

AGENDA ITEM 11: Items Proposed by Members

Agenda Item 11.1 *The Fossil Free Pacific* - A Call to support the Pacific's leadership on the proposed Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Paper presented by the Chair on behalf of 11 SPREP member states: Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Palau, Tuvalu, Niue, Nauru, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands

Purpose of Paper

- To update SPREP members on progress towards negotiation of the proposed Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty
- To inform Senior Officials and Environment Ministers of the growing regional support for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FFNPT), currently being championed by 19 countries, including 13¹ SPREP members.

Background

The Pacific region has long been recognised as a moral compass for global climate ambition. From the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal to the ICJ campaign which was spearheaded by the Pacific to the region's historic leadership towards a *Fossil Fuel Free Pacific*, we have led with courage, clarity, and conviction despite the many challenges we have faced.

In recent years, 11 SPREP Member States — Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Tonga, Fiji, Niue, Nauru Solomon Islands, Samoa, Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands — have publicly endorsed the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and progressed international discussions on the proposed Treaty to a point where negotiations are now planned for 2026. These *first-mover* nations have done so in recognition of the urgent need for an international framework to complement the Paris Agreement by addressing the root driver of climate change: *the continued unregulated and unmanaged expansion of fossil fuel production*.

2025 was the first year in which we breached the 1.5 degree warming limit. The Pacific can no longer afford a sole reliance on incremental measures when the crisis we are facing is now *accelerating*. We cannot slow fossil fuel *consumption* if we keep increasing fossil fuel *production*. This is why we are proposing the development of a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty to support the emissions reductions goals of the Paris Agreement with a complementary mechanism that addresses fossil fuel *production*.

In line with the position of PSIDS and existing regional frameworks, the FFNPT proposes three main pillars:

- **Non-Proliferation:** End *new* exploration and production of coal, oil and gas.
- **Fair Phase-Out:** Manage a global just transition away from fossil fuel production.
- **Just and Equitable Transition:** Support workers, communities and countries dependent on fossil fuels to diversify their economies in a fair and equitable way.

¹ Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia endorsed separately at MSG Leaders Summit 2023

1. The Pacific Imperative

- 1.1. The Pacific is on the frontlines of the climate crisis. We face existential threats from sea-level rise, intensifying tropical cyclones, ocean acidification, and the disruption of critical ecosystems such as coral reefs. Yet the continued production and consumption of fossil fuels, particularly by major emitting countries and corporations, undermines our survival and sacrifices our future for short-term gain.
- 1.2. Despite our negligible contributions to global emissions, Pacific Island countries have consistently shouldered a disproportionate burden of climate impacts. Supporting the FFNPT is both an act of self-preservation and a demonstration of Pacific leadership for the common good of all peoples.

2. Alignment with SPREP Mandate and Regional Frameworks

- 2.1. SPREP's Strategic Plan 2017–2026 commits the organisation to strengthening the resilience of island ecosystems and communities to climate change and environmental threats. The FFNPT is entirely consistent with this mandate.
- 2.2. Further, the proposed Treaty complements key regional positions and frameworks, including:
 - 2.2.1. The **Kainaki II Declaration on Urgent Climate Change Action Now (2019)**;
 - 2.2.2. The **Boé Declaration on Regional Security (2018)**, which defines climate change as the single greatest threat to the Pacific;
 - 2.2.3. The **Port Vila Call for a Just Transition to a Fossil Fuel Free Pacific (2023)**, adopted by five Pacific governments;
 - 2.2.4. The **Blue Pacific Continent narrative**, which elevates Pacific stewardship of the ocean and our collective destiny.

3. Opportunities for Regional Action

- 3.1. SPREP Member States have a unique opportunity to collectively amplify calls for a global fossil fuel phase-out by:
 - 3.1.1. Endorsing the FFNPT as a regional bloc sends out a powerful signal that a COP31 co-hosted by the Pacific and has the “Pacific” name on is a COP that is unequivocally ambitious and unambiguous about the need to manage a fast and fair phase out of fossil fuels.
 - 3.1.2. Including strong fossil fuel phase-out language in joint regional statements ahead of COP31
 - 3.1.3. Supporting a regional dialogue on just transition planning for the Pacific
 - 3.1.4. Collaborating with civil society and the FFNPT Secretariat to raise awareness and build support among governments not yet engaged.

4. Moral Leadership

- 4.1. The FFNPT will seek to pursue Pacific-tailored 100% renewable energy powered development pathways across all sectors, including energy, transport and more broadly
- 4.2. Calling on international partners to cancel debt and provide adequate finance to enable the just transition in the Pacific
- 4.3. Codifying legal obligations relating to fossil fuels, including through supporting and participating in process such as the ICJ and ITLOS advisory opinions
- 4.4. International momentum for the Pacific's leadership is strong and getting stronger, thanks in large part to the credible leadership and urgency shown by Pacific Island countries to date.
- 4.5. The FFNPT is intended to provide a clear framework for steps needed to enable a just transition in the Pacific, and the role of the international community both in
 - 4.5.1. phasing out fossil fuels first and fastest to prevent further devastating climate impacts, and
 - 4.5.2. providing the finance and support needed to support the transition.
- 4.6. The proposed FFNPT and its tangible commitments and targets have been formally referenced and welcomed in the Outcomes Documents of
 - 4.6.1. The 2nd Pacific Ministerial Dialogue on the Global Just Transition, March 2023
 - 4.6.2. The 5th Pacific Energy and Transport Ministers Meeting held in Port Vila in 2023
 - 4.6.3. The 2023 Forum Economic Ministers Meeting held in August in Fiji
 - 4.6.4. The UNFCCC High Level Ministerial Dialogue held in August in Suva, Fiji and
 - 4.6.5. The Melanesian Spearhead Group Leaders Summit in August in Port Vila, Vanuatu.
- 4.7. Pacific Leaders have tasked the PIF Secretariat to begin actioning this initiative's calls for a Regional Energy Commissioner and engaging through formal Forum processes with the view of securing a regional declaration on *Fossil Free Pacific* from leaders during the PIF Leaders meeting in September.
- 4.8. This ramping up of political buy-in provides momentum for increasing international support for the initiative going into crucial climate negotiations at COP31 and the 1st International Conference on the Proposed Fossil Fuel Treaty, to be held in mid 2026.

5. Dedicated Negotiations Process

- 5.1. Concurrent to the UNFCCC process, an proposed dedicated process will commence in 2026 to begin negotiations for the proposed Treaty.
- 5.2. The Governments of Vanuatu and Colombia have expressed interest in co-hosting meetings to begin this process.
- 5.3. The Government of Colombia and the Government of the United Kingdom have had an initial preliminary discussion on the potential hosting arrangements for this conference.

- 5.4. Further high level engagement will continue with a view of finalising these arrangements for announcement at COP30 later this year.

Recommendations.

6. This meeting is invited to note the paper presented by Vanuatu on behalf of the 11 SPREP member countries participating in the development of a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Palau, Tuvalu, Niue, Nauru, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands)

Conclusion

The coming 36 months presents the region with two significant and mutually reinforcing opportunities to advance decisive action on fossil fuels through parallel international processes. The first lies within the framework of the UNFCCC, where strengthening the ambition to constrain *consumption* of fossil fuels through stronger emissions reduction commitments in the COP process remains essential, particularly in light of the unique opportunity presented by a prospective joint Australia–Pacific hosting arrangement for COP31.

The second arises from the initiation of negotiations on the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty (FFNPT), scheduled to commence in 2026, which will, for the first time, place fossil fuel *production* at the centre of multilateral negotiations. Crucially, the recent Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice provides the legal and normative foundation for a concurrent strategy: one that addresses both the consumption and production of fossil fuels. Taken together, these developments highlight the complementarity of the two treaty regimes and underscore the potential for a more comprehensive and legally coherent approach to managing the global transition away from fossil fuels.

The climate crisis demands bold, principled action. As the custodians of the Blue Pacific Continent, we must speak with a united voice to demand a fossil fuel-free future, one grounded in justice, resilience, and the sacred responsibility we bear for future generations.
