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Natural Solutions for Island Resilience

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

CIRCULAR

FILE: AP 2/15/1 **TO:** SPREP National Focal Points

DATE: 30 June 2015

CIRCULAR: 15/41

SUBJECT: **Requesting Update on Legal Take of Turtles in PICTs**

Dear SPREP Focal Points,

It was noted during the last (25th) SPREP Meeting in Marjuro, Marshall Islands, that marine turtles appeared to be declining in abundance in many SPREP countries, and that the most iconic species are classified as either Endangered or Critically Endangered. It was also noted that a recently-published scientific paper asserts that the levels of legally-permitted take of turtles in SPREP member nations are amongst the highest in the world, and may be a major threat to the continued occurrence of turtles in some areas.

Due to these findings, all member PICTs agreed that where the take of turtles is still permitted, Members should:

- provide to SPREP any reliable estimates that may be available on the level of permitted take, as called for in Action 3.4 of the SPREP Turtle Action Plan (2013-2017);
- consider prohibiting or more strictly, regulating the take of turtles, particularly for major gatherings that involve the harvesting of large numbers of individual turtles; and
- prohibit the take of turtle eggs and nesters, in line with Action 3.5 of the SPREP Turtle Action Plan (2013-2017).

Please prepare the collection of this information and send any updates and data on the legal takes to Michael Donoghue (michaeld@sprep.org), SPREP's Threatened and Migratory Species Adviser, and Catherine Siota (catherines@sprep.org), SPREP's Turtle Database Officer. Please ensure that this information is made available by the end of July. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Netatua Pelesikoti
Officer-in-Charge

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