

Experts To Participate In Deep Sea Minerals Regional Workshop

Written by Administrator

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Some of the world's leading specialists on issues relating to deep sea minerals will attend a three-day workshop from June 6 through June 8 in Nadi.

The Deep Sea Minerals Project, administered by SOPAC, a division of SPC, and funded by EU will address legislative, regulatory, capacity requirements and environmental issues pertaining to deep sea minerals and mining for countries in the Pacific region over a four-year period.

Deep Sea Minerals Project Team Leader, Akuila Tawake, said that the project would work towards ensuring that sustainable seabed mineral resources management would bring tangible benefits to Pacific Island countries and their people.

Included in the workshop are:

Michael Lodge the Legal Adviser to the Jamaica-based International Seabed Authority (ISA). He has extensive experience on legal matters pertaining to the Law of the Sea including fisheries, maritime issues and deep seabed minerals exploration and mining.

Prior to working for the Authority, Mr Lodge served as Legal Counsel to the Solomon Islands based Forum Fisheries Agency, where he coordinated and led the regional position at the UN Conference on Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

Dr. James Hein of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is a marine geologist, geochemist, and economic geologist. His expertise is in marine mineral deposits with significant experience studying seabed manganese nodules and cobalt-rich crust though out the world including the Pacific Ocean.

An American environmental economist, **Dr Linwood Pendleton**, who is the Acting Chief Economist for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is noted for his work in the field of marine and coastal economics. Dr. Linwood Pendleton is also the Director of Ocean and Coastal Policy at Duke University in the U.S.

Dr Yannick Beaudoin, is the Head of the Marine Programme at the UNEP/GRID-Arendal, (the

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United Nations Environment Programme information office). He has been actively involved in developing marine mining community and in promoting sustainable development and good governance. Much of his current efforts are related to incorporating the principles of resource efficiency, ecosystems based valuation methods and sustainable economics into the design of project cycles in the extractive sector.

A biologist at Pennsylvania State University in the United States, **Prof. Chuck Fisher** has focused his work on life found around deep sea hydrothermal vents and hydrocarbon (oil and gas) seeps. Prof Fisher currently works as a Professor of Biology at the Pennsylvania State University.

A mineralogist at the Leibniz Institute of Marine Sciences (IFM-GEOMAR) in Germany, **Dr. Sven Peterson** studies the formation and evolution of seafloor hydrothermal systems and their associated mineral deposits.

Dr. Samantha Smith is the Environmental and Community Manager for Nautilus Minerals the company that holds the first commercial mining lease being granted in Papua New Guinea (PNG) territorial waters to mine 'high grade' Seafloor Massive Sulphide (SMS) deposits.

Her current responsibilities include managing the impact assessments of Nautilus operations in PNG, as well as coordinating associated seafloor mineral studies. Dr Smith has over 14 years experience conducting inter-disciplinary studies that combine geochemistry, biology, hydrology and modelling techniques to assess environmental conditions.

Head of the Commonwealth Secretariat' Economic and Legal Section, **Daniel Dumas** is an expert in energy and natural resources. His group has been providing assistance in trade law, capital markets, competition policy, maritime boundaries and in natural resources to Commonwealth Countries for over 25 years.

The workshop will be followed by a two-day steering committee meeting on June 9 and 10 where selected experts will make an assessment of Pacific marine minerals based on past scientific studies and exploration.

"This meeting is part of the SPC and the Norway based UNEP/GRID-Arendal, (the United Nations Environment Programme information office) partnership," said Mr Tawake. "It is expected that the outcomes from this assessment will take one year to complete."

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Countries that are participating in the Project are the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.