

## Twenty Third SPREP Meeting of Officials

4-6 September 2012  
Noumea  
New Caledonia

### Agenda Item 6.4: Request by the United Kingdom for SPREP Membership

#### Purpose

1. To inform Members of the request by the United Kingdom for SPREP Membership.

#### Background

2. The Government of the United Kingdom in a letter dated 14 November 2011 from the Foreign Secretary, Hon. William Hague to the Prime Minister of Samoa Hon. Tuilaepa Lufesoai Sialele Malielegaoi conveyed the wish of the United Kingdom to become a member of SPREP. The announcement by the United Kingdom to become a member of SPREP was formally made at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Auckland, New Zealand on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011.
3. The request for Membership by the United Kingdom is made in accordance with Article 10, Paragraph 5 of the SPREP Agreement signed on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2003 and entered into force on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1995 which allows the United Kingdom to accede to it.
4. Article 10 paragraph 5 states:  
  
“Following the expiry of the period when this Agreement is open for signature, and provided that this Agreement has entered into force, this Agreement shall be open for accession by any State other than those referred to in this Article which, desiring to accede to this Agreement, may so notify the Depository, which shall in return notify the Parties. In the absence of any written objection by a Party within six months of receipt of such notification, a State may accede by deposit of an instrument of accession with the Depository, and accession shall take effect thirty days after the deposit.”
5. At the time of writing (7 August, 2012), the Government of Samoa as Depository to the SPREP Agreement had not received any objections from any of the Members with regards the request for Membership by the United Kingdom. The six months period for written objections to be received ends on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2012. At the time of writing six SPREP Members have announced their formal support in respect of the application for Membership by the United Kingdom: the United States of America, Australia, Cook Islands, France, Niue, and New Zealand.

### Criteria for membership of SPREP

6. Other than what is stated in Article 10, paragraph 5 of the SPREP Agreement, there is no specific criterion specified for SPREP membership. This means that there is a wide discretion for Members to consider the membership for any interested Party. It is assumed that countries seeking membership of SPREP would have an interest in areas where SPREP is mandated to work in as articulated in Article 2 (1) relating to the purposes of SPREP which is: “to promote cooperation in the South Pacific region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations....” and more broadly on key environmental issues in the Pacific region such as climate change which has a global dimension.

7. The Chapeau of the SPREP Agreement is the probably the only clearest statement on the responsibility of Parties in recognizing the importance of protecting the environment and conserving the natural resources of the South Pacific region.

8. It is assumed Members will undertake their own assessment based on the possible benefits accruing from the Membership of any interested country and apply their own knowledge in respect of what they already know of the interested Party.

### Recommendations

9. The Meeting is invited to:

- **Consider** the request from the United Kingdom for SPREP Membership;
- **Note** that at the time of writing (7 August, 2012) no objections were notified to the Depository of the SPREP Agreement in respect of the request from the United Kingdom, noting that the deadline for notification of objections is 27<sup>th</sup> August 2012; and
- **Invite** the United Kingdom to join the 2012 SPREP Meeting