



MESSAGE FROM MR. KOSI LATU, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SPREP



Mr. Kosi Latu, Director General of SPREP.

Talofa,

September was a particularly important month for us as we hosted our 27th SPREP Meeting in Niue, a beautiful setting with welcome visits from whales passing by.

Our new 10-year Strategic Plan (2017 – 2027) was endorsed by our SPREP Members, the next phase of which is the development of our Performance Implementation Plan. We launched the Guidelines for Strengthening Environmental Impact Assessment for Pacific Island Countries and Territories, shared an update of the Pacific Climate Change Centre which has been endorsed as a shared regional hub for inclusive collaboration to meet the priority adaptation and mitigation priorities of Pacific island countries and territories, and ended our events with the Pacific Environment Ministers Meeting which resulted in the Alofi Communique.

This was also a touching month for us as we farewelled a work colleague, Ms Tologauvale Leaula who passed away. She was a special part of SPREP since it started, and am sure many will remember seeing her smile at our campus as she welcomed many who participated in workshops and meetings at SPREP. We pay tribute to her at the end of this SPREP Tok.

This issue of SPREP Tok has many updates on SPREP's work over the month of September, we hope you enjoy it.

Tofa soifua,
Kosi.

LATEST NEWS



Mr Kosi Latu with Ms Isabelle Louis, Regional Director, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UNEP. Photo: A.So'o/SPREP

SPREP LAUNCHES NEW GUIDELINES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

New guidelines for environmental impact assessment (EIA) were launched at the 27th SPREP meeting in Niue. In the wake of increasing development in sectors such as tourism, land mining, energy and transport, and with novel forms of development on the horizon, like deep sea mining, Pacific island countries have called for stronger EIA systems and further EIA capacity building.

The guidelines were developed by the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division of SPREP in response to those calls.

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Damaged asbestos flooring materials are safely removed at a building adjacent to the site of the fire. Photo: B.Wallace

HOSPITAL FIRE HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR PACIFIC-WIDE ASBESTOS BAN

After fire ripped through the old Gizo Hospital Building in Solomon Islands, clean-up efforts were immediately complicated by the discovery of asbestos materials in the debris. Some of these potentially harmful materials may have originated from newly installed asbestos cladding which continues to be imported and sold in Solomon Islands and elsewhere in the Pacific.

Representatives from the Solomon Islands Government, SPREP, European Union and the World Health Organisation believe that this incident highlights the urgent need for a Pacific-wide asbestos ban.

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Participants of the Environmental Impact Assessment Training in Niue. Photo: M.Bradley/SPREP

NIUE TO REAP BENEFITS OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT TRAINING

A stronger understanding of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process and how it can be effectively applied to Niue was the outcome of a special training workshop held in the island in August. The workshop was facilitated by SPREP's Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division and was attended by representatives from various Niue Government departments.

The need for EIA training was identified by Mr Andrew Irwin from the Sustainable Energy Programme at IUCN, in consultation with Mr Sauni Tongatule, Director of the Department of Environment of Niue.

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SPREP Youth Ambassador, Brianna Fruean (second from right), at the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris.

A PACIFIC ISLAND VOICE AT INTERNATIONAL GATHERING ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

SPREP Youth Ambassador Brianna Fruean shared a Pacific message that was heard loud and clear at the 73rd session of the Committee of the Rights of the Child in September.

Ms Fruean joined Ambassadors, UN representatives, child representatives and academics in the one day event, with her panel specifically focusing on the 'Children and the effects of environmental degradation – children's rights and climate change.'

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Signing of the Host Country Agreement in the Federated States of Micronesia. Photo: FSM PIO/media

SPREP SIGNS HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT WITH FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia and SPREP have signed a Host Country Agreement, formalising the establishment of a SPREP office in the Federated States of Micronesia. SPREP Director General Kosi Latu and H.E President Peter M. Christian of the Federated States of Micronesia, signed the agreement.

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Professor Peter Petsul of the University of Papua New Guinea with Mr Roger Cornforth, Deputy Director General of SPREP.



Ngawawa Village, Solomon Islands. Photo: USP



Marine Protected Area, Chelbacheb, Palau. Photo: Stuart Chape



Participants of the first National Drought Policy Workshop and Consultations in Solomon Islands.

UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA RENEWS ITS LONG STANDING RELATIONSHIP WITH SPREP

A long standing commitment between SPREP and the University of Papua New Guinea since 1976 was reaffirmed with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in Samoa. SPREP and UPNG will cooperate in programmes and activities in the fields of pollution control and environmentally friendly sound management of all types of wastes; climate change; variability and extreme events and its related issues; biodiversity management including protection and conservation; and environmental monitoring and governance.

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NEW FRAMEWORK TO BUILD RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTERS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Pacific leaders' endorsement of The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP), the world's first integrated regional framework to build resilience to climate change and disasters, has been applauded by Pacific regional and international organisations.

The Framework aims to ensure that climate change and disasters are understood as a development challenge with priority actions to address vulnerability to climate change and disasters and build resilience across all sectors.

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SPREP COMMENDS LEADERSHIP IN PROTECTING OUR OCEANS WITH NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

The Pacific islands now contain over 15 million square kilometres of marine protected areas with the newest announcements of marine reserves from the United Kingdom and the United States.

The Pacific islands region has now overall achieved Aichi Target 11, ensuring that by 2020 at least 10 percent of coastal and marine areas are conserved, although individually some SPREP Pacific island members have yet to reach the target.

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SOLOMON ISLANDS FIRST NATIONAL DROUGHT POLICY WORKSHOP AND CONSULTATIONS

The first National Drought Policy Workshop and Consultations hosted by the Government of Solomon Islands was held in September

The workshop and consultations brought together national stakeholders from sectors in the Solomon Islands together with the Solomon Islands Meteorological Services and the National Disaster Management Office to work towards developing a National Drought Policy for the country.

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Volunteers sorting through the rubbish collected during the cleanup. Photo: E. Vanderburg/SPREP

INTERNATIONAL OCEAN CONSERVANCY COASTAL CLEANUP A SUCCESS

Over 2,100 kilograms of rubbish was collected along 1.5 kilometres of beach area at Taumeasina in Samoa during the International Coastal Cleanup Day. The rubbish included plastic bags, food wrappers, plastic cutlery and Styrofoam food packaging and aluminium cans.

The Ocean Conservancy International Coastal Cleanup in Fiji, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu was this year supported by the PacWaste project.

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Discussions underway at the two-day workshop held in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

REGIONAL EXPERTS MEET TO DISCUSS ESTABLISHMENT OF MELANESIAN BIOSECURITY AND INVASIVE SPECIES GROUP

Discussions on the development of the Melanesian Biosecurity and Invasive Species Group for the long-term management of invasive alien species and biosecurity took place at a two-day workshop held in Port Vila, Vanuatu in September.

The workshop was hosted by the Government of Vanuatu through the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation in collaboration with SPREP.

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The students of FNU outside the SPREP Suva office. Photo: SPREP

SPREP SUVA SUPPORTS STUDENTS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING.

Environmental Science students of the Fiji National University visited the SPREP office in Suva to learn about the organisation's conservation and biodiversity protection work in the region. The second year students are enrolled in a course on Biodiversity and Conservation in Fiji and the South Pacific Region.

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Members of the Programme Steering Committee in Brussels. Photo: ACP MEAs Newsletter

ACP MEAS NEWSLETTER PROVIDES UPDATES ON PROGRAMME STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The ACP MEAs newsletter for May-August is now available online. The newsletter is prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme and provides updates on the European Commission-funded programme on capacity building related to multilateral environment agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean, and Pacific group of countries known as ACP MEAs 2.

The new edition features work in the Pacific region, as well as updates from the Programme Steering Committee meeting held in Brussels, Belgium earlier this year.

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Ms Ana Fekau, IIB Project Coordinator of Tonga, speaking at the IUCN WCC in Honolulu, Hawaii. Photo: SPREP

SHARING LESSONS WITH THE WORLD – TONGA’S P3DM SUCCESS STORY

Tonga was represented on the world stage at the World Conservation Congress in Hawaii in September, where they shared how they successfully carried out Participatory three-dimensional modelling (P3DM) for the Vava’u island group this year as part of the Integrated Island Biodiversity Project.

Ms Ana Fekau, the IIB Project Coordinator of Tonga, shared their story of the P3DM process and how it helps to strengthen community engagement in planning for the conservation of biodiversity in Tonga.

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Mr Taholo Kami, PIRT Chair and Director of the IUCN Oceania Office, speaks at the PIRT side event. Photo: SPREP

PARTNERSHIPS AND DIALOGUE FOR CONCRETE ACTION ON CONSERVATION: THE PACIFIC ISLANDS ROUNDTABLE ON NATURE CONSERVATION

Lively discussions took place at a side event held at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Honolulu Hawaii, where the work of the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRT), a partnership and coalition of conservation bodies aimed at improving collaboration and coordination on nature conservation at the local, national, regional and international level, was featured.

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SPREP Director General, Kosi Latu. Photo: SPREP

ECOTOURISM TO HELP CONSERVE ICONIC MARINE SPECIES IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Ecotourism as a tool for conservation of iconic marine species in the Pacific islands was the topic of discussion during a special session coordinated by SPREP and partners at the World Conservation Congress in Hawaii. The event aimed to identify an approach to ecotourism that will bring benefits to both communities and threatened species alike.

The Pacific islands region covers over 30 million sq km and suffered one of the highest rates of vertebrate extinctions in the world during the Twentieth Century. In recent years, the viewing of marine wildlife such as whales, turtles and sharks has become an important part of the tourism industry for several countries in Oceania.

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SPREP Director General, Mr Kosi Latu, with Acting Director of NOAA's Office of Marine Sanctuaries, Mr John Armor. Photo: SPREP

SPREP SIGNS A STATEMENT OF INTENT WITH NOAA'S OFFICE OF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES

SPREP will be forging a closer relationship with the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration following the signing of a Statement of Intent between SPREP and the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

While the collaborations between SPREP and NOAA will initially focus on Marine Protected Areas, the two organisations will explore ways in which they can work more closely together on other issues of shared interest including protected and threatened marine species, marine debris, ocean observing, and climate change research pertaining to adaptation and mitigation.

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IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS

ECOSYSTEMS ARE VITAL FOR GROWING PACIFIC CITIES

Cities in the Pacific are rapidly expanding and dependent on ecosystems more than ever before.

This was a key message from SPREP's Director of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management, Mr Stuart Chape, at a knowledge café on Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) to climate change at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress in Hawaii.

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Discussions on Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change. Photo: SPREP

REDUCING OCEAN THREATS, A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

An analysis of data collected by fisheries observers between 2003-2015 from purse-seine fishing vessels and analysed by SPREP has indicated over 10,000 pollution incidents that happened at sea during that time. These include the disposal of plastic and other waste into the ocean and oil spills as well as dumping or loss of fishing gear.

This reality was raised at the World Conservation Congress in Hawaii during a special panel on Reducing Ocean Threats at the Pacific Ocean Summit. The panel was moderated by Mr Kosi Latu, Director General of SPREP.

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Plastics comprise between 60 and 80 percent of the marine debris in all of the world's oceans.

PACIFIC ISLAND LEADERS URGED TO PRIORITISE OCEAN RESILIENCE AT WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS

Reducing marine debris and plastics in the ocean, and helping achieve integrated planning and management of Pacific islands' ocean resources, was the main focus of SPREP's Director General Kosi Latu, when he presented at the Pacific Island Leaders Welcoming Event at the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

The event was an open reception to welcome leaders of the Pacific, showcase the work being done by the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific agencies towards a sustainable Pacific Ocean, and highlighting the key messaging of the Pacific Ocean Summit.

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SPREP Director General Kosi Latu speaking at the Pacific Island leaders welcome event at the IUCN WCC. Photo: SPREP

SPREP FEATURED AT THE EUROPEAN UNION BEST INITIATIVE EVENT AT THE WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS

SPREP participated in the European Union BEST Initiative at the World Conservation Congress, which promotes conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems in European Union's outermost regions and overseas countries and territories.

Director General Kosi Latu was one of the featured speakers at the event focussing on two key projects – the PACIOCEA project which saw SPREP work with the French Agency for Marine Protected Areas in a pilot for regional scale marine spatial planning; as well as the Pacific Biodiversity Blue Belt which aims to achieve a blue belt of strong, healthy biodiversity across the Pacific.

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Mr Kosi Latu speaking at the European Union BEST Initiative Event. Photo: SPREP



Whale watching in Niue. Photo: Niue Tourism

PACIFIC ENVIRONMENT FORUM CALLS FOR A BALANCED APPROACH TO WHALE WATCHING IN PACIFIC ISLANDS

Balancing economic and conservation benefits was the focus of the panel discussion coordinated by the Pacific islands round table for Nature Conservation at the Pacific Environment Forum held in Niue in September.

Panellists shared diverse views on the issue of balancing economic and nature conservation and the significance of whales in Pacific island cultures and traditions.

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The 2015 SPREP Annual Report

2015 SPREP ANNUAL REPORT LAUNCHED

The SPREP Annual Report 2015 is now available online having been presented at the 27th SPREP Meeting in Niue.

The Report, available in both English and French, outlines the activities and projects implemented with members and partners in 2015 as the region strives to achieve the SPREP vision – a Pacific environment that sustains our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.

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Signing of the Regional Cooperative Framework for J-PRISM II at the 27th SPREP meeting. Photo: M.Guinto/SPREP

SIGNING OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR J-PRISM II

The second phase of a Pacific regional project funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to improve solid waste management was launched in during the 27th SPREP Meeting in Niue.

The regional framework for the Japanese Technical Cooperation Project for Promotion of Regional Initiative on Solid Waste Management in Pacific Island Countries, known as J-PRISM II, was signed by nine participating countries as well as the JICA and SPREP.

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Director of Climate Change, SPREP, Dr. Netatua Pelesikoti, with Jaana Dielenberg of Pacific iCLIM. Photo: SPREP

NIUE HOSTS PRESENTATION FOR PIONEERING INNOVATIVE ONLINE CLIMATE CHANGE TOOLS FOR THE PACIFIC

New innovating online tools to help Pacific islands with Climate Finance and Adaptation Planning that will be made available on the Pacific Climate Change Portal were presented at the 27th SPREP meeting in Niue.

These were developed by Griffith University for the Pacific Climate Change Portal under a partnership between Griffith University and SPREP made possible through the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded Pacific iCLIM Project and the GIZ Coping with Climate Change in the Pacific Islands Region Project.

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IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORY OF TOLOGAUALE LEULA (TOLO)



Ms Tologauvale Leula, or Tolo as she was affectionately known by her SPREP colleagues, was one of SPREP's longest serving employees. She was one of the original staff of the Secretariat, when it moved its headquarters from New Caledonia to Samoa in 1992. She had been at SPREP for 24 years, and was a valuable member of the team, loved and respected by many.

SPREP's Director General, Kosi Latu, delivered a eulogy on behalf of her friends and colleagues at SPREP, who remember her as a kind, loving and hardworking colleague, who always had a smile and a friendly word for everyone she met.

"Tolo was an honest and hardworking woman. In all her 24 years of service at SPREP, there was never a moment where her character was questioned. She served SPREP faithfully from the beginning until the very end. She was compared by a fellow colleague to the Pearl of the Pacific, because SPREP is made up of 21 Pacific island countries and territories, and as such, her service at SPREP made her shine to those whom the organisation served," said Mr Latu.

The SPREP staff attended Tolo's final services before she was laid to rest in her village of Salamumu.

Rest in Peace, Tolo. We will miss you very much.

IN MEMORY OF TIA MASOLO (A TRIBUTE BY SOLOMON ISLANDS MECDM)

Mr Tia Masolo is a familiar face to many across the Pacific Islands Region in his role at the Environment and Conservation Division under the Solomon Islands Ministry of Environment, Climate Change Disaster Management & Meteorology (MECDM). We remember him in this edition of the SPREP-Tok after his sudden passing away last month.

He started working at the then Ministry of Forest and Environment in 1993, joining the Environment and Conservation Division (ECD) during its early years with only 3 officers. During those early times his excitement and passion to support the work of the Division and see it grow has led him and the ECD team to commit almost our entire working life to the cause of the division. At one point, only Tia and the current Director of Environment and Conservation Division were left to run the affairs of the division as experienced Senior Staff have decided to ply their trade elsewhere with other organisations.

His promotion to the Deputy Director position of the Division was owed to his strong dedication to the Division's vision. His hierarchical movements within the division till his passing had never changed. The late Tia has left the division at a point in time where both efforts and hard work have started to gain fruition and the vision realised as a result of his supporting organisational skills, commitment and leadership.

His ECD team will miss him, and he has left a big void for them to fill in the organisation. His support, humility, strong sense of humor, hospitality and relaxed leadership style will be missed with great sadness.

The MECDM acknowledges Tia's contributions for all he has done for the country and the region as a whole. He has shown dedication and commitment in ensuring the natural resources and environment of Solomon Islands is conserved and managed for the livelihood of his people including for the future generation of the country Solomon Islands.

May Tia's soul rest in peace.



SPREP-TOK ISSN: 2311-861X

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



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