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CLEAN PACIFIC 2012

The Pacific environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.

CIRCULAR

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TO: SPREP National Focal Points
Collaborating Organisations

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON PACIFIC PREPARATIONS FOR RIO+20

1. The SPREP Secretariat wishes to provide an update on preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) - Rio+20 that is to be held in Brazil in June (20th -22nd) together with associated preparatory meetings and conferences. We are pleased to advise that Pacific Island interests have been well represented in the negotiation process to date, principally through the concerted efforts of Pacific representatives and staff at permanent UN Missions in New York, and through submissions originating from regional meetings[1], member states, the CROP Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)[2], ESCAP and various Civil Society Organisations.

2. The CROP Heads had mandated the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) to lead the preparatory process. The SDWG is the regional coordination mechanism for CROP agencies and other regional partners including UNDESA, ESCAP and some regional NSAs, that provides support to member states on issues pertaining to sustainable development, and in this instance on the Rio+20 process. Over the course of the past year the SDWG has focused preparatory efforts on:

- Facilitating together with ESCAP Pacific Preparatory meeting for Rio +20 held in Apia from the 20th-22nd June 2011that consisted of a Joint Environment, Finance and Fisheries Ministers Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting (June 22) that was preceded by a 2 day open forum. These meetings resulted in an Outcomes Document submitted as our regional contribution for consideration in the Zero Draft;
- Submitted regional outcomes document in the SIDS Inter-regional Preparatory Meeting (New York, September 2011);
- Briefing preparation and supporting Pacific Delegations in the Regional Preparatory Meeting (Seoul Korea, October 2011) co-funded by ESCAP;
- Helping facilitate the SPREP-led Environment Forum which focused on Rio+20 (Apia, September 2011);
- Continuing engagement with SIDS Inter Agency Consultative Group (IACG) coordinated by UNDESA;
- Support to all member countries in the development of National Assessments in preparation for Rio+20 co-funded and supported by ESCAP;
- Developing policy briefs and submissions prior to the 1st November 2011 Zero-draft deadline, on the following priority issues including; (i) the "Special Case of SIDS" with a focus on the Pacific SIDS, (ii) the vital role of fisheries and marine resource management, (iii) SIDS capacity constraints, and (iv) and the impacts of climate change on SIDS;
- Liaising with CROP Marine Sector Working Group on potential side-events options that will help to elevate the efforts of the region on Ocean issues; and
- Exploring funding avenues to facilitate members' participation in Rio+20 processes.

[1] Rio+20 Pacific Preparatory Meeting (Apia, Samoa, June 2011); and Asia Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting.
[2] SDWG core membership includes, PIFS, SPREP, SPC, FFA, USP, ESCAP.

3. Most recently (27/2/2012), the SDWG met to discuss support in the final lead up to Rio+20 and to consolidate collective feedback on the Rio+20 Zero-draft (10/1/2012). With agreement from SDWG members, a teleconference was subsequently held on Tuesday 28/2/2012 between core members of the SDWG (PIFS, SPREP, SPC & ESCAP) and representatives from several permanent Missions in New York to seek guidance on how best to support their efforts going forward. The teleconference was chaired by the Permanent Representative of PNG to the United Nations (Ambassador Robert Aisi) whom was joined by the Ambassadors of Samoa, Solomon Islands, Nauru and Fiji.

Advice from these Missions included the following:

- Despite limited resources of New York -based Missions, the Pacific has been well represented through coordination amongst the PSIDS Missions working through G77&China, and the region's interests have been consistently promoted during the negotiations process;
- The importance of coordinating future regional efforts with New York Missions to avoid duplication and maximize efforts towards Rio+20;
- The negotiations on the current Zero-draft are drawing to a close so there is little room for further amendments to this version. In this respect, Ambassadors suggested that detailed feedback on specific text would be best pitched following the release of the next Rio+20 draft or alternative negotiating documents (see point below on subsequent correspondence);
- The suggestion by Ambassadors that the SDWG could usefully assist by engaging with Capitals particularly those without representation in New York (Kiribati, Cook Islands Niue) in the region to bring them up to speed with progress on Rio+20; and
- Finally, the Ambassadors advised that the SDWG could focus on the Pacific's engagement in the possible SIDS day in Rio+20 or other such side-events that would promote practical implementation of Rio+20 commitments in the Pacific region.

4. Subsequent correspondence from New York indicates that Rio+20 organisers have not yet settled on exact negotiating processes and are still weighing up the merits of releasing a consolidated next draft in the short term. Efforts may alternatively focus on compiling and assessing proposed alternative text.

5. The efforts of negotiators in New York over the course of the past week look to have strengthened the Zero-draft through improved text relating to: fisheries and food security; highlighting the dangers of ocean acidification; stressing the importance of healthy coral reefs and the need to address coastal vulnerability; highlighting dangers of IUU and destructive fishing practices; and emphasizing the precautionary approach.

6. For your information Forum Secretariat on behalf of the SDWG are presently consolidating key documents on the Forum Secretariat's Home page (***www.forumsec.org***).. For queries please contact Mr. Sefanaia Nawadra, Director Environmental Monitoring and Governance: sefanaian@sprep.org

Yours sincerely

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