



GOVERNING COUNCIL 36th SESSION

Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga

22-29 November 2007

AGENDA ITEM	TITLE
11	ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION
11.1	Regional Institutional Framework (RIF)
11.1 Supplementary 2	STAR Outcome Statement of its discussion on the RIF (Para 19b of Forum Leaders' Communique, October 2007)

Purpose of Paper

To update Council on the outcomes of the STAR meeting discussion with respect to the Leaders' Communique 2007, para. 19b on the Regional Institutional Framework [RIF] as it pertains to SOPAC.

Background

The Science Technology and Resources Network (STAR) was formed as a partnership with SOPAC Council in 1984 and meets annually in conjunction with the SOPAC Annual Session. At its 24th Meeting held last week, the STAR delegates considered the implications for scientific research and applied science and technical delivery to the region of the recent Leaders' Communique decision in regard to the Regional Institutional Framework.

Attached is the Outcome Statement from that discussion. It has been submitted by the Chair of STAR Professor John Collen, to the Secretariat for circulation to Council.

Recommendation

That Council:

- (i) invite the Chair of STAR to introduce this paper, and
- (ii) take the advice from STAR into consideration as part of their discussions on the Regional Institutional Framework.

**PACIFIC ISLANDS REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW:
Outcome Statement from the STAR Meeting 22-24^h November, 2007 Nuku'alofa, Tonga**

The following outcome statement agreed to at the 24th STAR Meeting is intended to advise the SOPAC Governing Council as it prepares to consider the recent Forum Leaders Communiqué in regard to the regional institutional framework. It is submitted to the Secretariat in the hope that it can be circulated to Council members attending the 36th Annual Session.

The Science Technology and Resources Network (STAR) at its 2007 Meeting:

- **commended** its excellent relationship with SOPAC Governing Council extending back over the past nearly 25 years, during which it has developed and strengthened the linkages between science and policy through holding meetings in conjunction with SOPAC Governing Council;
- **recalled** the many occasions the SOPAC-STAR evolving relationship has been examined and endorsed both by the SOPAC National Representatives and the international geo-scientific community,
- **noted** STAR has developed into a complex mix of science and scientist, and is tending to grow, and its emphasis shifts from year to year in order to address the breadth of the SOPAC work programmes and focus on current issues in an integrated and synergistic manner;
- **noted** further that STAR meetings provide the opportunity for the increasing numbers of Pacific island nationals to present the results of their work, and in this context STAR meetings provide a valuable capacity building opportunity, especially for young scientists; the meetings also provide an invaluable direct networking experience for scientists based outside the region, they also provide a venue for SOPAC and member countries to become appraised of work planned or underway by organisations from outside the region;
- **highlighted** STAR meetings provide a unique interface for scientists based outside the region to familiarise themselves with issues facing the SOPAC island member states and the role that their science can play in contributing to development in the region; and provide a foundation from which scientists are better informed to advise Council on the SOPAC work programmes”;
- **highlighted** further that ‘geoscience’ is not just about geology (e.g. minerals) and geophysics (e.g. earthquakes), rather it is about an integration of the broad sweep of sciences that study the earth, it includes, as well, physical oceanography, meteorology, marine biology and ecology, and aspects of earth-related social sciences such as urban geography;
- **strongly reiterated** that one of the great strengths of SOPAC is its ability to mobilise excellent science and bring it to bear so as to address the national needs of SOPAC's island member countries, and the long-established working relationship between SOPAC and the international research community is a vital element in this endeavour, and one that STAR is charged to nurture;
- **acknowledged** that to remain relevant, change is inevitable, nonetheless for change to be least disruptive to the delivery of benefits to the region, change must be a deliberate and strategic ongoing process;
- **expressed** the strong desire that a mechanism be found that will enable the benefits of STAR to be continued, and hence contribute to improvement of delivery of benefits to the region, noting that the international community of scientists and technologists contribute freely to STAR and that this constitutes on an annual basis a substantial “no fee for service” to the region;
- **concluded** that, if invited by Council, the Chair of STAR supported by a small group of senior advisers, will be prepared to provide advice to Council at its 36th Session during the consideration of the process of responding to the recent Forum Leaders Communiqué.

**Submitted by Professor John Collen
Chair of the Science Technology and Resources Network (STAR)**