

Annex 5: Report of the Friends of the Chair: Study on options for establishing a sub-regional presence for SPREP

The meeting recalled that element 3.2 of the SPREP Strategic Plan, 'Strengthening Regional Linkages', tasks the Secretariat to "continually seek ways to improve regional linkages and Member's access to SPREP services and advice". In this context the meeting welcomed the draft report *'Consultancy to assist the SPREP Secretariat in exploring a sub-regional presence in the Pacific Region'* and presentation by Mr David Gowty on the establishment of a sub-regional presence for SPREP as a important step toward meeting the need identified in the Strategic Plan.

The meeting recognized that improving regional linkages was a critical element of ensuring SPREP's success into the future and that there were a number of different approaches which required evaluation, including consideration of costs, benefits and implications for SPREP delivery of services and advice.

The following broad approaches were identified as requiring further evaluation, noting that none of these approaches are mutually exclusive:

- Establishment of sub-regional offices, including co-location with other CROP agencies;
- Periodic sub-regional forums;
- Project-based regional presence;
- Country desk officers based at SPREP Headquarters; and
- Placement of SPREP staff in line agencies in country.

The meeting tasked the Secretariat to bring forward a paper on 'Strengthening Regional Linkages' to the 23rd Meeting of SPREP, which presents a detailed evaluation of options and seeks endorsement of a program of action. The meeting identified the following elements as critical elements in moving forward:

- A formal consultation with all members prior to SPREP's 2012 meeting;
- Specific proposals, along with the rationale for support, linked to the efficient and effective delivery of programs and strategic plan priorities;
- A small number of illustrative cases studies of successful regional presence;
- Identification of Pacific Island Countries that would be the focus for improving regional linkages, including specific programs and projects requiring on-ground support;
- Robust assessment of the costs and benefits of the proposals;
- Identification of the implications of proposals particularly on delivery of services and advice into the future, including the financial impact on the core budget; and
- Identification of any factors, including external factors, likely to significantly impact on SPREP's delivery of services and advice over the term of the Strategic Plan.