
AGENDA ITEM 7.4:

UN Environment and SPREP Partnership

Purpose of Paper

1. Provide an update on the implementation of the revised strategic priorities for the UN Environment Pacific Office and the UN Environment-SPREP partnership.
2. Inform the Meeting about the 4th session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) and its preparatory process.

Background

3. This longstanding partnership between UNEP and SPREP predates SPREP becoming an independent regional agency and existed as a UNEP funded programme within SPC. Since SPREP became a regional organisation our partnership has been governed through a series of MOUs. The current MOU for a term of 5 years was signed in the margins of the 3rd UN Environment Assembly held in Nairobi, Kenya in December 2017. The revised MOU integrates the implementation of the strategic priorities for UN Environment Pacific Office and the current SPREP Strategic Plan.
4. As part of the implementation of decisions from Rio+20 to strengthen UN Environment, the UN Environment Pacific Office was opened on the SPREP campus in 2014 to mark the occasion of Samoa hosting the 3rd International SIDS Conference. The 27th SPREP Meeting revised and endorsed the strategic priorities of the UN Environment Pacific Office and the UN Environment- SPREP partnership.

Implementation of the Revised Strategic Priorities

5. The following are highlights of activities carried out together in the five strategic priorities:
 - I. Addressing climate change and enhancing resilience
 - We continue to work together with countries to:
 - assist access to global funding mechanisms such as the GEF, GCF and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN);
 - develop multi-country GCF Climate Information Capacity;
 - build climate projects (Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Niue, Palau and Tuvalu);
 - build capacity for National Action Plan formulation;
 - partner with the Governments of Vanuatu and Korea to formulate a GCF project for ecosystem based adaptation on Malekula Island.

- II. Maintaining biodiversity and sustainable provision of ecosystem services
- SPREP continues as the Pacific node for UN Environment's Regional Seas Programme through the Noumea Convention. UN Environment is committed to strengthening its Regional Seas Programme and 2 million Euros have been allocated under 3rd phase of ACP MEAs Capacity Building Project.
 - Together UN Environment and SPREP are implementing:
 - Phase 2 of a GEF regional and national project on management and control of invasive species
 - Regional GEF project on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing to assist countries with its implementation.
 - UN Environment continues to implement Palau's national GEF project on biodiversity conservation
- III. Managing chemicals and waste and developing integrated approaches to environment and health.
- UN Environment is the Implementing Agency and SPREP the Executing Entity for:
 - a GEF regional project on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Reduction
 - a GEF regional project on management of mercury for the Minamata Convention and a similar GEF national project for PNG;
 - UN Environment continues to assist Pacific island countries through:
 - its regional Ozone-action Project to implement the Montreal Protocol for the Phase Out of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), funding a network of national ODS officers and regional and national activities;
 - the SPREP Waste Management and Pollution Control Programme to formulate a pipeline of project concepts to contribute to the implantation of the Cleaner Pacific 2025 Framework endorsed by the 26th SPREP Meeting;
- IV. Strengthen governance for delivery of the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway including promoting science-policy linkages.
- Though the EU funded Asia Caribbean and Pacific Multilateral Environmental Agreement Project, UN Environment and SPREP continue to assist countries to build capacity for implementation of MEAs including national environmental legislation, policy, planning, EIA and State of Environment reporting. The 3rd phase of project has been approved to continue this work over the next 5 years.
 - UN Environment is implementing with SPREP a GEF regional capacity building project to strengthen environmental monitoring and reporting through the establishment of national environmental portals linked to a regional portal.
- V. Focus on oceans
- The ACP MEAs Phase 3 project has a new component for capacity building to address oceans governance through the strengthened implementation of the regional seas conventions – Noumea Convention for the Pacific.
 - UN Environment and SPREP are working with other partners to:
 - formulate a programme framework document under GEF 7 to strengthen oceans governance under the international waters portfolio
 - implement the regional marine debris action plan and support the campaign for a plastics free games during the recent Pacific Games held in Apia in July
 - supporting the office of the Pacific Oceans Commissioner to address the environmental dimension of the Pacific Oceanscape Framework and for preparations towards the UN Oceans Conference in Portugal 2020.

United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)

6. UN Environment and SPREP worked together to prepare PICs for the fourth session of UNEA which took place 11 – 15 March 2019, under the theme “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”. The key outcomes included:
 - the adoption of a [Ministerial Declaration](#),
 - [23 resolutions](#),
 - [3 decisions](#),
 - a new [Programme of Work and Budget for the period 2020-21](#)
 - [the Fifth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law \(also known as Montevideo V\)](#).
 - The session also welcomed an [Implementation plan “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet”](#), [The 6th Global Environment Outlook](#), and agreed to a [contribution to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#) taking place in July 2019.
 - 173 Member States and 3 observer states attended the fourth Assembly, of which 132 were represented at ministerial level (114 Ministers and 18 Deputy Ministers). 8 Pacific member states were represented, 3 at the ministerial level. It is encouraging to see so many participants attending UNEA and the increased engagement by Pacific Island States.
7. The fifth session of UNEA, will meet in Nairobi from 22 to 26 February 2021. The Bureau of the 5th UN Environment Assembly was elected, presided by Mr. Ola Elvestuen, Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway with Ms. Laksmi Dhewanthi, Senior Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Republic of Indonesia elected as Vice President from Asia Pacific region. The other bureau members represent Costa Rica, Serbia, France, Bahrain, Suriname, Estonia, Burkina Faso and South Africa.
8. The “Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific” was held successfully on 23-25 Jan 2019 in Singapore. The Forum was jointly organized by Singapore’s Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources and UN Environment. The Ministerial Forum discussed issues related to 4th session of the UN Environment Assembly, including sustainable consumption and production, draft resolutions and the draft ministerial declaration. Around 575 delegates from 41 Member States representing governments, intergovernmental and international organizations, and Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGOS) attended the event. 12 Pacific Member States were represented (7 ministerial level) including the Prime Minister of Tuvalu. Pacific states requested a sub-regional preparatory meeting that was held 23 February 2019 to provide guidance to Pacific delegations and discuss common issues and positions.
9. The “Fourth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific” is scheduled for September/October 2020 in the Republic of Korea. The Forum is an opportunity for Member States in Asia Pacific to bring an Asia Pacific to prepare for the UN Environment Assembly. The Forum will be jointly organized by Republic of Korea’s Ministry of the Environment and the UN Environment Programme

Recommendation

10. The Meeting is invited to:

1. **note** the progress and planned activities for the implementation of the strategic priorities for the UN Environment Pacific Office and the Partnership between UN Environment and SPREP; and
2. **urge** member countries to continue to actively engage with United Nations Environment Assembly and its preparatory processes.

26 July, 2019