

## **ANNEX 2: Opening Statement by the SPREP Deputy Director General, Mr Kosi Latu**

Chairperson of the Waigani Convention

Distinguished Representatives of Contracting Parties to the Waigani Convention

Distinguished Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to welcome you all to this, the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Waigani Convention.

Our region is slowly embracing the concepts of integrated waste management and the user-pays principal to fund improved waste management. However, the region is still collectively coping with the legacy of a history of poor management of wastes and hazardous chemicals, and with current major capacity shortfalls to address these issues.

In response to these issues, SPREP's waste management team has been elevated within SPREP to a Division in its own right in acknowledgement of the regional importance of waste and chemical issues. Since the last COP in 2010, the Waste Management and Pollution Control Division has worked hard to capture over \$US 20M in additional funding for hazardous waste management in the region.

I regret that insufficient interest by Members resulted in the cancellation of the 2012 STAC (Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee) meeting as well as the 2012 meeting of the SCPRC (Steering Committee of the Pacific Regional Centre) this year. As a consequence, the COP will be called on to make some important decisions this year concerning the future management arrangements of the Pacific Centre and the Waigani Convention. Our view is that the best way forward is to completely integrate the work of the Centre and Convention within the workplan of the SPREP Waste Management and Pollution Control Division.

As a component of this integration, I am delighted to welcome Mr. Jinhui Li, the Executive Secretary of the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for the Asia and Pacific Region (Tsinghua University, China), to address this meeting on the potential synergies and additional capacity that the Chinese Centre may bring to the Pacific.

I am also pleased to be able to report that the Secretariats of the 3 chemical conventions (the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions) have rationalized resources without reducing the current level of environmental protection afforded by these Conventions, and our partner agency UNEP is currently exploring ways to better assist countries revise their National Implementation Plans for Stockholm chemicals. SPREP has invited Mr Don Cooper (UNEP) to present progress on this important joint SPREP/UNEP initiative at a side-event on Monday.

You have my sincere best wishes on your endeavours over this important meeting.

Thank you.