



“Accelerating actions for a resilient Blue Pacific”

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

Agenda Item 7.1: Implementing the Pacific Leaders Agenda

Purpose of Paper

1. To provide an overview of the coordinated efforts of SPREP to implement the Pacific Leaders Agenda as outlined in the 2021 CROP Strategic Work Agenda, and the SIS Regional Strategy 2016-2020, where relevant to the mandate of SPREP.
2. To inform Members of key areas implemented under the relevant priorities and enable discussion on key strategic areas.

Background

3. The 2021 CROP Strategic Work Agenda is based on CROP collaboration on Forum Leaders’ priorities of: COVID-19 response and recovery; 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and regional architecture review; climate change and disaster resilience; sustainable ocean advocacy and implementation; sea level rise and maritime zones; nuclear legacy issues; regional security; regional fisheries; and regional health issues. Details of the work of SPREP in these areas are discussed in Agenda Item 8.

Key highlights:

2050 Strategy for Blue Pacific Continent & Review of Regional Architecture

4. SPREP has supported the development of the 2050 Strategy through the inputs of an internal taskforce of technical experts that have provided advice and inputs to help inform the process. The work completed to date by Members led by the FOC Sub-Committee on the 2050 Strategy with the support of CROP includes:
 - Identification of 20 key drivers of change
 - Development of a provisional list of regional goods to be refined
 - Refinement of the vision for 2050, which will serve as the long-term objective of the 2050 Strategy
 - Provisional themes of Gender, Social Inclusion and Culture; Natural Environment; Resources and Economic; Technology and Connectivity; and Political.

5. While there is much work still to continue for the respective consultations, verification and refinement of the 2050 Strategy, it is tentatively scheduled to be presented to the 16th FOC Sub-Committee Meeting for endorsement in late November 2021, followed by the 2021 Budget FOC meeting for endorsement for the due consideration of Forum Leaders.

Climate change and disaster resilience

6. The One CROP Plus led by SPREP provided support and advice to PSIDS during the inter-sessional meetings and in preparation of COP26 which will be hosted by the United Kingdom with partner Italy in Glasgow, Scotland from 31 October to 12 November 2021. SPREP will lead the One CROP Plus technical support for Pacific delegations at COP26 including the Pacific Pavilion which is a partnership to be funded by New Zealand. Specific thematic support will also be provided in the preparations for COP26.
7. A high-level event between the UK COP26 Presidency and PSIDS Leaders was held on 8 July 2021, to engage on the climate change priorities of PSIDS. The process for the identification of policy champions led by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, has also commenced. An outcome statement will be issued by the UK, which will be shared with the SPREP Meeting.
8. The Regional Pacific NDC Hub has prepared a 2030 Strategy that is focused on implementation of NDCs and supporting the 2nd NDC development. Resource mobilisation will be highly important for this Strategy to succeed, including for implementation of activities identified in the NDCs such as renewable energy projects and transition in the transport sector.
9. The Pacific Islands Climate Change Insurance Facility has produced a report and a work plan, but resources will be required to implement this further. A paper was submitted to the Forum Officials Committee in this regard.
10. The Decadal Weather Ready Programme of Investment has been endorsed by the Pacific Meteorological Council in May 2021, and the Pre-Forum Session of the Forum Officials Committee and the Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting in July 2021, as a country paper from the Government of Tonga. The Forum Secretariat will bring the Decadal Programme of Investment to the attention of Leaders for their endorsement and for sharing with Forum Dialogue Partners. SPREP as the Secretariat of the PMC facilitated the development of the Programme of Investment for consideration of Pacific Members and development partners.
11. SPREP has continued to provide support to SIS proposals for the GCF, but also through implementation of other projects in SIS.

Sustainable oceans international advocacy and Regional fisheries

12. The Secretariat has worked with CROP to report on SDG14 and supported Members in negotiations in the Twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, with the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and on development of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Workshops

have been organised pre-open ended working group and Pre-COP for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

13. Reports have been commissioned on the analysis of targets and indicators-implications for PICs and to examine the implications of target 2 for fisheries managers in the region. Programmes for coral reefs and for threatened migratory species under the UN decade for ocean science to be developed in 2021. The Coral Reef Action Plan is presented to the 30th SPREP Meeting for Members endorsement.
14. EDF-11 Pacific European Union Marine Partnership, Bycatch and Integrated Ecosystem Management project is working on bycatch mitigation techniques with regional fisheries.
15. Development of Pacific I2I Regional Project: Ocean Health for Ocean Wealth - The Voyage to a Blue Economy for the Blue Pacific Continent GEF 7 concept approved by the GEF in June 2021, with full proposal to be developed.
16. In collaboration with CROP led by FFA, opportunities for supporting the fisheries sector with climate change related projects will be pursued. The Secretariat is continuing work to address impacts of marine pollution on fisheries and reduce pollution from fishing vessels through port waste facilities and analysis of Gen 6 reports.

A Regional Mechanism to Address Oil Spills

17. Further to the Leaders decision for the development of a Regional Mechanism to Address Oil Spills and in recognition of the significant environmental risk and impacts from vessels including World War II Wrecks, the 29th SPREP Meeting endorsed the Pacific Island Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN) 2019, which outlines the mutual aid agreement for Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs) to seek assistance in the event of an oil spill beyond their national capability.
18. The Secretariat through funding support from New Zealand commenced a membership agreement with Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL) for 3 years enabling all PICTs to be an OSRL member. The Secretariat also commenced a 3-year PACPLAN Project with funding support from Australia to assist PICTs and in particular Australia's PACPLAN countries¹ fully implement the international conventions that relate to oil spill response.

SIS country-specific activities

19. As outlined in the SIS Regional Strategy 2016-2020, SPREP for the period July 2020 to May 2021 has directly assisted SIS to the value of USD 1,299,207.84 contributing in the areas of climate change USD1,199,863.05, health USD 177,672.77 and marine priorities USD 21,672.02. Refer to WP7.1 Att.1 for more detailed information including SIS country breakdown.

¹ Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

Strategic issues for discussion

20. In the CROP Heads Meeting of 10 June 2021 an update on the development of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, including next steps, key milestones and required support from CROP was discussed with the presentation by H.E. Mr Nikenike Vurobaravu, Vanuatu High Commissioner to Fiji, also Co-Chair for the FOC-Sub Committee on the 2050 Strategy. On timelines and progress, it was noted that the work on the 2050 Strategy was at the scenario stage and following this, work would progress with a draft 2050 Strategy to be conveyed to the Forum Leaders for their due consideration.
21. On the review of the regional architecture, a draft terms of reference is to be considered by the Co-Chairs and will then be considered by the FOC Sub-Committee on the 2050 Strategy before it is conveyed more widely to CROP and other stakeholders for consideration and input. The essence of the development of the 2050 Strategy and review of the regional architecture is that it is driven by Members of the Pacific Islands Forum. It is understood that the *'2050 Strategy will coincide with a review of the regional architecture, including the CROP mechanism, to ensure the requisite governance and resourcing arrangements that promote, govern and deepen collective responsibility and accountability to deliver the 2050 Strategy. Within the context of the upcoming review of regional architecture; lessons learned from the changed operating environment of COVID-19; and the opportunity for closer CROP harmonisation'*.²
22. The review of the regional architecture is a key issue that requires the attention of SPREP Members, noting past experience of SPREP from 'Reforming the Pacific Regional Institutional Framework (RIF)' report undertaken in 2006 and subsequent reforms associated with it as guided by Members. At the time of writing, the content of the terms of reference is unknown, however the continued support of Members is sought to ensure the proposed review aligns with the priorities of the SPREP membership and the mandated role of SPREP on the protection of the environment for present and future generations.
23. As noted in the Forum Leaders decision in 2019 for the operationalisation of the provisions of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Rarotonga Treaty), as necessary and for the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to coordinate assistance by CROP agencies to the Republic of Kiribati and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The role of CROP to collectively respond, through providing assistance to Members in addressing the ongoing impacts of nuclear testing, and the commissioning of a study of contamination in the Pacific including through the CROP Taskforce on Nuclear Legacy Issues.
24. With respect to the role of SPREP on the CROP Taskforce, a key challenge for the Secretariat is the technical and scientific expertise with which to effectively inform the process for affected Members. The Secretariat is of the view that nuclear legacy issues must include additional funding and external expertise, that for the time being, agencies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, have the scientific expertise and resources on nuclear legacy issues, which SPREP does not presently have. The issue has become more critical with respect to the 9th Pacific Leaders Meeting (PALM9) and the high-

² CROP Heads working paper Agenda Item 4: CROP Progress and Reporting to Forum Leaders (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 3 June 2021)

level discussions on the discharge of Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS) treated water into the Pacific Ocean. As noted in the recent Pre-Forum Session of the Forum Officials Committee and the Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting, Forum members adopted Policy Option 2 that the, *'discharge or dumping of nuclear waste into the Pacific Ocean is a red line for Forum Members, however at this juncture, Members have not had access to the necessary independent scientific information to support the formulation of a collective position on the nature and extent of the impact of the discharge of ALPS treated water into the ocean'*.³

25. These issues identified for SPREP Members to consider, requires high-level discussion to guide the Secretariat in effectively implementing Leaders' decisions on such critical matters relevant to the mandate and work of SPREP.

Recommendations

26. The Meeting is invited to:

- 1) **note** the coordinated efforts of SPREP to implement the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Agenda as outlined in the 2021 CROP Strategic Work Agenda, and the SIS Regional Strategy 2016 – 2020 for the period July 2020 to May 2021; and
- 2) **provide** guidance on the strategic issues identified on the implementation of the key decisions of Pacific Islands Forum Leaders.

14 June 2021

³ Pre-Forum Session of the Forum Officials Committee held on 23 July 2021 and Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting held on 27 July 2021.