MTR;
- **requested** that the Secretariat ensures the Strategic Plan provides the basis for development of other Secretariat planning documents, including the business plan and annual work programmes, as well as a more robust outcomes orientated monitoring and reporting framework for SPREP;
- **requested** that the Secretariat maximises opportunities for consultation with Members within the proposed budget including by utilising other regional, sub-regional and national consultation processes and other platforms, including information technologies;
- **requested** that the Secretariat updates Members with further details on the proposed approach, when internal arrangements are finalised, via a Circular by the end of the year, with Members to provide timely feedback on the proposed approach; and
- **requested** that the Secretariat submit a final report to the 27SM, on the implementation of the current Strategic Plan, as described in paragraph four of the SM Agenda Paper, and **notes** that development of this final report should be incorporated and help inform development of the new strategic plan where possible.

Agenda Item 6.7: Audit Committee Report for the Period July 2014 - June 2015

99. On behalf of the Audit Committee, Tokelau (represented by Mr Jovilisi Suveinakama) reported on activities performed by the Audit Committee

during the 2014-2015 period as per the Secretariat Internal Audit policy and Audit Committee Charter.

100. United States acknowledged the efforts of the Audit Committee and requested that the 2015 Work Plan and Progress Report be made available. The Secretariat confirmed that these documents would be made available on the Secretariat website.

101. The Meeting:

- **noted** the activities performed by the Audit Committee during the 2014-2015 period.

Agenda Item 6.8: Strategic Priorities for the UNEP Pacific Office and the SPREP-UNEP Partnership

102. Mr Sefanaia Nawadra of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) presented the seven proposed strategic priorities for the UNEP Pacific Office and the SPREP-UNEP Partnership. These priorities focus on addressing climate change and enhancing resilience, decoupling economic growth from resource use and pollution, maintaining biodiversity and sustainable provision of ecosystem services, managing chemicals and waste, developing integrated approaches to environment and health, especially to address air quality, strengthening science-policy linkages and strengthening governance for delivery of the SDGs.

103. Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia and Fiji acknowledged the work of the Secretariat in progressing the establishment of the UNEP Pacific office.

104. UNEP noted comments from Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia, emphasising that UNEP works to complement existing initiatives as well as introducing new ones.

105. New Caledonia thanked the Member states which participated in the UNEP Ministerial Meeting of May 2015 and asked that the priorities in

Oceania be also guided by the sectorial strategies, such as health and agriculture, developed by SPC.

106. Following a request from Samoa, UNEP agreed to the development of a draft resolution for UNEA-2 on the SAMOA Pathway and SDGs. It was agreed that this process would be led by Samoa and other Members, with advice from UNEP.

107. The Meeting:

- **considered** and **endorsed** the Strategic Priorities for the UNEP Pacific Office and the SPREP-UNEP Partnership;
- **encouraged** SPREP Members and the SPREP Secretariat to provide comments on the draft UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021;
- **agreed** to the development of a draft resolution for UNEA-2 on SAMOA Pathway and SDGs to be led by Samoa and other Members with advice from UNEP.

Agenda Item 6.9: European Development Fund (EDF) 11 Prospects

108. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on European Development Fund (EDF) 11 prospects for SPREP, noting that three proposals are being planned in the areas of waste, fisheries and ecotourism.

109. Australia, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and United Kingdom acknowledged the work carried out by SPREP and partners in relation to EDF 11 proposals developed.

110. Australia encouraged the Secretariat to work with SPC and FAME to ensure that management of coastal issues is adequately covered. The Secretariat confirmed that it is working in partnership with FFA and other partners.

111. Australia suggested that funding should only be accepted if all Secretariat costs are adequately covered.

112. New Caledonia requested those activities be coordinated with regional funding of the EDF 11 dedicated to European territories of the Pacific.

113. Solomon Islands requested clarification on whether the area of liquid waste management is included in the waste proposal. The Secretariat confirmed that this is correct and added that the Secretariat is working in collaboration with SPC, USP and other partners on this issue.

114. Federated States of Micronesia suggested that there be a link between EDF 11 activities in wastewater and solid waste undertaken in partnership with JICA.

115. The Meeting:

- **noted** the update on the SPREP EDF 11 Proposals;
- **directed** SPREP to only accept donor funding, for projects at SPREP, if all SPREP costs are adequately covered;
- **noted** opportunities for SPREP Members and SPREP under other related EU funding windows including the EU/OCT; and
- **noted** the need to address solid waste and wastewater in an integrated manner.

Agenda Item 6.10: Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape

116. The Secretariat and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) outlined progress on implementing the Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape (FPO). In 2014, work successfully progressed in the areas of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), conservation and management of threatened and migratory species, marine pollution, climate change impacts, environmental governance, international negotiations, marine spatial planning and the Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Programme (PIROP).

117. The Secretariat reiterated its ongoing commitment to support Members to achieve FPO goals and to ensure that the FPO is fully integrated into the new SPREP Strategic Plan, other SPREP strategies, programmes and action plans.

118. New Caledonia applauded the progress by FPO which includes the Coral Sea Marine Park. New Caledonia noted that the Pacific Ocean Alliance (POA) and FPO should allow for better coordination and support of such initiatives.

119. Cook Islands reaffirmed its support for FPO and commended SPREP's work in this area. Cook Islands encouraged SPREP's continued support for this, and suggested it extend its support in the areas of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), SPC's work on Deep Seabed Mining (DSM), and sustainable financing for ocean conservation regionally.

120. In response to a comment from Cook Islands on sustainable financing, PIFS responded that, with support from the World Bank, the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner will be investigating sustainable financing for marine conservation for the region, building on previous work on climate change financing, development financing and development effectiveness.

121. France applauded the recent signing of the MOU between SPREP and the French MPA Agency which will strengthen support for MPA establishment in the Pacific region.

122. New Caledonia noted its additional support in twinning with Cook Islands and the opportunity to invite other Coral Sea countries such as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to participate in the Coral Sea Marine Park.

123. New Zealand congratulated SPREP in its work implementing the FPO and its response to emerging threats and governance issues within the FPO. New Zealand requested feedback from the Secretariat on governance arrangements under FPO, and improvements to define roles and provide effective support to the region. The Secretariat clarified that the FPO supported: clear and sharp delineation of roles by Parties; the need

to identify areas of overlap, collaboration and added value; the need to build on existing models; and welcomed any additional Member suggestions.

124. The Meeting:

- **noted the progress** achieved and reaffirmed support for the implementation of the Framework for the Pacific Oceanscape by SPREP, in collaboration with members and partners, the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner and other CROP agencies; and
- **applauded** the recent signing of the MOU between SPREP and the French MPA Agency which will strengthen support for MPA establishment in the Pacific region; and
- **provided** guidance on SPREP's future role in the Pacific Oceanscape.

Agenda Item 6.11: SPREP Troika Terms of Reference

125. The Secretariat presented draft Terms of Reference for the SPREP Troika, as requested at the 25SM in 2014, for the Meeting's discussion and endorsement. The Secretariat explained that the Terms of Reference are intended to clarify the role of the Troika and contribute to improved governance practices.

126. Solomon Islands noted the need to provide opportunities for wider membership to input to the Troika reviews and suggested sub-regional representation within the Troika.

127. Australia noted that the Troika is not a decision-making body, but was established to support the work of the Secretariat and SPREP Members. Australia noted that if the meeting endorsed a move to biennial meetings, considered under Item 7.2 then along with the TOR of the Troika being revised to provide additional support to SPREP during the intercessional period, a grouping more representative than the Troika

would need to be considered. Australia encouraged the Secretariat to incorporate the appropriate amount of support for the Troika in its work plan and budget, including formally allocating funds for the Troika work.

128. New Caledonia noted that sub-regional representation may not enable greater Member input, and suggested that this may be better served by having representation based on themes of work.

129. Solomon Islands reiterated that greater representation via sub-regional participation was the main goal.

130. France expressed the view that the proposal to have sub-regional representation may well complicate and slow down the Troika process. Further thought needs to be given to the composition of the Troika. France proposed that at this stage we should maintain the current format.

131. New Caledonia noted that the role of Troika was to be a link between the Secretariat and Members and expressed the view that introducing sub-regional representation would add another layer of representation that would complicate the direct link between the Secretariat and its Members.

132. Samoa suggested some small changes to the ToR and these were accepted by the Meeting.

133. The Meeting:

- **noted** the revised Terms of Reference for the SPREP Troika;
- **noted** the need for the Troika to draw on expertise of Members as required on particular issues, bearing in mind the need for sub-regional representation, as appropriate; and
- **noted** that the Troika is not a decision-making body.

Agenda Item 6.12 - Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific: An Integrated Approach to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management

134. The Secretariat presented on the development of the draft Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP), noting the extension of the mandate of the PIFACC by one year by Forum Leaders at their Meeting in Papua New Guinea in September 2015.

135. Tonga noted support for the SRDP and for the associated Support Unit to be housed at SPREP. Tonga further recommended for SPREP's coordination role to be strengthened.

136. Papua New Guinea and Republic of the Marshall Islands highlighted and supported the decision made at the CROP CEOs Meeting in February 2015 and the Forum Officials Committee Meeting in Fiji in August that the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat will host the SRDP Support Unit for an initial two years.

137. New Caledonia expressed regret that the SRDP was not adopted by the leaders at the Pacific Islands Forum meeting and that governance arrangements had not been discussed. New Caledonia urged members to put stronger emphasis on collaboration amongst Member countries and territories to validate the Strategy.

138. Tuvalu noted the importance of the SRDP, particularly in ensuring that the vulnerability of small islands to climate change impacts is strongly reflected. Tuvalu also welcomed the extension of the SRDP development process to 2016.

139. Australia thanked the Director General for the update and commended the work of the Secretariat in promoting the SRDP and engaging its Members. Australia expressed its commitment to the SRDP and encouraged the Secretariat to ensure that the concerns of Members are taken into consideration throughout the process. Australia further encouraged the Secretariat to work cooperatively with other CROP agencies on governance arrangements and recommended that

Members and CROP agencies are consulted in the process.

140. Samoa highlighted that the SRDP and governance arrangements were not formally discussed at the Pacific Islands Forum meeting. Samoa noted the separate mandates of SPC and SPREP under PIFACC and the Disaster Framework for Action - both of which have been extended a further year to end in 2016 - and noted that a successor agreement must state clearly the two mandates.

141. Samoa further noted that the Pacific Climate Change Centre was endorsed by leaders at the PALM 7 meeting in May 2015 with funding commitments from the Government of Japan. The decision by the CROP CEOs to house the Support Unit at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat was made in February 2015. This decision was not endorsed by the governing bodies of both SPREP and SPC.

142. Samoa stressed that housing the Support Unit at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat is not logical given its mandate to deal with political rather than technical issues.

143. Samoa advised that it had distributed a paper to Members which included two recommendations; firstly, on SPREP maintaining its mandate to deal with climate change issues and secondly, for the Support Unit of SRDP to be housed at the Pacific Climate Change Centre in light of the recent funding commitment by the Government of Japan at PALM 7 Meeting.

144. Solomon Islands noted the progress of the SRDP and Tuvalu's concerns. Solomon Islands also called on the CROP agencies to work together to serve their Members. Solomon Islands recommended that disaster risk management should be technically backstopped by SPREP given that it also provides meteorological support.

145. Republic of the Marshall Islands urged the CROP agencies to work together.

146. New Zealand acknowledged that the SRDP is an important issue as it is a ground breaking approach globally, and recommended more time for deliberation.

147. The Director General noted the issues voiced by Samoa had raised broader issues of CROP agencies mandates and responsibilities. The Director General strongly emphasised that SPREP remains committed to working in partnership with all CROP agencies and noted that a process is in train for further discussion of concerns in 2016.

148. As the meeting failed to reach agreement on the hosting of the Support Unit, the Chair requested the establishment of a Working Group to further canvas the issue.

149. Australia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, New Caledonia, United Kingdom, Samoa and Fiji volunteered to discuss a way forward for this recommendation. The Secretariat, as Chair of the Working Group, reported back to the Meeting with a proposed set of recommendations.

150. Fiji sought clarification on the exact parties that would be reviewing the SRDP. The Secretariat responded that it will be the Secretariat in close consultation with Members.

151. New Zealand, New Caledonia, United States, Papua New Guinea and Australia requested revised wording to recommendations which were accepted by the Meeting.

152. Niue thanked the Working Group for coming up with the recommendations which are consistent with the thematic areas that Niue is working on at the national level.

153. The Chair congratulated the Working Group and the Meeting on reaching agreement.

154. The Meeting:

- **noted** the verbal report on progress with the SRDP, including the outcomes of the 2015 Pacific Islands Forum;

- **noted** the extension for 12 months of the PIFACC;
- **tasked** the Secretariat to work with the SRDP Steering Committee and Technical Working Group to address concerns raised by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in consultation with SPREP Members;
- **noted** the concerns expressed by several Members about the draft SRDP;
- **recommended** that the draft SRDP be reviewed by relevant agencies, in cooperation with Members, to ensure that climate change and issues of relevance to Members are appropriately included;
- **recommended** that the mandates given to SPREP under PIFACC on climate change be retained under the SRDP and further **requests** that the mandates of other regional inter-governmental agencies relating to the SRDP are clearly spelled out in the SRDP;
- **recommended** that the CROP CEOs decision made in February 2015 to locate the SRDP Support Unit in PIFS be set aside and revisited in consultation with Members timed to be in line with the decision to extend the PIFACC and RFA made by Leaders at the 2015 Pacific Islands Forum; and
- **requested** the Secretariat to circulate the agreed process for SRDP finalisation, when available to all Members; and **submit** a final draft of the SRDP to the 2016 SPREP Meeting.

Agenda Item 7: Strategic Financial Issues

Agenda Item 7.1: Report on Members' Contributions

155. In accordance with Financial Regulation 14, the Secretariat updated the Meeting on the status of Member contributions at the end of 2014 and submitted a report on Member contributions received in 2015. The Secretariat noted that the

total outstanding contributions, as at 21 September 2015, amount to USD 581,446.

156. The Secretariat noted that SPREP Member contributions owing are at the lowest level in 20 years. The Secretariat also noted and thanked Papua New Guinea for their one-off voluntary contribution of PGK 1 million.

157. French Polynesia noted that its contribution was paid in April 2015 and has been communicating with the Secretariat to resolve the administrative issue.

158. New Caledonia noted that its contribution was paid in French Pacific Francs (XPF) but that exchange rate losses resulted in a shortfall. New Caledonia confirmed that an additional payment to cover this difference will be made in 2016.

159. United States advised that its voluntary contribution will be made shortly, noting that its USD 200,000 voluntary contribution is dependent on a multi-step fiscal process which does not always align with Secretariat timeframes.

160. Wallis and Futuna noted that its payment was made on 15 September 2015 and that this data has been passed on to the Secretariat.

161. Federated States of Micronesia suggested that the Secretariat consider providing incentives for those Members that have paid their membership contributions on time, such as receiving priority for technical assistance.

162. 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 2015.

Agenda Item 7.2: Membership Contributions Report of the Friends of the Chair

163. New Zealand, representing the Friends of the Chair (FoC) on Membership Contributions presented an analysis of the current level of unpaid membership contributions, management fees for projects, exchange rates and voluntary contributions, in the context of the core budget pressures of the Secretariat, as directed by the 25SM.

164. Noting the current level of core financing received by SPREP, the FoC on Membership Contributions proposed a range of options, by way of a Working Paper, to address the issue. Suggestions included an increase in membership contributions, the possibility of additional voluntary contributions and the possible move to a biennial, rather than annual, SPREP Meeting with a strengthened inter-sessional Troika meeting.

165. United States stated that it did not support an increase in membership contributions on account of its policy of zero nominal budget growth for international organisations. United States advocated the practice of prioritising programmes and adjusting budgets accordingly to absorb costs. United States expressed an interest in hearing from SPREP Members about other options for improved efficiencies, such as biennial SPREP Meetings.

166. France opposed the proposed increase of 5% for membership contributions and suggested that the Secretariat strive for real savings and efficiencies, as has been achieved in terms of translation and interpreting services. France might be able to envisage a voluntary increase, but not until 2017, since budgets had already been confirmed for 2016.

167. Australia advocated for SPREP to increase funding reserves that are held as core funding, noting that reserves have previously been used to balance the budget but this strategy is unsustainable and poses significant risk to the

organisation. Australia supported all recommendations under recommendation one.

168. New Caledonia supported the recommendation for a 5% increase in membership contributions, but no sooner than 2017 as the budgets for many countries are already set. New Caledonia also suggested considering different increases for metropolitan Members, compared to insular states, so they could have some flexibility – for example to allow for the contribution that had been made by France towards COP 21.

169. United Kingdom and Fiji opposed an increase in membership contributions.

170. Solomon Islands supported recommendations to increase membership contributions.

171. New Zealand supported all recommendations made by the FoC on Membership Contributions.

172. The Chair requested the formation of a new Working Group to meet in the margins of the 26SM to present a further set of recommendations.

173. Australia, on behalf of the Working Group, presented the recommendations of the Working Group to the Meeting.

174. The Chair invited Members to consider the recommendations on membership fees.

175. All recommendations relating to membership fees were agreed without objection, although Samoa advised that the amount of the voluntary host country grant should be a contribution of USD 20,360.

176. The Meeting then considered the issue of programme management fees and cost recovery.

177. United States asked for clarification regarding the differential 10% and 12% levels for fees and whether this should be '10% or 12%'. The

Secretariat explained that the fee has traditionally been set at 10% for Members and 12% for non-Members and agreed to the changed wording.

178. Fiji requested an example to explain the kinds of exemptions. The Secretariat explained that projects are normally expected to cover core overhead costs such as human resources, but there may also be exceptional items. The Secretariat also clarified that if the core costs could be met at a lower level of management fee than 10%, then it was always possible for the fee to be reduced.

179. The meeting then considered other options to improve efficiencies.

180. Samoa suggested that the SPREP Troika should have wider powers and involvement in overseeing DG discussions with CROP CEOs. Samoa expressed concern with the way the CROP works, particularly with regard to accountability to Members. Samoa proposed that the Troika should have a closer engagement with the Director General on issues related to the wider CROP. The Chair suggested that the issue is better suited for discussion in the session related to the Troika Terms of Reference.

181. New Caledonia suggested a flat management fee of 12%. The Secretariat advised that the differential fee structure for Members and non-Members had been a policy decision by members at previous SPREP Meetings, and can always be changed by Members, but currently either 10% or 12% is within SPREP financial policy.

182. New Caledonia suggested a 'SPREP-lite' Meeting between biennial SPREP Meetings (perhaps to coincide with important Ministerial meetings), to provide the opportunity for Members to meet and exchange views. Australia advised that the Working Group had discussed the idea of a 'SPREP-lite' Meeting, and had concluded that having a scaled down meeting would be problematic due to only partial attendance from members or would balloon to become a full scale meeting, hence not achieving the objective of the recommendation.

183. New Caledonia suggested a sub-regional presence as a way of handling the issues around translation and interpreting, taking as a precedent the offices in Federated States of Micronesia and Republic of the Marshall Islands. The Secretariat advised that SPREP is committed to translation services, especially for communicating outputs, but the Secretariat has to operate within budget. Alternative and smart ways have been under consideration to achieve this, including working with New Caledonia, whose commitment to providing translation services for the Review Committee's meeting in 2014 was much appreciated.

184. France noted that the issue of translation has been discussed throughout the Meeting, and its importance had been acknowledged. It proposed that a statement should be included about the bilingual nature of the organisation and the necessity of translating all documents, then this issue would not be needed to be discussed at each meeting. The Secretariat advised that the intent of this intervention can be captured, and proposed that all meeting documents should be produced in French, but noted that it may not be possible for all the 80 or so documents that the organisation produces annually outside the SPREP meeting to be produced in both languages, but would do its best within existing budgets.

185. With regard to **Membership Contributions**, the Meeting:

- **Noted** that the annual SPREP Meeting requires substantial staff time plus a financial commitment of approximately USD 300,000
- **Noted** the progress of the Friends of the Chair on Membership Contributions and directed the Secretariat, working with the FoC, to further report to Members on options that address the Secretariat's core budget pressures, by the end of March 2016. The options developed will be considered and used by the Secretariat to inform preparation of the 2017 budget where considered appropriate.

- **Encouraged** a voluntary 5% increase in membership contributions in 2016;
- **Directed** the Secretariat to open discussions with Members, as appropriate, to explore options to increase their annual contributions.
- **Approved** an additional voluntary contribution over and above the Secretariat's assessed membership contributions, which is to be held as a contingency reserve to be deployed in accordance with SPREPs financial regulations relating to Reserves.
- **Commended** the intent of the Government of Samoa for the voluntary host country grant to SPREP of USD 20,360.
- **Encouraged** SPREP Members to commit to making membership contributions payments in a timely manner.
- **Directed** the Secretariat to work with Member countries with outstanding contributions to develop payment plans and to work on collecting these outstanding contributions.

186. With regard to **Programme Management Fees and Project Cost Recovery**, the Meeting:

- **Directed** the Secretariat, working through the Project Review Monitoring Group (PRMG) to include an appraisal criteria that projects meet a 10% or 12% project management fee(s) threshold, and noted that:
 - Any exemptions to the above require detailed justification, as part of the PRMG process and this should be reported to Members in relevant documentation to the SPREP Meeting.
 - Exemptions may be based on a scenario where what may otherwise be considered 'indirect costs' (that would otherwise be covered by a management fee) are factored into the project budget.
 - All 'direct costs', such as personnel salaries (and associated personnel

costs) should be comprehensively reflected in project budgets

- **Directed** the Secretariat to liaise with SPC on project cost recovery and build upon the SPC findings for an appropriate cost recovery model for SPREP.
- **Directed** the Secretariat to work through the CROP CEO Heads for support on a harmonised approach to project management fees across CROP agencies.

187. With regard to **other options to improve efficiencies**, the Meeting:

- **Directed** the Secretariat to incorporate a workable mechanism with donors and Members for fixed dates for payment of funds and the preferred currency for payment to be made.
- **Directed** the Secretariat to look at options of engaging with financial institutions in a partnership that could provide more cushioned foreign exchange rates.
- **Approved** the SPREP Meeting convening every two years in Apia Samoa, commencing from 2017 (to ensure alignment with relevant Convention meetings).
- **Approved** additional intercessional governance and reporting arrangements through the SPREP Troika, which may include additional members as per the SPREP Troika Terms of Reference.
- **Confirmed** the bilingual nature of SPREP and the need for translation of all documents for the SPREP Meeting and for other documents, within available budgetary resources.

Agenda Item 7.3: Update on the SPREP Business Plan

188. The Secretariat provided an update on the progress of the SPREP Business Plan. The Business Plan 2013-2015 was endorsed at the 25SM as an interim measure to provide the opportunity to strengthen and develop the final Business Plan in conjunction with the next SPREP Strategic Plan.

189. The Secretariat proposed that the interim Business Plan remain in place until the implementation of the next Strategic Plan, to ensure that the two documents are strategically integrated.

190. Australia reiterated that the current Business Plan is an interim one and that resources need to be set aside for its development in line with the development of the new Strategic Plan. Australia asked the Secretariat if there were amendments done to the interim plan to reflect current developments. Australia also asked to ensure that the Business Plan includes has a strong sustainability plan for the organisation, is more operationally focused, clearly articulates how it relates to the SPREP Strategic Plan and includes SPREP's role as an Implementing Entity under the GCF.

191. The Meeting:

- **approved** the continuation of the interim Business Plan until development of the next Strategic Plan; and
- **requested** the Secretariat to develop a new Business Plan in conjunction with the new Strategic Plan in 2016.

Agenda Item 8: Corporate Services

Agenda Item 8.1: CROP Triennial Review of Staff Terms and Conditions

192. The Secretariat advised that a joint CROP Triennial Review of Staff Terms and Conditions had been carried out earlier in the year by AON Hewitt of Australia.

193. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that it had received a final draft of the *Report of the 2015 CROP Triennial Review of Staff Terms and Conditions* on 10 September 2014, however, there had been insufficient time to analyse the report and conduct consultation with staff and the four participating CROP agencies.

194. Noting that the cost of the Triennial Review was USD 22,000 for each of the CROP agencies, the Secretariat expressed its intention to evaluate the value and relevance of participating in future reviews.

195. New Caledonia sought clarification on who paid for the Triennial Review. The Secretariat advised that costs were split between the CROP agencies.

196. The Meeting:

- **noted** that the final draft of the joint CROP Triennial Review of Staff Terms and Conditions had not been received at the time of preparing this report;
- **noted** that the Secretariat will carry out a full analysis and evaluation of the relevancy and value of continued participation and involvement in the CROP approach to harmonisation of staff terms and conditions, in consultation with Members; and
- **noted** that the Secretariat will provide a report to the 2016 SPREP Meeting of this evaluation as well as suggested ways forward for addressing recommendations of the 2015 CROP Triennial Review Report.

Agenda Item 8.2: Annual Market Data

197. The Secretariat advised the Meeting on the outcomes of the 2015 Annual Market Data Review for staff, noting that the SPREP Meeting has been informed annually of the challenges that CROP agencies continue to face regarding parity of salary scales with the market data, and the inability of each agency to keep up with the recommended market position, given the availability of financial resources.

198. The Meeting:

- **noted** the challenges in implementing the Annual Market data Review in SPREP and in other participating CROP Agencies

- **noted** that the Secretariat will carry out a full analysis and evaluation of the relevancy and value of continued participation and involvement in the CROP approach to annual market data review, in consultation with Members;
- **noted** that the Secretariat will provide a report to the 2016 SPREP Meeting of this evaluation as well as suggested ways forward for addressing future market data reviews.

Agenda Item 8.3: SPREP Director General's Performance Assessment

199. This was a closed session.

200. The Meeting:

- **noted and approved** the Director General's Performance Development Plan for 2014/15;
- **endorsed in principle** the draft 2016 Performance Development Plan noting it will be used as a guideline for the new Director General to be discussed and agreed between her/him and the Troika in early 2016; and
- **noted** the value of the Troika undertaking a face-to-face assessment of the Director General on an annual basis, well before the SPREP Meeting.

Agenda Item 8.4: Appointment of the Director General

201. This was a closed session.

202. The Meeting:

- **noted** the process undertaken by the SAC; and
- **approved** the appointment of Mr Kosi Latu to the position of SPREP Director General.

Agenda Item 9: Regional Conventions

Agenda Item 9.1: Report on the Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention

203. The Chair of the Thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention, represented by New Zealand, presented the *Report of the Thirteenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region and Related Protocols (Noumea Convention)* which was held in Apia, Samoa on 17 September, 2015.

204. The Meeting:

- **noted** the Report of the Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention.

Agenda Item 9.2: Report on the Eighth Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention

205. The Chair of the Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention, represented by New Zealand, presented the *Report of the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and the Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (Waigani Convention)* which was held in Apia, Samoa on 18 September, 2015.

206. Papua New Guinea expressed its continued commitment to the Waigani Convention, noting that the Focal Point in Papua New Guinea for both the Waigani and Noumea Conventions is the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority (CEPA).

207. Papua New Guinea further noted that it looks forward to working with SPREP on the implementation of both Conventions.

208. The Meeting:

- **noted** the Report of the Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention.

Agenda Item 10: 2016 Work Programme and Budget

Agenda Item 10.1: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division - 2016 Overview

209. The Secretariat presented an overview of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Division work programme activities for 2016 in the areas of island and oceanic ecosystems, threatened and migratory species and invasive species.

210. The Meeting:

- **noted** the 2016 work programme for the SPREP Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division.

Agenda Item 10.1.1: Progress in Developing a GEF-6 Invasive Species Proposal

211. The Secretariat provided an update on the status of participation of GEF eligible countries in the GEF-6 Invasive Species Proposal which was unanimously supported at the 24SM. The Secretariat advised that four Member countries have committed a portion of their GEF-6 STAR allocation to the project - Nauru (USD 1 million), Niue (USD 1 million), Republic of the Marshall Islands (USD 1 million) and Tonga (USD 1.5 million).

212. The Secretariat further noted that Fiji and Palau have included significant invasive species management components in their individual GEF-6 plans outside of this project.

213. United States applauded the comprehensive scope of the GEF-6 Invasive Species Proposal and emphasised that biosecurity is often the most cost effective method of dealing with invasive species. United States encouraged SPREP and Republic of the Marshall Islands to partner with Palau, Hawaii,

and other countries in the Micronesian region on invasive species work.

214. United States congratulated the four Members involved with the proposal as well as Palau and Fiji for their programmes outside of the project. United States also strongly encouraged other Members to consider how individual invasive species programmes can work together to benefit the region as a whole.

215. Republic of the Marshall Islands, Niue, Nauru and Tonga acknowledged their GEF-6 STAR allocations and thanked the Secretariat for its assistance in developing the project proposal.

216. Republic of the Marshall Islands thanked the United States for its assistance with developing the Hawaii-Micronesia Biosecurity Plan, funded by the United States Department of Defense and implemented by the University of Guam, and encouraged other Members to join this project.

217. Guam added that it was encouraging more Federal agencies to become involved in the implementation of the Hawaii-Micronesia Biosecurity Plan, and indicated its eagerness to collaborate.

218. In response to a question from Niue, the Secretariat advised that the project will be focused on the four Members that have committed funding, however, benefits are expected to flow to the whole region.

219. Federated States of Micronesia indicated that it is not in a position to commit to the proposal but it will deliberate further on its ability to participate.

220. Tonga emphasised the importance of the initiative and advised it will build on existing GEF-PAS work.

221. New Zealand endorsed the GEF-6 Invasive Species Proposal and the importance it places on invasive species and highlighted the social, cultural, conservation and economic benefits to be gained.

222. Tuvalu welcomed the good work, congratulated the Secretariat and noted the importance of the proposal to small islands facing invasive species problems. Tuvalu expressed its interest in committing to the programme in the future and requested assistance from the Secretariat to strengthen its invasive species capacity.

223. Samoa noted its commitment to addressing invasive species through its GEF-6 biodiversity focal area. For the information of Members, Samoa highlighted the use of invasive species as feedstock for its biomass renewable energy project.

224. New Caledonia recommended that the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management Division work closely with the Conservatory of Natural Spaces of New Caledonia with regard to invasive species. New Caledonia also expressed its interest in hosting the next Pacific Invasive Learning Network (PILN) meeting while reserving its decision pending transmission of supplementary information, notably in the logistics field. This expression of interest was welcomed and acknowledged by the Secretariat.

225. The Secretariat advised Members that it is ready to assist both GEF eligible and non-GEF eligible countries and encouraged all interested Members to cooperate and collaborate with the proposal.

226. The Meeting:

- **congratulated** the four countries that have committed to improving invasive species management nationally and regionally by taking up this opportunity;
- **encouraged** further Members to commit to the project; and
- **encouraged** all Members to consider how their individual invasive species initiatives can contribute to the overall success of invasive species management in the region by coordinating their activities with the project.

Agenda Item 10.1.2: Conservation of Threatened and Migratory Marine Species

227. The Secretariat advised the Meeting of recent initiatives related to the conservation of threatened and migratory marine species covered in SPREP's Marine Species Action Plan.

228. Solomon Islands acknowledged the support of the Government of New Zealand for its turtle monitoring programme and noted its work with Papua New Guinea under the Coral Triangle Network initiative (CTNI). Solomon Islands noted with appreciation the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the CTNI Secretariat.

229. United States expressed in principle support for all the recommendations, but particularly the recommendation dealing with the take of turtles. United States welcomed the appointment of a Shark and Ray Officer and noted support for the forthcoming Shark and Ray Action Plan.

230. United States supported the reinstatement of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) position and the Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) Officer position, provided it is done using existing resources. The Secretariat acknowledged the comments from the United States and noted that the Secretariat would also like to see CMS and CITES Officers, but does not have the resources.

231. United States noted the progress with the Pacific Year of the Whale and requested the Secretariat to explore opportunities for collaboration in the areas of marine mammals and by-catch. The Secretariat noted the comments and advised that it is collaborating with the International Whaling Commission and would welcome opportunities to discuss the work further and to collaborate on addressing derelict fishing gear.

232. United States stressed the need for regulations and guidelines to govern ecotourism, in particular with whale and dolphin watching. It also noted, with alarm, the volume of derelict

fishing gear and the impact that this can have on migratory species. The Secretariat noted the importance of ecotourism for the region hence the need to establish best practice standards in this area.

233. France noted the importance of the competencies already transferred in its French territories in the Pacific relating to the environment and further noted that it encourages these territories to take appropriate measures such as marine regulations being put into place. The Secretariat thanked France for its support in this area, noting that France and the French territories have been at the forefront of ecotourism and working with iconic species.

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

- **noted** that the Global Environment Facility and the Convention on Migratory Species have recently launched a global initiative for the conservation of dugong and seagrass habitat, and congratulated the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu for their commitment to this initiative;
- **endorsed** SPREP's engagement with CMS in developing this programme in the SPREP region; and urged donors and supporters to facilitate a similar level of engagement for the other SPREP Range States for dugong;

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

- **endorsed** SPREP's leadership of a programme under development for EDF 11 funding to reduce and mitigate the impacts of by-catch in commercial and subsistence fisheries on turtles and other non-target species;
- **reiterated** that where the take of turtles is still permitted, Members should: provide to SPREP any reliable estimates that may be available on the level of permitted take, as called for in Action 3.4 of the SPREP Turtle Action Plan; consider prohibiting or more strictly regulating the take of turtles, particularly for major gatherings that involve the harvesting of large numbers of

individual turtles; and consider prohibiting or more strictly regulating the take of turtle eggs and nesters, in line with Action 3.5 of the SPREP Turtle Action Plan.

236. With reference to **whales and dolphins**, the Meeting:

- **noted with approval** that SPREP has begun planning for the implementation of 2016 as the Pacific Year of the Whale; 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.

237. With reference to **sharks**, the Meeting:

- **noted** that many species of sharks in the SPREP region have declined significantly in abundance in recent years and welcomed the steps taken by many SPREP Members and partners to protect sharks within their EEZs through a variety of conservation measures;
- **noted with approval** that SPREP has appointed a Shark and Ray Conservation Officer and agreed that the Officer should work with Members, and in association with other competent and interested parties, to draft a Shark Action Plan, to be incorporated into the next round of Marine Species Action Plans (2018-2023).

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

- **noted** that the position of CMS Pacific Officer has been dis-established due to a lack of funding and appealed to donors and supporters to consider making a voluntary contribution to CMS to have the position reinstated;
- **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, to support Members who are signatories to CITES or non-signatories who wish to adopt similar regulatory measures for sustainable trade in wildlife.

239. With reference to **regional collaboration**, the Meeting:

- **endorsed** the proposal to seek the release to SPREP of Observer Reports on by-catch of non-target threatened species and species of special interest in commercial fishing operations, by seeking the consent of Members to allow the release of Observer Reports collected in their EEZs and archived by SPC.

Agenda Item 10.1.3: Ecotourism and Iconic Marine Species

240. The Secretariat advised the Meeting on the outcomes of the Blue Days (Journées Bleues) Conference on ecotourism and iconic species, held in Papeete from 1-5 June, 2015.

241. The Secretariat invited the Meeting to endorse the Communiqué issued by participants and presented a proposed programme framework to further develop marine species-based ecotourism in the Pacific Islands.

242. French Polynesia expressed its delight at having hosted the Blue Days Workshop, and reminded the Meeting about its role as a marine sanctuary for iconic species since 2002, and its contribution to workshop funding and collaboration. Noting that Blue Days emphasised the significance of iconic species, French Polynesia highlighted the importance of integrating scientific approaches with traditional and cultural knowledge and recommended that future workshops continue to address these important themes. French Polynesia plans to hold a number of workshops on this topic in the future. The Secretariat thanked French Polynesia for its comments related to Blue Days, noted the importance and value of the Blue Days workshops,

and advised that it will share Blue Days documents with French Polynesia.

243. United Kingdom welcomed SPREP's collaboration with SPTO, and encouraged interaction with relevant UK-based funding mechanisms geared at the targeted protection of natural resources and endangered species. United Kingdom indicated a willingness to work closely with SPREP on its planned marine protected areas around Pitcairn Island.

244. New Caledonia congratulated the Secretariat and French Polynesia on the Blue Days workshop and requested support from SPREP to develop a biodiversity strategy, advancing Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) and CITES.

245. New Caledonia informed the Meeting about the progress of the KBA methodological review and asked the Division to participate in the revision. The Secretariat advised that it will examine the KBA methodology to determine how it can be applied to the region.

246. New Caledonia and the Secretariat encouraged France to continue to support the position of SPREP Focal Point for French Territories.

247. The Meeting:

- **noted** the outcomes of the Blue Days conference;
- **endorsed** the Communiqué issued by the conference, in particular the proposal for SPREP to collaborate with SPTO and the private sector in the promotion of sustainable ecotourism involving protected species by providing advice and guidance on best practice guidelines; and
- **endorsed** the proposed programme framework to implement actions and to develop best practice ecotourism in the region that will support the conservation of iconic marine species and provide economic benefits to coastal communities.

Agenda Item 10.1.4: Biodiversity Related Multilateral Environmental Agreements

248. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on SPREP's role in maximising the implementation and effectiveness of biodiversity related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Ramsar Convention (Ramsar) on Wetlands, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

249. The Secretariat noted that, despite success in assisting Pacific island states to implement and meet their MEA obligations, MEA Secretariats have been unable to provide continued adequate funding for Convention Officers based at SPREP, specifically for the CMS and Ramsar Conventions.

250. Australia noted the value of having MEA Secretariat representation in the region through positions based at SPREP, and suggested that the Secretariat develop a single reporting template for key biodiversity MEAs to streamline the reporting processes.

251. Tonga and Republic of the Marshall Islands commended the work of the Secretariat in assisting Members to meet their biodiversity-related MEA obligations.

252. Tonga thanked the Secretariat for its support in developing Tonga's Fifth National Report and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

253. Republic of the Marshall Islands noted the importance of the UNCCD and requested the Secretariat's assistance in this area.

254. The Meeting:

- **noted** that the Secretariat plays an important regional role in leveraging the implementation and effectiveness of MEAs, and achieved a number of particular advances in 2014 to improve collaborations between Members and the relevant MEAs;

- **agreed** that the Secretariat should continue to collaborate closely with the main biodiversity related MEAs and ensure information sharing; and should offer to host Regional Officers to support such collaborations, with such arrangements to be negotiated on a case by case basis;
- **endorsed** the inclusion of realistic and achievable MEA targets in the new Strategic Plan; and
- **requested** that the Secretariat develop a single reporting template for key biodiversity MEAs to streamline the reporting processes.

Agenda Item 10.2: Climate Change Division - 2016 Overview

255. The Secretariat provided an overview of the Climate Change Division's work programme activities for 2016 in the areas of implementing adaptation measures, improving capacity, knowledge and understanding of climate change risks and reduction, contributing to greenhouse gas reduction and pipeline initiatives.

256. Tonga thanked the Secretariat for its presentation and noted the importance of the iClim project to many Member countries. Tonga expressed its appreciation to the Government of Australia and Griffith University for their support of the iClim project.

257. Tuvalu noted the value of the Climate Change Division's work, and expressed a desire to see the issue of loss and damage recognised as a priority. The Secretariat noted the importance of the issue to the region and advised the Meeting of a recently commissioned SPREP/GIZ study which will inform the Climate Change Division's work in this area.

258. Fiji, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands noted the need for assistance in the area of completing greenhouse gas inventories and encouraged the Secretariat to take leadership in this area. The Secretariat agreed that these technical experts in this area are in demand, and advised the Meeting

that the Secretariat is exploring mechanisms to foster south-south cooperation in delivering expertise in greenhouse gas inventories.

259. With regard to the upcoming COP21 in Paris, Fiji noted the importance of coordinating efforts, and pooling resources and expertise, to ensure robust outcomes.

260. New Caledonia noted its recent meeting with the Climate Change Division to explore opportunities for collaboration and advised the Meeting of an upcoming Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in New Caledonia.

261. In response to a question from Solomon Islands about backstopping disaster management officers in the region, the Secretariat noted its close collaboration with National Disaster Managers.

262. United States enquired as to whether the Secretariat had any side events planned for COP21. The Secretariat advised the Meeting that notification had recently been received about its successful application for a side event to be held in partnership with the Government of Finland. The Secretariat assured the Meeting that further information would be made available to all Members.

263. Australia expressed appreciation for the work of the Climate Change Division, noting that Australia is very proud of its collaboration with SPREP in this area. The Secretariat thanked Australia for its support.

264. Papua New Guinea asked for clarification as to why activities related to deforestation were not reflected in the work programme for the Climate Change Division. The Secretariat and Papua New Guinea agreed to discuss the matter further out of session.

265. The Meeting:

- **noted** the 2016 work programme for the SPREP Climate Change Division.

Agenda Item 10.2.1: Outcomes of PCCR

266. The Secretariat updated the Meeting on the outcomes of the Fifth Pacific Climate Change Roundtable (PCCR), held in Apia, Samoa from 12 - 14 May, 2015 and acknowledged the support provided by the Governments of Samoa and Switzerland. The PCCR was attended by 183 representatives from 24 Pacific island countries and territories along with 22 regional and international organisations and development partners. Detailed information on the 2015 PCCR key recommendations was provided to the Meeting in the form of a Working Paper.

267. New Zealand commended the Secretariat on its climate change work and the noted the usefulness of the PCCR in this regard.

268. The Meeting:

- **noted** the information in the paper;
- **noted** that it is proposed to continue the PCCR as a stand-alone forum and ensure that it is linked with mechanisms under the SRDP; and
- **noted** the recommendations of the PCCR for informing further climate change work in the region.

Agenda Item 10.2.2: Outcomes of the Third Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC-3) and the First Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology (PMMM-1)

269. The Secretariat reported on the outcomes of the third meeting of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC-3) and the First Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology (PMMM-1) supporting sustainable weather and climate services for a resilient Pacific.

270. United States supported the reports of the PMC-3 in principle and encouraged the WMO and World Bank to lend their support. While agreeing in principle with the *Nuku'alofa Declaration*, United States explained that there had been insufficient

time to have it fully cleared. United States noted the need for sufficient time to be provided in order to meet diplomatic procedures and urged this request to be considered in future. The Secretariat noted comments from United States and advised the Meeting that the Declaration had been corrected.

271. United Kingdom noted the impressive outcomes of the meeting and highlighted the value of the media training and other capacity building activities. United Kingdom noted the great value of communicating impending emergencies and welcomed opportunities for further collaboration with the UK Met Service.

272. Australia welcomed the increase in aid investment in climate and weather related activities in the region. Australia noted that it continues to encourage enhanced coordination amongst various partner agencies and governments involved in weather and climate related regional development projects at all stages of project implementation. Australia further noted the limited capacity of Pacific island countries and territories and competition for resources for various priority national needs and the benefits of regionally centralised delivery of products and services. Australia also noted with concern the increasing workload and pressure placed on regional and national agencies.

273. New Zealand acknowledged Tonga's hosting of this event, and recalled the long-term support it had provided through NIWA and the NZ Met Service. New Zealand expressed some concern about the proliferation of systems that do not talk to each other, and encouraged the effective coordination of efforts.

274. Samoa noted that the issue of integrating met services into disaster planning had been incorporated into the SAMOA Pathway and expressed disappointment at inadequate regional consideration. The Secretariat thanked Samoa and clarified that the *Nuku'alofa Declaration* is not intended to reinvent or undermine the SAMOA Pathway.

275. Tonga thanked the Secretariat and advised that the *Nuku'alofa Declaration* had been presented to Leaders at the recent Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Papua New Guinea. Tonga noted that the Declaration had been well received.

276. Solomon Islands congratulated the Secretariat and noted that it was warmly anticipating its role as host of the Fourth Pacific Meteorological Council and the Second Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology in 2017.

277. The Meeting:

- **noted** the key recommendations from the Third Meeting of the Pacific Meteorological Council and where appropriate, for Member countries and partners to commit resources;
- **commended** the members of the PMC for their vital contribution to the safety of the people of the Pacific through improving and expanding the delivery of weather and climate services in the region;
- **commended** the *Nuku'alofa Ministerial Declaration for Sustainable Weather and Climate Services for a Resilient Pacific* by the PMMM-1 and where appropriate, for member countries and partners to commit resources and to prioritise meteorological, marine, and hydrological services;
- **welcomed** the WMO continued support for the implementation of the Pacific Islands Meteorological Strategy through the Pacific Met Desk Partnership and the signing of two LoA during the PMC ministerial meeting;
- **commended** the people and the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga for the excellent facilities and hosting of the PMC-3 and the PMMM-1;
- **noted** the importance of and the need to support the Argo Program, and that the SPREP PI-GOOS Officer and US Argo Program staff will approach the Members to discuss the program;
- **acknowledged** the regional and international partners who have made

financial and in-kind contributions to SPREP in the ongoing work to strengthen meteorological services in the region, including from the Government of Finland, Korea, Australia, United States of America and WMO; and

- **noted** that the fourth meeting of the PMC and the second meeting of the PMMM will be held in Solomon Islands in 2017.

Agenda Item 10.2.3: Preparations for COP 21

278. The Secretariat updated Members on SPREP's planned support for Pacific island Member countries attending the Twenty-first Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris, France from 30 November-11 December, 2015. Detailed information on the Secretariat's preparations for COP 21, known as the Pacific Voyage to COP 21, was provided to the Meeting in the form of a Working Paper.

279. Papua New Guinea informed the meeting that the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea would be hosting a side event at the COP and enquired if the Secretariat would be able to provide supporting notes. The Secretariat welcomed the offer to assist and agreed to work bilaterally on this matter.

280. New Caledonia noted that its President made the commitment that New Caledonia would act as the spokesperson/state of the Pacific States during COP21, using the Lifou Declaration and the Taputapuatea Declaration. New Caledonia invited all leaders of Pacific countries and territories to participate in the France-Oceania Summit to be held on November 26, in the side event organised during COP21 at the Maison of New Caledonia, and also in the side event co-organised by OCTA and GLISPA.

281. United Kingdom commended SPREP on its support to PICs and encouraged the Secretariat to coordinate its work in the region to come up with a united voice at the COP. United Kingdom encouraged Members to view COP 21 as the start

of a process and not the end. The Secretariat thanked United Kingdom for its commitment and advised of its willingness to work closely with other agencies.

282. Solomon Islands thanked the Secretariat and enquired whether funding assistance would be available for ministers to attend the ministerial meeting at the end of this year in Apia. The Secretariat advised that funding would be provided for one Minister and one senior official.

283. Fiji encouraged the collaborative manner in which this matter was being organised and strongly supported the idea of taking a media team to COP 21. The Secretariat thanked Fiji for its support of media activities.

284. Australia advised that it is working with other countries to successfully deliver a strong and effective new global climate agreement at COP21. Australia noted the significance of this conference to Pacific island countries and SPREP's considerable work in helping Pacific island countries to prepare. Australia noted that it will act in step with other key economies to build global climate action in a way that also maintains economic growth and development. Australia welcomed the robust discussion of climate change issues in the recent Pacific Islands Forum.

285. Tuvalu welcomed the preparations by SPREP to deliver support to PICs at the upcoming COP 21. Tuvalu noted the difficulty in securing side events slots and exhibition space at the COP and enquired if SPREP would be able to assist in that regard. The Secretariat advised that it has requested a Pacific island pavilion and is currently seeking funding to support the initiative. The Secretariat advised that a request for exhibition space had been made and welcomed Members to use the space to set up their displays.

286. France thanked SPREP for putting this item on the agenda to give the opportunity to showcase the region's joint efforts and collaboration for COP 21. France advised that the President met with many Pacific leaders in

Noumea last year and observed the importance of climate change in the region.

287. The Meeting:

- **noted** the information in the paper;
- **provided** comments regarding ways in which SPREP can support PICs at COP 21;
- **invited** those in a position to do so, to provide additional resources to support SPREP's work in this area.

Agenda Item 10.2.4: Climate Services Programmes (FINPAC, Climate Services and ROK – PI CLIPS, COSPPac, PACCSAP)

288. The Secretariat provided the Meeting with an update on progress made by SPREP and its partners in relation to meteorology and climatology activities aimed at building the capacity of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) in the region.

289. Australia suggested an additional recommendation to support the Secretariat's role in coordinating and harmonising climate services programmes and to ensure that duplication of effort is avoided.

290. Fiji commended the Secretariat on its array of partnerships in climate and weather services, and noted the need to enhance information forwarded to climate divisions and departments. Furthermore, Fiji encouraged closer collaboration between meteorological and climate divisions within Member countries and territories.

291. The Secretariat advised the Meeting that work is being undertaken with national meteorological services to build the National Climate Outlook Forum, which brings together all sectors to inform development planning.

292. The Meeting:

- **welcomed** the generosity and commitment of regional and international partners for the ongoing projects to strengthen the

delivery of climate services in the region, including WMO and the Governments of Finland, Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, United States of America;

- **encouraged** Members to support the ongoing development of their National Meteorology and Hydrological Services and SPREP's efforts to support them; and,
- **encouraged** SPREP to continue to play a strong role in coordinating and harmonising climate services programmes to ensure that duplication of effort is avoided and to ensure these programmes are sustainable.

Agenda Item 10.2.5: Ocean Acidification Update

293. The Secretariat provided an update on SPREP's ocean acidification activities, including the recently funded New Zealand Partnership on Ocean Acidification and new partnerships.

294. United States welcomed the project and commended New Zealand for its support, noting the benefit of building on the outcomes from the UN SIDS Ocean Acidification workshop held in 2014.

295. New Zealand noted its pleasure at partnering with United States and the Secretariat, and encouraged Members to attend the upcoming Ocean Acidification workshop in Auckland from 7-9 October, which will build resilience to ocean acidification.

296. France and Solomon Islands thanked New Zealand and United States for their support of the project.

297. Solomon Islands requested more information on the project prior to the Ocean Acidification workshop in October. The Secretariat noted that more information would be uploaded to the Secretariat website and distributed to Members.

298. The Chair highlighted the importance of this issue and commended SPREP for working with its partners to lead on this issue.

299. The Meeting:

- **noted with appreciation** the Governments of the United States and New Zealand for their support for the UN SIDS Ocean Acidification Workshop;
- **welcomed** the support of NZD 1.8 million from New Zealand in helping Pacific island countries build resilience to ocean acidification; and
- **encouraged** SPREP and Member countries to actively pursue ocean acidification adaptation opportunities and to incorporate ocean acidification into climate change policy.

Agenda Item 10.3: Waste Management and Pollution Control Division - 2016 Overview

300. The Secretariat provided an overview of the Waste Management and Pollution Control Division's work programme activities for 2016 in the areas of solid waste management support, marine pollution management support and hazardous waste management support.

301. Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Vanuatu and France acknowledged and commended the Secretariat for its work in waste management and pollution control.

302. Federated States of Micronesia noted that e-Waste is a growing concern and requested to be included in one of SPREP's e-Waste initiatives. The Secretariat noted the request.

303. The Meeting:

- **noted** the 2016 work programme for the SPREP Waste Management and Pollution Control Division.

Agenda Item 10.3.1: Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy 2016-2025 (Cleaner Pacific 2025)

304. The Secretariat presented the *Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy 2016-2025*, known as Cleaner Pacific 2025.

305. Tonga, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea, Australia, France, Kiribati, and Fiji noted and expressed support for the new Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy 2016-2025 and further noted appreciation to the Government of Japan and the European Union for its financial assistance in developing the integrated regional strategy.

306. Solomon Islands and Kiribati raised the importance of a balanced approach to the potentially different waste and pollution priorities between national and regional levels which would require differential approaches.

307. France noted the importance of mainstreaming waste management into national policy frameworks. The Federated States of Micronesia and Fiji stated that they would align their national waste and pollution strategies with the regional strategy. Australia noted that the new strategy complements the PACPOL Strategy.

308. The Secretariat responded and thanked the Members for their support to develop and implement the strategy and also acknowledged the financial support to develop the strategy from JICA. The Secretariat further noted that the new strategy encapsulates all major waste streams and confirmed it complements the PACPOL Strategy. The Secretariat advised that it will be assessing the overall status of waste and pollution in the region to determine priority interventions for implementation at national levels which will be then undertaken when funding is secured for interventions.

309. The Meeting:

- **endorsed** the Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy 2016-2025 (Cleaner Pacific 2025); and
- **agreed** to work with SPREP and other partners to improve the regional management of waste and pollution over the next 10 years using the Strategy Implementation Plan.

Agenda Item 10.3.2: PACPOL Strategy and International Maritime Organization Conventions

310. The Secretariat presented the *Pacific Ocean Pollution Prevention Programme (PACPOL) Strategy, 2015-2020*. The PACPOL Strategy 2015-2020 promotes safe, environmentally sound, efficient and sustainable shipping throughout the region consistent with the 1986 Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region and its related Protocols (Noumea Convention).

311. Tonga, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Samoa and France acknowledged the work of the Secretariat on the PACPOL Strategy.

312. Papua New Guinea acknowledged the partnership between the Secretariat and the International Maritime Organization in the development of the PACPOL Strategy.

313. New Zealand encouraged countries that are yet to accede to the relevant Conventions to do so in support of the PACPOL Strategy.

314. Australia endorsed the implementation of the PACPOL Strategy. The Secretariat thanked Australia for the AMSA secondment noting the hard work of Scott Willson towards progressing many of the marine initiatives.

315. Kiribati requested assistance from the Secretariat in the areas of National Action Plan and Ballast Water Management.

316. Federated States of Micronesia pointed out that it is currently drafting its PACPOL Strategy and PacPlan. Federated States of Micronesia also highlighted the issue of sunken ships in Chuuk and requested assistance in addressing this issue.

317. The Secretariat noted requests for assistance from Kiribati and Federated States of Micronesia and advised that it would be happy to discuss the matter further.

318. The Meeting:

- **endorsed** the PACPOL Strategy, 2015-2020 programme (and estimated budget) to assist in the reduction of the environmental impacts of shipping in the region.

Agenda Item 10.3.3: Marine Litter Observer Data (GEN-6: Marine Pollution Originating from Purse Seine Fishing Vessel Operations in the Western and Central Pacific Region, 2004-2014)

319. The Secretariat presented an analysis and summary of data on pollution incidents caused by fishing vessels from the SPC/FFA Regional Observer Pollution Report Form GEN-6. The report detailed the nature and extent of ship sourced marine pollution in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. Recommendations from the report were provided to the Meeting by way of a Working Paper.

320. Tonga, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Australia, Kiribati, Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Samoa commended the Secretariat on work being done to address the issue of marine litter.

321. New Caledonia requested clarification as to whether information is available on the impact of marine litter on fisheries themselves. The

Secretariat agreed to share this information where available.

322. Samoa commended the inter-CROP agency collaboration shown between the Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency in sharing of Observer data and encouraged more of this cooperation.

323. Australia urged the Secretariat to seek the cooperation of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Group (PNA) and other relevant agencies, in informing the distant water fishing nations of this issue and seeking effective remedial action.

324. The Meeting:

- **noted** the progress on the analysis and summary of the SPC/FFA Regional Observer Pollution Report (Gen-6) data;
- **endorsed** the recommendations provided by the report, including the planned implementation of work on this subject; and
- **directed** the Secretariat to seek the cooperation of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Group (PNA) and other relevant agencies, in informing the distant water fishing nations of this issue and seeking effective remedial action.

Agenda Item 10.3.4: Regional Chemicals and Hazardous Waste Management Update

325. The Secretariat presented a summary of regional hazardous waste management activities.

326. New Zealand, Tonga, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Fiji, and Solomon Islands thanked the Secretariat and commended the work being undertaken under the chemical and hazardous waste program.

327. Kiribati noted its pleasure at hosting the upcoming PacWaste Steering Committee Meeting and Workshop.

328. The Secretariat thanked the Meeting for its positive expressions of support and noted requests for assistance from Tonga, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Solomon Islands.

329. Federated States of Micronesia enquired about the status of chemical management training. The Secretariat advised that training would be rolled out following the completion of training manuals.

330. The Meeting:

- **noted** the compiled Summary of Regional Chemicals and Hazardous Waste Management Activities for 2014-2015; and
- **encouraged** Members and relevant partners to prioritise and actively participate in ongoing hazardous waste management activities.

Agenda Item 10.4: Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division - 2016 Overview

331. The Secretariat provided an overview of the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division's work programme activities for 2016 in the areas of enabling frameworks, mainstreaming, building capacity and monitoring and reporting.

332. The Meeting:

- **noted** the 2016 work programme for the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division.

Agenda Item 10.4.1: Role of SPREP in Implementation of SAMOA Pathway and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

333. The Secretariat presented an update on the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, noting that SPREP will lead in addressing the environment pillar and will play a support role in the economic and social pillars.

334. The Secretariat noted that two key areas were identified as implementation gaps - green economy and sustainable consumption and production. To address these, SPREP has partnered with UNEP to ensure effective implementation.

335. The Meeting:

- **endorsed** SPREP's defined role in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and the SDGs;
- **noted** these areas will be proposed for integration within SPREP's new Strategic Plan; and
- **endorsed** SPREP's work with UNEP and other partners to fully address the identified gaps in green economy and sustainable consumption and production.

Agenda Item 10.4.2: Global Environment Facility (GEF)

336. The Secretariat provided an update on the Pilot Accreditation for GEF Project Agencies and the implementation of the Medium Sized Project to facilitate SPREP GEF Implementing Agency accreditation. The Secretariat also outlined the current status of SPREP GEF projects, proposals, concepts and member support services.

337. United States, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, New Zealand, Samoa, Australia, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Niue commended the Secretariat on its work in relation to Environmental Monitoring and Governance, particularly in relation to the GEF process.

338. United States welcomed SPREP's efforts to strengthen its fiduciary capacity, put in place environmental and social safeguards, and strengthen its IT platforms. United States welcomed additional information from the Secretariat at future SPREP Meetings to provide additional details regarding how these services are increasing Members' access to GEF resources and other sources of environment finance.

339. New Zealand encouraged the Secretariat to work closely with partners and other Implementing Agencies to ensure that GEF project proposals reach the GEF council in sufficient time.

340. The Secretariat noted a request from Tuvalu for assistance in identifying national priorities and moving through the GEF process.

341. Cook Islands acknowledged with appreciation the Secretariat's work on GEF proposals, and Kiribati supported Cook Islands' intervention, particularly in relation to raising awareness of the GEF process.

342. The Meeting:

- **noted** that the Pilot Accreditation of GEF Agencies is completed and the Medium Sized Project to strengthen facilitate SPREP's fiduciary capacity, put in place environmental and social safeguards and strengthen IT platforms is currently being implemented;
- **noted** the status of projects executed by the SPREP;
- **acknowledged** the significant contributions made by the recently completed PACC and PIGGAREP projects in climate change adaptation and renewable energy for Pacific island countries;
- **noted** that GEF 5 proposals for two regional projects on MEA and ABS have been submitted for consideration; and
- **endorsed** SPREP to continue to offer GEF support services to Members.

Agenda Item 10.4.3: Regional EIA Guidelines - Strengthening Environmental Impact Assessment: Guidelines for Pacific Island Countries and Territories

343. The Secretariat presented its draft Regional EIA Guidelines entitled *Strengthening Environmental Impact Assessment: Guidelines for Pacific Island Countries and Territories* and discussed the planned use of these Guidelines to

develop an EIA training package for national capacity-building.

344. Member countries commended the Secretariat on progressing work in this area.

345. New Caledonia recalled the recently signed MoU with SPREP to work in collaboration with IRD to better integrate human science and social science issues into EIA and encouraged indicators be contextualised to suit Pacific island experience.

346. Papua New Guinea advised it has rigorous EIA processes in place however, it noted that this process had areas that need strengthening. Papua New Guinea welcomed working closely with SPREP to support the EIA Guidelines.

347. Kiribati, while acknowledging the efforts of the Secretariat in developing the Regional EIA Guidelines, noted that the process was not inclusive of all relevant stakeholders. Kiribati requested clarification as to whether there were pilot countries identified for the process and, if so, if any of those countries were atoll countries. Kiribati supported the development of the Regional EIA Guidelines, and asked if relevant training programmes were attached to those guidelines. Kiribati also requested assistance from SPREP to appraise their EIA reports. The Secretariat confirmed that there were training programmes incorporated into the guidelines.

348. Australia noted that there may be two sets of guidelines being developed; PRIF and SPREP and enquired as to whether SPREP's Guidelines could be revised to match PRIF's guidelines once released. Australia noted that there are risks in having two sets of guidelines (SPREP/PRIF) which could lead to confusion. Australia asked for assurance that the EIA Guidelines would be updated as necessary so that the two sets are harmonised and noted that online publication might provide an easier way to update. Australia also drew the attention of the Meeting to the Offset Guidelines being developed by IUCN, and potential complementarity with the draft Regional EIA Guidelines. The Secretariat noted that the PRIF Guidelines were envisaged to be released soon,

that the regional EIA Guidelines developed by the Secretariat are based on best practice, and that the Secretariat would look at the possible convergence of the two in the future.

349. Vanuatu requested the Secretariat to take the lead in ensuring scientific information and data were made available to Members to assist the EIA process. The Secretariat noted the need for sharing of scientific information and data to guide the application of the EIA process.

350. Federated States of Micronesia encouraged close and open communication between SPREP and Members noting specifically the need for them to work towards their NEMS revision.

351. The Meeting:

- **endorsed** the new Regional EIA Guidelines, *Strengthening Environmental Impact Assessment: Guidelines for Pacific Island Countries and Territories*,
- **endorsed** the use of the Regional EIA Guidelines to develop an EIA training package for national capacity-building and supplementary guidelines; and
- **noted** the collaboration with PRIF on ESS safeguards.

Agenda Item 10.4.4: Deep Sea Mining (DSM) – the Role of SPREP

352. The Secretariat provided background information on Deep Sea Mining (DSM), highlighting the threat that it poses to deep sea biodiversity and marine ecosystem health and function.

353. Noting that SPREP's involvement with Deep Sea Mining has been unfunded to date, the Secretariat proposed a formalised role with respect to DSM in order to provide effective support for Members to assist in strengthening national environmental governance and enable effective management of Deep Sea Mining.

354. The Secretariat provided detailed guidance on DSM roles and responsibilities for the SPREP Secretariat and Members in the form of a Working Paper.

355. Australia, Vanuatu, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Cook Islands congratulated the Secretariat on its work on DSM.

356. New Caledonia noted for the Meeting that its experience with land-based mining activities could help inform the management of DSM and that it was willing to assist with work with indicators and the EIA Guidelines.

357. Kiribati noted the importance of formalising the Secretariat's role in DSM in relation to its mandate.

358. New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Cook Islands and Niue requested clarification regarding the roles of the Secretariat and SPC on DSM. The Secretariat advised that SPC is the lead agency on DSM and that the Secretariat importantly provides environment-specific inputs in line with its mandate.

359. New Zealand requested further information regarding the budgetary implications for the Secretariat's work on DSM. The Secretariat clarified that most of the work such as legal research or environmental frameworks is undertaken by SPC and that SPREP provides input into this which is mostly staff time. The Secretariat has also attended a few workshops with funding provided by SPC.

360. Samoa supported the Secretariat's important work on DSM, especially given the upcoming EU/SPC Phase II stage of regional DSM development. Samoa encouraged greater involvement by the Secretariat on DSM, and noted for the Meeting that many countries in the region currently do not have legislative frameworks for DSM.

361. Australia encouraged the Secretariat in continued cooperation and mutual clarification of roles with SPC, PIFS and OPOC (Office of the

Pacific Ocean Commissioner). Australia noted the value of EIA and marine spatial planning in understanding the impact of issues. Australia is supporting marine spatial planning in Pacific through the EPOG project. Australia asked for a report back on SPREP's work on DSM in the next SPREP Meeting.

362. United States requested a change in footnote one, namely that the reference to precautionary principle be revised to precautionary approach. The Secretariat noted the request and agreed to the amendment. United States asked what 'support of implementing MEAs' means.

363. Cook Islands encouraged the Secretariat to work closely with SPC to ensure that duplication of efforts on DSM do not occur, and noted for the Meeting that it has a national framework for DSM that can be shared with Members and the Secretariat.

364. Federated States of Micronesia requested clarification on the types of assistance available from the Secretariat for DSM. The Secretariat explained that SPC would undertake that work.

365. Papua New Guinea and Fiji suggested language for a further recommendation which was accepted by the Meeting.

366. The Meeting:

- **considered and endorsed** the role of the SPREP Secretariat in assisting Members with DSM environmental issues;
- **directed** the Secretariat to establish partnerships and seek additional resources to fulfill this role;
- **directed** SPREP, working in close cooperation with SPC, the lead agency for DSM, to conduct further research into DSM and develop scenarios for potential environmental impacts and convey this to members, within available resources;
- **encouraged** donors and partners to support SPREP's work on DSM environmental issues; and

- **noted** the guidance contained in Attachment 1 in the Working Paper.

Agenda Item 10.5: Consideration and Approval of Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2016

367. The Secretariat presented its proposed Annual Work Programme and Budget for 2016.

368. New Zealand sought clarification on the unsecured funding component of the budget. The Secretariat explained that the unsecured funding represents USD 150,000 of the core and USD 347,597 is for programmes.

369. New Zealand and the United States enquired about the increase in the consultancy component of the core budget. The Secretariat gave an update on the status of the reserves. The Secretariat also explained that the increase in the consultancy component relates to consultancies funded by the GEF Medium Sized Project.

370. Australia requested the Secretariat to provide an Executive Summary of the Budget Report in future to enable Members to better understand the key issues. The Secretariat noted the request.

371. Australia enquired about the reduced costs associated with running the 2016 SPREP Meeting. The Secretariat advised that the cost savings had come about as a result of a new service provider for translation and interpreting.

372. The Meeting:

- **considered and approved** the proposed Work Programme and Budget of USD 19,095,085 for 2016.

Agenda Item 11: Items Proposed by Members

373. There were no items proposed by Members for this Agenda Item.

Agenda Item 12: Regional Cooperation

Agenda Item 12.1: CROP Executives Meeting Report

374. The Director General provided a verbal briefing on the outcomes of the CROP Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Meetings in 2015, noting that these meetings are a valuable mechanism for sharing information and developing ways of working together.

375. The Meeting:

- **noted** the verbal presentation of the SPREP Director General on CROP CEOs Meetings in 2015.

Agenda Item 13: Statements by Observers

376. The 26SM 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. Observer statements are attached as Annex V.

Agenda Item 14: Other Business

Agenda Item 14.1: Suggestions for the Agenda of the Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting

377. Noting that the 27SM will have a ministerial component, Australia proposed that a key item for ministerial agreement should be the next Strategic Plan. Other possible items might include the Pacific Oceanscape Framework, a strategic Pacific-wide approach to Multilateral Environmental Agreements and endorsing the Clean Pacific Strategy.

378. France proposed a discussion on post-Paris outcomes and implications on the Pacific-Oceanic region.

379. The Director General reminded the Meeting of the existing process for submission of issues in consultation with the Troika.

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

380. The Meeting:

- **agreed** that the Secretariat would consult with Tonga and Niue regarding the hosting of the Twenty-seventh SPREP Meeting, which will include a ministerial component.

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

381. The Meeting:

- **adopted** the Report of the Twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting.

Agenda Item 17: Close

382. The Meeting was formally closed at 7pm on 24 September, 2015.

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Report of the Twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting of Officials

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132. Ms. Simeamativa L. Vaai
133. Ms. Alofa Tuuau
134. Ms. Selesitina Reti
135. Dr. Frank Griffin
136. Mr. Anthony Talouli
137. Mr. Stewart Williams
138. Ms. Ma-Bella Guinto
139. Ms. Lusiana Ralogaivau
140. Ms. Elizabeth Vanderburg
141. Ms. Amber Carvan
142. Ms. Faailo Maiuu
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144. Mr. Jope Davetanivalu
145. Ms. Melanie Bradley
146. Mr. Ryan Wright
147. Ms. Anama Solofa
148. Mr. Kilom Ishiguro
149. Ms. Pauline Fruean
150. Mr. David Moverley
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152. Ms. Easter Galuvao
153. Ms. Amanda Wheatley
154. Mr. Warren Lee Long
155. Mr. Michael Donoghue
156. Ms. Catherine Siota
157. Mr. Herman Timmermans
158. Ms. Makerita Atiga
159. Ms. Payal Maharaj

Report of the Twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting of Officials

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161.	Mr. Carlo Iacovino	190.	Mr. Elama Tofilau
162.	Mr. Espen Ronneberg	191.	Mr. Lawrence Warner
163.	Ms. Tagaloa Cooper-Halo	192.	Mr. Amosa Tootoo
164.	Ms. Azarel Mariner	193.	Mr. Faamanatu Sititi
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167.	Mr. Salesa Nihmei	196.	Mr. Tino Faumuina
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171.	Ms. Priscilla Olano	200.	Ms. Emma Arasi
172.	Mr. Simon Wilson	201.	Ms. Nanette Woonton
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174.	Ms. Apiseta Eti	203.	Mr. Simpson Abraham
175.	Ms. Rosanna Galuvao-Ah Ching	204.	Mr. Ewan Cameron
176.	Mr. Christian Slaven	205.	Mr. Michinobu Aoyama
177.	Mr. Billy Chan Ting	206.	Mr. Steve Newman
178.	Mr. Epeli Tagi	207.	Mr. Andrea Volentras
179.	Mr. Ainsof So'o	208.	Ms. Satui Bentin
180.	Ms. Luana Chan-Jamieson	209.	Ms. Veronica Levi
181.	Ms. Monica Tupai	210.	Mr. Aaron Buncle
182.	Ms. Jolynn M. Fepuleai	211.	Mr. Peniamina Leavai
183.	Ms. Christine Purcell	212.	Ms. Kelsey Richardson
184.	Ms. Makereta Kaurasi-Manueli	213.	Ms. Pascale Salaun
185.	Ms. Maraia S. Pogi	214.	Mr. Vainuupo Jungblut
186.	Ms. Rachel Levi	215.	Ms. Anna Bertram
187.	Ms. Leilani Chan Tung	216.	Ms. Ana Markic
188.	Ms. Sabrina Reupena		

ANNEX II: Opening Statement by David Sheppard, SPREP Director General

Pastor Samoa Unoi
Honourable Prime Minister
Honourable Ministers
SPREP Members
Members of the Diplomatic Community
Ladies and gentlemen

Good evening, Bonjour, Talofa

Thank you Reverend for your wise words.

I would like to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for honouring us with his presence this evening.

I would like to welcome you all to this Official Opening Ceremony for the 26th SPREP Meeting.

I am well aware this is a busy time for all of us working in the environmental field and that you are all busy people. Thank you for making the time to attend this very important meeting.

It is pleasing that 24 out of the 26 Members of SPREP are attending this years Meeting.

In total, this SPREP Meeting will welcome around 150 participants, including over 15 partner organisations.

For SPREP this represents a record - congratulations to you all on being part of such a record breaking event.

Our SPREP has been preceded by meetings of the Waigani and Noumea Conventions and today's Pacific Environment Forum which addressed the important issue of climate change finance.

Our SPREP meeting over the next few days has a busy and ambitious agenda.

This mirrors SPREP's work over the last year – we have been very busy – in fact we have been flat out.

SPREP's work has - at all times - been guided by the principle of increasing practical and tangible support for our Pacific island members of SPREP to better manage and protect their environment.

Over the last year SPREP was independently and comprehensively assessed through the Second Independent Corporate Review.

This review noted that Members view SPREP as delivering tangible and relevant outcomes for Pacific island countries and territories.

It also noted significant improvement in SPREP's governance since the previous review in 2008 and that SPREP is an effective and efficient organisation.

The "bottom line" from improved governance is that SPREP is better able to support our Pacific Island members in addressing their pressing environment and sustainable development challenges.

The landmark Small Islands Developing States - SIDS - conference in Samoa last year provided a framework for future action for our region, and for all SIDS, through the SAMOA Pathway.

I noted in my remarks to the SIDS plenary that Samoa did a wonderful job with this conference and that it was one of, if not **THE**, best international conferences ever held on our planet.

I re-affirm these remarks today.

16 June this year was a special day for SPREP, marking 22 years since the SPREP Agreement came into force in 1993.

We celebrated with an Open Day at SPREP – to showcase our work – which was attended by more than 500 school children from Samoan schools.

I'm proud to note we also welcomed the Manu Samoa team at SPREP and would like to congratulate them on their great win in the World Cup, this morning.

2014 marked a significant milestone with the first ever SPREP programme and project staff appointed outside of SPREP Headquarters, with SPREP staff placed in the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and the Solomon Islands. I note that staff have also been located in Fiji and Vanuatu in 2015.

SPREP has grown since 1993 but so have the environmental challenges facing our region.

Pacific island leaders - through a number of declarations this year - have underlined the extreme vulnerability of our nations to climate change.

These vulnerabilities have come into sharp focus this year as we move towards the United Nations Climate Change Conference – COP 21 - in Paris later this year.

Declarations from leaders have called for the adoption in Paris of a Legally Binding Agreement with the strongest possible emissions reductions targets - to keep global warming to within 1.5 degrees of pre-industrial levels.

SPREP – along with other CROP agencies - will support Pacific countries in Paris.

We have also implemented a number of programmes to assist Pacific countries and territories adapt to climate change.

This spirit of developing "Pacific solutions to Pacific problems" runs through many of the programmes at SPREP.

For example, the The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) Project has delivered practical, tailored, on ground climate adaptation solutions in Pacific countries, in key sectors such as water, food security and coastal zone management.

SPREP's landmark accreditation to the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund over the last year will significantly support Pacific countries to access climate finance and we received a number of practical recommendations from today's Environment Forum on this topic.

The message from SPREP's current Year of Natural Solutions is that ecosystem based approaches can and must be given more priority in our region - both to protect our precious island biodiversity and also as a key front line response to a changing climate and rising sea levels.

For example, protection and better management of coastal mangroves can play a key role in buffering the effects of climate change, as we can see in the coastal villages of Samoa.

SPREP has significantly increased support for Pacific island members over the last year in the management of waste, particularly hazardous waste, biodiversity and environmental monitoring and governance.

Our programmes emphasize that "every action counts".

The take home message for you all in the audience is to think about what you can do to address environmental issues – at work, in your home, in your village, in your community.

Our youth Ambassador, Brianna Fruean has shown the way through supporting recycling programmes and setting up environmental groups for youth in Samoa.

So – please think about what you can do and remember that "every action counts".

SPREP is putting our money where our mouth is.

Some examples of how we are "walking the talk" include applying composting and recycling at our compound, introducing renewable energy through solar panels and aiming to have our meetings, such as this years SPREP Meeting, paper free. We have a busy week ahead of us with many matters of pressing importance for our region.

We look forward to benefitting from your collective wisdom and guidance as we move forward.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of SPREP staff over the last year.

Many of you have had the opportunity to work directly with our staff members. We look forward to strengthening the bonds of this relationship – both professional and personal - over the coming week and beyond.

I thank and applaud the efforts of SPREP Members to ensure a better Pacific environment is passed on to our children and to future generations.

Thanks are due to our host country.

Samoa is a beautiful country and I hope you will be able to visit some of its sites and attractions. SPREP is indeed fortunate to be so generously and graciously hosted by the Government of Samoa. We deeply appreciate this support and generosity.

Being based in Samoa has also allowed us to work with and learn from the many cutting examples of environmental best practice in Samoa.

I would like to thank the Prime Minister and the Government of Samoa for their continued and strong support for SPREP over many years.

As I approach the end of my term as SPREP Director-General, I would like to place on record my appreciation to all members, partners and staff.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to serve Pacific island countries as we all strive – together - for a better environment and for sustainable development.

I look forward to a positive, busy and enjoyable week together.

Thank you, Merci, Fa'afetai Tele Lava and Soifua

ANNEX III: Keynote Address by the Honourable Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa

Pastor Samoa Unoi
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Members of the Development Community
Representatives of SPREP member countries
Members of the CROP and UN Agencies
Director General of SPREP and SPREP staff
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to officially open this years' SPREP Meeting.

It has been 22 years since the signing of the SPREP Agreement which established SPREP as an independent regional organisation.

SPREP arrived soon after Cyclones Ofa and Val caused immense devastation to the islands of Samoa. It was a time of rebuilding and reconstruction for Samoa and a challenging time for us all.

22 years ago marked the birth of SPREP as the Pacific's environmental agency.

There were a number of options for the location of SPREP within the region and the Government of Samoa at that time played a key role in ensuring that the decision was taken for SPREP to move to Samoa.

Since then the recognition of the environment has grown to influence national policies throughout the region.

My Government, through the Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2012 to 2016, clearly identifies the Environment Sector as one of our key national priorities.

Put simply - without a well-managed and healthy environment we will not achieve sustainable development in Samoa or any other Pacific island country.

This is a clear reflection of the importance placed by the Government of Samoa on the environment and on the importance of SPREP for our region.

The SAMOA Pathway is the key outcome from the landmark United Nations SIDS conference which my Government was honoured to host last year.

This conference reaffirmed the need for sustainable and durable partnerships to address the pressing challenges faced by our small islands.

When SPREP came here it had a very small but dedicated staff. Since that time the organisation has grown significantly and now has staff in Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands.

SPREP's programme addresses major issues for Pacific countries, including biodiversity conservation, waste management, environmental monitoring and climate change.

SPREP is the lead agency for climate change in our region under the mandate given in the Pacific Island Framework for Action on Climate Change (PIFACC). PIFACC which ends this year has been extended by the Forum Leaders for a period of one year.

This is an issue of vital importance for me and for my fellow Pacific Leaders in our collective journey, to COP 21 in Paris this year, towards the strongest possible legally binding agreement to reduce carbon emissions.

Climate change is the greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and well-being of the peoples of the Pacific and one of the greatest challenges for the entire world.

My Government recognizes that climate change is a reality, that it is an urgent issue and that we have to act now.

We are taking decisive action to adapt to climate change and to ensure an increasing part of our energy needs are met through renewable energy.

My Government has made a firm commitment to a target of 100% Renewable Energy by 2017. The share of renewable energy in Samoa has made significant progress, as witnessed by the solar installations at Faleata and Faleolo, and the wind turbines in Vailoa, Aleipata.

Other Pacific countries are making good progress on their renewable energy targets – we are doing our bit and we call on the rest of the world to do the same.

It is also a great honour for my Government to see the generous commitment of the Government of Japan for the Pacific Climate Change Centre, which will be built here in Samoa at SPREP.

H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan stated at the PALM 7 in Iwaki, Japan in May of this year *"Japan's intention to provide comprehensive assistance, in collaboration with SPREP, including the development of the Pacific Climate Change Centre and capacity-building which supports the efforts for tackling climate change by the Pacific region as a whole"*.

The Centre will be a focus for innovation and climate leadership in this region and in the world and has the full support of my Government, as the host of SPREP.

My government believes that the PCCC is the natural and logical location for the implementation/coordination unit for the proposed "Strategy for Resilient Development in the Pacific: An integrated approach to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management". I have already put this proposition to the Forum Leaders at their recent meeting in Port Moresby and a final

decision is expected at the Forum Meeting next year.

Samoa and other Pacific island countries greatly appreciate commitments made under the Copenhagen Accord to provide 100 billion US dollars per annum by 2020 to support climate change efforts by developing countries, including by the Government of Japan.

The establishment of the Green Climate Fund, on which Samoa serves as an Alternate Board Member, and the recent accreditation of SPREP is good news for our region and will create greater opportunities for access to climate finance for our Pacific nations.

I also congratulate SPREP on its many efforts to protect and better manage biodiversity – a critical issue given that our plant and animal species in the Pacific are being lost at alarming rates.

Efforts to manage both solid and hazardous wastes by SPREP and many partners, including the EU through the PacWaste Programme, and the Japanese Government, through JICA, have also made a positive impact in our region. Samoa has been pleased to trial the innovative Fukuoka method of solid waste management which is now being more widely applied in the region.

The Government of Samoa has been pleased to partner with SPREP on many programmes over the last 22 years.

But we must not rest on our laurels as the challenges ahead for our Pacific environment are many and varied and the role of SPREP has never been more important. I urge SPREP members, donors and partners to get behind and support our regional home grown environment agency.

Samoa is a member of a host of international organisations including the United Nations and its organs, the Commonwealth, Intergovernmental financial institutions as well as our own Pacific regional organisations, to ensure that Samoa does its part to add to the collective voice and weight of

our region in advancing globally issues important to the Pacific. But it comes with a heavy price tag relative to our financial resources. Nevertheless, I am happy to advise that Samoa has made an additional voluntary host country grant contribution of USD20,000 in recognition of the benefits of SPREP's work in addressing environment concerns of the Pacific region and our country.

In closing may I take this opportunity to convey my sincere appreciation to David Sheppard the outgoing Director General of SPREP for his outstanding service to SPREP and to our region.

He has exemplified excellence in leadership, innovation, determination and a strong will for effective and enduring partnerships for the betterment of our Pacific region.

It is now my pleasure to declare the Twenty Sixth SPREP Meeting officially open.

ANNEX IV: Agenda

Agenda Item 1: Opening Prayer

Agenda Item 2: Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of Agenda and Working Procedures

Agenda Item 4: Action Taken on Matters Arising from Twenty-Fifth SPREP Meeting

Agenda Item 5: 2014 Overview

- 5.1 Presentation of Annual Report for 2014 and Director General's Overview of Progress since the Twenty-Fifth SPREP Meeting
- 5.2 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the 2014 Annual Work Programme and Budget
- 5.3 Audited Annual Accounts for 2014

Agenda Item 6: Institutional Reform and Strategic Issues

- 6.1 Strengthening Regional Linkages update
- 6.2 Access to Climate Finance:
 - i. Adaptation Fund
 - ii. Green Climate Fund
(PEF Recommendations)
- 6.3 Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) – Update
- 6.4 Framework for Regionalism
- 6.5 Implementation of the 2nd ICR and Midterm Review of the Strategic Plan outcomes
- 6.6 Development of the next SPREP Strategic Plan
- 6.7 Audit Committee Report
- 6.8 Priorities for SPREP/UNEP Partnership and the UNEP Pacific Sub-regional Office
- 6.9 EDF11 Prospects
- 6.10 Oceanscape Framework
- 6.11 SPREP TROIKA TOR
- 6.12 SRDP

Agenda Item 7: Strategic Financial Issues

- 7.1 Report on Members' Contributions
- 7.2 Membership Contributions Report of the Friends of the Chair
- 7.3 Update on the SPREP Business Plan

Agenda Item 8: Corporate Services

- 8.1 CROP Triennial Review of Staff Terms & Conditions
- 8.2 Annual Market Data
- 8.3 SPREP Director General's Performance Assessment – **CLOSED SESSION**
- 8.4 Appointment of the Director General – **CLOSED SESSION**

Agenda Item 9: Regional Conventions

- 9.1 Report on the Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention
- 9.2 Report on the Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention

Agenda Item 10: 2016 Work Programme and Budget

- 10.1 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management (Overview)
 - 10.1.1 GEF6 Invasive Species Proposal
 - 10.1.2 Conservation of Threatened and Migratory Marine Species
 - **Video clip on Whales (6-7 mins)**
 - 10.1.3 Ecotourism and Iconic Marine Species
 - 10.1.4 MEAs
- 10.2 Climate Change - (Overview)
 - 10.2.1 Outcomes of PCCR
 - 10.2.2 Outcomes of the 3rd PMC (Pacific Meteorological Council) and the First Meteorological Ministers Meeting
 - 10.2.3 Preparation for COP 21
 - 10.2.4 Climate Services Programmes (FINPAC, Climate Services and ROK – PI CLIPS, COSPPac, PACCSAP)
 - 10.2.5 Ocean acidification

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- 10.3 Waste Management and Pollution Control - (Overview)
- 10.3.1 Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy 2016-2025 (Cleaner Pacific 2025)
 - 10.3.2 PACPOL Strategy
 - 10.3.3 Marine litter observer data (GEN-6)
 - 10.3.4 Regional hazardous waste management update
- 10.4 Environmental Monitoring & Governance - (Overview)
- 10.4.1 Role of SPREP in Implementation of SAMOA Pathway and new SDGs
 - 10.4.2 Global Environment Facility (GEF);
 - Medium Size Project (MSP) Implementation
 - Prospects (GEF 5 & 6)
 - 10.4.3 Regional EIA guidelines
 - 10.4.4 Deep Sea Mining (DSM) – the role of SPREP

- 10.5 Consideration and Approval of Proposed Work Programme and Budget for 2016

Agenda Item 11: Items Proposed by Members

Agenda Item 12: Regional Cooperation

- 12.1 CROP Executives Meeting Report

Agenda Item 13: Statements by Observers

Agenda Item 14: Other Business

Agenda Item 15: Date and Venue of Twenty-Seventh SPREP Meeting

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

Agenda Item 17: Close

ANNEX V: Observer Statements

1. Conservation International (CI)

Honorable Chair of the 26th SPREP Meeting,
Government Representatives from SPREP member
countries

Representatives from CROP Agencies, IGOs and
fellow NGOs

Director General of SPREP

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First off I would like to apologize on behalf of Sue
Taei, CI Pacific Islands Executive Director who was
unable to participate at this meeting. I know she
values our close collaboration with SPREP and was
disappointed to not be able to attend this
week.

Conservation International congratulates SPREP
member countries on the appointment of the new
Director General Mr. Kosi Latu. We also
congratulate SPREP on another successful year in
delivering environmental programmes and
technical support to member countries.

Conservation International are proud of our
partnership with SPREP having collaborated for
many years and on many regional, and in-country
projects and initiatives, including our collaboration
in assisting and building local NGO's such as the
Samoan Voyaging Society and highlighting our
partnerships on many biological diversity projects
and surveys throughout the region with our most
recent work together in Wallis and Futuna through
our New Caledonia Office.

We applaud SPREP for leading the regional
environmental agenda for the Pacific Islands
region and enhancing its engagement in the
Leaders' Pacific Oceanscape Framework for
effective focus on regional and national marine
and terrestrial management efforts in an
integrated approach. CI is a founding NGO
partner to the Pacific Oceanscape and we are
pleased that member countries have endorsed

SPREP to continue to use the Pacific Oceanscape
Framework as an over-arching regional integrated
management strategy. The momentum under the
Oceanscape continues to build well with the
development of the Pacific Oceanscape Alliance.

CI is also very heartened at the increasing number
of country commitments to the Oceanscape,
particularly in the form of large-scale ocean and
island protected areas and we are pleased to work
in partnership with these countries and SPREP to
support these initiatives, including the Cook
Islands Marine Park, New Caledonia Coral Sea
MPA and the Palau marine sanctuary. We
congratulate these countries on their vision,
leadership, and commitment, and are heartened
by the fact that Pacific Island states are leading
innovation in EEZ spatial planning, a new era of
integrated ocean management has begun.

In this the potential of large-scale marine
protected areas as a core business tool in EEZs
management is being developed and importantly
learning shared under the auspices of the
Oceanscape and networks such as the Big Ocean.
Quite simply in a common sense, Pacific-way
states are applying a 'use some-save some'
approach. The exact formula of use and
conservation naturally varies but the core rationale
to manage what you own, your EEZ has firmly
taken hold.

Finally, I would like to report that CI has signed
the Pacific Island Roundtable for Nature
Conservation Charter as our commitment to the
PIRT partnership and biodiversity conservation
work in the Pacific Region being led by SPREP as
the PIRT Secretariat. We will continue to work with
SPREP in areas where we can be useful and helpful
to Pacific Island states and we will draw on our
global network of expertise and fundraising to
assist well.

On that note, I thank you Chair, the former Director General Mr. David Sheppard and the new Director General Mr. Kosi Latu, and all SPREP member countries and our host the Samoan government. We look forward to when we next meet again.

Ia manuia
Soifua

2. Coral Triangle Initiatives (CTI-CFF)

CTI-CFF welcomes very much the MOU between CTI-CFF and SPREP signed yesterday.

CTI-CFF hopes that the MOU will serve as a strong legal basis for cooperation between the 2 organizations.

Some areas for cooperation are expected to explore and develop the knowledge on connectivity and linkage of marine, coastal and fishery ecosystem, sustainable marine tourism between CT Region and Pacific Region such migratory threatened species, tuna governance and climate change.

We believe the Joint Project on Turtle Conservation between CTI and SPREP through funding from Australian Government is a very good initial initiative heading toward this direction and we look forward to work closely with SPREP to plan the project.

CTI welcomes other projects to follow this initial project and cordially invites funding supports from other SPREP developed member countries such as Government of USA, New Zealand and France to go after or tag along with the Australian government on similar initiatives having recognized the importance of environmental connectivity and interdependence between CT region and Pacific.

3. Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Firstly, on behalf of GIZ we would like to congratulate Mr Kosi Latu on his appointment as the next Director General of SPREP and we look forward to working with him to further strengthen SPREP services to its Pacific members. We would also like to thank the outgoing DG, David Sheppard, for the excellent partnership we have enjoyed with him and his SPREP team over the last 6 years.

GIZ is committed to continue working with Pacific Island countries, SPREP and other CROP agencies to address issues of national and regional importance.

GIZ programmes in the region are focussed on climate change adaptation, sustainable energy and sustainable terrestrial and marine resource management.

Through our ongoing climate change adaption work we have been privileged to work with SPREP on a number of critical areas many of which have been mentioned during the week – from support to coordinated and integrated development partner approaches in Choiseul and Abaiang, policy and planning support, support to build capacity in critical skills around cost-benefit analysis and gender responsive adaptation and mitigation efforts, cc negotiators' training, support to the Pacific CC Portal and several other areas. We are also pleased to be able to provide support to key emerging issues of importance to the region in particular around loss and damage and climate risk insurance.

Our REDD+ programme, working in partnership with SPC, provides support to the region and in particular to Melanesian countries that are able to pursue this option for strengthening the sustainable management of their forests. And through our MACBIO programme, which involves SPREP and IUCN as a key implementing partners we are also working to enhance marine spatial planning and policy.

We also congratulate SPREP on securing finance from the German-funded IKI programme to support ecosystem-based adaption priorities in Solomons, Vanuatu and Fiji and look forward to exploring synergies with our existing programmes there.

We remain committed to working in a multi-partner, multi-agency approach to ensure members are supported in an effective and coordinated way and look forward to continuing to support SPREP and its members in the future.

4. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Thank you Madame Chair for giving IUCN the opportunity to make this statement.

Monsieur le Directeur général, Mesdames et Messieurs les délégués, chers collègues,

L’UICN tient à féliciter et saluer Mr David Sheppard pour ses accomplissements et souhaite le plus grand succès à Mr Kosi Latu en tant que nouveau Directeur Général du PROE.

Le bureau Océanie, le Secrétariat de l’UICN, ses programmes et commissions, le Programme Outre-Mer européen et mers régionales, se tiennent aux côtés du PROE et ses membres pour apporter tout leur soutien, renforcer les partenariats existants et en établir de nouveaux.

Nous espérons vous accueillir nombreux lors de nos prochains Sommet du Pacifique et Congrès mondial qui se tiendront à Hawaii l’année prochaine, mais aussi dans quelques mois, à Paris lors de la COP 21 où nous co-organisons deux journées Océans ainsi que d’autres événements dédiés aux Etats, pays et territoires insulaires. L’UICN souhaite en effet mettre en exergue le rôle clef des océans, leurs populations et acteurs, dans les grands défis auxquels nous devons faire face : le changement climatique et ses impacts, la résilience et le développement durable.

C’est un réel plaisir pour nous de participer à cette réunion et nous remercions chaleureusement les Samoa pour leur formidable accueil.

Je vous remercie, thank you, Fa’afetai

5. International Whaling Commission (IWC)

The International Whaling Commission is the inter-governmental organisation (IGO) charged with the conservation of whales and the management of whaling. The IWC consists of 88 Contracting Governments who are signatories to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling.

The work programme of the IWC continues to grow and diversify. Along with its on-going, globally respected Science, the IWC’s current, active work strands include whale watching, conservation management plans, entanglement, ship strikes, marine debris and climate change. Collaboration with other IGOs and regional organisations like SPREP is key to the success of these projects, and the IWC welcomes the leadership demonstrated by SPREP in advancing cetacean conservation in the Pacific Islands region.

Science

There are many areas of common scientific interest between SPREP and the IWC (e.g. scope and impact of bycatch, effects of noise and climate change, impacts of marine debris, ship strikes, and whalewatching, as well as abundance estimation, monitoring and population modelling....etc.) and the work of the IWC’s Scientific Committee can have a direct relevance to SPREP’s information needs for its whale and dolphin action plan. For instance, working with data, largely collected by scientists from the region, and global experts the IWC Scientific Committee recently concluded a comprehensive assessment of South Pacific humpback whales. This work provides SPREP and its member nations with the best analyses available concerning

population structure and size, including historical and current abundance and trends.

Entanglement

The IWC is leading a global programme which aims to tackle whale entanglement on a number of levels. On a practical level, a network of individuals from all over the world is receiving professional training in the tools and techniques needed to disentangle whales safely.

Since this work began, over 500 people from 20 countries have received training in the issue of entanglement and in entanglement response. Around the world over 1,000 rescues have been completed safely. Three expert workshops have been held, and the heads of all the world's national and regional whale entanglement response programmes have come together to share experience and develop consensus principles, guidelines and a curriculum for building capacity elsewhere. The number of requests for training and assistance continues to rise and, the IWC entanglement network is striving to meet demand. The past two years have seen trainings in cooperation with the Permanent Commission of the South Pacific in South America, UNEP-CEP-SPAW and SPREP (Tonga and Vanuatu).

Marine debris

Man-made ocean debris includes plastics, abandoned and lost fishing gear, glass and metal. Ingestion and entanglement can cause horrific suffering to marine mammals and the IWC is co-ordinating efforts to understand the nature and impact of marine debris on whales and small cetaceans with two workshops. In May (2013), the IWC brought together experts from around the world to better understand marine debris and its effect on cetaceans. A second workshop on mitigation and conservation was held in Honolulu Hawaii (August, 2014), with participation by SPREP staff. Marine debris, and its impacts on cetaceans continues as a strong work strand within the IWC, and the IWC Secretariat is currently reaching out to other IGO's with similar concerns on how best to effectively address this issue.

Whalewatching

Whale watch operators, scientists, and government officials from over 20 countries gathered in Brisbane in May 2013, and met again more recently in San Diego 2015 in order to further develop a 5 year Strategic Plan for Whale Watching and develop a web-based 'Living' Handbook. Whale watching is a fast-growing sector with economic benefits for a diverse range of coastal communities. However, unless well-managed it has the potential to have a negative impact on whales and their habitat. The IWC 5 year plan aims to develop and convey best practice, and the Living Handbook will become an evolving repository for all aspects of advice including training, governance, capacity building and compliance. Therefore the IWC looks forward to working collaboratively with SPREP on this issue.

Whale watching 5 year plan

<http://iwc.int/index.php?cID=3102&cType=document&download=1>

Climate change

The IWC has convened several technical workshops on the impact of climate change on cetaceans and their key habitats. The IWC will work with SPREP to provide technical expertise on this aspect of the issue.

The following are some proposed actions to be undertaken in conjunction with SPREP during the "Year of the Whale"

- Through its Scientific Committee, the IWC can assist SPREP and member countries to prioritize and encourage research to meet common goals under the YoW.
- Through its Whale Watch subcommittee, the IWC can work with SPREP in its mission to encourage responsible whale watching in the region, perhaps through inviting SPREP to present its initiative to the IWC at the next appropriate meeting (e.g. Scientific Committee and/or Commission meeting) in 2016.
- Continue ongoing cooperation on reducing the impact of whale entanglement through

continued capacity building where needed, and participation in the IWC's entanglement prevention workshop.

- Continue cooperation on understanding and reducing the impacts of marine debris on cetaceans and their key habitats.

The IWC would also like to work with SPREP on fundraising for these and other relevant and appropriate actions of common interest (e.g. capacity building, research...etc.), both under the Year of the Whale and beyond.

6. Pacific Island Forum (PIFS)

Thank you to SPREP and its members for the opportunity to participate as observers at this meeting and for the opportunity to make a few remarks on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

Thank you also to the Government and people of Samoa for their hospitality this week. 2015 has been an important year for regionalism in the Pacific, with the Framework for Pacific Regionalism in its first year of implementation. The Framework articulates Leaders' expectations that the regional agenda strive for a higher level of ambition, and that our coordinated and collective regional efforts deliver results that make a practical and positive difference to the lives of Pacific people. The Framework also represents Leaders' commitment to inclusivity and transparency in the development of regional public policy. A key innovation of the Framework is that anyone in the Pacific can contribute proposals for regional action. 68 submissions were received from governments, international and regional organisations, academic institutions, and, in particular, from NGOs and individual citizens.

The priorities selected by Leaders at their recent meeting in PNG – on fisheries, climate change, information and communications technology, cervical cancer and West Papua – are big challenges, but they are also the kinds of challenges the Forum was set up to face. Member

countries, regional and international organisations, the private sector and civil society will all need to work together to advance the region's agenda. Through our efforts as the Permanent Chair of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific we will seek to ensure that CROP is effective as it collaborates, cooperates and works in the areas of each agencies comparative advantage to the benefit of the region.

The Forum Secretariat is dedicated to the political and economic ambitions of our region and works with our technical agencies, including SPREP, to support member countries. This includes through mechanisms such as the Sustainable Development Working Group, Marine Sector Working Group and Working Arm on Climate Change and Disaster Resilient Development, and at regional meetings of Officials and Ministers. We would like to thank SPREP for their constructive engagement in these important mechanisms and in the reviews currently underway to strengthen coordination and collaboration between CROP Agencies, and streamline regional decision making processes.

We also work with SPREP and other partners in broader partnerships such as the Pacific Invasives Partnership and the Pacific Ocean Alliance. As I mentioned earlier in this meeting, our Secretary General, as Pacific Ocean Commissioner, convened the inaugural meeting of the Pacific Ocean Alliance in Fiji in May. Over 100 participants gathered in Fiji to discuss the region's priorities and interests as they relate to areas beyond national jurisdiction, and we thank SPREP for their support with this meeting.

Through the convening power of PIFS we are able to make mechanisms such as the Alliance provide an open-ended multi-stakeholder partnership for dialogue on key regional ocean policy and implementation issues. Over the next year, we will look at how the Alliance can best support the Leaders' decision on fisheries, among other issues.

Along with our work on oceans, PIFS has undertaken a range of activities on climate change

financing through the implementation of decisions by Leaders and Finance and Economic Ministers since 2010, including the application of the Pacific Climate Change Finance Assessment Framework developed by the Forum Secretariat. We will continue to collaborate with SPREP and partners to assist countries to effectively access and gain support for the scaling up of international climate change financing. Studies on climate change finance in Tonga this year are likely to be followed by another study in the Solomon Islands. These will incorporate lessons learned through studies completed in Nauru and the Marshall Islands.

This year is also a crucial year for the Pacific as we approach COP 21 in Paris. Forum Leaders and the SIS Leaders recently issued two declarations on climate change for COP 21, which add momentum to other high level statements made by the region for the Paris Meeting. We also provided the opportunity for SPREP and SPC to directly discuss climate change issues during the recent Leaders meeting. The Forum Secretariat has also collaborated with SPREP and SPC to undertake preparatory training over the past few months, and will continue to support upcoming activities under the leadership of SPREP to ensure Pacific Island Countries bring a strong and unified voice to COP 21. We note the need to continue to respond to member requests for support as part of the meeting.

We will also continue to actively support efforts to finalise the Strategy for Resilient Development in the Pacific (SRDP). The Forum Secretariat will work with the technical leads on climate change and disaster risk management (SPREP and SPC respectively) while we progress the necessary political and economic issues related to resilient development to Leaders and Finance and Economic Ministers for consideration.

And finally, on behalf of the Forum Secretariat I would like to thank David Sheppard for his years of service as Director General of SPREP. He has made a significant contribution to sustainable development in the Pacific region and to

strengthening the region's lead environmental organisation. We would also like to congratulate Kosi Latu on his appointment as SPREP's new Director General. We look forward to working with him in his new role in the CROP family.

Thank you

7. Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

Chair,

On behalf of the SPC Director General, Dr Colin Tukuitonga, let me first join others in congratulating you on your appointment as the Chair of the 2015 SPREP Meeting, congratulating Kosi Luta on his appointment as new Director General of SPREP, thanking the Republic of Samoa for its hospitality in hosting this meeting, and extending appreciation to the staff of the SPREP Secretariat for attending to our various needs and requests.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community is grateful to SPREP for the opportunity to attend this meeting. I would like to convey the apologies of the SPC Director General, Dr. Colin Tukuitonga, who is unable to attend but who extends his best wishes for very fruitful discussions on the matters before the Meeting.

As you know, SPC places great value on its long term relationship with its partner organisation SPREP and the ongoing collaboration with CROP agencies and development partners in the Pacific, as a way to deliver most effective and comprehensive assistance to our region. We are mindful that a number of issues of interest to the Pacific Islands Countries and Territories do involve interventions in areas as diverse as economic development, gender mainstreaming, low carbon energy uses, sustainable resource use or protection of the ecosystems and biodiversity. We are thus convinced that this requires an integrated and collaborative process, bringing on board all actors of the society, ensuring coherence between

the respective program and sectoral interventions, and calling for differentiated yet common responsibility for sustaining our shared ocean richness or attending to the needs of the most affected.

This was highlighted in our recent collaborative efforts, on one hand to work on developing a common Framework Strategy for Climate and Disaster Resilient Development in the **Pacific (SRDP)** and, on the other hand, to support Pacific Islands Countries and Territories to prepare for and address the challenges of Climate Change and the milestone of **COP21** in Paris.

In that respect, let me as well underscore the particular position and legitimacy of the Pacific region to encourage UNFCCC pay increased attention to and include the role of the oceans in Climate Change mitigation and adaptation policies.

We would also like to take this opportunity to underscore that SPC is committed, like other CROP agencies, to pursue internal institutional changes such as strengthening cross-programmatic collaboration to assist countries and territories to achieve sustainable development. We are pleased to report that SPC's new integrated programming approach which was endorsed at our governing council meeting last year will result in the integration of priority cross cutting issues such as climate change, disaster risks, food and water security in the delivery of our services to the region. Like SPREP, our institutional changes are in response to the immediate and emerging priority areas in our region.

8. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

UNEP delighted to attend the 26th SPREP meeting, the first since the opening of the UNEP Pacific Office, located on the SPREP compound. Acknowledge the great support received from the DG David Shepherd in the establishment of the UNEP Pacific Office, as well as in the collaboration between UNEP and SPREP. We look

forward to building on this collaboration under the leadership of the next DG Kosi Latu.

UNEP's presence in the Pacific will build on the longstanding track record of work in the region, including the establishment of SPREP and support to countries in areas including ozone, biodiversity, MES implementation and other initiatives, many of which were carried out with or through SPREP.

As UNEP starts this new phase of its cooperation with the Pacific, we are fully aware of the complex landscape and intend to bring true added value, building on UNEP's global expertise and making this more readily available to the Pacific countries in areas like: blue-green economy; sustainable consumption and production; finance; SDG readiness. We will also continue to provide support to countries as GEF IA in projects on ABS, invasives, MEA capacity building, chemicals etc. With the UNEP Pacific Office established, we are better placed to support Pacific involvement and participation in the processes shaping UNEP's work, especially the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA, the Medium term Strategy and the Programme of Work. In this regard we will be supporting Samoa as they lead the development of a Resolution for UNEA-2 on the implementation of the SAMOA pathway.

Thank you

9. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

Thank you for the opportunity for UNESCAP to observe and make a statement at this important regional meeting.

As world leaders including our own from the Pacific meet in NY this week to launch the post 2015 development agenda and the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), our region, here in the Pacific and in the wider Asia-Pacific, is stepping up efforts to organize ourselves for the important follow-up work on

implementing, monitoring and reporting on the SDGs.

In PNG 2 weeks ago, the PIF leaders made some clear decisions and commitments re the post-2015 development agenda including:

- the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with particular attention to the region's 'unfinished business' on the MDGs";
- commitments under the SAMOA Pathway and Addis Ababa Action Agenda, particularly re financing, statistics, partnerships, SDGs integration and follow up and review, as well as the special case of Small Island Developing States;
- recognizing global discussions on the SDGs indicators through the Inter-agency and Expert Group on the SDGs Indicators and calling for the active participation of the region to influence the discussions through Fiji and Samoa who are members of this Expert Group;
- emphasizing a country-driven process in tailoring the global indicators to their context; tailoring global indicators to better reflect the Pacific context and to use these regional indicators to monitor the Pacific's progress on the SDGs, including towards the high-level objectives of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and implementation of the SAMOA Pathway;
- using an open and inclusive consultation process, accounting for national priorities, to select the relevant global SDGs indicators to the Pacific context to ensure regional ownership;
- tasking the Forum Secretariat, in collaboration with CROP and UN agencies, to lead this consultation process, building on existing work streams to avoid duplication, with the aim of adopting regional indicators at the next Forum Leaders' meeting in 2016, as well as outline a regional process for the follow up and review of the SDGs and SAMOA Pathway that would seek to reduce the burden of reporting at the country level.

This week, UNESCAP is helping take forward these decisions, convening an Asia-Pacific Forum in Bangkok to consider the regional priorities and indicators for implementing SDGs. Attending the Asia-Pacific Forum are heads of national statistics offices from Fiji and Samoa as well as other Pacific countries to highlight, with the assistance of SPC (which has been leading the work on Pacific-relevant SDGs indicators) and PIFS, the views of the Pacific on SDGs indicators. The outcome of the Asia-Pacific meeting will be submitted for the consideration of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on the SDGs Indicators at their meeting in Bangkok in late October. As noted by the PIF leaders, this process will produce a set of global SDG indicators which are expected to be launched in the first quarter of next year, and which, as the PIF leaders agreed, will be tailored to suit the context and circumstances of the Pacific with the assistance of PIF, CROP and UN agencies. We are pleased to be part of this process.

So we look forward to working with SPREP and others in CROP, UN and other entities to advance the Pacific's plans re the SDGs, noting the need to have indicators that can monitor the priorities highlighted at this SPREP meeting (climate change and natural disasters, ocean acidification, marine pollution and seabed mining etc.) and at the recent PIF meeting (example, climate change and natural disasters, fisheries and marine resource management, ICT and regional connectivity including technology transfer, cervical cancer and NCDs etc.). Importantly for Pacific SIDS, the SAMOA Pathway should be used as a key document for tailoring or contextualizing the SDGs in the Pacific.

At our recent commission in Bangkok in May earlier this year where Pacific SIDS leaders met for a high-level dialogue on the Samoa Pathway, a special resolution was passed mandating UNESCAP to focus its support in the Pacific on the Samoa Pathway working with the Pacific's own regional organizations and processes. I am pleased to reaffirm that commitment today.

10. University of the South Pacific (USP)

USP is pleased to be invited to this 26th SPREP meeting. It is manifestation of the good and cordial working relationship between USP and SPREP as CROP organisations. USP and SPREP continue to work in collaboration in a number of areas just to name a few:

- a. Climate change Round table, the PCCR portal and UNFCCC COP preparations, SRDP working group
- b. Capacity Building in Bio-diversity conservation

USP will continue to collaborate and partner with SPREP in future opportunities such as:

- a. Waste management under the EDF11 programming
- b. The Pacific Climate Change Centre

As you are aware USP has an ongoing Climate Change programme especially in Post graduate studies including Training and Research. With this, USP is pleased to see the establishment of PCCC and we look forward to working closely with the centre when established. We will work closely with the centre in the area of training and research.

11. World Animal Protection (WAP)

Madame Chair, ladies and gentlemen of the SPREP meeting, Madames et Messieurs, fellow colleagues.

World Animal Protection would like to take this opportunity to thank you sincerely for the opportunity to participate and share ideas with like-minded people over the past few days. We congratulate you on a very successful and productive conference.

World Animal Protection is a global organisation working in more than 50 countries, creating positive lasting change by pioneering sustainable solutions to animal suffering that benefit both animals and humans.

We work collaboratively with governments, businesses, communities and NGOs; as well as through our relationships with UNEP, FAO, the Council of Europe and the United Nations to protect animals worldwide.

Two weeks ago World Animal Protection proudly launched the Global Ghost Gear Initiative as part of its global Sea Change campaign, bringing stakeholders together to tackle the problem of ghost fishing gear. Ghost gear in this context refers to any fishing equipment or fishing related litter that has been abandoned, lost or discarded.

Ghost gear is a growing problem worldwide, with an estimate of more than 640 000 tonnes of fishing gear ending up in our oceans each year. It is also a problem in the Pacific, affecting commercial fishing stock and thus livelihoods; but also iconic marine mammals such as whales and turtles.

It is recognised that around the world there are fantastic examples of economically viable solutions that are working at a local level. However, this global problem requires a collaborative, cross-sectoral and global approach.

The Global Ghost Gear Initiative or GGGI is the first initiative dedicated to tackling the problem of ghost fishing gear at a global scale. It unites people and organisations with the knowledge, power and influence to deliver solutions for ghost-gear-free seas. We aim to forge alliances with governments, industry, intergovernmental organisations, and civil society with a shared commitment to understand and tackle the problem of ghost fishing gear. Every participant has a critical role to play to mitigate ghost gear locally, regionally and globally.

Within the GGGI we aim to build the evidence by standardising and analysing data globally; we want to define best practice and inform policy; and we want to catalyse and replicate sustainable solutions. By working together we believe we can protect one million animals from being accidentally killed by fishing gear by 2018, while

improving the health of our marine ecosystems and safeguard human health and livelihoods.

As part of its collective impact the GGGI will contribute to the objectives of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter¹, which seeks to protect human health and the global environment by the reduction and management of marine litter. Moreover, at a recent event at the UN in New York, many Member States noted that the GGGI could make a significant positive contribution to achieving the Oceans and Seas goal in the new Sustainable Development Goals.

We at World Animal Protection know that this is ambitious, but we strongly believe that by bringing the right stakeholders like SPREP around the table we can make a difference for marine animals and communities worldwide. We have already spoken with many of you during the week, but we would encourage you to approach us if you are interested in supporting our Global Ghost Gear Initiative or to visit our website at www.ghostgear.org

Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup.

¹ <http://www.marinelitternetwork.org/page/global-partnership-marine-litter>