



“Accelerating actions for a resilient Blue Pacific”

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

Agenda Item 8.2.2: Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021 – 2025, and the 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas

Purpose of paper

1. To seek endorsement of the new Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021 – 2025.
2. To raise awareness of the successful 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas including key outputs of the Framework and Vemööre Declaration.
3. To seek endorsement of the Vemööre Declaration by Members who have not yet endorsed.

Background

Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021 – 2025

4. The new Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021 – 2025 (WP.8.2.2/Att.1) is the principle regional document for environmental conservation in the Pacific. Its purpose is to provide broad strategic guidance for nature conservation planning, prioritisation, and implementation in our region. It reflects the urgent need for transformative action in response to the multiple accelerating threats, both established and emerging, that are faced by nature and people in the Pacific.
5. The Framework has been reviewed, discussed and endorsed by the participants of the 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas (10th Pacific Nature Conference), convened virtually from 24 – 27 November 2020. It identified key regional priorities for action that are needed to make progress towards the 30-year Vision, Mission and Goals for conservation that were adopted by Pacific leaders in 2002 at the 7th Conference held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands. These regional priorities are presented in the form of six Strategic Objectives. Each Strategic Objective is accompanied by Action Tracks that represent priority areas for implementation, and which also reflect the key themes of discussion at the 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas.

6. The Strategic Objectives and Action Tracks were endorsed during the High-Level Session of the Conference. Commitments to action were articulated by Pacific Island countries and territories at the 10th Pacific Nature Conference through the Vemööre Declaration (WP.8.2.2/Att. 2), which also forms part of this Framework.
7. The Framework also provides an Overview of Best Practice as guidance for work undertaken within each Action Track, it includes notes on the various responsibilities of stakeholders in its implementation, on governance arrangements, and on monitoring and reporting of regional progress. Recognising the importance of alignment with other multilateral instruments and agreements, the Strategic Objectives of the Framework are linked to key global environment and development frameworks.
8. The new Framework is ready for implementation and all key organisations, governments and partners are encouraged to endorse and commit to the implementation of the Framework.

Vemööre Declaration

9. As part of the 10th Pacific Nature Conference, New Caledonia Government hosted a high-level segment for Pacific island government Ministers or their delegate, partner countries, and heads of organisations of the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRT).
10. The main deliverable of the segment was the adoption of the Vemööre Declaration, which underlines the urgent need to protect biodiversity in the Pacific and to strengthen policies and civil society actions.
11. The Declaration was endorsed by 14 representatives of governments of Pacific island countries and territories and their partner countries, and 11 members of PIRT during the high-level segment.
12. Countries that endorsed the Vemööre Declaration were Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna. Partner countries attending were Australia, France, and New Zealand.
13. PIRT members who endorsed the Declaration were BirdLife International, cChange Pacific, Conservation International, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Oceania Regional Office, The Nature Conservancy, Pacific Community, Protected Area Learning Research Collaborative (PALRC), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Wildlife Conservation Society, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - New Caledonia, and World Wide Fund for Nature-Pacific.

10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas

14. Nature conservation programmes in the Pacific are guided by the regional conservation conference that has met on average every 5 years since 1975. The Nature Conservation and Protected Areas Conference has become the principal forum for government agencies, NGOs, community-based organisations, donor agencies and individual experts concerned with conservation science and practice in the Pacific Islands region. Its

importance is reflected in the increasing participation by stakeholders at each event over the past decade. The last conference in Fiji in 2013 had around 800 participants.

15. The 10th Pacific Islands Conference was scheduled to be a face-to-face event hosted by New Caledonia in April 2020 but was postponed due to the global pandemic outbreak. This event was rescheduled as a full virtual event held in November 2020.
16. The event proved to be very successful with more than 1,800 people registering, and nearly 1,100 active virtual participants, as well as local hubs, and an interactive event platform, which allowed the virtual event to achieve conference goals and to provide strong opportunities for engagement and interaction.



17. Full details of the conference highlights and outcomes can be found in the Conference Outcomes report (WP.8.2.22/Att. 3). The Conference website can be accessed here <https://www.pacificnatureconference.com/> and the interactive platform via this link <https://pacificislands.hubilo.com/community/#/home> (note you need to register to access, and you can register via the website).

Recommendation

18. The Meeting is invited to:
 - 1) **endorse** the Pacific Islands Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2021 – 2025;
 - 2) **encourage** Members and partners to support the implementation of the Framework;
 - 3) **note** the successful virtual 10th Pacific Islands Conference; and
 - 4) **invite** Members that did not attend the high-level segment of the Nature Conference to endorse the Vemööre_Declaration.