



Seventeenth meeting of the Noumea Convention

Seventeenth 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)

Apia, Samoa
31 August 2023

Agenda Item 7.1: Outcomes report from the Ad Hoc Meeting of the Parties on the review of the Noumea Convention

Purpose of paper

1. To inform the Parties on the outcomes of the Ad Hoc Meeting of the Parties;
2. To seek endorsement from the Parties on the recommendations at Annex 5 in the outcomes report; and
3. To seek endorsement from the Parties to convene an intersessional meeting, prior to COP18 in 2025, with a view to discussing and endorsing a Work Plan and Budget to implement the recommendations endorsed by the Contracting Parties at COP17.

Background

4. At the 16th Ordinary meeting of the contracting parties to the Noumea Convention, the Parties discussed the working paper (WP7.1) on the review of the Noumea Convention. The working paper provided an update to the Parties on the progress and status of the review. As a result, the meeting decided as follows:
 - Noted the status and progress of the review of the Noumea Convention.
 - Collaborated and supported the Secretariat by providing comments to the consultant undertaking the review, and
 - Agreed to discuss intersessionally the findings and recommendations of the review prior to its formal consideration at COP17.
 - **[Tasked the Secretariat to propose a suitable date for Parties to meet intersessionally to discuss the findings of the review.]**
5. The review was completed in November 2021 resulting in a report listing 20 recommendations for consideration, discussion and approval by the Parties. The Ad Hoc Meeting of the Parties convened in Apia, Samoa, from 14 to 15 June 2023. The primary objective of the Ad Hoc Meeting was for the Parties to discuss, review and unpack the recommendations in the review report.

6. The Ad Hoc Meeting was convened by Australia and attended by representatives of the Contracting Parties to the Noumea Convention, namely, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, New Zealand and Samoa. Representatives of Parties from Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea and United States of America joined virtually.
7. The Parties present were briefed on the background context and information behind the reviews of the Noumea Convention particularly, its initiation in 2019 and a further review in 2021 with a broader scope and objectives. The review report tabled to the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) in 2019 was mainly a desktop review on the current status of the Noumea Convention due to the limited scope as well as having been reviewed jointly with the Waigani Convention. As a result of discussions in COP15, Parties called for a further review with a wider scope and consultations with the Parties.
8. The consultant engaged to conduct the review of the Noumea Convention presented to the Parties during the Ad Hoc Meeting, the key findings from the review. These findings provided a prelude to the recommendations and the rationale behind the findings and recommendations.
9. The Ad Hoc Meeting adopted a 'Talanoa' and facilitative approach to enable Parties present to be open and frank in the dialogue unpacking the findings and recommendations. Given the number of recommendations, Parties were allocated into small groups for more focused discussions on the recommendations clustered as follows:
 - (i) Strengthening internal collaboration;
 - (ii) Strengthening the Secretariat of the Noumea Convention;
 - (iii) Strengthening the governance of the Noumea Convention;
 - (iv) Financial sustainability;
 - (v) Communication and awareness; and
 - (vi) Monitoring and reporting.
10. The outcomes of the focused-group discussions are outlined in the attached Outcomes Report of the Ad Hoc Meeting of the Parties (WP7.1.1) with Annexes for the information of, and further comments by the Parties.
11. The Outcomes Report highlight the critical importance of the work that needs to be carried out in the intersessional timeframe prior to the 18th Conference of the Parties in 2025. These activities are to:
 - (i) Develop a specific workplan and budget for the Noumea Convention;
 - (ii) Develop a communications and awareness plan for the Noumea Convention;
 - (iii) Develop a membership strategy.

12. In accordance with Rule 42(2) of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretariat is to develop a draft Terms of Reference for the intersessional meeting and circulate to the Parties for approval at the intersessional meetings
13. The above key activities are envisaged to be developed in close collaboration with the Parties.

Recommendation

14. The Parties are invited to:
 - (a) **Note** the Outcomes Report of the Ad Hoc Meeting held on 14-15 June 2023;
 - (b) **Endorse** the recommendations including, the proposed revisions to the recommendations, in the Outcomes Report; and
 - (c) **Endorse** for Parties to meet intersessionally in accordance with Rule 42(2) of the 2025 to discuss and endorse a Work Plan and Budget to implement the recommendations endorsed a by the Contracting Parties at COP17.

6 July 2023