



Report of Special SPREP Meeting

Novotel Tradewinds Hotel, Lami, Suva, Fiji

10 July 2009

Opening:

1. The Special SPREP Meeting was opened with a prayer by the delegate of American Samoa.
2. The Chair of the SPREP meeting addressed the meeting and highlighted the three issues on the provisional agenda. The first issue was the recently concluded Joint Meeting on the RIF. He noted that although the outcome of the RIF did not meet the SPREP preferred option, it nevertheless reflected the collective mood at this point and that Members needed to shift their focus to the further challenges and opportunities before them. The second issue would address the Secretariat recommendations in relation to progressing the ICR while the third agenda item was the Selection Advisory Committee's report on the appointment of a Director.

Agenda Item 1: Selection of Drafting Committee & Adoption of Agenda

3. Members agreed that although normal procedure was for the Vice Chair of the SPREP Meeting to chair the drafting committee, for this meeting, the Secretariat was tasked with preparing the Summary of Decisions of the Meeting.
4. The agenda was adopted.

Agenda Item 2: RIF Outcomes

5. The Acting Director of SPREP introduced the Summary of Decisions from the Joint Meeting. He stressed that while there was no intention to reignite the debate, the Secretariat wished to specifically address the four areas recommended for transfer from SOPAC to SPREP. The Secretariat accepts the decision of the Council but requested that there was a need for closer examination of what these four areas constitute and what it means in terms of resource, personnel and funding.

6. He outlined the four proposed areas for transfer and explained the understanding of the Secretariat on their status:

- PI-GOOS (Pacific Island Global Ocean Observing System) - the position is currently vacant
- The Island Climate Update (ICU) - is a newsletter and funding is currently being discussed with NZAID. The work is outsourced to NIWA.
- Climate and meteorological database - this is also outsourced to NIWA.
- The component of the Energy sector relating to monitoring and evaluation of Greenhouse Gases and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) - SPREP currently conducts the monitoring under the PIGGAREP while the CDM is only listed in SOPAC work programme as an unfunded activity.

7. The Secretariat advised that, other than the vacant PI-GOOS position, these activities do not have dedicated staff.

8. The Secretariat also noted that the Sea Level Rise project currently at SOPAC would also benefit from being transferred to SPREP as the other proposed activities for transfer are largely climate change-related.

9. The Acting Director raised the issue of the language used in the Summary of Decisions of the joint council meeting. The language used currently suggests that some core functions of SOPAC were being transferred to SPREP with other functions going to SPC. He suggested that for clarity in terms of what is presented to the Leaders, this section of the document could be reworded to better reflect the situation.

10. In response to the Secretariat's presentation, the Delegate of Tonga advised that he needed to be clear on what was being transferred from SOPAC to SPC and what was going to SPREP without wanting to change the Decision. He added that it was important to not lose focus of the decision of the Leaders and its intent. He considered that the Reports of the Consultants had not been taken seriously enough in terms of looking at the synergies of programmes between the three organisations in order to assist better delivery for the countries. He suggested that there is a need to reflect on what has been decided and build on this while respecting the Decision that has been made.

11. The Delegate of New Zealand clarified on the Island Climate Update noting that it is more than a bulletin, is also a capacity building initiative targeting regional meteorology offices. Monthly teleconferences are held which provide an opportunity for meteorology directors to come together. The service has been ongoing since 2000 and discussions are currently underway to ensure it becomes part of the core programme of the organisation that manages it, if Members consider this an important function. NZ views the ICU as something that can strengthen meteorology functions in the region.

12. The RMI delegate sought clarification on the Secretariat's presentation noting her concern that Members were now learning that the four proposed areas for transfer are activities and not programmes. She noted that this changes their understanding and requested clarification from SOPAC in terms of what kind of funding was coming to SPREP. The PI-GOOS and other staffing issues needed to be clarified. She added that it was the responsibility of Members as the SPREP Governing Council to clarify these issues.

13. The Delegate of American Samoa noted that there had been no collaboration between the three organisations leading to the decision of the areas of work to be transferred. He added that the earlier proposed clause for ongoing consultation regarding synergies should have been included in the Summary of Decisions.

14. The Delegate of PNG said that they had been clearly instructed by Leaders that the functions had to be distributed according to the synergies. The CEOs had also signed an MOU on this matter which should be adhered to.

15. The Acting Director reiterated that it was not requesting a return to the Decision of the Joint Council. He merely asked that Members be fully cognizant of the resource implications before they go ahead with implementing the decision.

16. The Chair reminded Members that the decision was made at the joint council meeting for the activities to be rationalised to SPREP. However the issue was for Members to appreciate the resource implications of such a move.

17. The Director of SOPAC concurred with the NZ intervention on the ICU. She explained that the ICU was definitely more than just a newsletter and that the next triennial arrangement provides an excellent opportunity to redefine what the ICU initiative can provide to members. Discussions with SPREP, NIWA and NZAID are on currently ongoing and focus on broadening the scope of the initiative and what it can deliver. She added that the timing was right and that SOPAC will continue to be involved in the discussions to ensure that there is comprehensive consultation to ensure the delivery of this initiative is strengthened.

18. The SOPAC Director further explained that PI-GOOS is not an activity but part of a larger programme - a series of international experiments. There is some recruitment underway and SPREP will be involved in this. The advisor delivering against this initiative will need to be housed at SPREP. She asked Members to look at more than the current status of the initiative, to also look at the potential and opportunities this transfer will allow. She added that the Climate and Meteorological data is indeed run by NIWA which has the ability to collect and collate this data, which advises the UNFCCC process. She further advised that the energy discussions will consider exactly what the modalities are in terms of delivery of energy services to the Members. It was important not to lose sight of the energy dimensions of climate change in these discussions.

19. The Director of SOPAC assured Members that resources would accompany the transfer and that this was an exciting opportunity for progress. She added that she had proposed the four areas for transfer to SPREP after taking into account the consultant report, the June discussions with the other two CEOs and the consultants and the SPREP ICR.

20. The Director General of SPC reiterated that all three CEOs being from the region have the region's benefit at heart. He assured the SPREP Council that there will be ongoing rationalisation between the organisation and between the CEOs. Once SPREP has addressed the ICR there will be opportunities for further rationalisation and synergy development. He stressed that it is possible to build on opportunities being presented and gave the example of the Maritime Programme which came to SPC from the PIF with a small budget and two staff. It is now a 3 million dollar, well-staffed project that is growing as it addresses key priorities of the region. The Director General added that, as regional agencies, we need to build partnerships to identify and address priority areas.

21. The Delegate of Tonga reflected that the joint council decision was made based on an understanding of the agreement between the three CEOs. In terms of staffing and resources Members needed to consider very carefully the incoming Director, who will be tasked with resourcing and funding these activities.

22. In response to a question from the delegate of PNG regarding clarification on the budget, SOPAC advised that USD110,000 was allocated for the PI-GOOS (funding from US, UN and Australia). No other clear indication was made on actual budgets for the other areas as the SOPAC Director did not have this information at hand. This will be discussed between the CEOs next week.

23. The delegate of USA made a request that the recommendations be formatted to reflect the decisions of the CRGA meeting held the day before.

24. Australia noted that it expected the implementation plans with regard to the changes recommended by the joint meeting would be tabled at the 20th SPREP Meeting in September. This would provide the full set of information that will give members opportunity to make better informed decisions then. She also informed Members that Australia has been discussing with SPREP support for a number of Climate Change initiatives that potentially will support the activities proposed for transfer.

25. The delegate of French Polynesia concurred with the Australian delegation regarding their inability to make a financial commitment as sufficient information is not currently available. He added that there was a need to concentrate on the main goal of the meeting which is to adopt and ratify the decisions made at the joint meeting. He also concurred with the USA suggestion that the Meeting align its recommendations with those of the earlier meetings and reiterated that the Council could not reopen discussion on previously made decisions.

26. The delegate of France endorsed the comments by French Polynesia noting that he was prepared to endorse the decision adopted a few days ago but that resourcing would need to be discussed once information is provided. It is the responsibility of the three directors to provide this information to the Members.

27. The delegate of the Cook Islands supported the comment by France and suggested that the second recommendation be reworded.

28. American Samoa noted that it was good to see that there was a sense of mutual cooperation between the CEOs and he hoped this will continue. He moved that the earlier adopted decision be accepted. The delegates of USA and Niue seconded this.

29. In response to a question by RMI, the Secretariat advised that the CEOs would be meeting next week to begin discussions on implementation.

Recommendations

30. The special SPREP Meeting:

- **Endorsed and ratified** the outcome of the Joint Meeting of the governing councils of SOPAC, SPC and SPREP on the rationalisation of SOPAC functions into SPC and SPREP and noted that detailed implementation plans will be presented for consideration by the 20th SPREP Meeting.

Agenda Item 3: ICR Updates

31. The Secretariat presented two discussion papers on proposed actions to address ICR Recommendations 59, 60 and 61 and on Recommendation 79 and asked that Members provide feedback to the Secretariat prior to the 20th SPREP meeting.

32. With regard to the issues of core functions, the Secretariat suggested that Members consider the establishment of a taskforce to help progress the issue of core functions. The task force would be representative of all Members, initially drawing from Apia-based Members (currently USA, NZ, Australia, Tokelau and Samoa) and be open to all Members. Another update on implementation of the ICR recommendations will be provided at the 20th SPREP Meeting.

33. NZ commended the Secretariat for its work to advance the ICR during what has been a difficult time with a lot on the agenda.

34. NZ and the Cook Islands supported the proposal that Members provide feedback on the discussion papers directly to the Secretariat and they further supported the idea of a taskforce to work with the Secretariat on the core functions and other ICR recommendations.

35. In response to a question from the USA, the Secretariat advised that the proposed task force could potentially be the same as the Chairman's Advisory Committee (CAC). He explained that the idea of the CAC was suggested to serve as a link between the Secretariat and the Members to ensure closer engagement.

36. The USA suggested that perhaps a more fluid process be considered that allows all members to contribute via an electronic bulletin board or other mechanism. He noted that there will be several Members interested in participating but may not be able to attend the physical meetings.

37. NZ suggested that both options could be considered.

38. The Chair invited Members to advise the Secretariat of their interest in volunteering on the task force.

39. **The special SPREP Meeting:**

- **Noted** the ICR progress report and **agreed** to provide feedback on the two discussion papers relating to proposed Secretariat actions on ICR recommendations 59, 60, 61 and 79 before the 20th SPREP Meeting; and
- **Endorsed** the establishment of a task force, representative of and open to all Members, to progress the issue of core functions and related ICR recommendations and agreed that the Secretariat would also establish an electronic bulletin board to enable greater participation of all Members.

Agenda Item 4 Appointment of Director

40. **The special SPREP Meeting:**

- **Accepted** the recommendation of the Selection Advisory Committee, and agreed to offer the Directorship to the Committee's first recommended candidate.
- **Resolved** to carefully review the Rules of Procedure for Selection of the SPREP Director at its next regular meeting in order to address Members' desire to improve upon the existing process. In that context, it noted the strongly expressed wish of a number of Members that in the future, the selection process be structured so as to operate more openly and to more fully engage the membership. This meeting sees the need for the Rules of Procedures to be amended.

- **Also** noted the recommendation of American Samoa that the SAC will provide a shortlist of qualified candidates to the delegates to make the final decision.

Agenda Item 5 Other Business

41. At the suggestion of NZ, delegates agreed that consideration should be given to deferment of the 20th SPREP Meeting, currently scheduled for early September, to November. This would allow the Secretariat and Members time to address the various tasks required of them prior to the Meeting.

42. **The Special SPREP Meeting agreed:**

- **That** the Secretariat would consult all Members regarding the possible deferment of the 20th SPREP Meeting to November 2009.

Agenda Item 6 Adoption of Summary of Decisions

43. The Summary of Decisions was formally adopted.

Agenda Item 7: Close of Meeting

44. The delegate of the Cook Islands thanked the Chair for his guidance throughout the Meeting.

45. The Chair thanked the support staff, interpreters and the Acting Director of SPREP.

46. The Acting Director thanked the delegates and expressed his wish to ensure that SPREP becomes a strong environmental agency for the region.

47. The Meeting was closed at 4.20pm.
