



CIRCULAR

FILE: SPREP 2/9/1 **TO:** SPREP National Focal Points
Partners and CROP

DATE: 20 March 2020

CIRCULAR: 20/22

SUBJECT: SPREP Update on Preventative Measures for the Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Pandemic and Plans for Business Continuity

Dear Members and Partners,

As many of you are aware there have been key high-level announcements made by several member governments regarding strict health and travel advisories due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) met this morning to discuss the continued preventative measures for the protection of SPREP staff and the ***continued but limited services we will endeavour to provide to you all***, noting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The key decisions are as follows:

1. As noted on Monday 16 March all official staff travel has been cancelled and this will remain in effect until further notice.
2. All staff that return from overseas travel will go into self-isolation for 14 days. This also applies to all staff who return to Samoa from overseas on annual leave.
3. For staff who wish to return to their contractual country of origin, they may do so where this is possible. There are strict measures in place that are beyond the control of the Secretariat, but we have encouraged staff to exercise good judgement and to act swiftly.

We are awaiting official advice from the Government of Samoa noting the recent announcement from the Honourable Prime Minister of Samoa on 19 March regarding preventative measures for COVID-19. Noting our experience with the measles outbreak in 2019, we have key preparations in place for business continuity should there be a closure.

4. Directors have met with their teams to discuss staffing arrangements. This includes reduced staffing and rotation amongst teams.
5. On Monday 23 March all staff will work remotely from home. This will enable the Secretariat to trial the effectiveness of working remotely from home.

6. On Tuesday 24 March all staff will return to work, where SMT will undertake a proper assessment of the situation including lessons learnt from working remotely and to consider any other likely changes that are necessary including key decisions by the Government of Samoa.
7. On Wednesday 25 March we will adopt 50 percent reduced staffing at Headquarters. This is an arrangement that Directors have prepared with their respective teams.

As we learnt from last year, ***in the event there is a Samoa Government closure due to the preventative measures for COVID-19*** we will abide and work remotely from home. ***Limited but key essential services will continue.***

8. Staff will continue to work from home remotely until further notice.
9. SMT has reiterated to all staff the options for flexibility of working arrangements, noting the importance of continued and open communication with their respective directors.
10. Our outposted staff have been advised to follow the guidelines of the respective host governments.
11. In the long term we are planning to secure two sets of upgraded conferencing equipment which will enable Headquarters to continue our communication and engagement with Members and Partners.

I want to reassure all of our Members and Partners that the Senior Management Team have given their full support to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all Secretariat staff and their families are maintained. We will endeavor to continue provision of limited but essential services to our Members and Partners with the business continuity measures in place. *Please refer to the separate document which includes the key mobile details of the Senior Management Team and key staff.*

As you are well aware, our Pacific region is resilient and we will do everything collectively to support staff and the people we serve.

Yours sincerely,



Kosi Latu
Director General