

SPREP-Tok

A monthly e-bulletin from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme



SPREP

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

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MESSAGE FROM MR. KOSI LATU, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SPREP

Talofa!

Time has gone by so quickly as we are moving swiftly towards the end of the year.

In August we were honoured to host the Australian Minister of International Development and the Pacific, Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, and her delegation, at the SPREP campus. The Honourable Minister, during her visit, announced two major investments by the Australian Government for SPREP, which total AU 2.5 million. We thank the Australian Government and the Honourable Minister for their continued support and belief in the important work that is being done, and needs to be done in the Pacific region.

SPREP also hosted a Preparatory meeting for the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention for the International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, both of which will be holding their Conference of the Parties later this year. The aim of the preparatory meeting was to bring together the Pacific and Oceania parties to ensure that there is a strong and unified voice at these conferences, and to equip the delegates from the Pacific and Oceania with the necessary skills to make a that voice hear.

I hope you all enjoy the stories in this edition of the SPREP-Tok.

Kosi.

Mr. Kosi Latu, Director General of SPREP.

LATEST NEWS



Australian Minister of International Development and the Pacific, Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, strolls through the SPREP campus with SPREP Deputy Director General, Roger Cornforth.

AUSTRALIAN MINISTER ANNOUNCES AU 2.5 MILLION IN CLIMATE CHANGE INVESTMENTS FOR SPREP

A tour of the SPREP campus was on the itinerary for Australian Minister of International Development and the Pacific, Senator the Hon. Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, and her Australian delegation while in Samoa on 22-23 August. Minister Fierravanti-Wells was pleased to announce two climate change adaptation investments while at SPREP.

The first investment, worth AU \$1.5 million over three years, will involve a Griffith University collaboration with SPREP to improve data access on climate change impacts for Pacific policy makers. She also announced a second investment of AU \$990,000 for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to work with SPREP assisting Pacific island countries to access and use recent climate change findings.

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The Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Government of Japan, His Excellency Mr Masakazu Hamachi, with Prime Minister of Samoa, Hon. Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi.

THE PACIFIC CLIMATE CHANGE CENTRE IN SAMOA TO BELONG TO ALL PACIFIC ISLANDS.

The Governments of Japan and Samoa with SPREP have sealed their partnership and commitment to building the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) at the SPREP campus in Samoa.

Senior officials from the Japanese Government, including the Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr Masakazu Hamachi, have signed the 'Exchange of Notes' with the Honourable Prime Minister of Samoa, Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi, effectively ending the preparatory stage and launching the building stage of the PCCC.

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FIJI TO STRENGTHEN ITS EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO MARINE OIL SPILLS

Protecting people and the marine environment is a priority for Fiji, as four ports of the island nation receive oil spill response equipment and training to the value of NZD 850,000.

A report produced at the start of 2015 evaluated the existing prevention and oil spill response system in Fiji against a risk framework and identified four critical high risk sites for oil spills – Port of Suva, Port of Lautoka, Port of Levuka and Port of Malau.

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Oil spill emergency response equipment funded by the Government of New Zealand. Photo: A. Talouli/SPREP

THE PACIFIC REGION PREPARES ITS ONE VOICE TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

Pacific unity was on display as Oceania came together in August to achieve stronger outcomes at two key global environment conferences this year.

The Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora are both holding Conferences of the Parties (COP) at the end of this year.

The Pacific and Oceania Parties worked on their One Voice strategy for the global events to protect our Pacific biodiversity, the background of island livelihoods, at a Preparatory meeting held at SPREP.

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PARTNERSHIP GROWING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

An important signing between SPREP and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) heralds the beginning of a strengthened relationship between the two agencies to deliver on waste management priorities for the Pacific region.

On 25 August 2016 at SPREP's Apia headquarters, representatives from both agencies formally signed the Meeting Minutes related to the formulation of the second phase of the Japanese Technical Cooperation Project for Promotion of Regional Initiative on Solid Waste Management in Pacific island countries, known as J-PRISM II.

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Hon. Fiaame Naomi Mata'afa, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, with SPREP Director General, Kosi Latu, and official delegates of the Pre-COP meeting.



Mr. Kosi Latu (SPREP) and Mr Satoshi Shigiya (JICA) at the signing of the J-PRISM II meeting minutes.



A humpback whale seen off the coast of Vava'u, Tonga. Photo: M.Donoghue/SPREP

TONGA 9TH PACIFIC ISLAND MEMBER TO SIGN ON CONVENTION FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE OF ENDANGERED SPECIES

Tonga was one of the countries attending the Oceania and Pacific regional joint preparatory meeting hosted at the SPREP Campus in Samoa from 15 – 19 August, 2016. The purpose of the meeting was to assist SPREP Members to prepare for the 17th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (Johannesburg, late September-early October) and the 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the associated meetings of the Parties to the Protocols of the CBD (Cancun, December)

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Dr. Netatua Pelesikoti, Director of Climate Change, with Mr Rere Mataiti, representative of the village of Tautu, Aitutaki.

TAUTU VILLAGE IN AITUTAKI, COOK ISLANDS STRENGTHENS DISASTER AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Tautu village in Aitutaki, Cook Islands now has completed a disaster and climate resilience pilot project. It was developed with support from the Finland-Pacific (FINPAC) Project which aims to reduce the vulnerability of the livelihoods of Pacific islanders to the impacts of climate change through strengthening the Meteorological Services.

The project has resulted in a number of outcomes including a Climate and Disaster Resilience Plan designed with input from the community to guide them on actions to take in case of an emergency weather hazard. This also saw the construction of tsunami evacuation, fire and drought monitoring and wind speed signs in place, and a new siren for emergencies ready for use.

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Ms Roxanne El-Hady, far right, at the SPREP campus with SPREP staff and her entourage.

THE UNITED KINGDOM'S YOUNG SCIENTIST OF THE YEAR VISITS SPREP

Ms. Roxanne El-Hady, who was born in New Zealand, was named United Kingdom's Young Scientist of the Year for her investigation into climate change in South Wales. As part of her role of inspiring young people in their scientific pursuits, she chose to come to Samoa to talk to young people about her journey and her passion for science. A visit to SPREP was a must for the young environmental champion.

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INVASIVE SPECIES SCHOOL CHALLENGE WINNERS GO ON TO REGIONAL COMPETITION

Winners have been announced for Samoa's National Schools Challenge on Invasive Species. Students learned about the harm that invasive species do in Samoa and then competed with art projects, essays and activities that they created based on their new knowledge.

Prizes for the Samoan School Challenge were provided by ANZ Samoa, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Samoa Stationery and Books, Business Systems Limited and Samoa Commercial Bank.

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Students from Chanel College with their entry for the Invasive Species School Challenge.



Participants taking part in the negotiations simulation activity.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS HONE THEIR NEGOTIATION SKILLS FOR GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCES.

It's not often you hear names such as Neway; Bellow; Shiner; Toovalue; however, these were on the table as Pacific islanders carried out mock negotiations as part of training to help them prepare for global environment conferences.

A one week preparatory workshop for the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was held in Samoa, where participants are now better equipped to tackle negotiations at international meetings and conferences, thanks to a negotiations simulations facilitated by SPREP.

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Staff of the Papua New Guinea National Weather Service during training.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE WALKING THE TALK

Differences in the meanings behind meteorological terms such as 'isolated showers', 'scattered showers', and 'brief showers' were discussed when forming a glossary for use by the Papua New Guinea National Weather Service (PNGNWS).

SPREP in partnership with the PNGNWS coordinated a two day training to enhance the communication skills of staff when sharing information through the media.

The training was one of many different activities carried out across the region under the Finnish-Pacific Project, also known as FINPAC, a four year project which comes to an end this year.

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Participants undergo a mapping activity during the workshop.

STAKEHOLDERS IN HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS RECOGNISE BENEFITS OF HEALTHY NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

An environment that thrives with a healthy natural ecosystem benefits from fresh supplies of natural resources for enhanced and sustainable living for present and future generations.

This was the key message of a 2 day mapping workshop organised by SPREP with community and national representatives from organisations in Honiara and the outskirts of the city on natural ecosystems and their benefits to everyday living.

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Fijian families continue to rely on the ecosystems for their livelihoods, Somosomo village, Taveuni.

TRADITIONAL FIJIAN LEADERS BACK NATURAL WAYS TO CURB CLIMATE CHANGE

Traditional leaders on the island of Taveuni in Fiji are discussing ways to restore and protect their natural ecosystems as a viable way forward for their island.

At a multi-community workshop on 'natural solutions to climate change' in Somosomo village organised by SPREP through its Pacific Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change Project (PEBACC), the traditional leaders recognised the importance of using natural solutions to curb climate change and the negative impacts of unsustainable development and farming practices on the island.

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IN MEMORY OF MI'I MATAMAKI

Mii Matamaki is a familiar face to many across the region and oceans in her role at the Cook Islands National Environment Service. We remember her in this edition of the SPREP Tok after her sudden passing last month.

Mii's journey began as an Environment Officer for the Cook Islands National Environment Service in 2006.

She was often a member of the Cook Islands delegation at the UN Climate Change Negotiations a role for which many across the world remember her for, and she played a key part in the development of the Cook Islands Second National Communication for the UNFCCC. Before her passing, she was the GEFPAS Integrated Island Biodiversity Project Coordinator for the Cook Islands, a role she was extremely passionate about.

"Mii's impact was felt beyond our shores, having represented our country and the Pacific region on the international stage. Please know that Mii is missed by many around the region and around the world" – Mr Joseph Brider, Director of the Cook Islands National Environment Service.

SPREP gives thanks for all the things the Mii did for her country and on behalf of the region. SPREP along with Pacific countries were fortunate to have worked with her as she did so with dedication, stamina and good humour, particularly through the long nights of climate change negotiations. Tributes from throughout the world were made for Mii, who was well respected.

Mii also showed dedication through the innovative and successful work that she carried out for the GEFPAS IIB project in the Cook Islands. This is a testament to her commitment and dedication in ensuring that the biodiversity of the Cook Islands is well preserved and conserved for the wellbeing of her people and especially for the future generations of Cook Islands.

May Mii Rest in Peace and Love.

IN MEMORY OF JOHN ANDERSON

The SPREP community was saddened to learn of the passing of celebrated film maker John Anderson, in Tarawa on 19 August, 2016. John enjoyed a successful film, television and acting career in his home country of New Zealand before focusing his efforts on making documentaries to capture his great love of the Pacific island region.

John's passion for telling the stories of the Pacific is evident in his body of professional work. After moving to Kiribati in 1997, John and his wife Linda Uan, established the Nei Tabera Ni Kai (NTNK) video unit. In the two decades since, NTK released more than 400 productions, many of which sought to highlight environmental and social issues faced by island nations, in particular, the issue of climate change.

One recent short film - Dear President Obama – prepared in advance of last year's Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21), features Toatang Tatake a student from the School for Children with Special Needs in Tarawa, Kiribati. In the film, Toatang uses sign language to deliver a deeply personal message to President Barack Obama and the world community about the increasingly desperate situation in his small island nation.

The staff of NTK have committed to keep the unit going to preserve John's legacy and to celebrate the man who trained them.

We pass on our deepest condolences to John's wife Linda, his extended family, and the vast network of individuals who knew him as a friend, colleague and comrade.

Vale John.



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Our vision: The Pacific Environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.

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