

30th SPREP MEETING OF OFFICIALS



“Accelerating actions for a resilient Blue Pacific”

7th, 8th, 9th September 2021, Virtual Platforms
12:00pm – 5:00pm Samoa Standard Time

Agenda Item 10.1: Report on the Sixteenth 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)

Purpose

1. To present the report of the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention.

Background

2. The 16th Conference of the Parties met virtually on Thursday 2 September 2021. The Parties in attendance were Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), France, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands and the United States of America. The meeting was chaired by Samoa with Nauru as the vice chair.

Conference Report Summary

3. Members acknowledged the work of the Secretariat under the Convention noting on-going work:
 - Implementing the WCPFC-CMM 2017-04;
 - Participating in 2 Cape Town Agreement workshops in October 2019 and July 2021;
 - Coordinating 50 shipments under the Moana Taka Partnership for recycling and disposal;
 - The Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL) Agreement in place;
 - Implementing the Greening of the Samoa XVI Pacific Games in 2019;
 - Completed waste audits in 8 PICs through Pacific Waste Project (PWP) and Pacific Ocean Litter Project (POLP);
 - Development of the Pacific Island Framework for Nature Conservation 2021-2025 including the Vermööre Declaration;
 - Support for countries on the development of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework;
 - Provided technical assistance and advice for BBNJ negotiations;
 - Development of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Guidelines for the Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs); and
 - Assistance to PICTs such as Cook Islands and Nauru on draft legislative instruments.

4. Meeting noted country reports from Australia, New Zealand and France (New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna). Australia implemented a range of measures across 2019 and 2021 under its obligations to the Noumea Convention, several measures of which include the AUD 16 million Pacific Ocean Litter Project in partnership with SPREP as well as progress made towards becoming a signatory of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. New Zealand is working towards ensuring clean and safe marine environments, including effective pollution control from land and sea, mitigating climate change and reducing domestic plastic pollution.
5. The Parties adopted the audited Financial Statements for 2019 and 2020.
6. The Parties noted the status and progress of the review of the Noumea Convention and agreed to collaborate and support the Secretariat by providing comments to the Consultant undertaking the review. Also, the Parties agreed to discuss the findings of the review inter-sessionally prior to its formal consideration at the COP17 in 2023. The Secretariat is to propose a suitable timeframe for Parties to meet inter-sessionally to discuss the findings of the review.
7. The Parties welcomed the assistance provided under the ACP MEA Phase III Programme and noted the update to support the Noumea Convention and for Parties to collaborate closely with the Secretariat to implement the Activities that supports the Noumea Convention.
8. The Parties noted the status and progress of work in relation to the development of the new regional framework to address marine litter and microplastics. Australia and New Zealand conveyed their commitment towards the protection of the world's oceans through addressing marine pollution. The Parties also agreed to include the development of the new draft regional framework to address marine litter and microplastics in the Secretariat's workplan for 2022-2023. Further, Parties agreed to assist and support the process for developing the regional framework.
9. The Parties noted and discussed the Pacific Declaration on Plastics with the hope to finalise and table for voluntary endorsement at the Environment Ministers' Meeting High-Level Talanoa. The voluntary endorsement is recognition of issues that may arise from Members and provide common ground.
10. Members considered and approved the core budget and contributions for the biennium 2022-2023 and committed to urgently clearing outstanding contributions.

Recommendations

11. The Meeting is invited to:
 - 1) **Note** the Report of the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the Noumea Convention.