

Excerpted out of the Proceedings of the Thirty-third Session, 17-24 September 2004 (pages 36-38, paras 250-266)

11.3 Leader's Pacific Plan

250. The Director introduced paper AS33/11.3 and its supplement; providing some background information to the papers. Council was reminded of comments made by the Secretary General of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat that there would be actions and decisions in this plan that would be of direct relevance to SOPAC.

251. Marshall Islands expressed its support for the continuing involvement of the Secretariat in the development of the Pacific Plan.

252. Tuvalu also supported the continuing involvement of SOPAC however requested that SOPAC ensure that all aspects of climate change, climate variability, sea-level rise for which SOPAC has responsibility is reflected in the Plan.

253. New Zealand thanked the Secretariat for its explanation on the Secretariat involvement and requested the Secretariat provide some general comments on the Pacific Plan.

254. Samoa in welcoming the Leaders' initiative agreed that the Plan would contribute to shaping the region's long-term future, and conveyed its full support for engagement in the process. Samoa further reinforced a statement made by the Forum Secretary General on ownership of the Plan which Samoa felt should be a product of in-depth and wide consultations right from the initial stages of its design through to implementation. Samoa felt the aspect of 'ownership' was a vital one and must be followed through to ensure that the Plan succeeded in achieving real and long-term sustainable outcomes.

255. Papua New Guinea also supported SOPAC's involvement in this important regional initiative. Papua New Guinea went on to note that any associated costs should be included in the 2005 Work Plan and Budget.

256. Australia also lent their support for SOPAC's ongoing participation in the development of the Pacific Plan as it was considered essential that not only countries but regional representative's also participate. SOPAC's involvement would also help to ensure practical results for the countries.

257. The Marshall Islands requested the Secretariat to continue to advise members of their ongoing involvement and advise of outcomes from this process.

258. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat informed Council of the sector analysis that was being developed on the Pacific Plan. He suggested that Council may wish to consider this and ensure that issues arising from a gaps analysis are fed back to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

259. On security issues within the Pacific Plan, Tuvalu encouraged SOPAC to emphasise the vulnerability of Pacific Island countries with respect to climate change and other hazards.

260. Tonga supported the view expressed by Tuvalu, but stressed the need to also account for grassroots views and not just consult with member countries.

261. SPREP congratulated the Chair on his election and also passed on good wishes to the Director. SPREP went on to inform Council that the SPREP Governing Council also considered this agenda item and similar issues were raised that focused on ownership and involvement by the community. SPREP acknowledged the involvement of the SOPAC Deputy Director in the preparation of the Pacific Plan, citing it as an excellent example of CROP collaboration. SPREP went on to commend the Pacific Plan to Council, acknowledging it as the first comprehensive plan to address the needs of the region.

262. In responding to comments made by Tuvalu, the Secretariat indicated that the main responsibility of SOPAC in the issue of climate change was adaptation and SOPAC, in partnership

with SPREP, who has primary responsibility for climate change, was to ensure Tuvalu's concerns as well as all other important issues are reflected in the Plan.

263. The Secretariat went on to provide Council with an overview of the Plan highlighting the four basic themes – economic growth, sustainable development, governance and security. The Pacific Plan needed to be developed within a sustainable development framework, and SOPAC expected the themes of governance and security to be cross-cutting and that the outcome of addressing these would be economic growth. It was in this context, particularly, that SOPAC will have a key role.

264. Advised that the work required of the taskforce in developing the Pacific Plan was enormous, however, a lot of work had already been done in the region in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Barbados Programme of Action+10 and the 2nd World Conference on Disaster Reduction. It was expected that outcomes from these global initiatives would have regional implications. The region also had established and approved regional policies and plans. This regional planning documentation will provide a basis for the amalgamation and rationalisation into a strategic framework for the regional plan. However, the real challenge would be to find a practical and more efficient way of working. Issues such as collaboration and consultation are key and that a communication strategy is critical for the development and implementation of the Plan. Ownership by countries and the region of the Pacific Plan was essential as it would be the guiding document for the next ten years.

265. The Secretariat suggested to Council that the results of the sector analysis could be made available and concurred with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in requesting countries for feedback on gaps. The taskforce is to meet at the end of October and has agreed to follow up on the gaps analysis.

266. Council noted the developments with regard to the Leaders' Pacific Plan and directed the Secretariat to participate over the coming year as may be requested by the Secretary General in the work of the task force to ensure SOPAC's contribution to the development of, and role in, the implementation of the Pacific Plan is optimised.