SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

PO Box 240, Apia, Samoa
E: sprep@sprep.org
T: +685 21929
F: +685 20231
W: www.sprep.org

PROTECT PACIFIC WHALES – OCEAN VOYAGERS

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

CIRCULAR

FILE: AP 6/5/7

TO: SPREP National Focal Points for Cook Islands, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu

DATE: 11 January 2017

CIRCULAR: 17/01

SUBJECT: **Inception Workshop of the Development of Minamata Convention Mercury Initial Assessment in Pacific Project**

Dear Sirs/ Mesdames:

On behalf of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), I write to announce the commencement of the *Development of Minamata Convention Mercury Initial Assessment in Pacific Project*. This is a 2 year project, for 5 Pacific Island Countries, namely, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu with the objective of ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention being facilitated by the use of scientific and technical knowledge and tools by national stakeholders in participating countries. There are 5 key components to this project, in which certain components are implemented regionally and nationally and funded by UNEP. These components include:

1. Establishment of Coordination Mechanism and organization of process
2. Assessment of the national infrastructure and capacity for the management of mercury, including national legislation
3. Development of a mercury inventory using the UNEP mercury tool kit and strategies to identify and assess mercury contaminated sites
4. Identification of challenges, needs and opportunities to implement the Minamata Convention on Mercury
5. Preparation and validation of National MIA reports and implementation of awareness raising activities and dissemination of results

As part of the project initiation process, I write to invite your government's participation at the project's Regional Training on the Development of a mercury inventory using the UNEP mercury tool kit and strategies to identify and assess mercury contaminated sites (Component 3 of the project) and then the Inception Workshop, to be on held 15th–17th February and 23rd–24th February, 2017 respectively. The Regional Training is scheduled to take place the week prior to the 6th Waigani Convention STAC meeting (WC STAC-6: 20th February), the 5th Meeting of the Pacific Regional Centre Steering Committee meeting (PRC-SC5: 21st February) and the 4th

GEFPAS uPOPs Project Steering Committee meeting (GEFPAS uPOPs SC-4: 22nd February) while the Inception Meeting will take place directly after the same meetings. The workshop will be held at the Conference Room of the Tanoa International Dateline Hotel, Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga. A draft programme for the workshop is attached at Annex 1.

The objectives for the Workshop are to:

- Revisit the MIA Project Concept, Objectives and Outline of Project Activities
- Ensure representatives fully conversant with the national commitment required to participate in the project, and
- Confirm key contacts required from all countries involved, for effective implementation of project.

The Workshop is aimed at government representatives at senior management level, with key responsibilities in national waste management and pollution control. As part of cost-saving measures, it is hoped that the officially nominated person to represent your country at the WC STAC-6, PRC-SC5 and the GEFPAS uPOPs SC-4 meetings could also be nominated to attend the Regional Training and the Inception Meeting.

As per the usual practice, the Secretariat will cover the most direct economic airfares and per diem according to the standard SPREP rates to cover meals and accommodation. Participants are welcome to book their own accommodation at the workshop venue.

This invitation is also extended to Papua New Guinea and Samoa who are implementing National Minamata Convention Mercury Initial Assessment projects. However, their participation will be on a self-funded basis. Please note that if the same officially nominated person to represent your country at the WC STAC-6, PRC-SC5 and the GEFPAS uPOPs SC-4 meetings is also nominated to attend both the Regional Training and the Inception Meeting, then the airfares will be covered by the Secretariat while the country, through its national project funds can cover the per diems for the other two meetings.

It would be highly appreciated if you could complete and return the attached nomination form (Annex 2) at your earliest convenience but no later than **25th January, 2017,** and forward by email to Dr. Frank Griffin (frankg@sprep.org) or Ms. Faailo Segi (faailom@sprep.org) or fax to +685 20231.

I thank you kindly for your consideration and encourage participation at the Inception Meeting for the Development of Minamata Convention Mercury Initial Assessment in Pacific project.

Yours sincerely,



Clark Peteru
Officer-in-Charge