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CLEAN PACIFIC 2012

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

CIRCULAR

FILE: AP 6/5/4
DATE: 4 December 2012
CIRCULAR: 12/94

TO: SPREP National Focal Points
SPC, AusAID, NZAID, JICA

SUBJECT: **Regional Healthcare Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2015: Request for Review**

Dear Focal Points,

Background

1. Healthcare waste is an unavoidable by-product of improved community healthcare and the poor management and disposal of healthcare wastes is currently a cause of concern in the Pacific region.

2. Healthcare wastes can include sharps, non-sharps, blood, body parts, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and radioactive materials.

3. Poor management of these wastes exposes health care workers, waste handlers and the community to potential infections, toxic effects and injuries and these hazardous wastes also pose risks to the environment and require special treatment.

4. SPREP has developed a Regional Healthcare Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan in response to Member requests to investigate options to improve the regional management of healthcare wastes. The draft strategy:

    - *Provides background information on the potential health risks associated with healthcare wastes;*
    - *Provides guidance on best practice in healthcare waste handling and disposal options;*
    - *Describes an integrated framework to progressively collect, store and dispose of healthcare wastes in the Pacific region;*
    - *Presents a draft of a model National Healthcare Waste Management Policy for further discussion and consultation prior to national adoption; and*
    - *Supports co-ordination and capacity building in hazardous waste management.*

Comments on the draft strategy and action plan sought

1. The draft healthcare waste management strategy is supported by an action plan (2013-2015) which presents a three year timeframe and framework in which to improve regional healthcare waste management.

2. Please return any comments on the draft strategy and action plan by email to SPREP at email address davidh@sprep.org no later than 1st April 2013.

3. Received comments will be consolidated and incorporated into the final draft as appropriate prior to its submission to the 24th SPREP Meeting in September 2013 for Member endorsement.

Yours sincerely



David Sheppard
Director General

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Att. – Regional Healthcare Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan, 2013-2015