

CIRCULAR

FILE: AP 6/1/3 **TO:** SPREP National Focal Points
DATE: 6 February 2020 & Timor-Leste Focal Point
CIRCULAR: 20/06
SUBJECT: Waste Management and Pollution Control Meetings (10 – 19 February 2020)

Dear Members,

Further to our circular issued on the 31st of January 2020 (Circular number 20/05), this serves to inform you all of SPREP's intention to *proceed with the meetings* scheduled over the next two weeks in Nadi, Fiji.

The Secretariat is aware of recent concerns with respect to the present global alerts relating to the novel coronavirus, and we therefore wish to bring the following matters to the attention of National Focal Points:

- According to recent reports in the Fiji and regional media, two Fijian citizens have been placed in quarantine following their return from mainland China after they displayed 'mild symptoms' of the coronavirus, and that Fijian health authorities have sent test samples to Australia to confirm whether the coronavirus is present;
- SPREP is *unable* to confirm whether coronavirus is present in Fiji, and refer any concerned individuals to review the regular updates being provided by the Fijian Ministry of Health & Medical Services;
- While SPREP is comfortable proceeding with the meetings in Fiji, noting that the majority of Members have indicated that they will attend the meeting, the decision to attend in light of the above circumstances is ultimately at the discretion of each Focal Point in consultation with their respective government authorities;
- Focal Points are therefore encouraged to confirm with their relevant health or other government authorities that their intended travel to Fiji is supported, and that they are satisfied with any potential health and / or quarantine measures which they may be required to adhere to upon their return;
- Focal Points are encouraged to ensure that their International Travel Insurance arrangements are up to date and that those policies will respond to any potential delays or health concerns while officers are travelling;
- Where necessary, and in the event that any officers are required to obtain a medical clearance certificate during the meetings and before returning to their home countries, SPREP will assist Focal Points to identify nearby Doctors who can provide this service.

- In the first instance, Focal Points should seek confirmation through their travel insurer that the costs for a Doctor's certificate are covered, however where this is not the case SPREP will consider covering the costs for a Doctor's certificate on behalf of the Focal Points concerned.
- **Please note** that SPREP is *not* able to cover any additional medical costs or costs associated with a potential scenario where Focal Points are delayed or quarantined during the meetings or while travelling to and from the meetings.

In the event that any National Focal Points determine that they are unable to travel, please note that arrangements will be made by each of the core Projects and convention / meeting secretariats to share any of the substantive details, materials and recommendations from these meetings.

The PacWaste Plus and Pacific Ocean Litter Project teams have tentatively scheduled a range of country-by-country missions over the next few months, which will provide an opportunity to share and discuss any matters, queries or concerns raised during the meetings next week for those Focal Points unable to attend.

The GEF ISLANDS project team have confirmed that they will make contact with each country not able to participate in their meeting on 19 February, to identify a suitable time for a videoconference to address key matters.

The Secretariats for the Waigani and Basel Convention and the Cleaner Pacific Round Table will likewise share any documentation and key messages from the meetings in Fiji, and will follow-up individually with those Focal Points unable to participate.

SPREP fully appreciates the concern raised about the coronavirus and we will respect the decision of National Focal Points to participate or not in the Nadi meetings.

We sincerely apologise in advance for any disruption or inconvenience for any Focal Points who are unable to join us in Fiji for these meetings. To facilitate the cancellation of travel, we do kindly request that SPREP is advised of this decision as soon as possible.

We seek the patience and understanding of all our Members and Partners in these matters. Our decision to go ahead with the meetings at this challenging time has not been made lightly. We of course encourage everyone to observe travel and healthcare precautionary advisories and stay safe.

Kind regards,



Kosi Latu
Director General

KL/VH/rmg