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CLEAN PACIFIC 2012

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

CIRCULAR

FILE: AP 5/3/13

DATE: 10 December 2012

CIRCULAR: 12/95

TO: SPREP National Focal Points

SUBJECT: **Notification of South-West Pacific Regional Marine Assessment**

Dear Sir/Madam,

On 25-27 February 2013, Australia will host (in Brisbane) a South-West Pacific Workshop of the United Nations Regular Process of Global Assessment and Reporting on the State of the Marine Environment, including Socio-economic Aspects (the Regular Process).

The workshop will bring together experts from across the region initiating this effort towards the production of a Regional State of the Marine Environment Assessment, and to collate and analyse key oceans-related data. This assessment is explicitly synthetic and will therefore build on previous assessments and regional efforts.

The South-West Pacific Workshop will support practical implementation of the Pacific Oceanscape Framework endorsed by Pacific Island Forum leaders, as well as contributing to and enhancing oceans management goals, such as country endorsed targets within the SPREP Strategic Plan.

Outputs of the workshop include:

- Enhanced dialogue between marine experts within governments, intergovernmental organizations, Civil Society and regional initiatives.
- Development of an inventory of environmental and socio-economic marine assessments for the South-West Pacific, which will be catalogued and made electronically available.
- Identifying marine assessment capacity-building needs of the South-West Pacific and considering the means to address those needs, specifically related to data gathering, collation and maintenance.
- Facilitating the integration of current marine ecosystem assessments in the region.

Invitations to the workshop have been circulated. We encourage participation by SPREP, SPC, FFA and PIF members in this effort that will build on current and ongoing efforts, building capacity for future work related to assessment of marine environmental condition within Pacific Island nations and the Pacific region.

Nominations are also being sought for persons interested in participating in the Pool of Experts. This is an important component of the regular process and our regional workshop, as national experts are needed to contribute knowledge and text for different chapters in the report, within four key areas. These are marine biodiversity, biophysical aspects, food security and socio- economics.

To ensure effective Pacific representation in this global effort, national and regional experts are encouraged to apply by contacting regularprocessSWPAC@environment.gov.au. The Criteria for joining the Pool of Experts include:

1) Internationally recognized expertise relevant to a chapter of the WOA report, and

2) Ability to serve in a voluntary and independent individual capacity.

As the impacts of human activities and climate change are affecting the state of our marine environment, the formulation of sustainable, ecosystem-based policies and measures for oceans and coasts need to be supported by sound scientific assessments of ecosystem condition at national, regional and global scales. The Regular Process is an important mechanism that can build capacity, alongside ongoing efforts, for sustainably assessing the Pacific marine environment.

Yours sincerely

David Sheppard
Director General

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