



*1991-1995
Action Plan for
Managing the Environment
of the South Pacific Region*



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Programme**

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Action Plan for

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The South Pacific Region

Apia, Western Samoa
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Preface

1. The Conference on the Human Environment in the South Pacific, held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 8-11 March 1982, adopted the South Pacific Declaration on Natural Resources and the Environment and the Action Plan for Managing the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific region (the Action Plan) and agreed on the administration and financial arrangements needed to support the implementation of the Action Plan for the next phase of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).
2. Since 1986, SPREP has evolved as the leading environmental agency for the South Pacific region. Several major arrangements were adopted to enable the Programme to respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of its member governments and in accordance with its regional and international status. The Co-ordinating Group, consisting of representatives from SPC, SPEC (Forum Secretariat), ESCAP and UNEP, was established in 1980 to co-ordinate the preparation for the Conference on the Human Environment in 1982 and to generally oversee the Programme. The Co-ordinating Group was later disbanded as members took a more direct role in overseeing the Work Programme.
3. It was determined in 1986 that member governments should have a greater role in setting priorities and managing the affairs of the Programme. Work Programmes are thus now developed and approved by annual meetings of the Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) which, in 1990, also called for SPREP to become an autonomous body.
4. Programme activities cover a wide range of national, regional and international concerns and are implemented by the Secretariat. Programmes on global climate change, marine pollution and conservation of biological diversity and other important issues are implemented in partnership or with financial support from other international environmental or donor agencies, attesting further to the increasing recognition of SPREP as the leading environmental agency in the South Pacific region.

5. The 1980s has been a decade of significant progress for SPREP. Some of the significant achievements have been:

- (a) The entry into force of two conventions and associated Protocols, the *Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region* (the SPREP Convention) and the *Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific* (Apia Convention);
- (b) development of an Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific, which set out a wide range of practical programmes in the area of biological diversity;
- (c) implementation of a large number of training courses, in areas such as coastal resource management, protected area planning, and environmental education curriculum development;
- (d) establishment of a co-ordinated monitoring, research and pollution control programme (SPREP POL);
- (e) preparation and distribution of a wide range of environmental educational materials;
- (f) coordination of South Pacific preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

6. This publication contains the text of the 1991-1995 Action Plan for Managing the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific region, developed by the SPREP Working Group on the Action Plan during its meeting in Noumea, New Caledonia, from 21-25 March 1991. It was approved by the IGM during its Fourth Session held in Noumea, New Caledonia, from 3 to 9 July 1991. This Action Plan entered into operation on the day of approval by the IGM, and has been revised in accordance with recommendations of the Fifth SPREP Intergovernmental Meeting, Apia, Western Samoa, 14 - 16 September 1992. It will be subject to further revision after five years or earlier as the need arises.

Vili A. Fuavao
Director

31 March 1993

The Regional Context

1. The members of SPREP, which are responsible for the development and implementation of this Action Plan, are :

*American Samoa
Australia
Cook Islands
Federated States of Micronesia
Fiji
French Polynesia
French Republic
Guam
Kiribati
Marshall Islands
Nauru
New Caledonia
New Zealand
Niue*

*Northern Mariana Islands
Palau
Papua New Guinea
Pitcairn Island
Solomon Islands
Tokelau
Tonga
Tuvalu
United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland
United States of America
Vanuatu
Wallis and Futuna
Western Samoa.*

2. The principal focus of the Action Plan activities is the area covered by the SPREP Pacific Island members, together with any associated national maritime resource management zones. This area is shown in Map 1; it totals more than 29 million square kilometres.

3. The environment of the Pacific region is diverse with over 2,000 ecosystems including flora and fauna found nowhere else in the world. Most of these ecosystems are, to some extent, endangered by disturbance directly attributed to economic development, by the overharvesting of preferred food and commercial species, and by the effect of introduced plants and animals or by collector depletion of rare species. For practical purposes the ecosystems under particular threat, and which are also of global conservation significance, are those which make up the region's tropical rainforests, coral reefs, and wetlands. A number of unique circumstances in the Pacific region combine to limit the opportunities for development and conservation. These include the small land masses of islands and their dispersion over large ocean areas.

The achievement of ecologically sustainable development can be adversely affected by the pressures of population growth and increased per capita consumption. Both population density and growth rates vary considerably throughout the region. Some Pacific countries already face threats to ecologically sustainable development from population pressure. Other demographic trends, such as rural-urban migration, are also contributing to population pressures on local environments.

4. The South Pacific environment is also under threat from problems which have their origin outside the region, including climate change and transboundary movement of wastes. These have further focused attention on the fragile nature of South Pacific ecosystems and the need to control and mitigate the environmental effects associated with such developments, as well as the need for the South Pacific to have a voice in global discussions on the means of addressing such problems.

5. The environment is of critical importance to the peoples of the South Pacific. The living natural resources of the small island countries, including the surrounding ocean, are the basis for subsistence and for economic, social and cultural well being. There has traditionally been a healthy respect for the environment and a recognition of the linkage between husbandry of the environment and the long-term survival of Pacific Island peoples.

6. There is an increasing emphasis on economic growth in Pacific Island countries. Current economic activity in the region focuses on the expansion of tourism, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and extractive industries. Long-term economic growth can only be achieved and maintained through a process that is based on the principles of sustainable development. Achieving ecologically sustainable development necessitates the integration of environmental and developmental concerns.

7. In recent years the international community has become increasingly concerned about the extent of environmental degradation and growing global threats and has recognised the need for co-operation of all countries and regions to ensure the preservation of our shared environment for future generations of humankind. The United Nations accordingly co-ordinated a number of initiatives and decided to convene, in Brazil in June 1992, a Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to consider a comprehensive agenda of interrelated environment and development issues. It is expected that the final decisions of UNCED will set the scene for implementing environmentally sound and sustainable development into the twenty-first century.

The South Pacific region's input to that Conference was an important focus for SPREP and the Conference outcomes have been taken fully into account in this revision of the Action Plan.

8. The adverse environmental consequences of unplanned and ill conceived development projects are of growing national and regional importance. The loss of biological diversity, effects of anticipated climatic changes, toxic waste disposal and deforestation, as well as marine pollution, coastal erosion, species depletion and pollution caused by accidents are of special concern to the region and underline the need for a regional approach.

9. To address these issues SPREP has identified a number of priority programmes and these are outlined in sections 15 - 23.

Action Plan Definition, Goal, Objectives and Guidelines

Definition

10. 'Action Plan' is defined as the strategies and objectives for the conservation and enhancement of the South Pacific environment, taking into account the need for ecologically sustainable development.

The Action Plan provides a framework for a regional approach to address environmental issues of the South Pacific region, complementing the unique needs and concerns of the countries and people in the region and enhancing their own environmental capabilities.

Goal

11. The Goal of the Action Plan is:

"to assist South Pacific countries to protect and improve their shared environment and manage their resources to enhance the quality of life for present and future generations."

Objectives

12. The objectives of the 1991-1996 Action Plan which will lead towards achieving this goal are to:

1. further assess the state of the environment in the region, including the impacts of human activities on the ecosystems of the region and the effects of these impacts on the quality of the human environment;

2. strengthen national and regional capabilities, institutional arrangements and financial support which will enable the Action Plan to be put into effect more efficiently and economically;
3. provide integrated legal, planning and management mechanisms at the national and regional levels to ensure the protection and ecologically sustainable utilisation of natural resources;
4. increase and improve training, educational and public awareness activities to support the goal and objectives of this Action Plan;
5. encourage development undertaken in the region to be directed towards maintaining or enhancing environmental quality;
6. protect terrestrial and marine ecosystems and species which require special attention;
7. reduce, through prevention and management, atmospheric, land based, marine and freshwater pollution in the region;
8. avoid or mitigate the adverse impact of human activities on the ecosystems of the region, through means such as Environmental Impact Assessment.

Guidelines

13. The following guidelines will apply in the implementation of this Action Plan:

1. *International co-operation*

SPREP recognises the interdependence of environmental issues both within the region and with other regions of the world. SPREP will encourage co-operation with other organisations in the development of appropriate technology and information to solve common problems. SPREP and/or member countries will participate in global environmental management efforts.

2. *Regional co-operation and co-ordination*

SPREP will make the fullest possible use of government and existing institutions and expertise in the region, in co-operation with appropriate regional bodies, such as the South Pacific Organisations Co-ordinating Committee (SPOCC). The focus will be on developing regional co-operation and co-ordination.

3. *Local community participation*

SPREP will encourage the participation of local indigenous communities in the planning and management of sustainable resource conservation and use.

4. *Traditional knowledge*

SPREP will encourage the integration of traditional sustainable resource use and conservation practices and knowledge into environmental management activities and programmes.

5. *Sound financial footing*

SPREP will seek to ensure an adequate and long-term financial base for environmental management activities in the region by attracting and allocating appropriate funding, including from the private sector.

6. *Encouraging action-orientated research*

SPREP will encourage research based on national and regional priorities relating to environmental policy, management and planning needs and decision-making.

7. *Application of relevant information*

SPREP will aim to improve the quality and flow of information, including the appropriate sharing of traditional knowledge, on which environmental management decisions and policies are based.

8. *Non-Governmental Organisations*

SPREP will encourage the involvement of Non-Governmental Organisations in environmental management activities and programmes.

1991-1995 Programme Activities

14. To achieve the Action Plan goal and objectives SPREP will develop and implement regionally co-ordinated, comprehensive programmes in the following major areas:

1. *Conservation of Biological Diversity*
2. *Global Change*
3. *Environmental Management and Planning*
4. *Coastal Management and Planning*
5. *Prevention and Management of Pollution*
6. *Planning and Response to Pollution Emergencies*
7. *Environmental Education and Training*
8. *Environmental Information*
9. *Regional Environmental Concerns*

These nine programmes for 1991-1995 respond to the expressed requirements of members and provide continuity with the 1982 Action Plan as appropriate. Programmes will provide a mix of technical assistance, research, training and exchange of information.

The background, goal and objectives of each programme are outlined below.

15. Programme 1:

Conservation of Biological Diversity

Background

The importance of managing the natural resources of the region on an ecologically sustainable basis is increasingly being recognised by member governments and administrations, especially as urban and industrial development becomes more widespread and in some cases threatens the existence of ecosystems such as mangroves, forests, soils and coral reefs. As a result of two major conferences held in the region on nature conservation and protected areas (1985 and 1989), SPREP has been given specific guidance, in the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region, on the type of projects members wish to be undertaken in this aspect of the SPREP Work Programme. As well, leading international nature conservation organisations, such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), co-ordinate their work in the Pacific region with SPREP.

Given the special characteristics of land tenure and resource ownership within the region, the successful protection and management of natural areas will depend on the involvement and active support of the local indigenous communities. These communities should be involved, from the initial stages, in the development of proposals for protection and management of species and conservation areas and in the utilisation of resources. In addition, any lasting arrangements for conservation areas must include formal structures for customary landowner decision-making on their establishment and management. Financial support for such areas will be required in many cases; accordingly, financial and associated administrative arrangements will be needed. A considerable body of information exists on priority sites for conservation areas; emphasis now needs to shift to practical implementation in the customary land context.

Goal

To ensure the protection of the high level of biological diversity and species endemism that currently exists within the region and to promote the ecologically sustainable utilisation of the region's biological resources.

Objectives

1. Strengthen national capabilities to promote and undertake conservation of biological diversity and management of resources in an ecologically sustainable manner.
2. Achieve a significant increase in, and improved management of, conservation areas throughout the region;
3. Undertake national and regional surveys of biological diversity and assist with the development of appropriate resource data bases to encourage the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable utilisation of resources.
4. Develop specific regional strategies, as well as national management plans for endangered, threatened or vulnerable habitats, ecosystems and species.
5. Develop a strong regional capability for the co-ordination of information exchange, training and technical assistance in support of national efforts to establish and manage conservation areas and for species conservation.
6. Promote the identification and use at all levels of traditional knowledge and techniques for resource management which assist the conservation of biological resources and diversity.
7. Encourage the development of institutional, management and financial arrangements at the local community level to enable the establishment and ongoing protection and management of conservation areas on customary land.
8. Promote the conservation and sustainable utilisation of tropical forests, wetlands and coral reefs.
9. Identify and assess the environmental, social and economic impacts of unsustainable resource use practices, such as often occur in forestry, agriculture and fishing, and promote environmentally sustainable alternatives.
10. Encourage and co-ordinate the representation of the interests and concerns of the South Pacific region at relevant international fora.
11. Co-ordinate the assistance of international organisations, corporations, governments and institutions to assist in the conservation of the region's biological diversity.

16. Programme 2:

Climate Change

Background

International scientists, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, have stated with certainty that human-induced emissions of greenhouse gases will result in global warming. This is of particular concern to the South Pacific, since global warming may result in sea level rise and concomitant loss of low-lying coastal areas, changing patterns of rainfall, increased incidence and severity of events such as cyclones and hurricanes, extinction of species unable to adapt to changes and disruption of biological communities. Agricultural and economic activity will also be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The South Pacific region, (especially small low-lying islands), due to its physiographic, ecological and socio-economic characteristics, is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The region has an important contribution to make to global discussions on means of limiting and responding to climate change.

Climate related issues, such as depletion of the ozone layer and tectonic movements resulting in volcanic activity and earthquakes, will have implications for the region.

Goal

To develop and implement a regional programme to assist members to understand and avoid or mitigate the potential adverse impacts of global environment changes, especially climate change, and to contribute to international efforts to limit human-induced climate change through appropriate measures.

Objectives

1. Act as a clearing house for information on climate change for the region.
2. Improve understanding at political and public levels of the potential impacts of climatic changes on the Pacific island region.
3. Encourage and co-ordinate activities relating to the science of climate change and the determination of measures to avoid or mitigate the impact of these changes.
4. Encourage and co-ordinate the development and implementation of response options to minimise the region's contribution to the causes of human-induced climate change (for example, through energy conservation).
5. Encourage and co-ordinate the representation of the interests and concerns of the South Pacific region in international discussions on climate change and response options for limiting its causes and adapting to it.
6. Co-ordinate the assistance of international organisations, governments and institutions from within and outside the region in dealing with climate change in the South Pacific.
7. Act as a clearing house for the region for information on the implications of international measures to protect the ozone layer, including information on the development and transfer of ozone - benign technologies.

17. Programme 3:

Environmental Management and Planning

Background

There is an increasing awareness amongst SPREP members that environmental management and economic development are inextricably linked. Economic development activities in the region have increased in momentum with significant environmental effects on the limited resource base of island ecosystems. Many development projects for tourism, urban expansion, ports, industries, forestry, mining, commercial fisheries and agriculture have had adverse environmental impacts that could have been mitigated or avoided through the use of environmental planning and management methods.

There is also recognition that environmental management needs to be addressed in a systematic and positive manner. A number of countries in the region are now developing National Environment Management Strategies, which will integrate environmental and economic development concerns.

The development of National Environment Management Strategies is an important step towards linking economic growth and environmental management. This linkage was a major principle underlining the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Brazil in 1992. The Conference outcomes contain significant obligations and responsibilities concerning the elaboration and implementation of ecologically sustainable development policies.

The scope of the NEMS is broad and includes the development of appropriate environmental legislation, (or review of existing legislation), the development of appropriate systems for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the implementation of environmental management training programmes. The legislative component of the NEMS will aim to ensure that member governments and administrations have adequate environmental content in their legislation and that they have the necessary resources to develop environmental management plans and strategies.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) can be used more effectively and the national resource base developed on a more sustainable basis through careful planning. EIA can be used to assist environmental assessment of development projects to ensure that economic development occurs in an environmentally sound manner. However, many SPREP members lack the necessary procedural, methodological and regulatory framework, administrative infrastructure and technical expertise to incorporate environmental management into the planning and implementation of development projects and programmes.

Goal

To ensure that economic development activities are carried out in an environmentally sound and sustainable manner, through activities such as the development of National Environmental Management Strategies.

Objectives

1. Review existing legislation relating to environmental management and recommend improvements as required on the request of members.
2. Assist with the development of national policies, strategies and plans for ecologically sustainable development.
3. Develop guidelines and implement procedures for Environmental Impact Assessment.
4. Strengthen national capabilities to implement ecologically sustainable development policies and programmes.
5. Increase community and private sector awareness of the need for ecologically sustainable development policies, programmes and investments and encourage the involvement of such groups in planning and regulatory processes.

18. Programme 4:

Coastal Management and Planning

Background

Coastal lands and nearshore waters are of great importance to Pacific Island peoples, cultures and economies. The coastal areas of all islands in the Pacific are the location of the vast majority of human habitation, the focus of subsistence and commercial agricultural and fisheries activity and the target of most economic development. Activities in upland areas, such as deforestation, soil erosion and mining, can also impact on the coastal zone. This combination of factors is increasingly resulting in destruction or degradation of coastal habitats, over-exploitation of natural resources and growing conflicts over use of coastal resources. In addition, coastal areas now face the threat of sea level rise due to global warming.

Coastal management and planning problems are widespread and in some areas urgent, as the potential for ecologically sustainable development and protection of coastal areas and resources is being permanently lost or compromised. However, much of the destruction, degradation, and depletion of coastal habitats, resources and values could be avoided, reduced or mitigated through effective coastal management, planning and administration.

Coastal management and planning promotes a comprehensive, multi-sectoral, integrated approach to the use and conservation of coastal areas, habitats and resources. Unfortunately, very few coastal management and planning programmes have been developed in Pacific Island countries. Consequently, the administrative infrastructure, technical capabilities and information base for coastal management and planning are not well developed in the region.

Goal

To assist SPREP members to manage and plan for the multiple-use, ecologically sustainable development and conservation of coastal areas, habitats and resources.

Objectives

1. Strengthen national capabilities to formulate and implement coastal management and planning programmes through training, workshops and participation in project activities.
2. Develop and implement coastal management and planning programmes, including appropriate institutional mechanisms, administrative arrangements and legislation as required.
3. Improve the understanding within the community, private and government sectors of coastal environments and resources, coastal conservation and development, as well as the process and benefits of coastal management planning.
4. Develop expertise within countries and provide examples of the process and benefits of coastal management planning.
5. Co-ordinate coastal management and planning activities in the South Pacific region, noting the importance of considering projected sea level rise.
6. Undertake coastal management and planning activities, including coastal resource surveys and management plan development.
7. Assist SPREP members to take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce and control coastal disposal causing pollution and coastal erosion causing environmental damage in the area covered by the SPREP Convention.

19. Programme 5:

Prevention and Management of Pollution

Background

All countries and territories of the South Pacific share the problem of how to minimise production and ensure safe disposal of all types of waste, particularly those generated by rapidly increasing urbanisation. Pollution from industrial wastes, sewage, inappropriately sited and poorly managed dumps and unsafe disposal of toxic chemicals significantly contribute to habitat degradation and threaten the health of Pacific islanders. Increased population growth, urbanisation and industrialisation can only exacerbate these problems.

Continuing urbanisation, an equally rapid rise in 'standard of life' expectations and the growing demand for imported packaged goods generate increasing volumes of solid waste. This includes the increasing amount of toxic chemicals found in municipal rubbish and the abandoned vehicles common on Pacific islands. Prevention opportunities need to be identified and implemented. With limited land areas around the urban centres, South Pacific countries and territories have major difficulties disposing of solid wastes. Disposal sites that are acceptable on social, economic or human health grounds are limited, as are finances to deal with the problem. Limited recycling programmes have started in a few countries, but there are otherwise no programmes to minimise, prevent or recycle wastes, which would reduce the mountains of discharged materials in the region.

Aquatic pollution, in particular, is one of the major problems affecting the quality of the freshwater resources and marine and coastal areas of the South Pacific. Inadequate collection, treatment and disposal systems for sewage cause contamination of surface waters and groundwater near urban areas. The transboundary nature of marine pollution requires a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to its assessment and effective control. Marine pollution monitoring and research projects have been successfully implemented through SPREP and are now consolidated into a co-ordinated monitoring, research and control programme (SPREP POL).

Goal

To prevent, control and manage pollution and wastes so that adverse impacts on the environment and human health are avoided, minimised or mitigated.

Objectives

1. Develop technical, legal and administrative measures for prevention of pollution and management of waste, and assist SPREP members to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of these measures.
2. Strengthen the capabilities of national and regional institutions to carry out pollution monitoring and research, and to formulate and apply pollution control and abatement measures.
3. Ensure the environmentally sound and sanitary disposal of wastes.
4. Minimise the amount of waste and maximise the recycling of waste products in the Pacific countries and territories.
5. Organise and carry out a regionally co-ordinated marine pollution monitoring and research programme (SPREP POL) as part of the scientific basis for the formulation of pollution control measures suitable for the region.
6. Develop, implement and assist programmes to maintain and improve the quality of freshwater resources.
7. Generate and disseminate information on the sources, levels, amounts, kinds, trends and effects of pollution within the South Pacific region.
8. Generate and disseminate information on the kinds and amounts of wastes, waste generating activities and disposal methods in the region.
9. Provide a clearinghouse for, and encourage use of, production processes and technologies which minimise waste generation.
10. Assist SPREP members to take all appropriate measures to prevent, reduce and control pollution of the area covered by the SPREP Convention, whether caused by discharge from vessels, land-based sources, sea-bed activity, discharge into the atmosphere, or dumping.

20. Programme 6:

Planning and Response to Pollution Emergencies

Background

Pollution emergencies are unpredictable or accidental pollution incidents which require urgent action to minimise environmental impacts and threats to human health and safety. These incidents generally result from the spill or accidental discharge of toxic and hazardous or noxious substances, such as oil, fuel or chemicals, and are occurring with increased frequency in the South Pacific region. Such discharges can severely impact marine and freshwater resources and habitats, groundwater systems and other natural resources and can have significant economic and public health effects. Pollution emergencies can result from human factors, natural events or a combination of both, so there is a need to develop pre-planned response systems and capabilities.

SPREP has been collaborating closely with the Australian Department of Transport and Communications and the International Maritime Organisation to address needs for emergency marine pollution response and planning in the region. Much of the direction for these developments has been determined by recommendations from the two-yearly regional workshops on oil spill response and contingency planning. These have been held since 1984 to train participants in contingency planning and response to marine pollution incidents, to refine and test a regional oil spill contingency plan for the South Pacific and review progress with the adoption and implementation of national contingency plans.

A draft regional contingency plan will be necessary to effect the SPREP Convention Protocol Concerning Co-operation in Combating Pollution Emergencies in the South Pacific. In the event of a major oil spill or other pollution emergency, larger SPREP member governments would be likely to provide the bulk of the response required. It will be necessary to develop the modalities of providing this assistance to the region in the context of national and regional contingency plans.

Goal

To develop and maintain national and regional pollution emergency response and planning capabilities.

Objectives

1. Generate and disseminate information on substances, activities and installations which may result in pollution emergencies.
2. Assist governments in developing plans and capabilities to respond to pollution emergencies.
3. Liaise with international, regional and national natural disaster response organisations on the pollution emergency aspects of such disasters.
4. Ensure that all governments have complete, updated and tested marine pollution emergency contingency plans and that the SPREP Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Contingency Plan for the South Pacific region is finalised and adopted.
5. Conduct seminars, exercises and training to ensure that national/territorial and regional plans are reviewed and practised and personnel are trained.
6. Advise SPREP members on appropriate international marine pollution conventions.

21. Programme 7:

Environmental Education and Training

Background

Learning about the environment is a life-long process. Environmental education should assist individuals and groups to understand the environment with the ultimate objective of developing caring and committed attitudes that will foster the desire and ability to act responsibly in the environment. Therefore environmental education is concerned about knowledge and also feelings, attitudes, skills, and social action. The SPREP education programme, and other programmes, will also recognise the existence of a considerable body of traditional knowledge as well as the need to develop an ethical approach in the way such knowledge is obtained and shared.

Educating about the environment involves providing support to the following groups in the region: school children, university students, teacher training institutions, curriculum developers and research organisations. It also includes non-formal environmental education for groups involved in environment management activities including government departments, conservation bodies, industry and NGOs as well as other community and land-owning groups and individuals.

Goal

To increase knowledge and understanding and to catalyse environmental education and training activities aimed at enhancing the management of resources and environment in the region.

Objectives

1. Assist schools and education departments to produce their own primary and secondary curriculum in environmental education.
2. Assist with the training of teachers in developing strategies and resources for teaching environmental education in schools.
3. Produce educational resources on environmental issues and concerns relevant to the region in an interesting and informative way, where possible in vernacular languages.
4. Develop agreements whereby technical and scientific agencies and individual researchers working on issues of relevance to the SPREP Action Plan are encouraged to provide results and information in ways that are useful to local communities, educational and environmental management agencies.
5. Encourage the raising of community environmental awareness through the arts, theatre, music and the media.
6. Promote community awareness raising activities on environmental issues with a special focus on women and youth in the region.
7. Encourage, through education and training, NGOs and other indigenous community groups and individuals to increase their involvement in environmental decision-making.
8. Support the professional development of environment managers and conservation bodies through scholarships and exchange schemes.
9. Assist the implementation of other SPREP programmes by developing educational and public awareness materials and strategies as appropriate.

22. Programme 8:

Environmental Information

Background

A public information programme on environment and development issues affecting the region is essential to promote positive community attitudes towards the environment and informed decision-making on conservation and management practices necessary to protect and improve the quality of the South Pacific environment.

Knowledge and understanding of current environment and development issues affecting the region needs to be disseminated in different formats to meet the needs of various groups. These may range from the production of scientific/technical reports and case studies for managers and researchers, to posters and audio-visual material for general environmental awareness and educational purposes.

As well as supporting the production of material, SPREP has an important regional role in disseminating information to member countries by functioning as an information clearing house, producing a regional newsletter and distributing information between environmental groups.

Goal

To increase overall awareness and understanding of the environment and cultural heritage to promote positive community attitudes towards environmental activities and decision-making in the region.

Objectives

1. Inform and promote regional environmental activities and resources through producing a regional newsletter.
2. Disseminate scientific/technical information on environmental concerns for management and conservation purposes through the publication of meeting reports and topic studies.
3. Promote community awareness through production of visual, print and electronic media including posters, displays, audio-visual kits, radio and video material.
4. Support community groups and organisations in developing their own media skills and publications.
5. Encourage translation/production of material in vernacular languages.
6. Respond as appropriate to requests for information on environmental issues.
7. Liaise and co-ordinate with other regional, national and international organisations in circulating information/publications throughout the region.
8. Assist the implementation of other SPREP programmes by disseminating appropriate information to target groups in conjunction with public awareness and information campaigns.

23. Programme 9:

Regional and Global Environmental Concerns

Background

Issues such as nuclear testing, toxic and hazardous waste dumping, weapons incineration and driftnet fishing have focused attention on the fragile nature of South Pacific ecosystems and the need to develop strategies to prevent or mitigate environmental impacts associated with such developments. SPREP has increasingly become involved in such issues and is viewed as a source of expert advice and information on regional environmental impacts and their prevention or mitigation.

Another concern in some Pacific countries is the adverse effects of population pressure and consumer demands on natural resources and local environments. The linkages between population, resources, and economic activities are complex. SPREP has a responsibility to contribute to the resolution of these problems through providing information and liaising with regional organisations working directly on population issues.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), 3-14 June 1992, has signalled the beginning of a new global partnership to address the issues of sustainable development. The outcomes of UNCED have significant implications for managing the environment of the South Pacific.

Goal

To assist members in understanding and responding to significant regional and global environmental concerns and agreements.

Objectives

1. Disseminate up-to-date and accurate information on regionally significant environmental concerns.
2. Advise governments and regional organisations, as required, on regional and national environmental issues and approaches on how to address them, in particular: on the prevention, reduction and control of pollution which might result from nuclear testing, and from importing, transporting, storing or destroying toxic and hazardous wastes or weapons.
3. Draw to the attention of members, organisations and communities the relationships between population impacts, environmental problems and the ability of countries to achieve ecologically sustainable development.
4. Support, with expert advice, international, regional and national efforts to end driftnet fishing;
5. Take full account of the principles contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of Forests;
6. Integrate the objectives and activities of Agenda 21 into existing and new projects and programmes and consider the implications of Agenda 21 in relation to all aspects of the SPREP Action Plan, in particular, the implications of those sections of Agenda 21 related to toxic and hazardous wastes and the role of indigenous people;
7. Assist member countries to implement those aspects of Agenda 21 that fall within SPREP's mandate;
8. Continue to coordinate regional approaches to global environmental concerns.

Implementation Strategy

Procedure for adjustments and review of the Action Plan

24. This Action Plan reflects regional environmental priorities. It seeks to assist with the catalysing, co-ordination and consolidation of existing national and regional initiatives and provides the framework for building regional consensus that will ensure effective management of the region's natural resources.

25. It is recognised that the environmental scene, regionally and internationally, is in a state of rapid evolution. There may thus be a need for the Action Plan to reflect these developments by absorbing new priorities and adjusting to the results of new findings, situations and issues. Accordingly, while it is proposed that the Action Plan be comprehensively reviewed and revised by the IGM every five years, it will also be reviewed as events might warrant.

26. There should also be independent reviews from time to time, if commissioned by the IGM, to cover areas such as the effectiveness of the SPREP Secretariat in implementing the Action Plan.

Relationships, Roles and Responsibilities

SPREP

27. The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is the regional environmental organisation for its members and, thereby, for South Pacific Commission members and Forum countries. It is the co-ordinating, clearinghouse and technical regional organisation responsible for environmental matters in the South Pacific region.

28. SPREP is a Regional Seas Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Oceans and Coastal Areas Programme. SPREP co-ordinates closely with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on environmental matters for the Pacific portion of the Asia/Pacific region. SPREP liaises closely with appropriate programmes of the South Pacific Commission and the Forum Secretariat, and co-operates with these and other regional organisations, including through participation in the South Pacific Organisations Co-ordinating Committee (SPOCC).

Role of the Secretariat

29. The SPREP Secretariat is responsible for implementing the Action Plan. Specific functions of the Secretariat include:

- (a) to prepare an annual Programme of Work based on the priorities in the Action Plan, for approval by the IGM, and to make preparations for the annual IGM;
- (b) to promote, undertake and coordinate the implementation of the Action Plan through the Annual Programmes of Work, and review and report regularly on progress thereon to members;
- (c) to carry out research and studies as required to implement the Action Plan through the Annual Programmes of Work;
- (d) to advise and assist members on the implementation of activities carried out under the Action Plan or consistent with its purpose;
- (e) to provide a means of regular consultation among members on the implementation of activities under the Action Plan and on other relevant issues;
- (f) to co-ordinate and establish working arrangements with relevant national, regional and international organisations;
- (g) to gather and disseminate relevant information for members and other interested Governments and organisations;
- (h) to promote the development and training of personnel of members and to promote public awareness and education including the publication of materials;
- (i) to assist members in the interpretation and evaluation of scientific and technical data and information;

- (j) to undertake such other activities and follow such procedures as the IGM may decide;
- (k) to seek financial and technical resources for SPREP;
- (l) to prepare a Corporate Plan which provides details, inter alia, of staff and financial resources and how they will be deployed by the Secretariat in the implementation of the Action Plan through the annual Work Programme.

30. In addition to the functions described above, the Secretariat shall be responsible for the coordination and implementation of any functions that may be assigned to SPREP in connection with:

- (a) the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific and related Protocols;
- (b) the Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific;
- (c) any other international or regional agreement that may be concluded for the protection of the environment of the South Pacific Region.

31. The SPREP Secretariat is responsible to its members through an annual IGM.

Role of the IGM

32. The role of the annual SPREP IGM will be:

- (a) to provide a forum for Members to consult together on matters of common concern with regard to the protection of the environment of the South Pacific Region and, in particular, to further the purposes of SPREP;
- (b) to approve and review Action Plans for SPREP, to review progress towards the achievement of Action Plan goals and objectives, and to determine the overall policies and direction for SPREP;
- (c) to adopt the annual report of the Director on the operation of SPREP;
- (d) to review and adopt the annual Work Programme of SPREP;
- (e) to review and adopt the annual budget of SPREP;

- (f) to make recommendations to members;
- (g) to give directions to the Director concerning the implementation of the Action Plan and approve rules and conditions for the appointment of the staff of the Secretariat;
- (h) to ensure that the programme responds rapidly and effectively to the changing environmental issues and needs of the region;
- (i) to carry out such other functions as are necessary for the effective functioning of SPREP.

33. In addition, the IGM shall, through such mechanisms as it considers appropriate, consult and cooperate with the Meetings of Parties to:

- (a) the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region and related Protocols;
- (b) the Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific.

34. Every five years, or at a more frequent interval as determined by the IGM, the annual SPREP IGM should be at Ministerial level. This meeting will provide the forum for high level representatives of member countries to review regional priorities, allocate the resources required for the continued development of these priorities and review and approve a revised Action Plan for the subsequent five years.

Reporting to other organisations

35. The SPREP Director will present annual reports to the South Pacific Conference and the Forum for purposes of regional co-ordination and co-operation, and provide copies of these reports to other appropriate organisations.

Focal Points

36. SPREP Focal Points play an important role in disseminating information and co-ordinating the implementation of the SPREP Work Programme with all relevant sectors, agencies and individuals in their respective countries. This effective co-ordination seeks to reduce the duplication of efforts and to take full advantage of existing and proposed regional, sub-regional and national initiatives. This process requires the existence or establishment of functional in-country networks through which this co-ordination can be achieved and for Focal Points to be at a senior official level.

Participating organisations

37. Implementation of the Action Plan will rely on the participation of a wide range of organisations, including:

- National environmental and resource management agencies;
- United Nations organisations;
- Other international and regional organisations;
- Bilateral and multilateral aid agencies;
- Academic and other scientific institutions;
- Professional and technical organisations;
- Private sector organisations including foundations and corporations; and
- Non-governmental organisations.