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PROTECT PACIFIC WHALES – OCEAN VOYAGERS

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

CIRCULAR

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Update on the European Commission Programme for Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries Phase II (ACP MEA2)

Dear SPREP Members,

The purpose of this Circular is to update you on the outcomes of the second phase of the *Programme for Capacity Building related to Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Countries (ACP MEA2)*; and to inform you of proposed priorities for a continuation of the Programme into a third phase.

The ACP MEA programme is a European Commission funded programme delivered through the UN Environment in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and implemented by SPREP as the Hub for the Pacific ACP countries. The overall objective of the Programme for the Pacific ACP countries is to continue to strengthen and enhance the capacity of Pacific ACP countries to effectively implement MEAs and related commitments in the biodiversity and waste clusters in order to promote environmentally sustainable development.

Phase 2 of the Programme for the Pacific ACP countries has been successfully delivered and I am pleased to inform you of the overall outcomes and achievements thus far which include:

- Alignment and integration of programme objectives into SPREP's Strategic Plan 2017-2026. The ACP MEA Programme contributed directly to the creation of a new Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division of SPREP. This ensures integration and sustainability of the programme within our organizational structure and strategic direction.
- Effective engagement by Pacific ACP countries at MEA COPs and related meetings are a result of our negotiations training and pre-COP meetings.

- Pacific ACP Countries have taken united positions and made clear and impactful interventions at MEA COP meetings on issues of importance to the region. At the CITES CoP17, the Pacific ACP Countries have demonstrated global leadership through the listing by CITES of silky sharks and mobula rays.

- State of the Environment (SOE) Reports formulated through the programme provides key information to support policy development, planning processes and reporting to MEAs. SOE Reports have been completed for Fiji, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Cook Islands. Support to Niue's SOE is currently underway. Plans are in place for additional SOEs to be completed based on needs expressed by Member countries.

- MEA commitments are integrated into National Environment Management Strategies (NEMS) and mainstreamed into National Sustainable Development Plans - environment pillar Strengthened national MEA enforcement and compliance mechanisms through Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guidelines, training and technical assistance for implementation. The following countries are being assisted with the review and update of their NEMS or equivalent: Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Niue and Nauru.

- Increased requests for input on EIAs, conducting EIAs systematically, and for support on policy development. EIA training including the development of EIA Guidelines have been undertaken for Nukunonu Island, Tokelau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Niue. Further EIA training and assistance are planned for the remaining of 2017 for FSM, Cook Islands and Tuvalu.

- Used the $US1 Million ACP MEAs phase 2 funding for the Pacific Hub as co-financing has leveraged $4 Million funding from the GEF for a regional project to address a major gap in terms of environmental data management and monitoring and reporting. The new GEF project will start in the final quarter of 2017.

The ACP MEA2 will be operationally closed in June 2018 and the Secretariat will endeavor to complete all the remaining activities within the specified timeframe.

While we continue to implement remaining activities under Phase 2, I wish to also inform you of preparations and discussions that are currently are underway for a Phase 3 of the Programme. For your information, an independent midterm evaluation commissioned by the European Commission has strongly recommended and supported the continuation of the Programme. However, we are not certain what the scope and scale of the next phase will be.

The Secretariat in consultation with UN Environment and based on needs identified during Phase 2 have identified the following priority areas for Phase 3 for the Pacific ACP countries:

<u>Biodiversity MEA cluster</u>

- Priority ecosystems to implement and report on MEAs objectives: coral reefs and mangroves

- Ocean governance
- Strengthen Legal Capacity: SPREP's Legal Capacity, through legislative road maps for countries, MEAs negotiations
- Visibility and large-scale communication
- Strengthening synergies across the Biodiversity MEAs and integration with the SDGs, S.A.M.O.A pathway and other related international processes
- Strengthening the mainstreaming and integration of biodiversity and ecosystem services into policy and legislative frameworks of key development sectors such as the tourism sector and the agricultural sector building on work already undertaken on mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Improve and strengthen data collection and management to support monitoring of the state of biodiversity to support policy, planning and decision making
- Build capacity on the application of strategic environmental assessment methodologies and tools to support mainstreaming of biodiversity at the national and sectoral levels
- Support the implementation of revised NBSAPs through targeted technical and capacity building interventions
- Strengthening linkages between MEAs and SDG reporting, monitoring and governance
- Support country engagement in COP and related processes including capacity to assess implications of key decisions arising from COP meetings

<u>Waste MEA cluster</u>

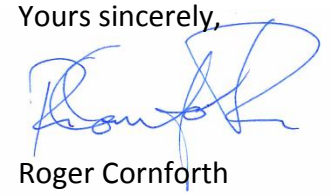
- Focus on national activities but prioritise those that can be replicated
- Have incentive once pilots completed to encourage those who want to replicate
- Establish long term technical support in key areas such as legal drafting, environmental economics and monitoring
- More activities that promote cross sector coordination and integration – use of synergistic approaches that are already in place through the BRS Conventions
- Chemicals and waste MEAs implementation in the ACP regions: Trends and status.
- Increase Pacific membership in MEAs - (only 4 members in region for Rotterdam and only 1 for the Minamata Convention) – this can be done through conducting awareness raising workshops which can be facilitated through the Pacific Regional Centre
- Build on the political will (Cooks, Tonga and Samoa) to address issues like paraquat and Asbestos at the regional level - Waigani Convention is an example
- Enhance the links between EDF11 generated data and MEA reporting

While discussions are underway between the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat on the scope and scale of the next phase of the programme, I would like to seek your assistance particularly for those countries with missions in Brussels to advocate for, and convey priorities of the Pacific ACP countries to the ACP Secretariat as input into the current discussions.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated given the value and multiple benefits of this programme in strengthening MEA implementation in our region.

I thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Roger Cornforth
Acting Director General