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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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DATE: 14 February 2013
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TO: SPREP National Focal Points

SUBJECT:

9th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protect Areas.
Nature Solutions: Building Resilience for a Changing Pacific
University of South Pacific, Suva, Fiji
2 – 6th December 2013

Dear Focal Points,

It is with great pleasure that I can now announce that a date and venue has been set for the 9th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. In partnership with the Government of Fiji as the host country, SPREP has secured the University of the South Pacific in Suva as the venue for this major SPREP conference for the Pacific Region. The dates have been agreed upon and set as the **2 – 6th December 2013** – lock in these dates now!

The concept paper and theme for this conference was endorsed by the 23rd SPREP Meeting. This significant event only occurs every 5 years, the outcomes of which will shape nature conservation and biodiversity work in the Pacific for the next 5 years. It will be attended by major conservation NGOs, donors and partners, Pacific Island communities and, with all your support, representatives from each SPREP member country and territory.

The theme of the conference is Natural Solutions: Building Resilience for a Changing Pacific. A draft agenda has been developed around this theme (Annex 1 and supplementary notes Annex 2). All comments and feedback on these documents can be directed to the SPREP conference team (Easter Galuvao – easterg@sprep.org and Neil Walkinshaw neilw@sprep.org).

This major conference is an ideal opportunity to showcase the successes, best practices and lessons learnt from all member countries and territories in your efforts to preserve our unique environment and Pacific way of life from the growing threats of environmental change, including the impacts of climate change.

SPREP will organise sponsorship for one representative from each SPREP member country and territory to attend this event. We expect all members will want to send more than one representative to ensure they can maximise their benefits from this major gathering and we encourage you to explore other funding sources to support additional participants to the conference. There may be opportunities through other organisations or donors supporting your country and territory.

A conference dedicated webpage has been set up to provide the latest information on the developments of the conference - www.sprep.org/pacificnatureconference - keep an eye on this webpage to stay up to date with progress and feel free to share among your networks.

Additional circulars will be sent to update you of key developments and announcements in the lead up to the conference. The next key date will be the start of registration, scheduled to open 1st March 2013.

Once again, I would like to thank all SPREP members for their support and endorsement of this event and look forward to working in partnership with you all to deliver a successful conference for the Pacific.

Yours sincerely



David Sheppard
Director General

DS/SC/EG/NW/MA

Annex 1: Draft Provisional Agenda

9th Pacific Island Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas
THEME: Natural Solutions: Building resilience for a changing Pacific

2nd – 6th December, 2013
University of the South Pacific Campus, Suva, FIJI

DRAFT Provisional Agenda

Sunday 1st December	Monday, 2nd December	Tuesday, 3rd December	Wednesday, 4th December	Thursday, 5th December	Friday 6th December	Saturday 7th December
Arrival of the Vakas into Suva Harbour (tbc)	**THEME: Strategic Planning**	**THEME: Nature based solutions**	**THEME: Building Community Resilience**	**THEME: Biodiversity Financing, and Sustainable Development**	**THEME: Governance, leadership and commitment**	
	Day One **8:30 – 10:45am** **Session 1: Organizational Matters** **Welcome and Opening** • Conference opening ceremony • Cultural performance (tbc) • Opening address (Fiji) • SPREP Remarks • PIRT Remarks	**Day Two** **8:30 – 10:45am** **Daily Opening** • Prayer • Fiji special presentation **Session 4: Nature based solutions** • Keynote speaker (tbc) **Celebrating successes:** case studies on the use of ecosystem based management interventions to build resilience to the impacts of climate change and extreme events	**Day 3** **8:30 – 10:45am** **Daily Opening** • Prayer • Fiji highlight **Session 6: Community resilience** • Keynote speaker (tbc) **Celebrating successes:** case studies from local communities	**Day 4** **8:30am – 10:45am** **Daily Opening** • Prayer • Fiji highlight **Session 6: Biodiversity, financing and sustainable development** • Keynote speaker **Celebrating successes:** case studies on the role biodiversity play in sustainable development and financing	**Day 5** **8:30am – 10:45am** **Opening of the High Level Leadership Forum** Prayer and Official Welcome **Session 8: Leadership and Governance** • Keynote address **Celebrating successes:** Leadership and commitment to conservation – case studies	**2nd Field Trip for participants departing later**
	10:15 – 10:45am **Official Photo and Morning Tea**					

	11:00am – 12:30pm **Session 2: Setting the scene** • Outgoing Conference Chair (PNG) Remarks • Welcome remarks by the In-coming Conference Chair (Fiji) • Invited Keynote Speaker to address the conference on the theme of the conference and highlights the actual status and trends of biodiversity in the Pacific. • Case studies from selected Pacific Island Countries and Territories will be presented focusing on country level achievements and successes. • *Questions and Answers*	**11:00am – 12:30pm** **Panel Discussion**	**11:00am – 12:30pm** **Panel Discussion**	**11:00am – 12:30pm** **Panel Discussion**	**11:00am – 12:30pm** **Panel Discussion**	
	12:30 – 2:00pm **Lunch Break**	**12:30pm – 2:00pm** **Lunch Break**	**12:30pm – 2:00pm** **Lunch Break**	**12:30pm – 2:00pm** **Lunch Break**	**12:30pm – 2:00pm** **Lunch Break**	
	2:00pm – 3:30pm **Session 2 continue** Adoption of Conference Agenda and organization of work • Outline of the agenda and outputs • Housekeeping **Session 3: Action Strategy for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas** Report on implementation of the current Action Strategy	**2:00pm – 5:30pm** **Parallel Sessions (tbd)** 6 parallel sessions on topics relevant to the theme on Nature based Solutions Sessions to be confirmed by May 2013	**2:00pm – 5:30pm** **Parallel Sessions (tbd)** 6 parallel sessions on topics relevant to the theme on Community Resilience Sessions to be confirmed by May 2013	**2:00pm – 5:30pm** **Parallel sessions (tbd)** 6 parallel sessions on topics relevant to the theme on Biodiversity financing and Sessions to be confirmed by May 2013	**3:00pm – 5:30pm** **Final plenary** Presentation of the: - New Action Strategy – draft - Leaders' communiqué and key messages from the conference - Launch of major commitments	

	and an overview of the proposed targets for the next five years					
	3:30pm – 5:30pm **Session 4: Free flow sessions:** these sessions will be facilitated by the PIRT Working Groups to update participants on specific achievements by the PIRT WGs and to provide input on the WG priorities for the next five years • Protected Area • Species Conservation • Invasive species				**5:30pm – 6:30pm** **Closing Ceremony and reception** - Announcement of the new PIRT Chair and Secretariat - Closing Remarks	
	5:30pm – 6:30pm Conference Drafting Group Meeting	**5:30pm – 6:30pm** Conference Drafting Group Meeting	**5:30pm – 6:30pm** Conference Drafting Group Meeting	**5:30pm – 6:30pm** Conference Drafting Group Meeting		
	6:30pm – 9:00pm **Opening reception Hosted by PIRT** - Presentation of Inaugural Conservation Awards	**6:30pm – 9:00pm** **Photo, poster and art exhibition** **Reception hosted by: (tbc)**	**6:30pm – 9:00pm** **Cultural evening - performances and entertainment**	**6:30pm – 9:00pm** **Viewing of conservation films (village 6)** **Reception hosted by: (tbc)**	**6:30pm – 9:00pm** **Closing reception (tbc)**	

Annex 2: Supplementary Notes for the Provisional Agenda

9th Pacific Island Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas

THEME: Natural Solutions: Building resilience for a changing Pacific

2nd – 6th December, 2013, University of the South Pacific Campus, Suva, FIJI

Annotations to the Provisional Agenda

Introduction

Momentum has been gathering around the world to find natural solutions to the issues and impacts of climate change. Ecosystem services have become increasingly recognised as a fundamental approach to combat these threats to the Pacific environment and its communities. Climate change is predicted to have a range of impacts on island ecosystems and natural resources that are critical to current and future development, some of these are anticipated to be severe. It is increasingly recognised that a relevant response to these predicted impacts is the application of ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) approaches. That is, the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to the adverse effects of climate change.

By taking into account the ecosystem services on which people depend for their livelihoods and social and economic security, EbA integrates sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services in a comprehensive adaptation strategy (CBD 2009)[1]. Nature conservation and its relationship to sustainable development, blue/green economies and community resilience is a key element in EbA approaches.

The 9th Pacific Conference is organised within the framework of promoting natural solutions to the threats of climate change while developing community resilience through sustainable development of natural and physical resources.

Key Objectives of the 9th Conference

1. Review the Action Strategy 2008-2012 and formulate a new Action Strategy for 2013-2017
- Assess progress in implementing the Principles of the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the Pacific Islands Region 2008-2012.
- Discuss and agree on priorities for the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation for 2013 – 2017, taking into account the potential to strengthen its relationship to implementation of EbA to climate change in the region, and also for helping countries to meet the Aichi Targets[2].

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[1] CBD [Convention on Biological Diversity] 2009. *Connecting Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: Report of the Second Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change.* Technical Series No. 41.

[2] Aichi Targets are overarching international framework guiding the conservation of biodiversity. These targets were set under the Convention on Biological Diversity creating an updated Strategic Plan for Biodiversity at a global meeting in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan 2010. For more information see http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/

- Identify and agree on specific key priority issues for the next 5-year period including innovative, practical and cost effective ways to address these issues.
- Identify and agree on specific action to promote and implement natural solutions to climate change adaptation.

2. Promote natural solutions to address impacts of climate change

- Review status of current ecosystem-based initiatives for climate change adaptation in the Pacific.
- Identify how such initiatives can be strengthened and more effectively applied as adaptation solutions to impacts of climate change.

3. Review National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

- Assess progress in the implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans;
- Identify priority areas to be considered in the NBSAP review process; and
- Provide a synthesis of the new priority targets for NBSAPs which will provide guidance and input to the setting of targets and priorities for the new Action Strategy for Nature Conservation

4. CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) and Island Biodiversity Programme of Work (IBPow)

- Assess progress in the implementation of the CBD PoWPA and IBPoW
- Discuss and agree on ways to improve the implementation of these CBD programmes of work as a means for countries to meet the Aichi Targets.

5. Capacity Building, Knowledge Management and Learning

- Identify capacity needs and opportunities to advance conservation efforts in the Pacific;
- Identify and develop mechanisms to deliver capacity development initiatives such as the South-South Cooperation modality

Conference Expected Outputs

- Implementation mechanisms identified for strengthening the development and application of natural solutions to climate change adaptation.
- Case studies developed and shared on selected topics especially those on ecosystem based adaptation.
- Recommendations to assist countries with the review of their NBSAPs.
- Draft Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific produced to guide conservation work for the next five years.
- Support mechanisms and partnership arrangements developed to assist countries achieve the Aichi Targets, national and regional targets.
- Mechanisms and options identified to implement Capacity Development Programmes for Nature Conservation in the Pacific.
- New alliances and partnership forged to deliver on the Principles of the Action Strategy.

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DAY ONE

Session 1 - Organizational Matters

1.1 Official Opening

- The conference will be officially opened at 8:30am on Monday 2nd December 2013. The host government will lead the organization of all official and cultural protocols for the official opening
- At the official opening, the conference will hear addresses of welcome by representatives of the Government of Fiji, SPREP Director General and PIRT Chair
- Expected time for the opening is 1 hour and 45 minutes.
- A group photo will take place immediate after the opening ceremony

Session 2: Setting the Scene

Following the official opening ceremony, and as per usual practice, the outgoing conference chair will address the conference and hand over the chair to the host country. This is a symbolic event as it marks the end of a five tenure of the chair since the last conference and the start of a five year term for the new chair. The new chair will address the conference and officially chair plenary sessions of the conference. In setting the scene of tone of the conference, a keynote speaker will be invited to address the conference highlighting status and trends of biodiversity in the Pacific. Following the keynote address, case studies from selected PICT will be presented followed by questions and answers.

2.2 Adoption of the Agenda

The provisional agenda is prepared by the conference secretariat (SPREP) in accordance with the Concept Paper which was approved by the 23rd SPREP Council with input and guidance from the PIRT Chair and Secretariat.

2.3 Organization of Work

In accordance with the approved Conference Concept Paper, the conference is expected to be delivered through plenary sessions, keynote addresses, celebration of successes through presentation of case studies, panel discussions, parallel sessions and interactive activities in the evening. Each day of the conference will start with a prayer and highlights from Fiji. Evening social activities are planned for each day for participants to network and relax.

A drafting committee will be set up to draft proceedings of the conference, revise and incorporate comments and feedback on the new Action Strategy, draft communiqués, messages or statements from the conference. A team of rapportuers will be set up to take notes from all the plenary sessions and panel discussions.

All conference proceedings, discussions and presentations will be in English.

Session 3: Reporting on the 2008-2012 Action Strategy and setting targets for the next five years

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The purpose of this session is to present on the status of implementation of the 2008-2012 Action Strategy focusing specifically on the Action Strategy Objectives and Principles and Code Ethics.

Session 4: Pacific Islands Round Table (PIRT) Thematic Working Groups – free flow sessions

Free flow sessions will be facilitated by PIRT Working Groups on Protected Areas, Invasive Species, and Threatened Species Working Groups. Cross cutting issues on capacity building, knowledge management, finance, monitoring and reporting will be integrated into the discussions by each thematic group.

This session will run on a rotational basis/free flow approach and participants will spend about 40 minutes at each group and rotate after 40 minutes.

At the end of Day One, it is expected that a clear overview of the status of nature conservation and protected areas in the region is well articulated and understood to guide the discussions in the rest of the week.

An opening reception will be hosted by the PIRT in the evening. Presentation of conservation inaugural awards will be presented during the opening reception.

DAY TWO

Session 5: Nature based solutions

The main focus of Day Two is on nature based solutions. A keynote address will be delivered by an invited speaker and selected case studies will be presented on how nature based solutions have been successfully demonstrated in the Pacific. A panel discussion will follow to allow for questions and comments from the floor.

Series of parallel sessions will be held in the afternoon. The main objective of the parallel sessions is to give space to interested organizations to convene meetings, discussions, workshops etc on a topics that relate to nature based solutions.

It is expected that through the parallel sessions, participants would have a better understanding of the concept of nature based solutions and key lessons that they could take away with them.

DAY THREE

Session 6: Building Community Resilience

The main focus of Day Three is on building community resilience which aims at establishing a clear understanding of the meaning of resilience in the Pacific context taking into account environmental, social and economic changes at the global, regional, national and local levels. It will cover topics such as the role of traditional knowledge and biodiversity in building resilience, identifying opportunities to apply and integrate TK with contemporary scientific knowledge.

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A keynote speaker will be invited to talk on the theme - building community resilience and to highlight examples of how local communities are coping and adapting to changes to their environment. Selected case studies will be presented which will be followed by a panel discussion.

Parallel sessions will be held in the afternoon on topics related to the theme on Building community resilience.

DAY FOUR

Session 7: Biodiversity Financing and Sustainable development

The main focus of Day Four is on biodiversity financing and sustainable development. It aims at sharing information on sustainable ways to finance biodiversity initiatives, assess and explore issues on biodiversity incentives, and discuss broader sustainable development issues that are specific to biodiversity such as the concept of green economy.

There will be a keynote address to be delivered by an invited speaker, presentation of selected case studies on success stories from the Pacific and beyond followed by a panel discussion.

Parallel sessions will be held in the afternoon on topics related to the theme "Biodiversity Financing and Sustainable Development".

DAY FIVE

Session 8: Leadership and Governance

The main focus of Day Five is to facilitate a dialogue on Leadership and Governance. High profile leaders who are at the forefront of conservation efforts in the Pacific will be invited to attend to celebrate their work and share their experiences and visions on ways to strengthen and improve conservation in the Pacific. Speakers are expected to represent a wide range of groups such as parliamentarians, politicians, local community leaders, church groups, women and youth groups.

There will be a keynote address to be delivered by an invited speaker, presentation of case studies followed by a panel discussion.

The conference will reconvene for final plenary at 3:00pm to review and endorse the draft Action Strategy, review and endorse draft communiqué, statement and key messages from the conference.

The Closing Ceremony will include announcement of key commitments, the new PIRT Chair and Secretariat will also be announced including arrangements for the 10th conference.

Formal closing speeches will be delivered by SPREP, PIRT and the host government.

NOTE: Saturday 7th December – Optional field trips will be organized for participants staying on after the conference.

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