DRAFT MEETING OUTCOMES

19TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS ROUNDTABLE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

14-15 July, 2016

Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi Fiji

"Mainstreaming biodiversity: Sustaining Pacific people and their livelihoods"

The Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation (PIRT) is a coalition of nature conservation and development organisations, governments, inter-governments, donor agencies and community groups created to increase effective conservation action in the Pacific Islands Region. It was established in 1998 at the request of Pacific island countries and territories which was voiced at the 6th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in 1997. The forum enables those organisations working on nature conservation in the Pacific to improve their collaboration and coordination towards effective conservation action. It is the key coordination mechanism for the implementation of the new Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the Pacific Islands region 2014-2020 which was adopted at the 9th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas and was subsequently endorsed at the 25th Annual SPREP Meeting in September 2014.

The 19th Annual Meeting of the Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation was held on the 14 - 15 July, 2016 at the Tanoa International Hotel in Nadi, Fiji. The meeting adopted the theme "*Mainstreaming biodiversity: sustaining Pacific people and their livelihoods*" which is aligned to the theme of the 2016 year of Biodiversity and the theme of CBD COP13 high level segment. The meeting brought together more than 55 participants from governments, regional organizations, NGOs, local communities, development partners and international organizations.

The meeting discussed key strategic issues relating to the theme and concluded with the following outcomes:

1. The meeting reaffirmed the crucial role of PIRT in bringing together governments, regional partners and donors, and should continue its role as a mechanism for fostering partnerships and creating synergies. Furthermore, The PIRT has a role in providing assistance Pacific island countries and territories to implement activities towards achieving the CBD Aichi Targets.

2. The meeting further noted key achievements of PIRT and the Working Groups in implementing the objectives of the Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the Pacific islands region 2014-2020.

3. On mainstreaming biodiversity into national development planning processes, the meeting noted the need to redefine and refine approaches to mainstreaming biodiversity by identifying innovative and effective ways to engage with whole of government taking into account key strategic entry points within national sustainable development planning processes to facilitate the integration of biodiversity.

4. On mainstreaming biodiversity into development sectors, the meeting noted that although there have been progress in the integration of biodiversity into the agricultural, fisheries, forestry and tourism sectors however, there is a need to intensify and strengthen the level of engagement with these development sectors. Additionally, the meeting further noted the need to engage in trade discussions and agreements to ensure environmental concerns are effectively integrated.

5. On sustainable financing and resource mobilisation, the meeting noted the importance of exploring innovative financing mechanisms for conservation in the region. The example from Palau's Protected Area Network (PAN) trust fund was shared as a conservation financing model for conservation into the future. The meeting further noted the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) which is implemented in Fiji as a way to consolidate financial investment opportunities for biodiversity at the national level.

6. The meeting recognized the challenge of securing adequate and sustainable financial resources to support work on endemic and invasive species in the region which calls for more creative and innovative ways to mobilize funds.

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7. On NBSAPs, the meeting noted the important role of NBSAPs as a vehicle to facilitate mainstreaming of biodiversity into key development sectors and into national development planning processes. For example, the opportunity of proper utilization of ecosystem services in food production systems as an opportunity for improving sustainable agriculture.

8. On community engagement in mainstreaming biodiversity, the meeting acknowledged the successes of grassroots projects, such as the Verata Project in Fiji, which is attributed to good governance, visionary leadership and effective management at all levels of traditional community (Vanua) working in partnership with national government.

9. The meeting recognized the need for regional conservation organisations to dedicate more efforts in examining the effectiveness of current mainstreaming initiatives in addressing key development challenges and emerging issues.

10. The meeting further recognized that in order for mainstreaming biodiversity to be effective, it should entail the following key considerations:

    - Linking the mainstreaming biodiversity process with improving livelihoods which is an issue that is close to the hearts of Pacific people.

    - Integration, implementation and inclusiveness are key building blocks of effective biodiversity mainstreaming.

    - The meeting also acknowledged that mainstreaming approach is not about imposing the biodiversity agenda into other development sectors, but rather, an effort to find mutually-beneficial outcomes for all.

    - The meeting noted that the success of mainstreaming would rely on effective communication and awareness raising initiatives are crucial in improving understanding of values of biodiversity

    - Key conservation messages should be packaged and delivered through creative and innovative ways such as through inspirational and charismatic champions. For example, the President of Palau is an inspirational leader who has been at the forefront in promoting ocean issues for our region.

- Socio-marketing campaigns are one of the most effective ways to convert science to action. There are good examples of campaigns to bring about behavioural change and promote conservation issues such as the 4FJ campaign in Fiji.

11. The meeting recalled the 2013 Laucala Declaration and the ten key action points and encouraged members of PIRT to take these priority actions into consideration when developing programmes and projects.

12. The meeting acknowledged high level commitments by Pacific Leaders which has played an important role in moving the conservation agenda forward at local, national, regional and international levels. To support the implementation of these commitments, PIRT is encouraged to proactively provide high level advice to governments and seek opportunities to assist with the translation of commitments into practical actions.

The meeting made the following additional recommendations to scale up conservation efforts in the region:

(i) Step up efforts in linking Indigenous and Local Knowledge with modern science. Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK) needs to be preserved, recorded, learnt and incorporated into our development and adaptation plans. There should be synergies between Indigenous and local Knowledge and science as a key function of the IBPES.

(ii) Environment and conservation-focused organisations in the region to coordinate response measures and actions to natural disasters as in the case of Tropical Cyclone Winston which devastated Fiji in early 2016. Response to natural disasters should be an integral part of PIRT's key functions

(iii) Ensure country NBSAPs address impacts of natural disasters on biodiversity and put in place response measures to address these.

(iv) Develop programmes at the community level to promote and protect the diversity of crop/plant varieties, especially those that are culturally important. This is important to ensure cultural knowledge of crop/plant varieties is maintained across the Pacific.

(v) Consider culture as an integral part of PIRT's work sector to address gaps between different sectors particularly those with direct and indirect impacts on community well-being and livelihood. For example, conflicts between conservation zoning and cultural boundaries can be nonsensical and divisive from a cultural perspective. Cultural well-being needs to be more integrated into conservation work.

(vi) Support the development of standardised methodologies or tools to develop country-specific indicators for Aichi targets 7, 13 and 14. For example, the work implemented by FAO on supporting mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem services in agricultural production can contribute in this regard.

(vii) Identify ways to strategically engage youths and the role of university institutes in supporting youth engagement. For example, USP could develop a proposal and budget (to be endorsed by USP) for the participation of university students at PIRT-20 (in 2017).

(viii) Take a proactive approach through forward looking initiatives in addressing emerging issues that could potentially cause significant impacts on conservation and recommend putting in place mitigating measures to address these.

(ix) Assess the extent to which PIRT could engage meaningfully in the blue-green economy discussions and how it can support countries to transition to a blue-green economy and adopt more sustainable practices over time.