

SOPAC

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION

hosted by the
Government of Tuvalu, in Funafuti

22-30 October 2008





PACIFIC ISLANDS APPLIED GEOSCIENCE COMMISSION

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION

hosted by the
Government of Tuvalu in Funafuti

22-30 October 2008

June 2009

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of SOPAC concerning the legal status of any country or territory or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of the frontiers of any country or territory.

The mention of any firm or licensed process does not imply endorsement by SOPAC.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO SOPAC	4
OPENING ADDRESSES	
Opening Address by Honourable Apisai Ielemia, Prime Minister of Tuvalu	7
Reply to Opening Address & Outgoing Chair's Remarks by Dr Sione Nailasikau Halatuituia, Secretary for Lands, Survey & Natural Resources & Environment of the Kingdom of Tonga	10
Opening Remarks by Ms Cristelle Pratt, Director of SOPAC	11
SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SOPAC SESSION.....	13
APPENDICES	
1 List of Participants	51
2 Agenda.....	56
3 Designation of National Representatives (as at May 2009)	58
4 Statements by Delegations	
Part I: Member Countries	60
Part II: CROP Organisations	77
Part III: Cooperating Governments, International Agencies & National Institutions	81
5 STAR Chair's Report to Council.....	84
6 Programme Monitoring Evaluation Groups Reports and Associated Documentation.....	93
7 List of Conference Room Documents	104
8 Acronyms.....	106

INTRODUCTION TO SOPAC

Objectives

The Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) is an independent, inter-governmental, regional organisation mandated by several Pacific nations to:

- develop resource policy, and advise on the management and development of onshore and offshore mineral and aggregate resources;
- meet the needs for water resources, waste management, health and sanitation through the provision of resource policy and management advice, appropriate information and training;
- support the information requirements and enhance the skills required for management and operation of the energy sector in member countries;
- assist decision makers and planners to develop coastal zones and extract resources while protecting them from degradation;
- predict the effects of hazards on the health, wealth and development potential of member countries;
- assist decision makers and planners to understand ocean processes, develop ocean areas and extract resources while protecting oceans from over-exploitation and pollution;
- provide geoscientific and related education needs through the provision of a variety of training and education opportunities at all levels of geoscience and resource management;
- meet the demands for electronic information by member country governments and regional organisations to manage resources and risk;
- support National authorities in disaster management activities through advice information; and
- provide readily-available and current information in geoscience and related fields to member countries and others.

Member Countries

Member countries are currently Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji Islands, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. American Samoa, French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Tokelau are Associate Members.

Background

The Commission comprises the Governing Council (the member country representatives), the Secretariat (based in Suva) and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). TAG comprises advisors who are nominated by member countries and by supporting Governments and organisations, or are invited by the Secretariat.

The Commission's Work Programme is formulated from member country requests, and is carried out by its Secretariat based in Suva, Fiji Islands.

SOPAC was established in 1972 as CCOP/SOPAC (the Committee for Coordination of Joint Prospecting for Mineral Resources in South Pacific Offshore Areas) under the sponsorship of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). In 1984, CCOP/SOPAC changed its legal status to become an independent, regional inter-governmental body, changing its name to SOPAC (South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission) in 1989. Another name change was decided in 2006 to "Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission" to better reflect the composition of the membership.

Funding

SOPAC is funded by a combination of statutory and voluntary contributions by its member countries and grants from donor governments and international agencies. An annual budget of around F\$30 million (in 2008) supports the implementation of the Work Programme and the operation of the Secretariat.

Supporting countries include Australia, Fiji and New Zealand as members, Canada, Denmark, France, Ireland, Republic of Korea, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, United States and the United Kingdom. The European Union, Commonwealth Secretariat and UNDP are the principal multilateral supporting agencies. SOPAC has formal and informal links with many other supporting agencies and institutions. Member countries provide considerable support during survey work, and ship time in the region is regularly contributed by other countries such as the France, Japan and Germany.

SOPAC Annual Session

The SOPAC Annual Session is a meeting of the Commission, and has four components:

- (a) a Plenary Session covers the procedural aspects of the meeting and the presentation of reports from member countries, donor Governments and organisations, and the Secretariat. This session is a meeting of the Council at which other delegates are invited as observers, contributing to the discussion of non-technical matters concerning SOPAC such as cooperation and funding.
- (b) a joint meeting of the Council and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to consider the SOPAC Work Programme. All TAG members participate as equals during this meeting.
- (c) a meeting of the Science Technology and Resources Network (STAR) which is an open forum for reporting geoscientific research in the Pacific and for exchanging information and ideas between scientists from SOPAC Member Countries and the international geoscientific community.
- (d) a Governing Council meeting to discuss the administrative and financial business of SOPAC, which may be open to observers who could speak when invited.

See the Table on the next page for a summary of past SOPAC sessions.

SUMMARY OF SOPAC ANNUAL SESSIONS

Session	Date	Venue	Chairman	Vice-Chairman	TAG Chairman	Rapporteur(s)
Preparatory	Jul 1971	Manila, Philippines	R.W. Willett, NZ	—	—	—
FIRST	Nov 1972	Suva, FJ	D. Green, FJ	S. Tu'a Taumoepeau, TG	R. Willett, NZ	—
SECOND	Aug-Sep 1973	Nuku'alofa, TG	S. Tongilava, TG	R. Richmond, FJ	R. Willett, NZ	—
THIRD	Sep 1974	Apia, WS	T. Enari, WS	P. Mueller, WS	J.W. Brodie, NZ	—
FOURTH	Sep 1975	Honiara, SB	R.B. Thompson, SB	G. Sawtell, CK	J.W. Brodie, NZ	—
FIFTH	Nov 1976	Rarotonga, CK	G. Sawtell, CK	S. Tongilava, TG	D. Kear, NZ	—
SIXTH	Oct 1977	Port Moresby, PN	N. Agonia, PN	R. Richmond, FJ	J.W. Brodie, NZ	J. Wright, UK
SEVENTH	Oct 1978	Wellington, NZ	D. Kear, NZ	S. Kingan, CK	J. Wright, UK	G. Shepherd, TS
EIGHT	Sep-Oct 1979	Suva, FJ	R. Richmond, FJ	A. Macfarlane, VA	M. Terman, US	J. Wright, UK
NINTH	Oct 1980	Tarawa, KI	T. Otang, KI	A. Macfarlane, VA	J. Wright, UK	J. Eade, NZ
TENTH	Oct 1981	Port Vila, VA	A. Macfarlane, VA	S. Tongilava, TG	J. Wright, UK	J. Eade, NZ
ELEVENTH	Nov 1982	Wellington, NZ	H. Thompson, NZ	S. Tongilava, TG	N. Exon, AU	J. Eade, NZ
TWELFTH	Oct 1983	Nuku'alofa, TG	S. Tongilava, TG	L. Ioane, WS	N. Exon, AU	D. Howell, US; J. Eade, NZ
THIRTEENTH	Oct-Nov 1984	Apia, Western Samoa	K. Eteuati, WS	S. Danitofea, SB	H.G. Greene, US	N. Exon, AU
FOURTEENTH	Sep 1985	Honiara, SB	J. Saliga, SB	S. Kingan, CK	H.G. Greene, US	D. Mallick, UK
FIFTEENTH	Sep 1986	Rarotonga, CK	S. Kingan, CK	G. Anderson, PN	J.V. Eade, NZ	D. Mallick, UK
SIXTEENTH	Oct 1987	Lae, Papua New Guinea	W. Searson, PN	S. Sopoanga, TU	D.J. Mallick, UK	J. Eade, TS; M. Fisk, UN
SEVENTEENTH	Oct 1988	Suva, FJ	S. Sopoanga, TU	R. Rutland, AU	C. Helsey, US	J. Eade, TS
EIGHTEENTH	Oct 1989	Canberra, AU	R.W. Rutland, AU	K. Kolone (Interim)	R.N. Richmond, TS	J. Harper, TS
NINETEENTH	Oct 1990	Tarawa, KI	T. Tokataake, KI	C. Mortimer, VA	R.N. Richmond, TS	H. Creech, TS
TWENTIETH	Sep-Oct 1991	Port Vila, VA	C. Mortimer, VA	S. Tongilava, TG	B. Page, UK	A. Sherwood, TS
TWENTY-FIRST	Sep-Oct 1992	Nuku'alofa, TG	S. Tongilava, TG	A. Simpson, FJ	H.G. Greene, US	A. Sherwood/J. Eade, TS
TWENTY-SECOND	Oct 1993	Suva, FJ	A. Simpson, FJ	M. Kaminaga, MI	R.N. Richmond, TS	A. Sherwood, TS
TWENTY-THIRD	Sep 1994	Majuro, MI	J. Kabua, MI	National Rep. Australia	D. Pickrill, NZ	R. Howorth, TS
TWENTY-FOURTH	Sep-Oct 1995	Suva, Fiji	D. Ritchie, AU	C. Brown, CK	D. Pickrill, Canada	R. Howorth/L. Bukarau, TS
TWENTY-FIFTH	Oct 1996	Rarotonga, CK	R. Newnham, CK	G. Ayin, FSM	A. Macfarlane, UK	L. Bukarau/R. Howorth, TS
TWENTY-SIXTH	Sep-Oct 1997	Nadi, Fiji Islands	B. Rao, FJ	G. Ayin, FSM	D. Tappin, UK	L. Bukarau/R. Howorth, TS
TWENTY-SEVENTH	Sep-Oct 1998	Suva, Fiji Islands	S. Anefal, FSM	National Rep. Guam	D. Tappin, UK	L. Bukarau/P. Fairbairn, TS
TWENTY-EIGHTH	Oct 1999	Nadi, Fiji Islands	T. Barrett, NZ	K. Ruaia, Kiribati	T. Barrett, NZ	L. Bukarau/P. Fairbairn, TS
TWENTY-NINTH	Sep-Oct 2000	Tarawa, Kiribati	K. Ruaia, Kiribati	M. Kaminaga, RMI	K. Ruaia, Kiribati	L. Bukarau/P. Fairbairn, TS
THIRTIETH	October 2001	Majuro, Marshall Islands	M. Maddison, RMI	A. Itsimaera, Nauru	M. Kaminaga, RMI	L. Bukarau/P. Fairbairn, TS
THIRTY-FIRST	Sep-Oct 2002	Suva, Fiji Islands	A. Itsimaera, Nauru	S. Talagi, Niue	A. Itsimaera, Nauru	L. Bukarau/C. Pratt, TS
THIRTY-SECOND	Sep 2003	Alofi, Niue	S. Talagi, Niue	S. Nion, PN	S. Talagi, Niue	L. Bukarau, TS
THIRTY-THIRD	Sep 2004	Coral Coast, Fiji Islands	A. Maino, PN	S. Potoi, Samoa	A. Maino, PN	L. Bukarau, TS
THIRTY-FOURTH	Sep 2005	Apia, Samoa	T. Toomata, WS	D. Tolia, SB	T. Toomata, WS	L. Bukarau, TS
THIRTY-FIFTH	Sep 2006	Honiara, Solomon Islands	T. Kaua, SB	S.N. Halatuitui/K. Mafi, TG	T. Kaua, SB	L. Bukarau, TS
THIRTY-SIXTH	Nov 2007	Nuku'alofa, Tonga	B. Tuita, TG	S. Laloni, TU	S.N. Halatuitui, TG	L. Bukarau, TS
THIRTY-SEVENTH	Oct 2008	Funafuti, Tuvalu	T. Finikaso, TU	C. Iao, VA	E. Sopoanga, TU	L. Bukarau, TS

Abbreviations used: AU – Australia; CK – Cook Islands; FJ – Fiji Islands; KI – Kiribati; MI – Marshall Islands; NZ – New Zealand; PN – Papua New Guinea; RMI – Republic of the Marshall Islands; WS – Samoa; SB – Solomon Islands; TG – Tonga; TS – SOPAC Secretariat; TU – Tuvalu; VA – Vanuatu; UK – United Kingdom; UN – United Nations; US – United States



Participants at the Official Opening of the 37th SOPAC Session at the Tausoa Lima, Funafuti, Tuvalu.

OPENING ADDRESS

by the Prime Minister of Tuvalu
Honourable Apisai Ielemia
at the Official Opening of the SOPAC 37th Annual Session

Honourable Ministers, Honourable Members of Parliament, His Excellency Acting Ambassador of the Republic of China, Director of SOPAC, Director of SPREP, Distinguished national Representatives of SOPAC member countries and delegations, representatives of CROP agencies, representatives of international organizations, development partners of SOPAC, representatives of international organizations, development partners of SOPAC, representatives of STAR and TAG, Representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations, Representatives of Civil Society, island Community Leaders, te Ulu o te Fenua o Funafuti, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.)

It is indeed a great pleasure, on behalf of my Government and the people of Tuvalu, to welcome you all to the opening of this 37th Annual Session of the Governing Council of the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (or SOPAC as it is better known). As host and the incoming Chair of SOPAC, Tuvalu would like to take this opportunity to welcome those who have come to Tuvalu for the first time and to renew friendships with those who have been here before.

I understand that for some of you this is your first visit to an atoll country- I trust that through your visit you will be able to appreciate that unique challenges that small island atoll States such as Tuvalu are confronted with in terms of endowments of natural resources, or rather the lack of them, including land, water, aggregates together with those created by the adverse impacts of climate change and all related hazards on our fragile ecosystems.

Many of you know that Tuvalu and more specifically here on Funafuti Atoll we have had for many decades a close association with science and the need for better understanding of atoll environments, for it was here in Funafuti over a hundred years ago that the Royal Society of London embarked on its island drilling programme- at that time surely a remarkable logistical and engineering, as well as scientific undertaking. The records from those days provide a unique snapshot of our natural environment.

Many of you will also be aware of the dramatic physical changes that took place to our environment here on Funafuti during the days of the Second World War. These have turned out to be

irreversible changes for us, and have included permanent change to our lagoon reef flat, beaches and nearshore current circulation patterns through dredging, the loss of land for agriculture and homes through construction of the airstrip and creation of the borrow pits. Our groundwater reservoirs of freshwater were destroyed seriously undermining freshwater supply due to those actions.

It was in 1972 when Cyclone Bebe struck that Mother Nature herself produced irreversible change here on Funafuti Atoll. The 'Bebe bank' comprised of coral rubble lifted up from the ocean reef front and was dumped by the storm waves on the edge of the reef. The storm waves flooded the entire atoll from ocean side to the lagoon. Over the following years the bank has migrated shorewards and is now a permanent feature of our landscape.

Tuvalu is one of the Smaller Island States of the Pacific Forum, with only some 10,000 people spread over nine atolls which are nowhere more than a few metres above sea level. Our total land area is only some 26 square kilometres and this is scattered through an exclusive economic zone of some 900,000 kilometers. Half of our population resides here on Fongafale at the southeast corner of Funafuti Atoll. It should not come as a surprise to any of you that we are deeply concerned about the catastrophic impacts of climate change and in particular of sea level rise. We do not want to leave our birthplace, our home, our sovereign nation and be forced to relinquish our fundamental human rights. Urgent actions must be taken to accelerate mitigation and implement concrete adaptation projects on the ground. Those countries responsible for the cause of climate change, in accordance with the principles of the Rio Conventions, must own up and ensure the fulfilment of agreed obligations and agreements. This is a critical issue, because it may well be the issue that involves the painful death for the whole of Tuvalu.

Soon after independence, Tuvalu joined SOPAC in 1983 at its 12th Session held in Nuku'alofa Tonga. Our priority interests that we identified at that time were in the areas of offshore aggregate extraction, baseline studies related to coastal processes and erosion, marine bathymetric surveys and, mapping and capacity development particularly

in the area of coastal management. Secondary interests lay in the area related to exploration and exploitation of deep sea minerals, phosphate and assessment of the potential for precious coral. Many of those original priorities have endured and remain priorities for us today.

However over time these have been added to with the need for affordable and renewable energy, adequate water and sanitation for all, and adaptation to the effects of climate change and sea level rise. In this respect Tuvalu looks towards SOPAC and other regional organisations for their continuing support and assistance in the provision of key technical and policy advisory that will assist us to make the best decisions in these areas that are crucial for our sustainable development, and indeed survival on these vulnerable islands.

Tuvalu first hosted an annual session of the Governing Council in 1988, in Suva Fiji. Some two decades later we are pleased and proud to be hosting this 37th Governing Council Meeting at home, here in Funafuti.

The preparations leading up to this meeting have not been without various difficulties but such often is the reality in this region where we constantly grapple with the challenges of geographical isolation and fragmentation, and the need for effective communication and transport. It is therefore with appreciation that I welcome those who have made the journey to be here for this historic occasion for Tuvalu and for SOPAC.

If I may at this juncture single out and welcome the STAR scientists who at their 25th STAR Meeting selected the theme “Environmental Change and Oceanic Islands – especially with respect to managing water resources and sanitation on atolls”. It is indeed a highly relevant and timely theme to focus upon for us given the effects of climate change and its impacts on rainfall which is our prime source of freshwater. Water resources, its assessment, extraction, use and conservation are key to the survival of people and this link is demonstrated no better than on small atolls like ours that suffer from periodic effects of drought. My Government had placed emphasis over the past years on additional infrastructure support to better harvest rainfall, and I am pleased that SOPAC has been able to provide applied scientific and technical support to us. In this regard I refer particularly to the EDF9 National B envelope funding through which SOPAC assisted us to design an intervention that is seeing the placement of additional water tanks on Funafuti.

I trust the scientists and policymakers amongst you will be able to take time and meet with our own technical professionals, students and Government officials over the week (if you have not

begun to do this already) as this will undoubtedly serve as an important information resource and catalyst for further action. Such dialogue could lead to the development of new exciting proposals and projects that will support us in our efforts to adapt to a rapidly changing environment which result from various stresses and pressures.

SOPAC has over the years engaged in a number of key initiatives of benefit to Tuvalu. Some of the earliest projects with SOPAC involved coastal mapping and a pilot study for aggregate mining within Funafuti Lagoon, to source material to fill the borrow pits that dot the atoll. Whilst this pilot was a success, much work remains to realise and complete this work, more specifically to implement full-scale dredging projects to support infrastructural development. The marine mapping and monitoring surveys of the lagoon, assessment of sand sources and modelling of water flows in the lagoon to look at the environmental aspects I understand are now complete. Perhaps the onus now lies on Government to commence work in earnest in order that these studies will underpin an initiative that will have positive impacts to Tuvalu’s sustainable development aspirations.

We are all faced with the high cost of energy which continues to be daunting and I commend the work of SOPAC in working with our utility Tuvalu Electricity Corporation in the area of conservation, renewable energy, and asset management. Another key project is related to marine boundary delimitation. This will need to be finalized as soon as practicable.

Delegates, you all will have a busy week ahead of you. I note that there are several key matters on the agenda, not the least being the discussion of the 2009 work plans and associated budget for SOPAC. I commend SOPAC for its efforts in acquiring additional funding for the delivery of their technical services such as from the GEF to implement the Integrated water Resources Management Programme that has been in the pipeline over the past 18 months, as well as other actions to implement priorities under the Pacific Regional Framework for Action for Building Safer and more Resilient nations and Communities to Disaster 2005- 2015.

I am sure that we all realise that this meeting is a critical one for SOPAC as it discusses progress under the Leaders Decisions of 2007 and 2008 with regard to the Regional Institutional Framework or RIF as it is referred to.

As Tuvalu has limited national capacity in many sectors of development, and it was for this very reason that we became a member of SOPAC some several decades ago, we will certainly continue to rely on SOPAC as the source to build our na-

tional geological survey capacity. SOPAC's technical competencies in these areas are unrivalled amongst the regional agencies that serve us and I for one would not want service delivery distracted or lessened in any way,

An issue of great concern to Tuvalu at the moment is the recent UN decision to graduate Tuvalu from the UN list of LDCs. Based on the three sets of criteria, for the UN assessment on graduation namely income per capita, human index, and vulnerability,, we strongly believe the criterion of economic vulnerability should be the most important one. Untimely graduation of Pacific SIDS from the LDCs would increase our vulnerability, and effectively accelerate our marginalization and isolation from sources of partnerships and development.

The vulnerability of Pacific Island Countries to externalities beyond their control is well documented and acknowledged. Today it does not stop at the environmental vulnerability of increasing negative impacts of global climate change, or the social vulnerability associated with the increasing presence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The economic vulnerability described by increasing global oil and food prices brings home a stark reality that sustainable development will depend on nationally driven enterprises. In a region where over 95% of the sovereign territory is the ocean, those sustainable enterprises are very likely to involve increased use of the ocean, and involve resource use other than just its fish.

To contribute towards this scenario, Pacific Island Countries will need to be fully informed by their own independent scientific and technical institutions, such as SOPAC through its recognised excellence in earth systems science, by it continuing to act as a de facto national geological survey for many island countries, in order to enhance their capabilities to build a strong and equitable partnerships with the seabed miners of tomorrow.

We cannot and must not allow the RIF rationalisation process to fragment SOPAC's work programme delivered through the three technical programmes of ocean and islands, community lifelines and community risk. We can and must strive towards the right outcome to the Leaders

requests. One that ensures SOPAC's programmes remain visible both to the island members and their donor partners as our de facto national geological survey. A range of considerations must be taken into account, including issues of ownership, legality, and credibility of the SOPAC which is highly reputed at the regional and international levels as well. I urge the Council Members to exert every effort in this Session in Tuvalu to map out an appropriate response that is pragmatic and agreeable to all Member countries, and ensures the continuation of vital services to all.

SOPAC's work is important to our Pacific Region. Everyday we are reminded of the individual and collective challenges facing countries in the Pacific. Here in Tuvalu we use our National Sustainable Development Strategy Te Kakeenga II to guide us, and help us to recognise that, these challenges also present great opportunities for national governments and other stakeholders, to work closely together with the committed technical experts, such as those at SOPAC, to achieve real outcomes. We must all strive together to help improve livelihoods, save lives and make our beautiful Pacific and even better place to live.

Hosting the 37th Session is not an easy task for an island nation like Tuvalu. I wish therefore to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to the Government of the Republic of China on Taiwan for their generosity in providing the much needed funding to help us host you in Tuvalu. Our cooperation with Taiwan, and I am sure also for many in the Pacific including SOPAC, have paid high results. I wish to invite you to also visit the Tuvalu-Taiwan Friendship Vegetable Garden Project here in Funafuti.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a worthwhile and productive meeting and encourage you to take some time from your busy schedules to enjoy some of our hospitality.

With that ladies and gentlemen I have much pleasure in officially opening the 37th Annual Session of the SOPAC Governing Council.

THANK YOU ALL

TUVALU MO TE ATUA

Reply to Opening Address and Statement of the Outgoing Chair
Honourable Tuita, Minister of Lands, Survey, Natural Resources and Environment, Tonga
delivered by Dr Sione Nailasikau Halatuituia, Secretary of Lands, Survey & Natural Resources

'Eiki Palemia Tuku mu'a keu fakafeta'i ki he 'Otua 'i langi - 'i he'ene fakanapangapanga malie 'a e 'Aho 'o lava ke tau lonuku mai ki he fale ni ke talanga'i e kaha'u 'oe SOPAC.

Honourable Prime Minister, Ministers of Cabinet, Excellencies, national representatives of SOPAC member countries and your delegations, Chair of STAR, Chairs of Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Groups (PMEG), representatives of CROP agencies, international organisations and development partners, Director of SOPAC and Secretariat staff, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I bring warm greeting from Nuku'alofa, Tonga and from my Minister, the Honourable Tuita, Minister of Lands, Survey, Natural Resources and Environment (MLSNRE) who has chaired SOPAC over the last 12 months, and would very much liked to have been able to attend this meeting.

May I first thank you Prime Minister for your opening statement to Council, and thank your Government and the people of Tuvalu for their exemplary efforts in preparing for this meeting, and for the warm hospitality that has been extended to all of us on this, the first occasion for Tuvalu to host a Governing Council Session of SOPAC, in Funafuti.

When Tonga assumed the role of Chair last November, there was much apprehension as to what was in store for Council and for SOPAC given the 2007 decision of the Leaders with respect to rationalization of SOPAC's technical functions into SPREP and SPC. Council agreed to establish a Committee of the Whole to respond positively to the challenge, a committee which Tonga had the privilege to Chair.

Following the discussion at last year's Council Meeting and subsequently through the work of the Committee, Tonga submitted on your behalf the Progress Report on the Committee's work. In our covering letter to the Forum Chair, we said, and I quote:

“the SOPAC Governing Council, felt it imperative to address the decision but through due process, to ensure that what the Leaders agreed, can be achieved. Furthermore, it is undertaken transparently, it follows the principles of good governance as proclaimed by the Leaders; it achieves excellence in quality and relevance of service provided or delivered and, it is within an environment of

sound economic modality. Moreover, as you are no doubt aware, the SOPAC Council also preferred that if rationalization and absorption becomes a fact sui generis that as much as possible of SOPAC's work programme be kept or moved as a whole rather than becoming fragmented. Even more important is that the critical core function of SOPAC's applied scientific and technical services continue to be appreciated and must be protected and developed.”

In that same letter to the Forum Chair, Tonga as Chair of SOPAC and of the Committee of the Whole took the opportunity to reflect on the origins of this - is commonly referred to as RIF, the Regional Institutional Framework process. The 2004 Eminent Persons to the Leaders that recommended the establishment of the Pacific Plan, you will recall, never called for the reduction in the number of regional organisations. Rather it simply stated “We consider it a strength of the region that it includes a wide range of regional organisations with different roles and structures. CROP agencies reflect the diversity and rich history of the Pacific. We see no practical value in replacing these agencies with one “super organisation”, as some have suggested.”

WE believe SOPAC is presently providing a valuable service to its member states in areas related to disaster risk reduction and disaster management (DRR and DM), water resources assessment and sanitation, marine mapping and monitoring surveys, maritime boundary delimitation as well as in the areas related to energy and ICT, which are underpinned by natural resources governance and knowledge management actions,. In addition, SOPAC has had recent success in mobilising additional donor funds to deliver on its work programme - the assistant with regards to National Action Plans for Disaster Risk Management and the GEF funding for IWRM are good examples for 2008. It is our fervent wish that the distraction of the Regional Institutional Framework review do not in any erode SOPAC's capability and capacity to deliver over the coming years.

I would also like to take this opportunity whilst I have the floor to say thank you to all participating scientists and development partners who are assisting our Pacific Island States, through SOPAC. We must remember that it is only by working together that we can build stronger economies and provide for better living conditions of all people in our countries.

Finally, Prime Minister Sir, as it will Tuvalu's turn to Chair the Governing Council over the next 12 months, I would like to wish Tuvalu as incoming Chair of SOPAC all the very best in time of significant change, and I am confident that the leadership and guidance of your nominated Chair will further enhance the reputation of SOPAC and strengthen the effectiveness of island member gov-

ernments to create a more prosperous community and lifestyle for all peoples of the Pacific.

I join with the Honourable Prime Minister in wishing us all a constructive and successful 37th Governing Council Meeting of SOPAC.

Tu'a 'ofa atu.

Opening Remarks by the Director of SOPAC Ms Cristelle Pratt

1. Prime Minister of Tuvalu the Honorable Apisai Ielemia, Chair of the SOPAC Governing Council, Honorable Ministers, the Rev. Tofiga Falani, Community Leaders and Elders, Excellencies, National representatives of member countries of SOPAC and member Delegations, Chair of STAR and the Chairs of our Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Groups, Heads and Representatives of CROP agencies, Representatives of international, regional and national organisations, Science and Technical Advisers, Staff of the Secretariat, Ladies and Gentlemen.
2. On behalf of the SOPAC Secretariat, Talofa and a very good morning and a very warm welcome to you all, to this, the opening of the 37th Annual Session of the SOPAC Governing Council.
3. This is the second meeting of the Governing Council that Tuvalu is hosting, since joining SOPAC in 1983, hosting its first SOPAC meeting in 1988 in Suva Fiji. Through you Prime Minister Sir I wish to thank your Government for agreeing to host this meeting on home soil here in Funafuti.
4. I am certain that I speak for all member Delegations represented at this opening session of Council and for all visiting organizations and development partners and for STAR scientists in thanking your Government and the people of Tuvalu for welcoming us so very warmly and for the hospitality and generosity with which you have embraced us all since we arrived last week. I know that the preparations for this meeting started months ago and I can assure you that the commitment from your Government and your communities leading up to our meetings have resulted in expectations being exceeded on all fronts and we have enjoyed every moment that we have spent in Tuvalu.
5. Hosting such meetings also serves to remind us of the real challenges faced by many of our smaller island nations in respect of isolation and vulnerabilities due to the great distances that separate; the limited space to live, work and play in and those essential services that are required to ensure effective connectivity with immediate neighbors and with the world.
6. The theme for this the 37th Session of the SOPAC Governing Council and for the 25th Meeting of the Science, Technology and Resources Network (STAR), which was held last week here in Funafuti, is Environmental Change and Oceanic Islands with special attention being given under the theme to Managing Water Resources and Sanitation on Atolls. The theme is both topical and timely in this fast changing world that we live in today.
7. This year's STAR meeting although a much smaller meeting by comparison to recent STAR meetings was successfully concluded last Friday. Quality scientific and technical papers from regional and international (and your very own) scientists and technical professionals were presented. I trust that some of these papers have provided an interest and a catalyst for some STAR participants to seek to cooperate and collaborate on initiatives of scientific importance and of interest for our island countries in their efforts toward sustainable development in the future.
8. The STAR was able to make special presentations to primary and secondary school students last Friday. These presentations were able to demonstrate the opportunities that science provides not just as important information for improving our understanding in this changing world of ours but it was also able to demonstrate science as an interesting and potential career option that the students could pursue.
9. There is no argument that STAR meetings and the support that the STAR provides inter-sessionally are invaluable and in fact a priceless opportunity for SOPAC member

countries as well as for its Secretariat. Over the last 25 years the region has benefited exponentially from this relationship; there is also no argument I believe that there is a need to link science use and science management to protect the resource base and the integrity of our natural system, within a sound policy framework; there is also no argument of the absolutely fundamental and critical role that pure and applied science and technology solutions plays in underpinning and informing our endeavours for sustainable development. Sustainable development as we all know being central to the mission and goal of every one of our Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

10. In respect of this years theme toward managing water resources and sanitation - SOPAC's work under its Community Lifelines Programme seeks to coordinate and facilitate regional activities; as well we seek to provide direct technical assistance and support to our island member countries. SOPAC is currently implementing a number of key strategic initiatives in the area of water and sanitation such as integrated water resources management, water safety, quality and monitoring and, also efforts to establish long-term, sustained observing systems of the hydrological cycle, which is needed if we are to better understand and manage variability in rainfall patterns that as we all know have implications on the quality of our lives our economies and our environment.
11. The Government of Tuvalu must be commended for the commitments that it has made to concentrate on addressing Tuvalu's water and sanitation priorities for its communities on Funafuti as well as its outer islands. We at the Secretariat look forward to supporting

these exemplary efforts in respect of their implementation.

12. This Session of the Governing Council of SOPAC is an important one and what a wonderful venue to be convening it in. I look forward to supporting Council as it deliberates on various technical and policy issues on the agenda for its 37th Annual Session of the SOPAC Governing Council and I trust that the discussions are both constructive and instructive in setting out areas of focus for the Secretariat over the next year.
13. I trust that Council's debate and decisions on the matter of the regional institutional framework will ensure that the final outcome for the region will indeed be an improvement in the technical services that are delivered to the island member countries and territories of SOPAC of SPREP and of SPC.
14. Honourable Prime Minister Sir, on behalf of those of us that are visitors to your beautiful country may I through you thank your Government and your people for being the best of hosts. In addition may I thank you for providing excellent venues for our STAR and SOPAC Governing Council meetings. I am certain that many friendships have been renewed, that many friendships have been made and I know that in the true tradition of the extended family of SOPAC that these friendships will endure time and distance and change.
15. Honourable Prime Minister, Chair of SOPAC, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates and colleagues I thank you for your attention.
16. Faka fetai lasi.

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SOPAC SESSION

FORMAL OPENING SESSION

1. OPENING

1. The Thirty-seventh Annual Session of the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) was held in Funafuti, Tuvalu, from 22nd to 30th October 2008. Its Council Sessions including the joint session with its Technical Advisory Group (TAG) were held in the Tausoa Lima Falekaupule and the preceding two-day scientific meeting of its Science, Technology and Resources Network (STAR) were all held at the Tuvalu Government Buildings. The STAR meeting was its 25th with the theme “Environmental Change and Oceanic Islands – Especially with Respect to Managing Water Resources and Sanitation on Atolls.”

2. The master of ceremony, Pasuna Tuaga of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Labor initiated the official opening ceremony. Council members; the representative of the SOPAC Outgoing Chair (Tonga), Dr Sione Nailasikau Halatuituia; the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Honourable Apisai Ielemia; and the SOPAC Director, Ms Cristelle Pratt, were escorted into the venue to be seated following which a traditional welcome and the national anthem of Tuvalu was sung lead by a choir of Tuvaluan primary school students.

3. All the dignitaries, delegates, SOPAC and community members present were acknowledged and then the Reverend Tofiga Falani, President of the Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu, was invited to offer the opening prayer.

4. Reverend Tofiga Falani delivered a short message about “focussing attention on goals”, before offering the opening prayer. He called for an alignment of this theme to the work that the Council and the Secretariat would be doing in their deliberations throughout the meeting agenda.

5. The Director of SOPAC, Ms Cristelle Pratt, in her Opening Remarks thanked the Prime Minister of Tuvalu for hosting the meeting on Tuvalu soil, acknowledging the tremendous effort, resources and commitment made by the Government and people of Tuvalu in doing so. She touched on the success of this year’s STAR meeting albeit a much smaller meeting in comparison to previous STAR meetings. She also stated that STAR meetings and

the support that STAR provides inter-sessionally were invaluable mechanisms to link science use and management to protect the resource base and the integrity of the natural system, within a sound policy framework. She said there was no argument in the absolutely fundamental and critical role that pure and applied science and technology solutions play in underpinning and informing endeavours for sustainable development, which is central to the mission and goal of each member Pacific Island country and territory. The Director’s Opening Remarks are tabled in full in the Proceedings volume.

6. The Prime Minister, Honourable Apisai Ielemia, delivered the Opening Address on behalf of the Government and people of Tuvalu. Honourable Ielemia welcomed all delegates and the Secretariat to Tuvalu and highlighted that first time visitors would now be able to appreciate the unique challenges that small island atoll states such as Tuvalu are confronted with in terms of the lack of natural resources, including water, land, aggregate, together with the adverse impacts of climate change and related hazards on fragile ecosystems.

7. On the decades of close association between science and the need for a better understanding of atoll environments, Honourable Ielemia cited the example where data was collected in Funafuti some 100 years ago by the Royal Society of London providing a unique snapshot of the natural atoll environment. The Funafuti case clearly illustrated by the long lasting impacts on the atoll environment and geophysical landscape of such episodes as the Second World War and Cyclone Bebe. He further highlighted the concerns of Tuvaluans in terms of climate change and impending sea-level rise, which threaten their fundamental human rights; and challenged countries responsible for causing climate change to live up to their obligations under the Rio Conventions, UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. He urged fellow SOPAC Council members to expend every effort at this session to map out an appropriate response to the RIF initiative that was both pragmatic and agreeable to all member countries, and ensured the continuation of vital SOPAC services to island member states.

8. Honourable Ielemia concluded by expressing his deepest gratitude to the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) for their generosity in providing much needed funding to host the 37th SOPAC Governing Council in Tuvalu.

¹ A comprehensive list of ACRONYMS is included as Appendix 8 of this Proceedings volume

9. Honourable Ielemia's Opening Address is tabled in full in the Proceedings volume.

10. The representative of the Outgoing Chair (Tonga), Dr Sione Halatuituia, Secretary, Ministry of Lands, Surveys, Natural Resources and Environment delivered a short reply to the Prime Minister's Opening Speech on behalf of the SOPAC Council. He stated that Tonga assumed the role of Chair in November 2007, when there was much apprehension as to what was in store for the Council and for SOPAC given the 2007 decision of the Leaders with respect to rationalising SOPAC's functions into SPREP and SPC. He outlined briefly the work of the SOPAC Committee of the Whole (on the RIF) that was formed to respond to the Forum Leaders' decision. Dr Halatuituia's remarks are also tabled in full in the Proceedings volume.

11. Delegates from the following member countries were in attendance: Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. A full list of participants is annexed as Appendix 1.

12. The following development partners, organisations and institutions attended as observers: the European Union, UN/ESCAP, the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Geoscience Australia, the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC), the (NZ) National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research (NIWA), the Victoria University of Wellington, the Tuvalu Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (TANGO) and the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories.

13. The United States of America was also represented as an observer government.

14. The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA); the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS); the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC); the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP); and the University of the South Pacific (USP) were the CROP organisations represented.

2. ELECTIONS

2.1 Chair and Vice Chair of SOPAC

15. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, Tuvalu assumed the role of Chair of the SOPAC Governing Council; the representative of Vanuatu was appointed Vice Chair.

16. The Honourable Taukelina Finikaso, Minister for Communications, Transport and Tourism in assuming the role of Chair for the host country, also assumed the role of chairing the Joint-Council TAG session.

2.2 Chairs of STAR and TAG

17. Council accepted STAR's nomination of Professor John Collen of Victoria University of Wellington to continue as Chair of STAR with Joe Buleka as first Vice Chair, and Chris Ioan of Vanuatu as second Vice Chair.

2.3 Appointment of Rapporteurs

18. Ms Lala Bukarau (SOPAC) was appointed rapporteur and was tasked with the Secretariat to prepare a summary record of proceedings of the 37th SOPAC Session, under the supervision of the Drafting Committee.

3. AGENDA AND WORKING PROCEDURES

3.1 Adoption of Agenda

19. Council adopted the revised provisional agenda as presented (AS37/03.1 Rev. 1) noting the request put forward by the Republic of the Marshall Islands to combine the discussions under items 4.1 (Designation of National Representatives); 4.2 (Membership Issues); and going on to 5.1 (Statements by Member Countries) in the interest of time. The adopted agenda is attached as Appendix 2.

20. The draft daily working schedule (AS37/3.1 Info. 1) and the working procedures (AS37/3.1 Info. 2) of the meeting were also adopted with a revised earlier start time of 8 am.

3.2 Appointment of Drafting Committee

21. An open-ended drafting committee chaired by Vanuatu and comprising Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Kiribati and Federated States of Micronesia as the core group, was tasked with overseeing the production of a summary record of proceedings.

22. The Chair advised that the Secretariat would record what would normally be considered as issues and decisions; however, if members felt that there were any gaps or inaccuracies by the Secretariat they were welcome to provide this input into the record.

3.3 Appointment of Sub-Committee

23. The Chair announced his intention of taking the whole agenda in full Council to prevent the necessity for a sub-committee, and this was accepted by the meeting.

24. Later Council, under Agenda Item 10.4 (Director Position), tasked a sub-committee to work out a way forward in light of the wider RIF process and the incumbent SOPAC Director's consideration of the SPREP Director job offer.

4. REPRESENTATION

4.1 Designation of National Representatives

25. The designation of national representatives is included in Appendix 3 of the Proceedings.

4.2 Membership Issues

26. No membership issues were raised.

5. STATEMENTS

27. The Chair proposed that in order to move through the agenda in the allocated three days that statements be kept as brief as possible, and that more substantive issues be considered under Agenda Item 10.1. This suggestion was acceptable to Council.

28. Member country delegations made short interventions mostly commending the host country for the wonderful hospitality being enjoyed by all delegates; acknowledging donor support; with various comments on the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF) process. The statements are tabled in full in Appendix 4.

29. Delegates from supporting and partner agencies followed suit expressing best wishes to the host country and their continued commitment to work in partnership with SOPAC to achieve common goals in the SOPAC region.

5.1 Statements by Member Countries

30. These statements are tabled in full in Appendix 4, Part I.

5.2 Statements by CROP Organisations

31. These statements are tabled in full in Appendix 4, Part II.

5.3 Statements by Cooperating Governments and International Agencies

32. These statements are tabled in full in Appendix 4, Part III.

5.4 Statements by National Institutions

33. One statement was submitted under this item, see Appendix 4, Part III.

JOINT COUNCIL-TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (TAG) SESSION

6. ISSUES COMMON TO PROGRAMMES

6.1 Director's Report

6.1.1 Introduction

34. The Director introduced the item and listed below are some of the items highlighted in the paper reporting on work programme activities in the period 2007/2008:

- (a) Only 60 % of the membership were visited in the reporting period; and this was attributed to preoccupation with the Council processes on the RIF and seeking opportunities for additional resources to sustain work programme delivery.
- (b) The Directorate is working with regional partners to progress the discussions toward designing concepts to be submitted for consideration under the 10th EDF RIP under the two areas of focus: (i) regional economic integration; and (ii) sustainable management of natural resources. Concepts are due at the end of 2008 and those accepted would need further elaboration for funding with implementation expected in early 2010.
- (c) That the Secretariat participated in the Joint Australia and New Zealand Review of Regional Organisations, which has only recently been completed. Trilateral discussions with New Zealand and Australia would be held mid-November to discuss the findings of the review and its recommendations. It would be an opportunity to discuss the extent and nature of their combined support to SOPAC for 2009; though the Financing Agreements for the various regional organisations beyond 2009 are tied to the outcomes of arrangements determined under the RIF. The Director noted that though 2009 would see a second year of bridge funds being provided; multi-year

programmed support from donors enabled a more stable and secure environment for the Secretariat to effect work programme delivery.

- (d) That service delivery against work programmes was reliant on being able to attract, recruit and retain appropriately qualified scientific and technical personnel whose performances were monitored through a Performance Management System (PMS) tied to actions under the annual work plan and the staff members' terms of reference under their individual employment contracts.
- (e) That the result of a comprehensive institutional assessment of SOPAC carried out by the EU in 2007 has enabled SOPAC to enter into contribution agreements with the EC.
- (f) That more space had been provided by the Government of Fiji and was being refurbished to house the additional staff being recruited for a number of new projects coming online for SOPAC at this stage.
- (g) That there was still room for improvement in the various administrative, finance and other service support actions to provide full, necessary support to the technical programmes.
- (h) Due to the RIF process being progressed throughout 2009, the Secretariat would continue with its current Strategic Plan 2005 – 2009 as the overarching strategic operating framework and would not be developing a new Strategic Plan for 2010-2014.

35. The Director's full intervention is the subject of paper AS37/6.1.1, see the CD that accompanies this Proceedings volume.

36. Council noted the Director's highlights from the reporting year.

6.1.2 2007 Annual Report Summary

37. The Director presented the 2007 Annual Report Summary.

38. Cook Islands commended the Director for the annual report as well as the Secretariat staff for the work carried out noting it was an important marketing tool.

39. Council endorsed the 2007 Annual Report Summary and agreed to use it in promoting the work of SOPAC.

6.1.3 Summary Report of 2008 Donor Support

40. The Director presented the paper AS37/6.1.3. The full narrative of the donor funding support presented by the Director can be found in paper AS37/6.1.3 Suppl. 1.

41. Palau sought clarification on the currency of the amounts stated in the report. The Director responded that the figures were in FJD and explained that the Secretariat operated in Fiji dollars.

42. Papua New Guinea noted the large funding available to the Secretariat and hoped that this would not be compromised because of the rationalisation process.

43. Tuvalu thanked the Director for the report and the various summaries noting that it reflected the confidence of the organisation's development partners in the work of SOPAC. Tuvalu commended the support of the EU, Australia, New Zealand and other bilateral partners and multi lateral agencies. It was evident that SOPAC was not broke and continued to attract support from regional and international partners, however, the real yardstick of success is the delivery of concrete progress in country. Tuvalu acknowledged that the financial support for the regional pool of expertise (such as SOPAC) provided the technical and scientific expertise not available in-country. The approach would need to be continued and improved. Tuvalu raised concerns that the Pacific region was missing out on global initiatives due to the lack of frameworks particularly at international level. Strategic pockets were needed to facilitate delivery for international cooperation identifying clear goals with clear demarcations of where work is delivered at regional level for functional purposes and at national level with concrete outputs involving the community. Tuvalu further sought clarification on the possibility of interventions from GEF and disbursement of resources.

44. The Director addressed interventions made by Palau, Papua New Guinea and Tuvalu. In response to Tuvalu on GEF-PAS, SOPAC was at the stage of finalising documentation between UNDP and UNEP. The recruitment process was already underway with an intended January 2009 start for the Team.

45. In response to the Palau observation on the need for the coordination of the GEF-PAS Framework to be housed within one of the Pacific organisations, the Director noted that regional organisations need to be requested to support

interventions. Countries will need to work with implementing agencies to design appropriate actions by January 2009.

46. The Cook Islands commended the Secretariat and the Director for the information on the donor supported activities to date noting funding opportunities in place and how RIF would impact delivery.

47. The Marshall Islands echoed the comments made and welcomed continued support of the donors. He noted the links to the Pacific Plan and commended the staff on work that had been carried out, which was reflected in the increasing funding awarded to SOPAC over the years. The message to donors is that SOPAC is an active regional organisation working with them to support national activities.

48. Kiribati associated itself with other countries that expressed deep appreciation to donors and partners for the tremendous support given. Kiribati highlighted the obvious commitment and value placed on SOPAC work by the development partners as reflected in the summary of contributions presented. She expressed the hope that Secretariat morale remained steady particularly during these trying times such that, as preparatory work progresses towards the realisation of the Leaders' decision, the work of SOPAC, which members had and would continue to benefit from would not be diminished or compromised in any way.

49. Samoa thanked the Director and echoed sentiments expressed around the table noting that it was obvious that donor support provided the resources for carrying out in-country work. Despite the outcomes of the RIF, it appeared donors recognised the impacts of the SOPAC work programme on the lives; and resources and would continue to support the work programme. She commended the Secretariat for securing the confidence of donor partners and thereby securing funds.

50. Tonga acknowledged with appreciation the support from donor countries, particularly with respect to services delivered. He reflected on the opening prayer by the Rev. Tofiga Falani to "focus", saying this should be Council's focus.

51. Tuvalu supported the recommendations in the paper (AS37/6.1.3 Rev. 1) and recommended that the language be amended to read "requested the Director" (rather than the Secretariat), to write to all donors.

52. The Director suggested that Council might wish to consider recommendations under the RIF

item to ensure services were sustained and the resources required to improve services are secured; and to encourage regional organisations to be proactive in securing international resources.

53. Council accepted the report and in doing so acknowledged with appreciation the strong donor support, essential for effective delivery of SOPAC's work programme, and requested the Director to write to all the donors and development partners thanking them for their support in delivering the SOPAC work programmes.

54. Council also noted with appreciation that some of its members were contributing directly to the Secretariat in order to support in-country work programme delivery.

6.1.4 SOPAC/EU "Reducing Vulnerability of Pacific ACP States" – Report

55. The report of the SOPAC EU Project was introduced by the Deputy Director. Council was advised that the paper should be read with the four annexes as indicated in AS37/6.1.4. The Deputy Director recalled that in July 2007 the Secretariat was advised that the EDF8 component would not be extended beyond 2007 and that the EDF9 component was extended to December 2008. Council was advised that the technical components of the report would be presented under the relevant technical programmes.

56. New Zealand expressed appreciation for the presentation noting that it had enlightening information and enquired whether there had been opportunity for SOPAC to discuss with the EU the lessons learnt as highlighted. He thought it would be useful for other donors to know of these types of experiences.

57. The Deputy Director explained that EU projects are reviewed at mid term, annually and also at Project end, by the EU. The Project-end review would present an opportunity for the discussion on lessons learnt.

58. The Director added that each annual evaluation was taken seriously and the Secretariat has sought to clarify with the EU on how to improve the Project delivery design accepting that the project was ambitious. Following the mid-term review of EDF 8 the decision was made to integrate the Project across the programmes and a greater and higher quality delivery rate was evident complementing the technical assistance recruited under other initiatives.

59. Council noted and commended the results

and the completion of the EDF8 component of the EU Project; the extension of the EDF9 component for a further 18 months from June 2007 till December 2008 and the products and services provided to date.

60. Council endorsed the progress report on the SOPAC/EU Project for the 2007/2008 year.

6.2 STAR Chair Report

61. Chair invited the Chair of STAR, Professor John Collen of the Victoria University of Wellington, to present his report to Council. (The Report is attached in full in Appendix 5).

62. The Chair of STAR presented his report to Council (paper AS37/6.2), highlighting the activities undertaken during the STAR 2008 meeting. He emphasised the voluntary nature of the STAR, in terms of the sharing of scientific findings and time given freely by scientific experts to support the meetings. He reminded Council that STAR participants are a scientific resource that Pacific island countries could tap into for expert advice.

63. The Chair of STAR noted that the meeting theme of the 2008 STAR Session was “Environmental change and oceanic islands – especially with respect to managing water resources and sanitation on atolls”. He reminded Council that STAR themes were selected each year by the host country in conjunction with the Chair of STAR and the Director of the SOPAC Secretariat with the view to attracting extra scientists working in that particular area as well as to ensure that the host nation got specialist knowledge in areas that was of most interest to it. He also noted presentations from other areas were also welcomed by the STAR.

64. The Chair of STAR noted that 35 papers were presented orally at the 2008 meeting while many others had been submitted as poster papers. There had been a broad range of topics covered including water and sanitation, remote sensing, shallow marine and coastal processes, aggregate mining and resource economics. He referred Council to the STAR papers.

65. He observed that while the STAR Working Groups on Deep Sea Mining and Human Resource Issues had to be cancelled this year, the Working Groups for Marine Benthic Habitat, Energy, Water and GIS did meet. He drew the attention of Council to the fact that 2008 marked the first ever meeting of the STAR GIS Working Group.

66. He drew the attention of Council to the presentations made by a number of STAR participants

to local schools in Tuvalu during the meeting to share science findings as well as promote science as a career.

67. The Chair of STAR observed that he had previously made comments at the Annual Session in 2007 on the potential impact of the Leaders’ Decision (RIF) on the STAR. Emphasising that it was not appropriate for STAR to comment on the operations of SOPAC but only on the link STAR makes between science and SOPAC, he observed that there had been a considerable dialogue through e-mail exchange among STAR members on the impact the RIF could have on the STAR. He stated that the STAR could theoretically continue to operate independently of SOPAC once the absorption of SOPAC occurs; nevertheless, he considered that it was debateable in reality as to whether this would actually occur. Rather, he considered that, without the ability of STAR members to continuously contribute to SOPAC as they currently do, STAR would mostly likely disappear when SOPAC does. For a new STAR to emerge in the future under the new institutional framework, he emphasised that an interim relationship would need to be established during absorption. To be successful once absorption took place, a new STAR 2010 would be critical in his view.

68. The Chair of STAR drew Council’s attention to the following suggestions out of the STAR Business Meeting held on 22 October 2008:

- (a) STAR appreciates the value placed on it by member nations during discussion at the 36th Annual Session in Nuku’alofa, and hopes that the network can continue to contribute to the delivery of scientific services in the region into the future.
- (b) However, STAR realizes that a new relationship will need to be formed and that an interim period of uncertainty will follow the 2009 meeting.
- (c) As STAR is a purely voluntary organisation, it is crucial that both a desire and a forum be maintained that encourage participation through this period.
- (d) Therefore, to maintain the momentum of STAR or its successor, STAR suggests that member nations consider supporting a regional scientific meeting to take the place of the STAR conference during 2010.

69. The Chair of STAR proposed that a regional scientific meeting be conducted in 2010 instead of the STAR, if nations of the region saw merit in this. He noted that this meeting could be held under the auspices of STAR if necessary but that it could also be open to a wider scope.

70. The Chair of STAR concluded his statement by acknowledging the warm hospitality of Tuvalu and offering the services of STAR to provide whatever advice and support to Council.

71. Chair invited Council members to comment on the STAR Chair's report.

72. The Marshall Islands thanked the Chair of STAR for his presentation and acknowledged the importance of the work of STAR, including the involvement of the international community. He requested that a way be found to continue the work of STAR which provided a valuable bridge between the needs of the Pacific and the work of the scientific community. He also requested SOPAC to facilitate arrangements to carry on the work of STAR.

73. Tuvalu thanked the Chair of STAR for his report and underscored the appreciation of Tuvalu for the presentations made to local schools. He joined Marshall Islands in acknowledging the importance of the STAR work, and the continuous support provided by donor partners.

74. Papua New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Tonga and Kiribati acknowledged the contribution and importance of the work of the STAR and extended their wishes that STAR continue to form part of SOPAC's future under the new institutional framework. Additionally, Kiribati stated that it hoped that cautious steps would be taken in the implementation of the Leaders' decision so that the work of the STAR was not compromised.

75. Noting the proposal for a regional scientific meeting in 2010, New Zealand asked what options Council had to take forward the recommendation in light of the Leaders' decision on the RIF.

76. The SOPAC Director advised that Council usually considered the recommendations of the STAR Working Groups and endorsed them; hence Council could review the suggestions out of the STAR Business Meeting and adopt them as their own recommendations.

77. The Director of SOPAC also reminded Council that at the last meeting in Tonga there had been considerable discussion on the value of STAR and the need to retain it. She suggested that, in this session, and under agenda item AS37/10.1, Council could reiterate the value of STAR and seek to ensure that, in all discussions on the RIF, STAR not be forgotten and Council seek to find ways to ensure that STAR endure into any new future institutional arrangements that may emerge.

78. The SPREP Director acknowledged the contribution to the region of SOPAC and the STAR and observed that the wording of the Leaders' decision in 2007 already included that STAR continue. He assured Council that SPREP recognised that SOPAC essential services must be maintained and not fragmented.

79. The Cook Islands reiterated the request that discussions continue to ensure that the STAR continue.

80. The Chair of STAR thanked Council for its kind remarks and encouragement in the continuation of STAR but reminded Council that STAR was not an entity per se but a large number of separate individuals who would ultimately make their own decisions about whether or not to continue to operate.

81. Council accepted the STAR Chair's report and in considering the issues raised in the report reiterated its appreciation of the value of STAR to member nations as discussed at the 36th Annual Session in Nuku'alofa, and hoped that the network could continue to contribute to the delivery of scientific services in the region into the future.

82. Also, Council noted:

- (a) the STAR observation that while a new relationship would need to be formed with the absorbing agency(ies) an interim period of uncertainty would follow the 2009 meeting; and
- (b) that given STAR was a purely volunteer organisation, it was crucial that both a desire and a forum be maintained that encouraged participation through this period.

83. Council endorsed, that to maintain the momentum of STAR or its successor, that member nations consider supporting a regional scientific meeting to take the place of the STAR conference during 2010.

6.3 PMEG Chairs Report [on cross cutting issues]

84. Chair invited the Chair of the Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Group (PMEG), Professor Gary Greene of the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, to present his report to the SOPAC Governing Council on the cross-cutting programme issues noted by PMEG in their 2008 review.

85. The Chair of the PMEG reminded Council of the origin and mandate of PMEG as a means to support good governance in SOPAC. He reminded Council that reports on individual programme reviews would be covered under items AS37/7, AS37/8 and AS37/9 while PMEG comments of the RIF were to be covered under the OIP PMEG (agenda item AS39/9). Details of this presentation are available in paper AS37/6.3. The full set of PMEG reports is in Appendix 6.

86. The Chair of PMEG identified a number of cross cutting issues that appear to affect the performance of SOPAC programmes and that these had been shared with Programme Managers as well as the SOPAC Directorate. The issues identified included communications (the need for improved exchange of information within SOPAC as well as improved information management), the need for improved SOPAC staff development and SOPAC reports to donors to draw more explicit links between funding and strategic goals/outcomes.

87. The Chair of PMEG invited Council to provide input on the effectiveness of the PMEG and how it might be improved, including its existence following the absorption of SOPAC to SPREP/SPC. He concluded by joining other delegates in extending his thanks to Tuvalu for its warm hospitality and generosity.

88. Chair invited comments from Council on the PMEG.

89. The Cook Islands expressed appreciation for the report and the work of the PMEG. He acknowledged the importance of PMEG in ensuring a performance management based approach to SOPAC's work programme and acknowledged the recommendations by PMEG to improve SOPAC's performance. He stated that PMEG together with the STAR should both continue after the absorption of SOPAC. Given that the issue of the SOPAC rationalisation will be discussed later on in the meeting, he expressed the hope that Council would be able to provide more guidance on the future of PMEG then.

90. Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea acknowledged the contribution of the PMEG as a means to improve programme delivery and meeting the needs of Pacific islands. They reiterated the desire of SOPAC members to maintain the work of the PMEG, recognising the improvements to service delivery that had been achieved in the few years that the PMEG has existed.

91. The Director of SOPAC thanked the Chair of PMEG for his report and acknowledged the value that Council placed on the PMEG proc-

ess. She described the PMEG as a cost-effective mechanism for getting input to improve SOPAC's operation at both a technical and organisational level. She emphasised SOPAC's view of PMEG as an independent constructive commentary and review. She considered the PMEG to be an invaluable mechanism and would encourage other CROP agencies to consider embracing it.

92. In response to the cross cutting issues raised by the PMEG, the Director of SOPAC reminded Council that the PMEG reports had only just been received by SOPAC so that, while the Directorate had been briefed on the findings of the Group, her responses to issues would be initial and that SOPAC would, following the Annual Session, revisit the recommendations in more detail to consider further implications.

93. On the issue of communication, the Director of SOPAC accepted the need for improvement and proposed to immediately implement regular Monday morning senior management meetings. On the matter of information management, she advised Council that some progress had been made on this issue last year, and noted that a draft information strategy for SOPAC has been compiled and was being considered internally.

94. On the issues of staff development and training, the Director of SOPAC reminded Council that this was a challenge for agencies such as SOPAC where staff are contract based; nevertheless, she noted that there were a variety of ways in which to support development. For instance, she noted the formal training provided to the SOPAC numeric modeller by GA and NIWA in tsunami modelling. She also noted the opportunity for outsiders to work with SOPAC technical staff to convert various technical SOPAC reports to refereed scientific and technical journals articles. In this respect, she stated that SOPAC welcomed the opportunity to get assistance from the STAR.

95. On the issue of linking outputs and outcomes before donors, she acknowledged that the need to link outputs to the outcomes identified in the Strategic Plan was critical. She stated that SOPAC needed to be more explicit about the outputs that the Secretariat makes and how these contribute. Finally, the Director emphasised that SOPAC endeavoured to address all the recommendations in the interest of achieving continual improvement.

96. Marshall Islands asked whether it would be possible to obtain a copy of the report on how SOPAC planned to address the remarks in the PMEG report; and the Chair confirmed that this would be possible.

97. Chair reiterated the value of the PMEG contribution and the need to continue the work of the PMEG to support the SOPAC programmes.

98. Council endorsed the Chair of PMEG's report on cross-cutting issues and noted the issues raised, a number of which would be revisited under the RIF item.

6.4 CROP and PPAC Summary Reports

99. Chair invited the SOPAC Director to present the outcomes of the 2008 meetings of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) and of the meetings of the Pacific Plan Action Committee (PPAC). The Director referred Council to paper AS37/6.4 which highlighted those issues most relevant to SOPAC. She also drew the attention of Council to related issues covered under agenda items AS37/7, AS37/8, AS37/9 and AS37/10.2.

100. Marshall Islands thanked the Director for the report on the CROP and PPAC and commented that this reporting was just not for the sake of reporting but it reflected the work done by the Secretariat in implementing the policies as stated in the Pacific Plan.

101. Samoa considered that the reports were important for facilitating dialogue on Pacific goals and actions as well as for sharing technical expertise. She noted the reference to the review of Working Groups and asked whether there was a timeframe attached to the review. She also advised that Samoa wished to see SOPAC country profiles continually and regularly updated as countries found the country by country coverage very useful.

102. Tuvalu thanked the Director for her report and stated their satisfaction with increased collaboration and coordination between CROP members. He expressed the wish of Tuvalu that this continue. With respect to the Pacific Plan, he stated that Tuvalu was encouraged by the progress on this issue. He asked that SOPAC strategise so that it focused its work on adding value and not duplicating the work of other CROP agencies.

103. Tuvalu also stated that, in relation to climate change, there was a need to strategise and develop programmes that could attract assistance from international partners. He observed that there was considerable discussion and work on climate change in the region but there was not much in the way of increased local capacity to address it. He raised the potential need for a climate change centre of excellence to develop the capac-

ity of islanders, for instance in negotiations. He suggested that, while focusing on rationalisation, SOPAC could also look at opportunities for new types of partnerships.

104. Further, Tuvalu acknowledged the presence of the outgoing Director of SPREP and given that Mr Takesy had indicated the day before that this was probably the final occasion when he would be in Tuvalu in his capacity as SPREP Director, and that he was due to depart the next day, Tuvalu took the opportunity to thank him for his contribution to the region and to Tuvalu in particular. He also noted that the Director of SPREP had also announced that SPREP Council had appointed Cristelle Pratt as the new Director of SPREP.

105. Cook Islands drew the attention of Council to the last paragraph on paper AS37/6.4 which noted the role of SOPAC in climate change and resource use solutions. He endorsed SOPAC's recommendations in relation to this, emphasising the value of SOPAC's applied geoscience and applied technology, in tandem with STAR, to help Pacific island nations.

106. In response to the question from Samoa, the Director of SOPAC advised that SOPAC had not yet signed off on the terms of reference of the [CROP working groups] review and that this would be considered at the CROP's next meeting (probably late 2008 or in early 2009). On the matter of updating country profiles, she advised that SOPAC would discuss internally how this could be conducted in a timely and up-to-date fashion.

107. In relation to the intervention by Tuvalu, the Director of SOPAC stated that SOPAC made every effort not to duplicate the work of other agencies but to address the development priorities in the areas of its comparative advantage. She stated that she was unaware of a time when SOPAC duplicated the efforts of another agency, but she stood to be corrected if one could produce evidence that this was the case. She wholeheartedly agreed that CROP agencies should complement each others' efforts.

108. With respect to the comment by Tuvalu for CROP to target new funds in support of climate change, the Director of SOPAC suggested a recommendation as follows:

"Tuvalu observed that there are significant non-traditional donor and development partner resources that could be secured to address emerging development priorities such as climate change. Accordingly, Council encouraged the Director to engage with CROP colleagues to collaborate toward designing strategic programmes including exploring the possibility of establishing a Pacific climate change centre, to achieve this."

109. Council noted the Summary Reports of the 2008 meetings of the CROP and the 2008 meetings of the PPAC, acknowledging that items of relevance to SOPAC will be raised under appropriate agenda items.

6.5 Deepsea Minerals – an Emerging Regional Opportunity

110. Chair invited the Deputy Director to make a presentation on deep sea minerals as a (re) emerging issue. Details were provided in paper AS37/6.5 while other information was available among STAR papers (available on the CD that accompanies this Proceedings volume). The paper highlighted that the formation of CCOP/SOPAC, the forerunner organisation to SOPAC, was expressly for the purpose of promoting the investigation of mineral potential of the shelves and ocean floor of the South Pacific region.

111. The Deputy Director focussed the attention of Council to the lack of basic legal, fiscal and environmental policies in most Pacific islands to regulate the exploration and exploitation of deep sea minerals. He noted that innovations in technology and success in exploration means that the region is now facing a mini deep sea gold rush. He proposed that SOPAC work with Pacific island members and partner agencies to develop a regional approach to policy development for deep sea minerals and that this could subsequently be tailored by individual Pacific island countries to meet their needs.

112. Chair invited comments from the floor as well as from the chairs of STAR and PMEG.

113. The Chair of STAR commended the Deputy Director on the presentation and suggested that Council conduct a special session at the SOPAC 2009 Annual Session, bringing in experts on the topic to share information and inform the region of issues.

114. The Cook Islands concurred with the importance of the issue of deep sea minerals and endorsed the idea of a side meeting on the issue at the SOPAC Annual Session in 2009.

115. The Solomon Islands had no hesitation in accepting the paper and its entire contents thereby fully endorsing its recommendations as presented. Solomon Islands considered the issue as being one of paramount importance to them, given its total area of 1.3 million square kilometres of offshore territory in a geological area acknowledged to be mineral rich. This mineral potential was also the reason the Solomon Islands was pursuing an eCS claim under the UNCLOS via a tripartite approach with Papua New Guinea

and the Federated States of Micronesia over the Ontong Java Plateau. The Solomon Islands confirmed deepsea minerals as an emerging regional opportunity reporting that while they had issued as many as thirty-four prospecting licences; they were issued under the auspices of the Mines and Minerals Act of 1990, legislation which was specifically formulated for onland mineral development. While commercial interest in certain offshore areas of Solomon Islands was obviously high, the country itself was ill-equipped to handle the interest to its best advantage and formally requested the advisory services of the SOPAC Secretariat to complete an unfinished task from 1999 on a draft mineral policy, which needed fine tuning to include the offshore aspect and to be prepared for final adoption. (The Solomon Islands statement on this matter is included in full in Appendix 4, as an attachment to the Solomon Islands country statement.

116. Marshall Islands and Fiji endorsed the recommendations proposed by SOPAC as well as the suggestion by the Chair of STAR to convene a workshop.

117. Noting its unique experience in developing policy to accommodate deep sea minerals in Papua New Guinea, the PNG delegate offered to share their experiences with other Pacific island countries in dealing with deep sea minerals on a bilateral basis. This offer was gratefully acknowledged by Council members.

118. Tonga expressed appreciation for the paper and emphasised that assistance in deep sea minerals is a high priority for Tonga. Tonga endorsed the recommendations.

119. Palau also expressed appreciation for the presentation by the Deputy Director but enquired after the reason that Palau was not listed in the table that is part of paper AS37/6.5.

120. Vanuatu thanked the Secretariat for tabling the paper in Council and for the paper presented in STAR (by SOPAC geologist Akuila Tawake) both highlighting the re-emergence of deepsea minerals. Vanuatu, alongside Solomon Islands is one of those countries that has issued prospecting and exploration licences – in total 29 licences altogether to Neptune and Bismarck. In the absence of an offshore legislation or policy Vanuatu has used the Mines and Minerals Act. of 1990 in issuing those licenses; hence Vanuatu clearly sees the need for pursuing offshore policy and mining legislation and in this regard Vanuatu endorsed the recommendations provided in the paper.

121. Kiribati welcomed and fully supported the offer by STAR to host a meeting in 2009 on the issue of deep sea minerals. Kiribati also expressed

gratitude for the offer by Papua New Guinea to share their experiences in this area through bilateral means. She informed that partial exploration had been conducted in their seas and Kiribati would welcome further exploration to be carried out in the rest of the Kiribati EEZ. She underscored that for Kiribati, this was the new emerging issue and therefore they fully supported the recommendations as articulated in the paper.

122. Federated States of Micronesia supported the recommendation in the report, particularly the assistance to the member countries to formulate the policy on seabed mining and minerals; and he also registered his gratitude for the offer by the Chair of STAR for a meeting on the matter, which he also supported.

123. New Zealand submitted a couple of questions : (1) the fact that a hundred licenses had already been issued in Papua New Guinea did that mean that deposits there were greater than elsewhere or were they just more accessible? and (2) in relation to Papua New Guinea – would Papua New Guinea still benefit from a regional legislative framework or had the “horse already bolted”? A third question was added – given the significant commercial pressure for the issuance of licences, for example around 29 in Vanuatu already issued – then realistically how long would it take to develop a set of binding legislative frameworks?

124. Tuvalu also lent their support to the recommendations in the SOPAC paper and they also took the opportunity to request that SOPAC enlighten Tuvalu on its potential for deep-sea minerals as an issue. Tuvalu was interested in this assistance because a number of mining companies have appeared to claim that Tuvalu has potential and hence they were looking to SOPAC for more guidance.

125. Nauru joined others in supporting the recommendations but observed that like Palau, Nauru had no potential for deep sea minerals. Nauru however was still interested in being considered as a host country for the STAR or SOPAC conference that have been recommended; and was seeking SOPAC’s views on that interest.

126. The Chair of PMEG drew attention to the tripartite exploration programmes on deep sea minerals that were highlighted in the presentation by the Deputy Director. He reported that 20 years ago those programmes were key in establishing mineral potential in the Pacific region and there was a rich dataset in existence at the SOPAC Secretariat in Suva that can be ‘mined’ in support of what was emerging. He reported that Japanese, French, German and other vessels were in and out of the region and he noted that these programmes had generated extensive deep sea

minerals data which is still held at SOPAC, given that the organisation SOPAC had cut its teeth on mineral exploration in this region. Reports on the US-AU-NZ tripartite programme cruises were published in the Earth Science series of the Circum-Pacific Council for Energy and Mineral Resources (CPCEMR). Furthermore, in that regard the PMEG Chair proposed that the CPCEMR partner with SOPAC and STAR to conduct a conference on the issue since many that had been involved in the original tripartite programme and had much experience to share were still active in the field. As a director of the CPCEMR, he offered to take back the request from the region, should Council agree.

127. Marshall Islands queried whether there would be merit to address the issue of deep sea minerals through a regional policy via the Pacific Plan.

128. Fiji endorsed the suggestion by Marshall Islands to address the issue of deep sea minerals through the Pacific Plan as a way of bringing the attention of Pacific island leaders to the issue. While he acknowledged that the work proposed in Council’s discussion would ultimately result in a regional strategy to manage deep sea minerals, he enquired as to what approach Pacific island governments should take to deal with mining company requests until this was developed.

129. The Chair called upon the Deputy Director to respond to the various queries raised.

130. On the convening of a special session at the 2009 STAR session on deep sea minerals, the Deputy Director advised that the idea would need to be included as a recommendation from Council. Concurring with the Chair of PMEG, he also observed the need to tap into the pool of international and academic expertise on deep sea minerals to support any meeting.

131. With respect to the queries from New Zealand, the Deputy Director noted that Papua New Guinea exploration licences are in its territorial waters, and that PNG is a tectonically active area. These factors coupled with the first licences (in the world) granted to Nautilus explained the abundance of licences in the area..

132. The Deputy Director acknowledged the observation by Palau that it is not recognised as currently having deep sea minerals potential. Nevertheless, he noted that information on mineral occurrences continues to be collected globally as the ocean floor is a vast area. This issue may therefore yet emerge as important to Palau given exploration for fossil or older deposits.

133. With respect to the Marshall Islands suggestion to address the issue of deep sea minerals

via the Pacific Plan, the Deputy Director agreed that this could be an opportunity and suggested that this could be located under the issue of sustainable development/ natural resources development.

134. The Deputy Director noted the request from Tuvalu for SOPAC assistance on the matter of deep sea minerals. He suggested that SOPAC and Tuvalu discuss further on how to build the issue of deep sea minerals into the SOPAC work programme for Tuvalu.

135. The Chair of STAR requested more time to discuss the idea of a STAR side session on deep sea minerals in 2009 with other stakeholders and advised that he would report back on this idea later in the Annual Session.

136. The Director confirmed SOPAC's perception of the importance of a roundtable on the issue of deep sea minerals and noted SOPAC's intent to discuss with partners the convening of a workshop on the matter as soon as possible (in all likelihood a joint SOPAC/World Bank workshop in early 2009). This would then potentially result in three critical workshops (in all) in 2009: a SOPAC/World Bank regional introductory workshop, a STAR side meeting and a CPCEMR/SOPAC/STAR Pacific regional conference on Marine Minerals.

137. Council:

- (a) considered the implications of the growing interest in offshore minerals as demonstrated by the increasing numbers of applications lodged with Pacific governments to acquire ground within their Exclusive Economic Zones, and the lack of adequate offshore minerals policies and or regulatory frameworks to protect their national interests.
- (b) strongly urged SOPAC to coordinate the development and implementation of a multipartite, regional initiative that will assist countries to develop and implement appropriate and effective legal, environmental and technical policy and regulatory frameworks.
- (c) supported the convening of a regional workshop to commence the design and implementation of a regional offshore minerals initiative.
- (d) encouraged STAR to convene special sessions in their 2009 meeting on deep sea minerals research exploration and mining and welcomed the offer by CPCEMR to convene with SOPAC and STAR a (separate) Pacific regional Marine Minerals conference in 2009.

7. COMMUNITY LIFELINES PROGRAMME

7.1 Report from the Community Lifelines Programme

138. The Community Lifelines Programme (CLP) Manager presented a summary of the 2008 Component Outputs with major achievements of the Community Lifelines Programme in: Resource Assessment, Development and Management; Asset Management; and Advocacy and Governance with specific presentations on the HYCOS and IWRM projects. He acknowledged the CLP Staff for the invaluable contribution toward the successful delivery of the programme activities and the PMEG Team for their commitment in evaluation of the CLP.

139. Council commended the presentations and acknowledged the Manager CLP and programme staff for the work well done in the region; and the continuing donor support.

Water

140. Marshall Islands recognised the importance and rights of people having access to clean and safe water and requested that where possible to provide details of the donor and the funding for the respective activities. The Marshall Islands delegate also stated that he was not aware of all the invaluable work that had been implemented in the Marshall Islands and would like to further register its appreciation.

141. Kiribati acknowledged with appreciation the Secretariat's assistance delivered under the programme noting the work done on the improvement of water quality data through the Pacific HYCOS and stressed the need for continued assistance.

142. Nauru appreciated the work undertaken in securing funding for national projects, highlighting the country capacity difficulties with respect to implementation and requested SOPAC for assistance.

143. Cook Islands supported the concept of the IWRM approach and suggested that donors should use this as a model for achieving integrated programme delivery.

144. Tuvalu recognised the specific assistance by the water sector and highlighted the need for continued support as water is a critical commodity particularly in Small Island States (SIS).

145. Vanuatu registered its profound acknowledgement and satisfaction on the various work ac-

tivities CLP has rendered in country. It also commended the hard work, commitment and effort that the Programme Manager and staff had put in order to secure funding in order to execute work programmes as outlined in the report such as GEF / EU IWRM, Pacific HYCOS, Water Safety Plan and Water Quality monitoring. Vanuatu advised the council of the completion and recent launching of their National Water Strategy and thanked the Government of NZ for financial assistance in this important undertaking. They thanked CLP for attending to their request at the last SOPAC annual session and for considering them in the water demand management pilot programme for which work would be undertaken in early 2009 in Luganville, Santo. Vanuatu requested technical assistance in the implementation of the National Water Strategy specifically in the area of regulation development in line with the Water Resources Management Act and also acknowledged support provided by the EU-funded national IWRM programme towards the strengthening and coordination of national water committee activities.

146. Papua New Guinea recognised the importance of water sector activities and noted the policy component of the IWRM as a significant activity that can assist in its national management policy with respect to water with particular relevance to rural communities and supported the need for assistance in this area.

147. Tonga noted the need for country support and stressed that this would be addressed.

148. Solomon Islands noted the increased support to the water sector of US\$30 m for the next 5 years and accorded its appreciation to the efforts in securing the funding. In addition, the Solomon Islands noted the impact of the HYCOS Project in reviving national efforts with respect to the assessment of its water resources.

149. The Secretariat acknowledged the responses from Council and based on the comment by Marshall Islands of not being aware of in-country activities, also noted the need to improve SOPAC's visibility factor.

150. The Secretariat clarified that in terms of funding tagged against specific activities, this was reflected in the Work Programme and Budget appended as Annex 1 and 2 of AS37/7.1.

151. In terms of legislation and policies, the Secretariat acknowledged the need and requests from countries and stated that this would be addressed through the EU-funded component of the IWRM. The Secretariat further stressed the

need for countries to strengthen their national support mechanisms and internal processes so as to facilitate the successful collection of relevant information.

Energy

152. New Zealand noted the wide range of energy activities and wondered whether there was a strategic direction for energy at SOPAC. He also noted the training and up-skilling activities as presented and sought clarification on whether this should be part of the Human Resource Manager's portfolio. Additionally, New Zealand suggested the inclusion of another column in Annexes 1 and 2 of AS37/7.1 that this would provide details of how effective the activities have been.

153. Kiribati expressed their appreciation of the Secretariat's support and assistance with energy activities and welcomed ongoing assistance.

154. Marshall Islands acknowledged the work delivered in the region and the support of donors to the CLP and expressed the continuous need for assistance in the energy sector.

155. Nauru acknowledged work conducted on energy efficiency and conservation and stressed the continuous need for such assistance to Nauru specifically for the end-users.

156. Samoa commended the Secretariat in particular the Community Lifelines Programme staff for the tremendous efforts and for all the work and activities carried out in the region in particular the water & sanitation, energy and ICT sectors. It was clear that a lot of work had been done and Samoa encouraged the CLP and SOPAC to continue this programme that addressed the issues relevant to each member country. Each country realised and appreciated the benefits from all these efforts and activities pertaining to these sectors. Samoa also acknowledged the assistance provided by SOPAC on Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and expressed its appreciation for the assistance provided in the development of its national energy policy and action plan and wished to see this technical assistance extended towards the implementation phase.

157. Tuvalu in thanking CLP recognised the assistance rendered specifically in the tariff review, wind monitoring and securing of funds from the Italy-Pacific SIDS Cooperation.

158. On a strategic direction for Energy, the Secretariat referenced an independent review

commissioned by SOPAC that would engage with SOPAC Management, the CROP Energy Working Group and the EU Delegation as well as EU EDF experts, to advise on the most appropriate and sustainable coordination and management mechanism that could be established to ensure the effective implementation of EDF10-funded initiatives. The review had provided recommendations for consideration as a possible way forward for its Energy programme.

159. The Secretariat also highlighted that there were energy programmes spread across the region with the Pacific Power Association (PPA) focussing on power utilities, the Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme (SPREP) on the environmental components of energy, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) on petroleum and SOPAC on resource assessments, energy efficiency and conservation, policy, capacity development, and educational awareness including a coordination role in the CROP Energy Working Group. SOPAC had also taken-on many partially completed projects being left-over from terminating projects thus assuming the responsibility of continuing support to PICs on their request.

160. The Secretariat welcomed the suggestion to expand the matrices in Annexes 1 and 2 (of paper AS37/7.1); however the practicality of actual monitoring over the long term was also raised. The Secretariat on the other hand stated that its activities are already being monitored against the key indicators of its work programme which is at a higher level and on a longer term basis (2005 – 2009).

161. In response to the comment on providing training and up-skilling, the Secretariat stated that there was no Human Resource Manager thus these activities are currently being implemented at the sector level of CLP.

162. The Secretariat noted the challenges and requests by Marshall Islands and Nauru and would endeavour to continue to provide its technical assistance, support and capacity building as requested.

ICT, GIS & Remote Sensing

163. Cook Islands referenced the use of the Tele-Centre concept as raised in the recent PACINET meeting in the Cook Islands and urged SOPAC to investigate the applicability for supply into rural communities.

164. Kiribati registered the continued need for capacity development in GIS, data analysis and coastal monitoring.

165. Tuvalu requested assistance on the use of the Linux software.

166. Marshall Islands noted the work being carried out specifically referencing the ICT support to the Suva-based missions and would like to see this continued.

167. FFA raised the issue of whether SOPAC had considered open-sourcing software that it had developed for the countries. The Secretariat responded that these were developed with the aim that it could be widely used by PICs without any restrictions.

168. In response, to the Cook Islands' request to explore means of funding for licences of the GEOCAP software the Secretariat confirmed that it was currently seeking funding for the licences required for the GEOCAP software and suggested that this be also raised at the upcoming workshop in Canberra which may provide means to address this.

Recommendation

169. Council endorsed the report on the 2008 Work Plan for the Community Lifelines Programme, commented as necessary with regard to both national and regional aspects, and acknowledged the input/comment from the PMEG and TAG.

7.2 Issues and Opportunities for the Community Lifelines Programme

170. The CLP Manager highlighted the new initiatives in the CLP as detailed in AS37/7.2 where the respective areas included:

171. Water and Sanitation Sector; (i) reducing water-borne diseases; (ii) adaptation to climate change – water; (iii) resourcing water resources assessment & monitoring; Energy Sector; (iv) Coordination and Implementation Mechanisms; (v) 2009 Energy Ministers Meeting; (vi) Energy in the 39th Forum Leaders' Communiqué; ICT and Remote Sensing; (vii) Pacific Plan and the Digital Strategy; (viii) e-Parliament – ICT Access for the Poor; (ix) GIS & Remote Sensing; (x) Methodology Development; (xi) Internal Review of the ICT Structure; and (xiii) Programme Resources.

172. Cook Islands suggested the inclusion of water-borne diseases into Recommendation 2 to be consistent with the issues raised by the STAR Water Working Group. Within this context the Secretariat noted that recommendations made by the STAR Working Groups were incorporated into the Secretariats' Work Programme.

173. New Zealand firstly on recommendation 5 (to do with PEMM in 2009 and associated meetings) reinforced the need to strengthen the linkages between the providers and the funders of the activities around energy so that outcomes of those activities could actually be measured. Secondly, on some later recommendations, particularly 9, 11 and 12, which are to do with ICT – reinforced that any new work would need to take into account possible changes under the RIF.

174. Australia in agreeing to endorse the recommendations noted the need to keep in mind the RIF process, (i.e.) to be mindful of decisions made here so as they do not become an obstacle to the rationalisation process.

175. Council in noting the RIF process and proposed rationalisation of SOPAC programmes, endorsed the recommendations in Paper AS37/7.2 with minor amendments as follows:

- (a) Council recognised the high-level commitments provided by Pacific Leaders to accord their highest priority to water and sanitation in their economic and development plans, made at the Beppu Summit and under their Pacific Plan, and strongly urged SOPAC to provide support to member countries to meet these objectives, including through high-level political and national consultative processes.
- (b) Council encouraged the Secretariat to support member countries to incorporate risk reduction into Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Water Safety Planning (WSP) frameworks as coping and adaptation priority areas to climate variability and change. It further recognised the commitments made by Pacific Leaders attending the Beppu Summit to take urgent and effective action to prevent and reduce the risks of flood, drought and other water-related disasters; and support the region's vulnerable small island states in their efforts to protect lives and livelihoods from the impacts of climate change.
- (c) Council recognised the importance of water resources assessment and monitoring as key elements of sustainable water resources management; and recommended that the Secretariat support the development of hydrological monitoring systems in member countries through the Pacific HYCOS programme and create the political will to sustain these. It was noted that failure to support the sustained collection of long-term hydrological data would reduce the ability of countries to minimise health and financial risks from events such as flooding, droughts and environmental degradation.
- (d) Council noted the increasing cost of energy and recognised the high, critical priority accorded to energy by Pacific Leaders and Energy Ministers and urged SOPAC with lead regional responsibilities to coordinate the implementation of energy priorities to develop practical mechanisms that provide the best possible support to Pacific Island Countries to realise more sustainable energy use.
- (e) Council noted the priority placed by Pacific Leaders on Energy as articulated in the Forum Communiqué for 2008 and the progress made towards progressing this initiative and acknowledged the need for SOPAC to work with key partners to convene a 2nd Energy Ministerial Meeting in 2009.
- (f) Council noted the emerging and critical links between energy and other sectors and particularly to the opportunities and challenges of food security and urged SOPAC to work with partners to progress actions identified under the PEMM Communiqué. Council also noted the need for the Forum Secretariat to work closely with SOPAC to develop a regional Energy project to be considered for EDF10 Regional Indicative Programme funds, under the Regional Economic Integration sector of the EU's Regional Support strategy with the Pacific ACP states.
- (g) Council noted the continuing acknowledgement by Leaders that ICT remains a strategic priority for the region and supported ongoing participation and supporting the implementation of the Digital Strategy. Council encouraged, through its Outreach activities, an active role in supporting the implementation of actions under the Digital Strategy and was actively seeking funding support for e-Government, information management policies and capacity building projects.
- (h) Council noted the efforts of the Secretariat to secure resources/partnerships necessary to engage and inform parliamentarians in the areas of ICT and energy to ensure they develop effective and relevant legislative and regulatory environments within their countries.
- (i) Council noted the continuing increase in image coverage and expanded use of products and applications within the region and within the technical programmes of SOPAC, and recognised SOPAC's growing role as a service centre in the area of GIS/RS and the need to secure adequate resources (human and technical) to realise this.
- (j) Council noted the significant progress that SOPAC has made with respect to new and

innovative applications of GIS and Remote Sensing and urged the Secretariat to continue to extend this work particularly in the development of new methodologies that make better use of existing satellite imagery and data to enhance the services, support and products that SOPAC can deliver to its members.

- (k) Council noted the progress made with regard to the revised ICT structure and the progressive refocusing of technical support into the external outreach / information management and internal service support components and urged the Secretariat to commence with its implementation.
- (l) Council noted the significant progress that SOPAC has made with respect to new and innovative applications of GIS and Remote Sensing and urged the Secretariat to continue and extend this work particularly in the development of new methodologies that make better use of existing satellite imagery and data to enhance the services, support and products that SOPAC can deliver to its members.

7.3 Report from the Programme Review Monitoring and Evaluation Group on CLP

176. The CLP Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Group (PMEG) Team consisted of Dr Andrew Matthews, National Science Commissioner, New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO; Ms Makereta L. Sauturaga, Director, Department of Energy, Fiji; and Mr Jerrold E. Knight, PALARIS Programme Manager, Palau as the CLP PMEG Chair.

177. On behalf of the CLP PMEG Team Mr Jerrold Knight presented the findings of their review as in Paper AS37/7.3. He highlighted the difficulties in undertaking a comprehensive analysis given the limited time to review all programme activities. (For the full PMEG CLP report, see Appendix 6).

178. PMEG noted the rapid growth in staff: 2006 = 29; 2007 = 33; 2008 = 39; a 51% increase in three years with nine positions vacant.

179. PMEG commended CLP for an excellent work delivery with the specific details for water, energy and ICT activities presented in paper AS37/7.1 by the Programme Manager. PMEG also noted that a number of PMEG recommendations were already being implemented.

180. The PMEG presentation summed up with the following conclusions:

- (a) Staffing vacancies, especially upper level positions, needed to be urgently addressed.
- (b) Staff training is a constant requirement in the quickly evolving world of ICT. Personnel need to maintain high skill and knowledge level of current technologies. Other personnel in Energy and Water should also have access to training.
- (c) The Energy Sector has to be given a clear positioning and the lack of full-time leadership contributes to reducing the visibility of the Sector and limiting its ability to contribute effectively to energy sector programmes. The issue of the fragmentation of the energy sector across a number of CROP and other agencies needed to be urgently addressed so that work programmes were coordinated and better reflected the priorities of the Pacific community;
- (d) The Water and Sanitation Sector was doing very well with its strategic plan and implementation. The work programme was very country driven and this modality brought a better commitment of staff and resources; however, in some areas, particularly with the implementation of the hydrological services project, member States needed to commit resources to this project if it was to realize its full potential.
- (e) Success of SOPAC activities in the Community Life Programme which are directed at the client countries should be evaluated by whether the service actually benefited the country. This can only be determined by in-country visits or other communication with the people on the ground that received the service.

181. Marshall Islands sought clarification on the issue of communication, as highlighted in the PMEG Chair's address to Council, as this was not specifically referenced in the CLP PMEG Team's findings.

182. The Cook Islands stressed the need to continue the services of PMEG until the RIF process was finalised.

183. In response to the comments, CLP PMEG stated that the communication issue was considered as serious and cross cutting thus was relevant throughout all SOPAC programmes. The CLP PMEG report only covered the specific issues relevant to water, energy and ICT.

Recommendation

184. Council received the PMEG CLP report, requested the Director to address relevant concerns and recommendations as the opportunity and need arose in the coming year and the CLP to review outstanding concerns and recommendations.

8. COMMUNITY RISK PROGRAMME

8.1 Report of the Community Risk Programme

185. The Secretariat referred to paper AS37/8.1: Report of the Community Risk Programme 2008. The CRP Manager presented a summary of 2008 outputs with major achievements of the Community Risk Programme in the three components of:

- (a) Strengthening Resilience to Disasters;
- (b) Mitigating against Hazards; and
- (c) Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management (DRM).

186. The CRP Manager highlighted several activities undertaken in 2008 related to the following:

- o Implementation of the EU EDF 9 B-Envelope in Nauru, Tonga, Tuvalu and Marshall Islands on Safe Drinking Water and in Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Palau and Federated States of Micronesia on Emergency Communications and Emergency Operations Centres.
- o Implementation of the Regional Early Warning Strategy and the related Implementation of the Melanesian Volcano Network through the development of the Operational framework as well as the Australian Tsunami Warning System (ATWS) capacity assessments for PICs notably Tonga, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Cook Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.
- o DRM mainstreaming guideline.
- o Review of national DRM arrangements for Fiji, Marshall Islands, Palau, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.
- o DRM training courses in partnership with TAF/OFDA. Discussions are underway with the United States Government for the extension of the training programme beyond December 2008.

- o 14th Annual Regional Disaster Managers Meeting, 3rd Annual Pacific DRM Partnership Network Meeting and the Inaugural Regional DRM Meeting of Pacific CEOs of Finance/ Planning & DM.
- o Support for AFAC/PIFSA.
- o Support to PICs for International Day for Disaster Reduction Day.
- o Inter NDMO Post Disaster Support Facility.
- o EU EDF 9 activities.
- o World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction & Recovery which included a stocktake and gap analysis and Country assessments for Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu.
- o World Bank Catastrophe Risk Insurance Pool for the Pacific where risk models are being developed for Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.
- o Pacific Cities Project, Lae, Papua New Guinea.
- o Pacific Disaster Net (www.pacificdisaster.net), which was launched on September 18th.
- o DRM advocacy in PICs.
- o Development and implementation of National Action Plans in Vanuatu, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.
- o AusAID NAP Facility.
- o ACP/EU Natural Disaster Facility.
- o Study on the link between Disasters and Poverty.

187. The Secretariat presented a summary of progress against the 2008 Work Plan including the issues raised at the SOPAC 36th Session (2007) and by PMEG. The Secretariat also presented some observations in relation to the delivery of services to Pacific countries as highlighted on pages 12 and 13 of paper AS37/8.1.

188. Marshall Islands expressed their gratitude to donors noting that though regional organisations may have wonderful work programmes, these would be hard to achieve without funding. He also commended the Secretariat and regional donors Australia and New Zealand on improving the lives of people in the region and anticipated

their continued support of CRP. Marshall Islands also thanked other donors such as the European Union, United States and the World Bank and noted that countries needed to relook at responsibilities in activities being implemented. The Marshall Islands stressed their need for continued SOPAC support.

189. Marshall Islands thanked the Secretariat for the comprehensive yet clear presentation on the activities currently being undertaken in each of the countries.

190. Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) expressed gratitude for the support provided to PICs particularly in FSM. FSM commented on the DRR and DRM counselling PICs or Council on the need for continued dialogue between higher decision makers for DRR and DRM framework in order to protect and save Pacific Island countries. The word “disaster” in the frameworks sounded overly threatening but there was need to ensure that frameworks meet the needs of the PICs.

191. Papua New Guinea thanked the Director and acknowledged the work carried out under CRP and recognised the donors in particular EU, Australia and New Zealand. Under the tsunami warning and mitigation system it recognised the vulnerabilities of communities as well as national action plans. Papua New Guinea noted the need to invest in resources to meet requirements for SOPAC work programmes. With respect to the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Training Programme, Papua New Guinea registered its interest in participating in the next round of training.

192. Samoa thanked the CRP Manager for the comprehensive overview noting that it was heartening to hear the extent of assistance provided to the NDMO and lead implementing agencies under the Disaster Advisory Council. She noted the range of assistance provided which included technical assessments and would like to see the continuous engagement for capacity strengthening. Samoa encouraged CRP to embrace partnerships with other programmes such as climate change. Samoa recognised the importance of mainstreaming DRM and the National Development Strategic Plan. Council was informed that Samoa had launched the new Sustainable Development Strategy which included environmental sustainability and Disaster Risk Reduction as well as the allocation of budgetary support underscoring the Government of Samoa’s support to this area.

193. New Zealand thanked the CRP Manager for the presentation and reassured the Marshall Islands that there would be continued support to the work programme noting the extraordinary efforts accomplished as well as the strategic path

set up by the programme in including new stakeholders and initiatives. He commended the Secretariat for the remarkable job despite the reduced staffing; however, in relation to the programme New Zealand made the following remarks:

- (a) Strongly supported the subregional initiative of the Melanesian Volcanological Network (MVN) and looked forward to the next meeting in Papua New Guinea in November 2008. Council was informed that New Zealand supported extending the facility to allow for more tangible outputs.
- (b) Encouraged by the report on the World Bank’s Catastrophe Insurance given the number of options presented, New Zealand commended the Secretariat for providing the coordination for the PICs involved.
- (c) Strongly supported the Meetings of the Disaster Managers, Pacific DRM Partnership Network as well as the inaugural CEO meeting noting that efforts should be made to build on the current momentum and consideration be given to hold the CEOs’ meeting annually rather than biennially as advised.
- (d) Enquired about an evaluation to be done on the effectiveness of the training offered by PENTAG.
- (e) Strongly supported the inter-NDMO facility as it would be effective.
- (f) Expressed concern over the large number of ongoing and planned initiatives with the current staffing and resources.
- (g) Commended the CRP Manager for linking activities against the Framework for Action in his report to Council.

194. Tuvalu thanked CRP for the informative presentation and acknowledged the support of donor partners who assisted in programme delivery, in particular the B-envelope Project with the funding of water tanks in Tuvalu. He noted comments from the presentation with respect to the Regional Early Warning Strategy and stressed that in Tuvalu’s case it was essential that investments were in preparedness programmes particularly in early warning. Tuvalu requested SOPAC for assistance in these programmes.

195. Palau commended the work of CRP placing on record their request for assistance in reviewing Palau’s DRM arrangements.

196. Kiribati thanked CRP for the work programme undertaken in the region and welcomed initiatives for mainstreaming DRM and the development of NAP. Kiribati expressed the importance of disaster management, regarding it as a critical

issue for islands due to the vulnerability of islands to climatic situations. She encouraged the Secretariat to complement national efforts for Climate Change Adaptation and expressed appreciation to development partners for their ongoing support.

197. Vanuatu echoed the sentiments expressed by members of Council thanking the CRP Manager for the report delivered, particularly with the continued support for in-country activities outlined. These included the review of the institutional arrangements for DRM, the development and review of the National Disaster Management Act, capacity building of NDMO national stakeholders through a series of workshops and assistance awarded in documenting historical tsunami events. Vanuatu also thanked donor partners for providing funding that enabled work, for example AusAID's assistance for NAP and NZAID for future MVN efforts. Vanuatu commended the progress made on the issues raised by the PMEG in Tonga as it clearly showed the usefulness of PMEG in evaluating the work programme noting that similar reports be made under the other technical programmes. Under Agenda Item 6.3, Vanuatu had requested that CRP consider in-country future work activities as specified under the Vanuatu statement.

198. Cook Islands registered support and expressed gratitude to the Secretariat and the CRP Manager for the services carried out in-country. He also echoed the sentiments of other Council members with respect to the support tabled and expressed gratitude to development partners Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, the World Bank and the United States. Cook Islands concurred with the Manager CRP and FSM on ongoing activities and the request for in-country capacity to mobilise other agencies to ensure programmes were sustained and facilitated with an integrated approach with NDMOs and advocacy within government.

199. The CRP Manager thanked Council for the kind remarks and acknowledged the staff of CRP for realising the work programme.

200. In response to Papua New Guinea's query on a regional monitoring facility for countries to tap into with respect to EWS the Secretariat advised that Papua New Guinea through the EDF B-envelope Project would receive assistance to enhance the emergency communications in support of early warning. Council was informed that the opportunities under MVN with New Zealand support provided potential opportunities at regional level. The particular challenges faced in Papua New Guinea included the establishment of linkages with the National Disaster Council in Port Moresby, which could be elaborated upon in a side discussion.

201. The Director, in relation to the query on the regional facility for EWS, noted that the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center provides tsunami alerts to the Pacific and that in addition to this the MVN once up and running would do the same for vulcanological events. She thanked Council for the positive commendations. In response to the comments on the evaluation of training, during the no-cost extension of the TAF/OFDA programme, PEMTAG would evaluate the impact of the training provided and how it could be improved for another phase of support to the Pacific by the US Government. The Director added that the PDRMPN was to be commended for without donor and implementation partners, the Pacific would not achieve the progress made as presented, given that SOPAC could not achieve success alone. It was noted that the PDRMPN needed to be strengthened and that dedicated resources was required to maintain support to countries as well coordinate activities. In response to Tuvalu's comments about EWS, the ATWS in its support to the Pacific would be implemented under a number of phases such as preliminary assessments including capacity assessments. Efforts would focus on Pacific risk strategy with respect to EW demonstrating the multi-partite effort to mainstream DRM as well as strengthen DM.

Recommendation

202. Council accepted the report on the 2008 Work Plan for the Community Risk Work Programme and noted the measures taken to address issues arising from the 2007 PMEG Report.

8.2 New Initiatives in the Community Risk Programme

203. The Secretariat referred to paper AS37/8.2 on New Initiatives in the Community Risk Programme, stressing that there had been a deliberate decision to limit the number of new initiatives in light of the change process of the impending rationalisation.

204. The Secretariat highlighted and elaborated on the following new initiatives:

- o Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management;
- o Biennial Meeting for CEOs, as part of Pacific Platform;
- o ADB Project – Regional Stock take and Mapping of DRR for the Asia Pacific Region; and

- o National DRM Reports and Regional Synthesis Report for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR).

205. Emerging opportunities include: an integrated approach to the implementation of the Regional Framework for Action and the Pacific Islands Framework for Climate Change; the introduction of DRM considerations into Pacific Ministerial Meetings such as the Forum Economic Ministers' Meeting; Advocacy for SOPAC programmes at Cabinet Level in PICs to support DRM mainstreaming; Study on how the interface between disasters and climate change can exacerbate conflict in the Pacific; and strengthening of the DRM Partnership Network.

206. New Zealand (NZ) noted issues relating to NAPs as a critical output of CRP and voiced concern on the resources required to develop NAPs. In addition to recognising that DRM was mainstreamed through national planning, the Ministry of Finance would be the most likely recognising ministry however, in light of the existing commitments of the Ministry, he wondered if there were alternatives. For advocacy, agencies such as MCDEM could provide advice. NZ supported the Pacific Platform and recognised the commitments required for HfA reporting. NZ cautioned that the facilitatory role of the Network may not be operational though there would be expectations for it to be so.

207. Australia with respect to the Pacific Platform noted that at the recently concluded Climate Change Roundtable there were some discussions of the possibility of a climate change platform funded out of the CCA funding from Australia. Australia queried how the Pacific Platform would be resourced and financed.

208. The Secretariat in response to NZ's comments on the Ministerial-level meeting that in terms of consistency with what has been done, a separate Ministerial meeting of DRM may not be a relevant approach to take therefore the view was to better coordinate effort and explore existing mechanisms with PIFS such as FEMM as an opportunity to raise the profile of disaster risk.

209. The Secretariat in response to Australia on resourcing and financing reiterated that the Pacific Platform was the coming together of existing mechanisms for which funding was already allocated i.e. the disaster managers', Partnership and CEO meetings.

210. The Director acknowledged that the ISDR reporting did put pressure on countries and informed Council that the Secretariat had looked at avenues to simplify and streamline reporting

to RfA and translating these reports for ISDR to input into HfA reporting.

Recommendations

211. Council:

- (a) considered and approved the Pacific Platform for Disaster Risk Management discussed and supported at the 14th Regional Disaster Managers Meeting, 3rd Annual Meeting of the Pacific DRM Partnership Network and the Inaugural Pacific Regional DRM Meeting for Pacific CEOs of Finance/Planning and Disaster Management which were all held in Nadi in late July 2008.
- (b) noted and accepted the new initiatives being undertaken to increase the profile of disaster risk management as an imperative for sustainable development and encouraged continued high-level advocacy missions to member countries to raise awareness and garner commitment at the highest levels within governments.
- (c) recognised the strong linkages between the Pacific DRR and DM Framework for Action and the Pacific Islands Framework for Action for Climate Change (PIFACC) with their focus on all hazards and climate change, respectively: and strongly urged SOPAC and SPREP (the agencies responsible for the implementation of these Frameworks) to collaborate in the development of an integrated approach towards their implementation.
- (d) noted the importance of, and progress made by, the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network as an effective mechanism to support implementation of national and regional initiatives since its establishment in 2006 encourage SOPAC to secure necessary resources to strengthen its role as facilitator to strongly support and assist implementation of disaster risk management initiatives within island member countries.

8.3 Report from the Programme Review Monitoring & Evaluation Group on CRP

212. The programme review and monitoring for the Community Risk Programme (PMEG-CRP) was carried out solely by John Norton (New Zealand) due to the unavailability of Dr Wally Johnson (Australia), Angelika Planitz (UNISDR Bangkok) and Joeli Rokovada (Fiji).

213. The PMEG CRP Chair presented the purpose, scope and focus of the review noting issues related to the complex operating environment of CRP, clarity of strategic direction, CRP work programme and budget, CRP structure, in-house commitment to the CRP programme and funding of the NAP process. He stressed that the first four issues required some strategic direction from the Directorate; and he noted progress against the recommendations of PMEG in the 2007 report, and that for 2009 there was a need to consolidate programme support and capacity.

214. Cook Islands thanked PMEG for the report to Council and acknowledged the recommendations for the Programme. While he noted that it reflected unfavourably on the Programme, he was also aware that the current status of delivery in-country had been tremendous. Cook Islands had taken on board views but sought comments from Council to see where the areas identified might be improved. He reflected on the purpose of the establishment of the PMEG process, which was continuous improvement, hence progress may be viewed against service delivery however, issues relating to in-country delivery needed to be raised by countries.

215. Marshall Islands welcomed the presentation and findings by the PMEG review of CRP and reiterated support from PMEG and would like to see work continuing despite the RIF outcome. Marshall Islands congratulated the staff of CRP for their professionalism in maintaining delivery of service to member countries.

216. Australia thanked the PMEG Chair for presenting findings noting that the comments made have been made previously and may have hit the mark with respect to reservations with new initiatives. There was a dose of reality in noting the increasingly complex environment in which the programme is working and the increased expectations of partners. There was really a need to get the strategic direction right and the PMEG had given food for thought with respect to the consideration of the work programme and budget. She further commented that it would have been useful to have had the paper sooner and for it to be considered before the new initiatives.

217. Cook Islands in light of recent interventions noted that the recommendations from PMEG on the functions of CRP would not have any impact on the recent approval of Council on new initiatives. He noted that PMEG recommendations 3 and 4 were aligned with the CRP presentation on new initiatives.

218. New Zealand agreed that 2009 should focus on consolidation noting that the report was bal-

anced, strategic, comprehensive and concurred with Australia's view.

219. The Director thanked the PMEG Chair and welcomed the comments from Council. In response to Australia's comments on reporting, she explained that PMEG met with the Secretariat prior to the Annual Session noting that the Secretariat itself had just received the report. On the matter of sequencing this would be considered for the next annual meeting.

220. The Director stated that most members realised that SOPAC's Strategic Plan 2005-2009 was coming to an end and due to the rationalisation (RIF) issue, the Secretariat was not in a position to revise the Plan. The RIF process was an opportunity to look at consolidation across the organisation as well as in the receiving organisations: SPREP and SPC. She noted the Cook Islands' recollection of the prime objective of the PMEG, which was to seek continual improvements to the work programme delivery. The Director assured Council that the PMEG recommendations would be taken into consideration on return to the Secretariat.

221. The Secretariat thanked the PMEG for the report noting that the new initiatives such as the Pacific Platform were not 'new'. It was basically a re-packaging of existing fora in line with the global platform as supported by UNISDR. CRP would have new staffing resources to strengthen capacity to contribute to work programme delivery in 2009 which provides an opportunity to consolidate work programme in light of the RIF process making it value adding.

Recommendations:

222. Council:

- (a) noted the highlights for 2008, the breadth of the CRP outputs given the staffing constraints and the commitment and enthusiasm of the CRP staff.
- (b) noted the issues outlined in the report.
- (c) commended to countries their role to take accountability for their DRM programmes.
- (d) agreed that the CRP should consolidate its position for staffing and strategic direction during 2009.
- (e) encouraged donors and partners to address the issues of short-term project funding to allow the CRP to consolidate its position.

223. The CRP Manager presented planned work for 2009 and an overview of the budget under the three components of the CRP. This aspect of reporting was noted for revisiting under Agenda Item 12.2 (Work Plan and Budget 2009).

224. Chair also, while inviting comments, pointed out that this aspect of the work programme would have another opportunity for discussion under Item 12.2.

225. Vanuatu sought clarification with respect to the PMEG report on how much funding was dedicated to NAP for Marshall Islands and Vanuatu.

226. The CRP Manager responded that the AusAID NAP facility and projected budget for EU NAP facility is under Component 3 which includes support for the four main priorities for Vanuatu. He noted that some requirements of NAP can also be addressed under the respective budgets under Components 1 and 2. Marshall Islands review of national arrangements which was identified as top priority can be accommodated under Component 3 of the NAP facility or Component 1. The Manager added that the Risk Reduction initiatives which emanate from NAPs and other work programmes from within SOPAC, can be addressed strategically by using existing commitments to help support implementation of activities as identified in NAPs noting the different ways in which NAP activities can be addressed. The PDRMPN, on emergency communications, added to strengthening emergency management through B-envelope funding.

227. Cook Islands thanked the Secretariat for the presentation on the programme and budget for 2009. He commented on the assessment of disasters and TAF/OFDA training presented noting that the latter provided the tool for PICs to use during and post disaster. The TAF/OFDA training programme allows countries to prepare themselves for pre disaster, e.g. IDM and IDA. The Secretariat was encouraged to seek alternative institutions with Swinburne University ending its Graduate Certificate.

228. Marshall Islands observed that work carried out by each programme involved all levels of community. He congratulated SOPAC in inviting non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to attend its in-country consultations and other meetings and noted that when requesting services of CRP the response was relatively quick.

9. OCEAN AND ISLANDS PROGRAMME

9.1 Report from the Ocean and Islands Programme

229. The Chair referred Council to paper AS37/9.1 relating to work undertaken under the Ocean and Islands Programme for 2008. He introduced Paula Holland, Natural Resources Governance Adviser who presented the report on behalf of the Manager OIP who was unable to attend the session.

230. The Governance Adviser emphasised the breadth of work undertaken in the OIP in the three component areas of Resource Use Solutions, Monitoring Physical and Chemical Change and Natural Resource Governance. She highlighted some key activities over the period 2007 – 2008 including efforts by OIP in maritime boundaries delimitation and the development of offshore minerals work.

231. The Cook Islands acknowledged the work of OIP, noting that Cook Islands had benefitted from the maritime boundaries training during a workshop in May 2008. The Cook Islands also acknowledged the support of Australia and UNEP GRID Arendal in relation to this work. He also noted the support being provided by Geoscience Australia in relation to maritime boundary submissions and requested further assistance from AusAID and SOPAC in relation to boundary delimitation if possible. The delegate for the Cook Islands advised that, with the assistance of the multi-stakeholder Natural Resource Committee on Rarotonga, the Cook Islands was well placed to see the maritime boundaries work through.

232. The Cook Islands requested that the Earth Science and Marine Geology (ESMG) course be revitalised.

233. Reflecting on the issue of deep sea minerals, the Cook Islands observed the emerging issue of deep sea mining within the region, emphasising that the Cook Islands have already been approached by numerous commercial enterprises seeking licenses for exploration. Cook Islands advised that they therefore looked to SOPAC for assistance on this issue.

234. The Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) acknowledged the efforts of OIP and brought to the attention of Council that, at the FFC 67 (2007) regional fisheries ministers noted the need to finalise maritime boundaries to support conservation and management measures. He noted that Ministers had therefore directed FFA to liaise with SOPAC to assist member countries delimit their maritime boundaries as a matter of urgency.

235. Papua New Guinea thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and sought additional assistance for the work in the Sirinumu and Yonki areas to ensure that effective and sound monitoring could be conducted in three years time as a way to maintain awareness of the situation there. She acknowledged the importance of establishing national maritime boundaries given the importance of the resource base within Papua New Guinea's waters and advised that efforts were currently underway for the development of a tripartite submission on maritime boundaries in conjunction with the Solomon Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. Papua New Guinea expressed appreciation to donors and partners for their assistance on their maritime boundaries issues.

236. Fiji thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and joined with the Cook Islands in calling for the revitalisation of the Earth Science and Marine Geology course. Fiji further acknowledged the need for the training of Secretariat staff in such areas as tsunami modelling, noting the importance of keeping abreast with the rest of the world in technological developments. Fiji also acknowledged the bathymetric work that OIP has been conducting in its waters.

237. Tuvalu acknowledged the value of coastal monitoring work conducted by the OIP and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided through the Programme on the matter of maritime boundaries delimitation. Tuvalu requested the opportunity to sit down with SOPAC to consider progressing the maritime boundaries work further.

238. The delegate for Tuvalu noted the work being undertaken under the PI-GOOS project and requested the opportunity for Tuvalu to participate in the project. He also acknowledged the contribution by SOPAC OIP in assessing the potential of Tuvalu to exploit lagoon aggregate reserves and requested further assistance from OIP to progress this issue.

239. The Solomon Islands accorded high regard to the work of the OIP, noting with appreciation the services delivered through the OIP over the previous year. The Solomon Islands emphasised the value of coordination and technical advice provided to it in the last year to progress extended continental shelf claims.

240. The Solomon Islands noted with concern the potential loss of professional technical capacity from the OIP with the imminent closure of EDF9 at the end of the year. He also noted that the problem could be compounded by the Forum Leaders decision to rationalise SOPAC's activities, if this affected donor confidence.

241. Finally, the Solomon Islands joined with other countries to request the reconstitution of the Earth Science Marine Geology course, noting that this course had previously supported Pacific island students to secure key executive positions in their countries.

242. The Marshall Islands commended the Secretariat for the work carried out through all the programmes with a business-as-usual attitude, despite the uncertainties of the organisation brought about by the rationalisation process. The Marshall Islands requested assistance to further initial work conducted by OIP on aggregate identification so that they could identify not just the potential sources of aggregate but also their suitability for different types of uses.

243. Kiribati thanked the Secretariat for the efforts of OIP over the last year and observed that it had been a significant beneficiary of this work, particularly in relation to the design and development of a lagoon dredging project to support the sustainable supply of aggregates in South Tarawa. Noting that funding for this project had now been secured, Kiribati asked for a status update on the project. In relation to the same project, Kiribati acknowledged the support of the European Union in terms of funding.

244. Kiribati acknowledged the efforts of the Secretariat, with support from AusAID, in providing training and development of local authorities in the development of submissions concerning maritime boundaries. She stressed that these issues are critical to Pacific Island Countries not only in terms of managing mineral and fisheries resources but also in terms of determining EEZ and eCS territorial areas. Kiribati further touched on the issue of international momentum that was picking up and stressed its position on the need to pursue this opportunity. Seabed mining is an important issue for Kiribati given its vast marine area and there was great potential in this area, if appropriate technical research and advice was provided from SOPAC. Kiribati further expressed its major concern that with the RIF process underway, the risk existed that SOPAC might lose focus on the important matters for its members.

245. Tonga expressed its perception of the OIP as the 'heart' of SOPAC and repeated calls for the Programme to revitalise the ESMG Course noting the benefits seen with four of his staff having enjoyed the benefits of this course. Tonga acknowledged NZAID and ComSec for the assistance given in its eCS submission.

246. Nauru congratulated the OIP on its aggregate work to date and queried the financial and environmental implications of dredging as a viable option.

247. Vanuatu thanked OIP for the presentation. He noted the conflict with territories over maritime boundaries targeted by Vanuatu and sought clarification from SOPAC on the impact of this on Vanuatu's ability to meet the May 2009 deadline for submissions. Vanuatu also requested assistance from SOPAC on coastal erosion in Saratamata, Ambae and sedimentation and dredging study on Sarakata River, Santo.

248. Australia congratulated OIP on the presentation which showed important outcomes of the work and illustrated the contributions of the activities to achieving outcomes. She noted the issue raised by Solomon Islands of the potential loss of professional technical capacity from the programme and acknowledged the issue of seabed mining raised by Kiribati. Australia expressed pleasure at the progress of countries towards the May 2009 deadline for extended continental shelf submissions.

249. The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) acknowledged the activities of OIP, noting activities of which it has been a beneficiary. He observed a pending issue on coastal assessments work for the outer islands of Pohnpei with which assistance was still sought. FSM acknowledged the EU and AusAID in providing the funding that enabled OIP to do much of the work. He thanked the Secretariat for outlining the linkages between SOPAC programmes. He expressed agreement with Palau, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea on the need to meet the deadlines on maritime boundaries.

250. The Chair of STAR congratulated OIP for the work conducted and confirmed the high standard of work being delivered, noting that this was being conducted with limited resources while operating under difficult conditions. He acknowledged the integration of OIP to other SOPAC programmes and stressed the importance that, through the RIF process, interaction and programme integrity be maintained.

251. The Director and the Secretariat acknowledged the support from Council and responded to the various queries raised from the floor.

252. The Governance Adviser acknowledged the observation by Solomon Islands of the potential loss of technical capacity within the OIP at the end of 2008 and advised that this item had been tabled specifically under Agenda item AS37/9.2 and requested that this be considered there.

253. The Governance Adviser also acknowledged the request by numerous countries for a resumption of the Earth Science course however noted that previous efforts to secure assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat to reinstate the course

had been unsuccessful. Nevertheless she noted that staff would reconsider the idea internally to see what options could be identified. The Director added that innovative mechanisms might be developed to incorporate parts of the course into planned technical workshops which, together with some contact hours, might enable students to gain the ESMG Certificate in the future.

254. In response to a number of requests for ongoing assistance in maritime boundaries delimitation, the Secretariat advised that it would continue to provide assistance in 2009 and noted that AusAID funding to support this issue had also been secured. The Director thanked Council for comments on the work of the Secretariat on the Maritime Boundary Delimitations and Extended Continental Shelf, and maintained the need for staff within the OIP to continuously carry out the work required such as regular updating.

255. In response to the request for data by Marshall Islands on the suitability of the aggregate for various uses, the Secretariat advised that this information was readily available to Marshall Islands in the information already provided. The Secretariat advised that OIP could provide further assistance to interpret this information if required.

256. The Secretariat acknowledged the comments from FFA and committed to working with FFA to share public data for fisheries monitoring.

257. In relation to the specific additional work requested raised by Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu and Federated States of Micronesia, the Secretariat advised that follow-up internal discussions would be held to determine how to fit these activities into the work plan and budget where possible.

258. In relation to the Kiribati lagoon dredging project, the Secretariat advised that the project was now close to inception, with a terms of reference already drafted to advertise for a project manager.

259. With respect to aggregate assessment as queried by Nauru, the Secretariat advised that feasibility assessments conducted by SOPAC covered technical, financial, economic and or environmental feasibility issues. She also noted work underway in Nauru relating to the use of limestone pinnacles as a subregional supply of aggregate and commented that SOPAC had contributed some economic assessment work to Nauru on this issue.

260. Concerning Vanuatu's sovereign conflicts over the maritime boundaries, the Secretariat advised that its role was of a technical nature and

that SOPAC had no legal mandate to enter into negotiation over boundaries. The Secretariat stated that this was the responsibility of countries but they may seek legal assistance on this issue from the Commonwealth Secretariat, Australia and/or New Zealand who had extensive expertise in this issue. On the other hand, SOPAC would be able to work with Vanuatu to identify base points for maritime boundaries and SOPAC would be happy to follow this matter through at a time convenient to all.

261. Council considered and accepted the report on the 2008 Work Plan for the Oceans and Islands Programme.

9.2 Issues and Opportunities for the Ocean and Islands Programme

262. Chair invited the SOPAC Governance Adviser to present issues and opportunities in the Ocean and Islands Programme. The Governance Adviser outlined a number of issues emerging in OIP and referred Council to paper AS37/9.2, which explained these issues in detail.

263. Among other things, the Governance Adviser emphasised the need for staff retention to continue within OIP, given the significant number of technical capacity staff that were currently attached to projects, including the EDF9 Reducing Vulnerabilities Project, which are due to end imminently. She also noted the emerging issue of climate change, the increasing interest in deep sea minerals, the need for shoreline monitoring and the continuation of the maritime boundaries work.

264. The Cook Islands highlighted the issue of sea-level rise and the need for in-country capacity to analyse the data of projects in-country.

265. Fiji acknowledged the imminent loss of technical capacity within the OIP and enquired about the scope to retain staff at the end of 2008.

266. In response to this and queries raised by Australia, the Director advised that some scope did exist to retain some staff through options such as EU funds, should a current proposal with the EU to conduct work with overseas countries and territories be approved. The Secretariat also noted that some secured funding might be used to support staff, and that this was being investigated by Corporate Services as an option. The Director also noted that efforts were to be made with existing Korean and Australian Volunteer International assistance programmes to replace or retain volunteer staff currently operating in the OIP. Finally, the Director noted that, in respond-

ing to recommendations approved by Council concerning the need for deep sea minerals work (Paper AS37/6.5), the Secretariat would be seeking funding to ensure that the OIP Aggregate Adviser would be retained to provide deep sea minerals analysis assistance to countries.

267. FFA alerted Council to the potential for the regional maritime boundaries dataset and the opportunities within OIP to benefit from this, noting that as individual boundaries are signed, legislated, or ratified their details become public. FFA also noted that the OIP already maintains a regional boundary dataset based on this public data internally so the work required to ensure up to date data would be minimal. Finally, FFA observed that the use of this data would reduce the scope to duplicate effort and streamline reference data across CROP users.

268. The Secretariat acknowledged the suggestion put forward by FFA on the compilation of the regional Maritime Boundaries dataset noting that this was a sensible approach. The Secretariat agreed to work with FFA to further this.

269. Tuvalu noted the role promoted by SOPAC in relation to climate change adaptation and climate change generally. While acknowledging that there was uncertainty around the science concerning this and that additional data was always welcome, Tuvalu emphasised the need to embark on adaptation work now rather than just continuing research.

270. The Secretariat acknowledged the immediate need for adaptation work in the region however emphasised that this implementation needed to be underpinned by sound data and science which the SOPAC OIP provides.

271. At the request of Marshall Islands, the OIP PMEG presentation was made prior to the finalisation of Council recommendations.

Recommendations

272) Council considered:

- a) and noted the achievements of OIP during the period 2005 – 2008;
- b) the implications of loss of the 43 per cent of OIP's current technical staff and delivery capacity; and
- c) encouraged the Secretariat to take measures, such as through the reprioritisation of the work plan and budget and/or through options such as the regional deep sea mining initiative, to bolster OIP core capacity at current levels.

273) Council:

- a) acknowledged the achievements of OIP during the period 2005 – 2008 towards contributing to climate change science and appropriate “no-regrets” solutions; and
- b) endorsed the Secretariat’s and in particular, OIP’s engagement with donors and other CROP agencies to strengthen CCA science and monitoring in the region and continue to liaise with international partners to undertake immediate and effective implementation of concrete adaptation in PICs as well as conduct, where appropriate, research and baseline studies as may be requested which contribute to improved understanding of climate change.

274) Council (from Item 6.5):

- a) considered the implications of the growing interest in offshore minerals as demonstrated by the increasing numbers of applications lodged with Pacific governments to acquire ground within their Exclusive Economic Zones, and the lack of adequate offshore minerals policies and or regulatory frameworks to protect their national interests.
- b) strongly urged SOPAC to coordinate the development and implementation of a multipartite, regional initiative that will assist countries to develop and implement appropriate and effective legal, environmental and technical policy and regulatory frameworks.
- c) supported the convening of a regional workshop to commence the design and implementation of a regional offshore minerals initiative.
- d) encouraged STAR to convene special sessions in their 2009 meeting on deep sea minerals research exploration and mining and welcomed the offer by CPCEMR to convene with SOPAC and STAR a (separate) Pacific regional Marine Minerals conference in 2009.

275) Council:

- a) endorsed OIP’s approach to the important issue of shoreline monitoring due to sea-level rise; and
- b) recommended that the Secretariat investigate options for regional assistance to better resource and develop this system to ensure PIC are adequately informed of how island shorelines may be responding to climate change and other environmental stress.

276) Council:

- a) noted with urgency this critical [topography] information gap; and
- b) urged the Secretariat to seek collaboration with regional partners to develop an adequately resourced campaign to address this important data need recognising that only with such an investment in accurate baseline information collection, can meaningful inundation, wave incursion and sea-level rise inundation and coastal zone hazard mapping be pursued.

277) Council noted:

- a) the progress made to date on maritime boundaries delimitation and the country information now residing in PIRMBIS; and
- b) and commended the progress on extended continental shelf submissions and encourages those members involved to provide support to their eCS submission teams and support these efforts to successfully submit claims before 13th May 2009.

9.3 Report from the Programme Review Monitoring and Evaluation Group on OIP

278. Chair invited Dr Gary Greene to present to Council on the PMEG assessment of the OIP. Dr Greene referred Council to the Programme Review paper AS37/9.3. He presented the process undertaken to review the OIP and provided a brief summary of the findings.

279. Dr Greene acknowledged the large volume of work and high quality of products which has moved through the OIP during 2008 and commented on the significant progress achieved in many of the 2008 PMEG recommendations.

280. He remarked upon the RIF process and practical implications of the process upon the OIP and SOPAC as a whole, including issues surrounding equipment, intellectual property rights over data and the integrity of programmes and service in the region.

281. On a more personal statement, Dr Greene noted the need for careful implementation of the RIF, such that it does not jeopardise the effectiveness of SOPAC altogether.

282. The Cook Islands extended their appreciation to Dr Greene for his presentation and commended Dr Greene for his observations on

the OIP and the RIF process. The Cook Islands also concurred with recommendations of the OIP PMEG review, specifically in relation to the need for safety training in fieldwork.

283. Council received the PMEG OIP report and accepted all the PMEG recommendations, requesting the SOPAC Director to address relevant concerns and recommendations as the opportunity and need arose in the coming year.

284. Council also directed the PMEG OIP to review outstanding concerns and recommendations as part of their next report.

Work Programme and Budget 2009

285. The Secretariat presented a brief overview of the work plan and budget for OIP for 2009, drawing the attention of Council that this would be considered in further detail under Agenda Item 12.2.

GOVERNING COUNCIL POLICY SESSION

10. ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

10.1 Paragraphs 251 and 252 – Proceedings of AS36 (RIF)

286. Chair invited the Director of SOPAC to introduce the item. The Director of SOPAC referred Council to paper AS37/10.1, as well as the supplementary papers AS37/10.1 Suppl. 1 and AS37/10.1 Suppl. 2, which outlined key issues, proposed ways forward, and legal aspects of, the absorption of SOPAC into SPREP and SPC.

287. The Director briefly outlined to Council discussions conducted between SOPAC, SPREP and SPC to progress the RIF. She highlighted to Council the commitment of SOPAC to the RIF and assured Council that the momentum in work would not be lost during the RIF. The Director then invited the Vice Chair of the SOPAC Council Committee of the Whole to present its progress on the RIF.

288. The Vice Chair of the SOPAC Council Committee of the Whole reminded Council of the Pacific Island Leaders' decision concerning the RIF and referred Council to AS37/10.1 Suppl. 1. The Vice Chair highlighted a number of principles and issues that had been developed to guide the implementation of SOPAC's absorption.

289. Chair invited the Deputy Secretary General of the PIFS for comments. The Deputy Secretary General of the PIFS referred Council back to the Forum Leaders' decision in 2007 (para. 19b), noting that the timeframes for implementation of the rationalisation process were not specifically prescribed and that the 2008 Leaders' decision had provided more details and clarity on the process and timeline for rationalisation. The Leaders now expect the work on their RIF decision to be finalised by their 2009 meeting and implementation to start by 01 January 2010. He highlighted the desire of Leaders to progress the rationalisation and absorption exercise without diminution of SOPAC's services to the region.

290. The Deputy Secretary General of the PIFS advised that PIFS played a coordination role with respect to the issue of the RIF. This includes its Secretary General's role in explaining to the Leaders the progress on the RIF. He added that the former (late) Secretary General had been keen to assist in the coordination of the RIF implementation and that, while SOPAC had not accepted the offer of assistance, the offer remained and the new Secretary General of the PIFS would be amenable to follow up on it. This option could be taken up as the implementation of the RIF unfolds.

291. The Deputy Secretary General of the PIFS reminded Council that the CEOs of SOPAC, SPREP and SPC are required to present to Forum Leaders a package of rationalisation outcomes ready for execution by the beginning of 2010. In this respect, he was heartened by progress on the RIF to date as reflected by the position taken by the SPREP and SPC Governing Councils.

292. Chair invited the Director General of the SPC to comment. The Director General of SPC observed that CRGA had met twice since the Forum Leaders' decision in 2007. CRGA had endorsed the process outlined by Forum Leaders as well as that of the SPREP Council. Areas of differences alluded to by the Deputy Secretary General of the PIFS included the expansion of the criteria to include the SOPAC decision of 2007 and previous CRGA decisions [so that all were aligned]. He also advised that, in the event that the three CEOs were to require the assistance of an outside consultant to assist them in identifying the new institutional arrangements, this would be addressed at the time and resources required would be sought.

293. The Director General of SPC stated to Council that the work of the CEOs was to address the implementation of the RIF in a way that gener-

ated the best possible outcomes for the benefit of members. He also emphasised the need to at least retain and/or enhance the services of SOPAC. On this issue, he noted the concerns of Council regarding SOPAC staffing and what impact the rationalisation could have on this. He advised that whatever the outcome (whether SOPAC programmes were absorbed by SPC and or SPREP), there should be no impact on staffing. Rather, the issue would be to see where the gaps were and to work to fill them. He noted the concern of SOPAC Council on the possible fragmentation of SOPAC and emphasised the wording of the Leaders' decision in 2008 to minimise this, and that Council had his undertaking that he would work closely with his CEO colleagues to ensure that members' aspirations with respect to the services continuing to be delivered would be met.

294. Chair reminded Council that the Director of SPREP had previously made an intervention on this issue. Chair then invited comments from the floor.

295. Fiji observed the extensive degree of discussion that had taken place on the RIF in the preceding months. He advised that, while Fiji did not like the decision to absorb the functions of SOPAC to SPREP/SPC, it respected the decision nevertheless. He advised that Fiji would pursue the implementation of the Leaders' wishes 'in the right way', in which the right way included ensuring that the services of SOPAC were not compromised. He advised that Fiji considered that it was not sufficient to ensure that the services of SOPAC were not diminished; rather they needed to be enhanced. He acknowledged the importance of the SOPAC Council Committee of the Whole in determining the implementation of the RIF and emphasised the need for implementation to incorporate the outcomes of the SOPAC Council and the SOPAC Council Committee of the Whole. Fiji requested that Council members be informed regularly of developments on the RIF consideration and implementation.

296. Samoa perceived that the recently concluded SPREP and SPC annual meetings had paved the way for a harmonised and consistent process to take forward the Leaders' decision. Nevertheless, she emphasised the need to strengthen language to reinforce concerns expressed by member countries on the need to embrace caution in the rationalisation exercise, ensure that scientific and technical work built up in the last 30 + years are not in vain and that SOPAC's work programmes are not placed at risk nor compromised. She also noted the overarching goal of the RIF exercise which was to improve service delivery and in this case stated the need to ensure that service delivery would endure and improve once the work pro-

grammes are absorbed into the recipient agency. Samoa reiterated the critical role of PMEG and STAR and Samoa's desire to retain these beyond the rationalisation. She also requested that language be inserted in the recommendation to reflect this. With reference to the proposed May 2009 meeting on the RIF, she enquired about whether any thought had been given to utilising the Pacific Plan Action Committee given that everyone was represented in PPAC and it therefore allowed for cost reductions.

297. The Cook Islands acknowledged progress to date on the RIF as expressed in the tabled report and that he was humbled by the stance taken by the CEO of SPC (Dr Jimmie Rogers). He endorsed the views expressed by Fiji and Samoa concerning implementation, as well as the need to retain the integrity of the services delivered by SOPAC as being a good basis for proceeding. In view of programme delivery in-country – this was of paramount importance to Pacific island countries. He emphasised the need for more work to get the rationalisation off the ground (given the timeline established by the Leaders, by January 2010) and the importance of all three CEOs reporting back to their respective councils on developments and the SOPAC Council committee of the whole essentially re-establishing control of the next stage of the process.

298. The Cook Islands also raised the issue of the legal aspects of the RIF, including the legal ownership of donor-funded items and the legal dimensions of donor funding more generally, as also alluded to by the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, and the Outgoing Chair in their opening remarks. He noted the possibility of another legal consultation to review the whole process in terms of the three different mandates of the agencies involved; and thought the couple of questions asked by Dr Greene in the OIP PMEG presentation needed to be incorporated into members' thinking. He emphasised that the future of SOPAC's rationalisation would remain unclear until the legal issues are cleared.

299. New Zealand observed the significant amount of work that had been conducted in pursuit of the RIF and highlighted the reinforcement by the Forum Leaders in 2008 that the SOPAC rationalisation should proceed. She observed that New Zealand had been actively involved in all SOPAC Council Committee of the Whole meetings to date and welcomed the fact that all three CROP agencies had arrived at the same recommendations concerning RIF implementation. She also acknowledged the forthcoming meeting in May and looked forward to hearing back from CEOs on their outcomes.

300. Kiribati acknowledged the work that had been progressed on the RIF since the Leaders' decision in 2007. She associated with the sentiments expressed by Fiji concerning the retention of SOPAC services expressing, in particular the concern on the implications of the RIF process on SOPAC's core functions. She highlighted the issue of seabed mining being one example of the core functions of SOPAC for which it was established; seeing a greater potential in terms of economic opportunity adding that the exploration and exploitation of these resources in a way that would provide maximum returns is of significance to Kiribati. She stressed that Council proceed with this matter in a manner that would ensure that it happened without diminishing SOPAC core functions.

301. Papua New Guinea reminded Council of the need to observe the RIF timeline while maintaining SOPAC delivery in a way that countries continue to benefit from the SOPAC technical programmes and the continuation of the STAR and the PMEG as much as possible. She emphasised the need of Pacific island members to continue to receive the services that they were enjoying before the Forum Leaders' decision in 2007. She also observed that SOPAC needed to work in close consultation with the governing bodies of the SPREP and SPC and therefore requested that an additional meeting be convened so that everyone could understand the others' positions. She referred to the reaffirmed decision of Leaders in 2008 and hoped that the decisions be reflected and carried forward.

302. Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) acknowledged the presentation by the Vice Chair of the SOPAC Council Committee of the Whole and extended his support for the RIF. He reiterated FSM's desire to retain the STAR and that SOPAC services be retained observing that some meetings were to come up to map out the process for SOPAC absorption. He also expressed his desire for more understanding of how that process was to occur.

303. Tonga thanked the Secretariat and the SOPAC Council Committee of the Whole for the positive manner in which they had responded to date on the decision by the Forum Leaders. He noted with concern the remark by the STAR Chair that there was no way Council could direct STAR to continue after the RIF. Tonga's position, as indicated in 2007, was that the services of SOPAC would be maintained or improved. Tonga does support the RIF but advised proceeding with caution. Tonga was also concerned that given the reason SOPAC was established by Pacific nations for offshore prospecting, when the time was at hand that we should strengthen SOPAC in light of the offshore mining becoming a reality – but now

we are rationalising it – and he echoed sentiments expressed earlier that “maybe SOPAC was born 30 years early.”

304. The delegate from the Cook Islands reminded Council of the duty of care (while moving the RIF process along) that members had to meet the needs of island nations through the in-country programmes and to look after their own people. He had been heartened during one of the SCW meetings when possible staff relocation had been raised; that Australia took time to point out that losing the Suva SOPAC campus was never an option in anything discussed so far. He expressed support for the excellence and integrity of the SOPAC programme; and concern that SOPAC's services would now be evaluated on whether it addressed environmental or economic concerns to determine where it might best fit into the receiving organisations. While supportive of the principles of the RIF process, as a founding member of SOPAC, Cook Islands reiterated its concern about the need to address some of the legal uncertainties surrounding the RIF, including the implications of suspending or dissolving SOPAC and expected the CEOs to verify to members what each was expected to do. He re-emphasised that all of these considerations amounted to there being a great deal of work still to be done in comparison to the timelines laid down by the Leaders (implementation to begin by 1 January 2010).

305. Tuvalu acknowledged the anxieties generated by the proposed absorption of SOPAC and the potential impact on SOPAC service delivery. He proposed that Council needed to take as much time as required to consider the progression of the RIF. He noted the professional reputation of SOPAC and queried the appropriateness of absorbing it into SPREP in light of its recent review. Tuvalu recommended caution in considering the absorption of different SOPAC functions into SPC and SPREP and proposed flexibility in proceeding with the absorption if necessary.

306. Marshall Islands raised the issue of the scope to change the decision of the leaders and reiterated the need for the services of SOPAC to be maintained.

307. Nauru observed that it was easier for a small island developing state to report to fewer organisations and underscored the idea that the RIF was not about SOPAC per se but about improving the delivery of services by all CROP agencies to member countries. Nauru went on to highlight the need to focus on delivery, emphasising that it supported the RIF decision, as well as the SPREP and SPC decisions.

308. Papua New Guinea noted the need for the Council members of all organisations to meet

at least once to gain a shared understanding of the process for implementing the RIF. She also expressed support for Samoa's suggestion to progress the RIF through the PPAC.

309. Australia remarked that its position on the RIF had been articulated in 2008 and that its position on this had not changed. She noted and endorsed the comment from Nauru that the focus of the exercise was the enhancement of services from all CROP agencies.

310. The Director advised that reports on the progress of the RIF would be submitted to Council immediately following any new decisions being made.

Recommendations

311. Council commended the work of its Committee during the year, to provide a positive and timely response to the challenge outlined in the 2007 Forum Communiqué;

312. SOPAC Council :

- (a) took into account the 2007 and 2008 Forum Communiqués relating to the RIF Review.
- (b) took into account the 2008 SPREP Council and Pacific Community CRGA decisions on the RIF.
- (c) recognised the need to ensure a cautious approach is adopted when considering the legal, financial, administrative, and programmatic implications for rationalising SOPAC functions into SPREP and SPC.
- (d) requested the Director of SOPAC to engage collaboratively with the CEOs of SPREP and SPC immediately following the 2008 SOPAC Council Meeting to determine and jointly identify proposed institutional arrangements based on an analysis of:
 - i) transparency and timeliness with respect to the process, and effective involvement of stakeholders.
 - ii) cost effectiveness.
 - iii) analysis of the core function of each SOPAC programme to assess whether it is primarily (a) an environmental programme or (b) an economic development programme.
 - iv) synergies and linkages between programmes.
 - v) optimising delivery and sustainable continuation of regional services.

- vi) strengthening organisational capacities.
- vii) maintaining the integrity of the applied science and technical services.
- viii) a mechanism that will enable the benefits of STAR to be continued.

- (e) requested the Director of SOPAC to work with the other CEOs to provide joint, formal quarterly updates on progress and to seek and share the views of, and give due consideration, to all members of SPREP, SPC and SOPAC.
- (f) encouraged the Director of SOPAC to provide regular briefings to members with Suva-based representation, as well as regular email updates to all members.
- (g) requested the Director of SOPAC in collaboration with the CEOs of SPREP and SPC, jointly commission an independent analysis of the legal, financial, administrative and programmatic implications of their proposed institutional arrangements, avoiding duplication of work already undertaken.
- (h) requested the Director of SOPAC to work with the other CEOs to ensure that the proposed institutional arrangements and analysis of implications are circulated to all member focal points of SPREP, SPC and SOPAC with an invitation for a representative from each member country to attend a meeting of all countries and territories for consideration by May 2009.
- (i) requested, subject to the guidance of the above-referenced meeting, the Director of SOPAC to work collaboratively with the CEOs of SPREP and SPC to finalise and jointly recommend new institutional arrangements and implementation plans, to be provided to Members by July 2009, for consideration and decision by their respective Governing Bodies in 2009.
- (j) agreed that it will meet to consider the institutional arrangements and implementation plan recommended by the three CEOs before the next Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting in 2009.
- (k) Agreed that an independent external consultancy may be commissioned and if necessary, to assist the three CEOs to achieve the objective of paragraph 4 acknowledging that additional resources would be sought.
- (l) noted the instruction by the SPREP meeting to the Director of SPREP in his deliberations on the new institutional arrangements to take account of the ICR recommendations and implementation.

(m) to immediately respond by writing to the Forum Chair, Chairs of SPC and SPREP governing bodies, Chair of STAR, donor partners and key stakeholders advising of the outcomes of its consideration of the issue at the 2008 Council Meeting.

10.2 CROP Remuneration Review Report [Professional and Support Staff]

10.2.1 Professional Staff

313. The Director introduced paper AS 37/10.2.1 on the CROP Remuneration Review Report which included the proposed salary adjustments agreed by CROP Heads at their meeting of August 2008, with respect to professional staff. Council was advised that SOPAC had already debriefed Council on this issue however provided a short overview for those who had not been present at that meeting.

314. The Cook Islands, Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea endorsed the recommendations proposed by the Secretariat.

315. Tuvalu queried whether SOPAC was able to absorb additional costs in the regular budget or whether increases in contributions would be required to cover higher costs. The Director assured that an increase in membership contribution would not be required.

316. Australia sought clarification on where the extra funds came from to support the increase to which the Secretariat responded that this was absorbed within current funds. Australia approved of the increase stating its support of the harmonised approach.

317. New Zealand associated itself with Australia's comments.

318. Fiji queried why existing salary packages were not sufficient to attract local experts to SOPAC, noting that local staff could be trained to conduct specialised work.

319. The Director explained that some of the work conducted under the technical programmes was highly specialised and that, while there was an increase in the number of qualified personnel in the region, there remained challenges in securing some experts, particularly as SOPAC often had to compete to secure staff against other agencies that offered higher salaries.

320. Council endorsed the paper and approved the application of 100% of the average of the 3 reference markets as outlined in Table 5 (of paper AS37/10.2.1) and addressed in accordance with the CROP consensus.

321. Council approved that salary adjustments be effective from 1 January 2009.

10.2.2 Support Staff

322. The Director introduced paper AS37/10.2.2 on the CROP Remuneration Review Report which includes the proposed salary adjustments agreed by CROP Heads at their meeting of August 2008, with respect to support staff.

323. Fiji noted that the increase would be absorbed internally and supported the recommendations. Tuvalu and the Cook Islands joined Fiji in supporting the recommendations by the Secretariat.

324. Council considered the paper and approved the increases as outlined in Table 2 (of paper AS37/10.2.2) in accordance with the CROP consensus and approved that salary adjustments be effective from 1 January 2009.

10.3 Secretariat Accommodation and Related Institutional Issues

325. The Director introduced paper AS37/10.4 on Secretariat Accommodation and Related Institutional Issues. Council was reminded that accommodation was an ongoing issue for SOPAC and that there was a need for additional space within the current SOPAC Campus. The Director stated that the refurbishment of current premises was underway to address the issue.

326. The Director also observed a number of reviews that had been conducted within SOPAC to investigate human resources issues as well as strategic communications. The Director emphasised the desire of SOPAC to implement findings at little or no cost. She noted the recommendation of the human resources review to recruit a Human Resource Manager.

327. The Director drew the attention of Council to the need for strategic communications work within SOPAC and the benefits currently being achieved through a short-term consultancy on strategic communications.

328. Marshall Islands accepted the recommendations of SOPAC but, in relation to accommodation issues, queried the status of SOPAC's host country agreement. Fiji advised that there had been no further discussion on this issue.

329. New Zealand acknowledged the continuing need for office space at the Secretariat in Fiji and asked whether it was possible to invite to the Government of Fiji to report back to Council

next year on progress in this matter. With respect to the human resources manager position, she acknowledged the need for good human resource advisory capacity but, given the RIF, she urged that any positions in this capacity are temporary in nature. In response, the Director advised that SOPAC had not budgeted for a human resources specialist at this point and that the strategic communications work being conducted was occurring on a short-term consultancy basis.

330. Fiji stated that Government was having discussions with SOPAC regarding accommodation and that Fiji would be happy to report back to Council on the matter next year.

331. Council acknowledged the continuing and urgent need for additional space to ensure effective work programme delivery and requested the Secretariat to work closely with the Government of Fiji as host Government of the Secretariat to explore appropriate options.

332. Council recognised and encouraged the proactive measures being undertaken by the Secretariat to strengthen its Corporate Services particularly its Human Resources Management and its Communication and Outreach functions as it strived to enhance programme and project delivery noting that these have financial implications.

10.4 Director Position

333. The Chair introduced paper AS37/10.4, Director's Position. He advised that in light of the Director's second term coming to an end in early 2010, Council would need to review the job profile and approve the job advertisement as per Rule 6 of the Procedures for Executive Appointments.

334. Cook Islands noted that the subject was integral to the work recommendations discussed under 10.1 and recalled the announcement by the Director of SPREP before his departure that the current (SOPAC) Director had been appointed by the SPREP Council to replace Asterio Takesy as Director SPREP, stressing the timelines with respect to the SOPAC position.

335. Marshall Islands proposed that time be given to Council to consider the implications and have discussions at a later time.

336. The Director advised Council that she had been offered the SPREP Director position though no formal commitments had been made by herself given that she'd only just received the contract of offer and she felt it rather premature of the current Director of SPREP to make the announcement

when he addressed Council earlier in the meeting.

337. The Cook Islands had flagged the SPREP Director announcement because he felt it was more appropriate for the Chair of SOPAC to make such an announcement. As to the paper before Council, the Cook Islands had no problems with the advertisement but that Council needed to decide on the cut-off point for applications and when the advertisement needed to be placed.

338. Vanuatu concurred with the Cook Islands and enquired as to when the contract for the new Director of SPREP would come into effect. He also suggested an ad hoc committee be given the responsibility of looking into the matter of recruiting a new SOPAC director to work with the CEOs of SPC and SPREP.

339. Papua New Guinea supported the Cook Islands and Vanuatu citing the great importance of the RIF process, especially the May 2009 meeting on the matter. Council needed to make strategic decisions as quickly as possible and that a director should be in position to guide the process before the May meeting.

340. New Zealand agreed with the Vanuatu view in that there needed to be an inter-sessional process in place to help Council work through the issues and that it was likely more information would come to hand in the next few weeks that would assist. She added that it was probably a good opportunity (in light of the RIF) to amend the Rules of Procedure with some explanatory information of the wider developments going on in the region; and that the position description may also need to be amended by the same token.

341. The Director referred Council to paras 7 to 10 of the Rules of Procedure under the sub-heading "Interim Appointments should a Deputy Director not be in Post" suggesting that this was an opportunity to work through any eventuality should she accept the position of the SPREP Director.

342. Tuvalu agreed that the Rules of Procedure should guide Council; and while having no problems with the mechanics set out in the paper he pointed out the particular peculiarity of the situation before Council in light of the RIF process as well as the appointment of SOPAC's current director to be the new SPREP Director. He reminded Council that what needed to be kept in mind was the interest that the work of SOPAC undergo minimum disruption and that there was continuity given that Council had given the Secretariat a lot of work to do between now and May 2009. In this regard he sought flexibility in timing and thought it important that Council set

in motion the recruitment of a new SOPAC director given the imminent departure of the current SOPAC Director.

343. Fiji added their voice to the concerns raised on this being a crucial moment for SOPAC and concurred with the Tuvalu view. He suggested that Council go ahead and endorse the advertisement pending the Director's response to the offer from SPREP and that a special committee should sit to implement provisions of the recommendations.

344. Cook Islands concurred with views expressed and realised that the main issue was that of timing.

345. The Director while apologising for not having come to a decision with respect to the SPREP Director position offered that regardless of whether she accepted the SPREP offer or not Council was faced with the decision of having to advertise the SOPAC Director position in May, given that the end of her six-year term was due on 1 February 2010. She also suggested that given the RIF implementation timetable there might not be a SOPAC in 2010.

346. Cook Islands moved that Council accept the paper in front of it taking into account the concerns raised by members.

347. New Zealand while being very sympathetic to the Director's views noted that Council was meeting up in May 2009 on the RIF and offered that as an opportunity to review the job description and advertisement and initiate the process of recruitment at that point given that it was several months before the advertisement had to go into the papers.

348. The Director suggested that based on the discussions the recommendation be slightly amended and also in light of what was happening that a review of the job profile on the type of person required may also be warranted.

349. Australia expressed concern that the period straight ahead would involve intense work for all three Secretariats and was concerned about SOPAC's interest within that period as Council could very well end up with no one representing its interests. She alluded to a very capable Secretariat, senior members of which had a really packed agenda (some to do with the RIF anyway); and wondered whether there was a need for another position called by a different name. Australia's main concern was that a great deal of work was scheduled for the period directly ahead, and they would have a problem with postponing a decision on that matter.

350. Tuvalu found the Australian view very helpful and recited that if Council ran out of captains,

it could look out for watchmen or babysitters – the issue was that important to SOPAC. He offered a two-fold decision (1) to endorse the process in the paper which was in concordance with the Rules of Procedures; and (2) in light of the RIF and the imminent departure of the incumbent director that advertisement of the position be brought forward, for example to December. Tuvalu felt it important to set clear timelines and not leave it open because of the importance of the RIF tasks set for the Secretariat to carry out in the immediate future; further suggesting that Council request the Director to inform Council of her decision by mid-November to help the situation.

351. Vanuatu associated itself with the views just expressed by Tuvalu.

352. Samoa noted that it was taking a somewhat different stance to that assumed by colleagues around the table. Samoa raised the need to keep RIF at the back of members' minds and especially the specific timeframes given by Leaders in the recent Alofi Leaders' Forum. Samoa noted the relatively short period before implementation of RIF, virtually one year, and the fact that there are capable and highly competent Secretariat staff, one of which could be appointed as Acting Director to ensure the organisation continued to function effectively during the interim period.

353. Marshall Islands attributed its earlier position for deferring discussion to their being mindful of the timeframe set by the Leaders on the RIF for 2010, and that having a new Director in position for only a year was unjustified. He concurred with the Samoan view and mentioned the names of some programme managers as among capable staff that could work with those implementing the RIF process.

354. The Director thanked Samoa and Marshall Islands for recognising that there were some highly qualified personnel within the Secretariat management team who had been aware of her bid for the SPREP position; and with whom she had had discussions on how to manage through an interim change if she did leave to take up the SPREP position.

355. Papua New Guinea sounded a word of caution in that an interim arrangement, according to the rules, was for only six months and there might be a problem there.

356. New Zealand made a small point of clarification with respect to the timeframes that the RIF implementation commencement was in 2010 and just how long that implementation would take was unknown at this stage, which was a challenge for confirming the time period for a new director to be in position and amending the job description.

357. Tuvalu stated that to help Council reach an agreed common position that it was important to keep in mind and not pre-empt the SOPAC Council's prerogative to decide on dissolving SOPAC; and that it would be Council, at the right moment, that would take that decision to put an end to SOPAC – a decision that it hadn't taken yet. Tuvalu's suggestion for a practical way forward was in their view straightforward, i.e. according to the Rules of Procedure the job had to be advertised by June 2009 and by the same rules an interim arrangement was for a period of 6 months, therefore Council should take the decision now to immediately advertise the position as soon as timelines were determined and they respected the right of Secretariat staff and any member country national to apply for interim or substantive appointments.

358. Cook Islands revised its earlier position to accept an amended recommendation that might be offered by the Director and asked his colleague from Tuvalu to also amend the recommendation to reflect the RIF process and their views as expressed in their latter intervention.

359. Tonga supported the Cook Islands revised position.

360. Chair read out the reworked text of the recommendation: "In light of the RIF process Council will need to review the draft job profile, job advertisement and procedures outlined above making amendments where necessary and decisions as appropriate" – for Council to consider at this point.

361. Australia referred to an earlier suggestion by Vanuatu for a sub-committee to come up with a way through this as the amended text of the recommendation read out by the Chair was in their view going to involve a lot of consideration of different issues in a very short timeline; and she suggested that a sub-committee could be tasked to deal with the matter overnight and present to Council the following morning.

362. Tuvalu while already having a formulation of their own with respect to an amended recommendation was attracted to the Australian suggestion and deferred to it.

363. Council, in light of the uncertainty of the incumbent Director continuing in position at SOPAC in a period of intense activity with respect to the RIF; tasked a subcommittee comprising the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Cook Islands, New Zealand and Vanuatu (Chair) to provide a way forward in ensuring that interim arrangements were in place for the Secretariat to effectively respond to Council's recommendations in item 10.1. The subcommittee completed its work and

reported back to full Council when it reconvened in the morning.

364. Chair extended the appreciation of Council to the subcommittee on their work on the issue of the recruitment of a new SOPAC director and invited the Chair of the subcommittee to present their deliberations on the matter.

365. The Chair of the subcommittee presented their recommendations to Council. It was also noted that individual follow-up discussions with the Secretariat on this issue could also be conducted with country representatives during any visits they might make to Suva in the near future.

Recommendation

366. In view of the work on the Rationalisation of SOPAC functions under the RIF, and the recent Offer of Appointment of the incumbent as the new Director of SPREP, the Council decided to further consider the process for Director recruitment inter-sessionally, noting the need to avoid disruption to the SOPAC work programmes.

367. The Council agreed:

- (a) to request the Director to formally advise the Council, through the Chair, by 30th of November 2008 of her decision on whether to take up the offer of the post of Director of SPREP;
- (b) to request the Chair to write to Council Members on his recommendations for future arrangements for the Director position, including the text of any position description and job advertisements taking into account the RIF Process, for inter-sessional approval by Council; and
- (c) that skills in Change Management and a shorter than normal tenure be considered.

11. FINANCIAL REPORTS

368. Chair introduced the Manager Corporate Services who presented most of the financial reports to Council.

11.1 Financial Report 2007

11.1.1 2007 Audited Financial Statements, Auditor's Report and Management Report

369. The Secretariat referred Council to paper AS37/11.1.1, and presented the 2007 Audited

Financial Statements, Auditor's Report and Auditor's Management Letter.

370. The Secretariat explained that in accordance with Regulations 17(e) and 24 of the SOPAC Financial Regulations, the Audited Financial Statements of SOPAC for the year ended 31 December 2007 had been prepared on an accrual basis of accounting and SOPAC's external auditors Ernst & Young audited the full set of accounts.

371. The Secretariat referred Council to the Statement of Revenue and Expenditure for the year ended 31 December 2007 and Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2007 (AS37/11.1.1), noting three important issues of membership contributions, United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund and Capitalisation of property, plant and equipment.

372. Marshall Islands requested information on the level of the reserve fund, and the Secretariat responded with the figure F\$400,000.

373. Samoa requested for additional clarification on the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund.

374. The Secretariat explained that it referred to amounts owed to SOPAC and is associated with the Southampton Training Course in 2002 for Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Tonga. The Secretariat further stated that all avenues to recover the amount owed had been exhausted even with the assistance of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

375. Council received and accepted the 2007 Audited Financial Statements, Auditor's Report and Auditor's Management Letter.

11.1.2 Report on 2007 Regular Budget Variance and Virement of Funds

376. The Secretariat presented paper AS37/11.1.2 on the 2007 Budget Variance and Virement of Funds, noting the Regular Budget Expenditure Variance Report (Annex 1), Explanations Report (Annex 2), Information on Savings Achieved (Annex 3) and Overall Variance Summary (Annex 4).

377. Council noted and accepted the Report on the 2007 Budget Variance and Virement of funds.

11.1.3 Report on Assets and Inventory written off for the year ended 31 December 2006

378. The Secretariat introduced paper AS37/11.1.3 and reported to Council on the

Non-Current (Fixed Assets) written off during the year by disposal due to irreparable damage.

379. Samoa and Papua New Guinea acknowledged the Paper AS37/11.1.3 and supported the recommendations.

380. Council accepted the report on assets and inventory written off for the year ended 31 December 2007.

11.2 Report on 2008 Accounts to 30 June

11.2.1 Report on Financial Accounts for the 6-month period to June 2008

381. The Secretariat introduced paper AS37/11.2.1, and presented to Council the Report on the 2008 Accounts to 30 June, stating that it had not been audited.

382. Council noted and accepted the report on the 2008 Accounts to 30 June.

11.2.2. Membership Contributions

383. The Secretariat presented paper AS37/11.2.2 Rev.1 on the status of Membership Contributions as of June 2008. The Secretariat also requested countries to inform the Secretariat of any changes in their respective financial processes as Samoa and Palau had done so.

384. Solomon Islands registered that it had paid for its 2006 arrears and had made arrangements to consider the arrears for 2007 and 2008.

385. Nauru had budgeted their contribution for this year (however arrears have not been budgeted for).

386. Marshall Islands requested the Secretariat that in its letter and invoice to countries to also indicate the amount in the respective PIC's currency.

387. In response to the Marshall Islands, the Secretariat stated that this could be risky from the Secretariat's perspective which could run into losses due to exchange rates. On the other hand this is negligible if payment is carried out within a month's timeframe.

388. Australia noted the long-term arrears for Guam and requested the Secretariat to seek an explanation from Guam.

389. Council:

(a) noted the report on the status and level of outstanding Membership contributions;

- (b) encouraged Members to discharge their outstanding contributions in full; and
- (c) encouraged the Director of SOPAC to work with PICs that have significant arrears to identifying options to address this.

12. 2009 WORKPLAN AND BUDGET

12.1 Reserve Fund Ceiling

390. The Manager of Corporate Services referred Council to paper AS37/12.1 reporting to Council, as required, the annual ceiling on the Reserve Fund. He noted the relevance of this fund to Financial Regulation 14. Having explained the assumptions underlying the value, he reminded Council that it had agreed in previous meetings to maintain the reserve fund at FJD 400,000.

391. The delegate for the Cook Islands acknowledged the interventions of Council in previous years and recommended support for the recommendation of the Secretariat.

392. Council agreed that the Reserve Fund ceiling remain at FJD 400,000.

12.2 Approval of 2009 Work Plan and Budget

393. The Deputy Director introduced paper AS37/12.2 on the draft 2009 Work Plan and Budget, noting that a revised Work Plan and Budget 2009 was distributed for Council to consider the day before tabling this specific agenda. He then outlined key points and general comments as explained in AS37/12.2, following which the Manager Corporate Services detailed tabulated items 1-10 and alerted Council to a few changes in the Proposed Work Plan and Budget 2009 Logframe.

394. The delegate for Australia thanked the Secretariat for preparing the work plan and budget and acknowledged the progress against the 2009 Work Plan and Budget whilst seeking clarification on the breakdown of expenses by programmes (Chart 1).

395. Australia, further noted with pleasure the balanced Revised Work Plan and Budget for 2009 which did not reflect any unsecured funding, a position which they are comfortable with approving.

396. The Director commented that the Community Risks Programme budget summary (Table 1) reflects a significant amount of funding received through the EU B Envelope Disaster Facility and

AusAID resulting in the highest budgeted summary amount.

397. Australia commented that the Secretariat should continue to make every effort to ensure the overall strategic direction and priorities set by the Council are the primary drivers in securing funding for the organisation

398. Council considered and approved the 2008 Revised Budget of \$25,752,620 and the 2009 Work Plan and Budget of \$31,841,577.

12.3 Appointment of Auditors

399. The Secretariat introduced paper AS37/12.3 on the Appointment of Auditors, stating that there was a call for tender with two responses one from Ernst & Young; and the other from KPMG.

400. Council assessed the audit tenders and approved the appointment of Ernst & Young for the audit of SOPAC's 2008 and 2009 financial statements.

401. Council also approved Ernst & Young to carry out any other audit required as a result of specific financial donor reporting.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

402. The Chair advised Council that the SOPAC Secretariat had no other business and invited any other items from the floor.

403. Nauru noted the importance of time to discuss policy matters concerning SOPAC and queried whether the Secretariat could reformat the agenda to allocate more time to these issues, particularly noting the amount of time taken to report on technical items.

404. The Director observed that Council meetings were infrequent and that Programme technical reports were critical for providing Council with the opportunity to understand work undertaken, to note how any impacts it was having and to provide feedback on the directions of work. She also noted that the amount of time dedicated to Programme reporting had already been substantially reduced in recent years and to reduce further the time allocation to this reporting would be to lose opportunities for Council to guide SOPAC.

405. Nauru confirmed that a balance was needed in terms of the time provided to cover both policy discussion and technical reporting and reiterated the need for more time in future for policy consideration.

14. VENUE AND DATE OF 38th ANNUAL SESSION

406. The delegate from Vanuatu informed Council that his Government was willing to host the 38th SOPAC Annual Session and the attendant STAR conference in Port Vila in 2009. He advised that the provisional dates for the meetings would be 19-30 October 2009.

407. Council applauded Vanuatu's intent to host the 38th Annual Session of the Governing Council of SOPAC.

15. ADOPTION OF AGREED RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

408. Council adopted the agreed summary record of the proceedings of the 37th SOPAC Session subject to amendments.

16. CLOSING

409. The Chair invited the SOPAC Director to make final comments.

410. The SOPAC Director thanked the Chair for his strong leadership throughout the meeting, extending appreciation also to the co-chair, the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs for Tuvalu. She acknowledged the contributions to the Meeting of Vice-Chair of the SOPAC Council Committee of the Whole, the Ambassador of Tuvalu to the Fiji Islands, HE Tine Leuelu.

411. On behalf of SOPAC, the Director extended warm appreciation through the Chair to the different communities that had provided such hospitality while the SOPAC Session was underway in Tuvalu. She paid special tribute to the efforts of the Tuvalu national representative to SOPAC and the task force who had worked so effectively in organising logistics for the meeting.

412. The Director thanked all participants who had contributed throughout the week to the meeting, including CROP representatives, NGOs and observers. She made particular reference to contributions of the PMEG groups and members of the STAR and acknowledged the staff of the SOPAC Secretariat for their support to her throughout the year and at the meeting. She extended appreciation for the contribution of Vanuatu as Vice-Chair at the meeting, especially the convening of the early morning drafting committee meetings; and noted with pleasure the offer of Vanuatu to host the SOPAC Annual Session in 2009.

413. The Chair thanked all the delegates including STAR, CROP and other representatives for their contributions throughout the week, noting with satisfaction the constructive discussions achieved. He expressed particular thanks to the community members who had supported the meeting so warmly.

414. The Chair declared the 37th Annual Session of the SOPAC Governing Council closed at 11:25 am, Thursday, 30 October 2008.

APPENDICES

1	List of Participants	51
2	Agenda	56
3	Designation of National Representatives (as at May 2009)	58
4	Statements by Delegations	
	Part I: Member Countries	60
	Part II: CROP Organisations	77
	Part III: Cooperating Governments, International Agencies & National Institutions	81
5	STAR Chair's Report to Council.....	84
6	Programme Monitoring Evaluation Groups Reports and Associated Documentation	93
7	List of Conference Room Documents	104
8	Acronyms	106

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

MEMBER COUNTRIES

Australia

Ms Judith Robinson
Minister Counsellor – Pacific Development Cooperation
Australian High Commission
PO Box 214
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 3382211
Fax: (679) 3382316
Mobile: (679) 9920535
E-mail: Judith.robinson@dfat.gov.au

Cook Islands

Mr Keu Mataroa
Executive Officer
Ministry of Works
PO Box 102
Rarotonga, Cook Islands
Tel: (682) 20034
Fax: (682) 21134
E-mail: k.mataroa@mow.gov.ck

Federated States of Micronesia

Mr Gabriel Ayin
Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia
PO Box 15493
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 330 4566
Fax: (679) 330 4081
E-mail: fsmsuva@fsmsuva.org.fj

Ms Oleen Poll Peter
Hazard Mitigation Officer
Office of Environment and Emergency Management
FSM National Government
PO Box PS-69, Palikir
Pohnpei FM96941
Federated States of Micronesia
Tel: (691) 320 8815
Fax: (691) 320 8936
Mobile: (691) 920 2322
Email: oleenpoll@yahoo.com

Fiji Islands

Mr Simione Rokolaqa
Acting Principal Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and
Civil Aviation
PO Box 2220, Government Buildings
Suva, Fiji Islands

Tel: (679) 3309645
Fax: (679) 3301741
E-mail: simione.rokolaqa@govnet.gov.fj

Mr Venasio Nasara
Acting Director of Mineral Development
Mineral Resources Department
National Representative of Fiji Islands to SOPAC
Private Mail Bag, GPO
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 3381611
Fax: (679) 3370039
E-mail: venasio.nasara@govnet.gov.fj

Following with same address as above:

Mr Malakai Finau
Acting Manager (Geological Services)
E-mail: malakai@mrd.gov.fj

Kiribati

Ms Peniita Taiaa Kabubuke
First Secretary
Kiribati High Commission
PO Box 17937
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 3302512
Fax: (679) 3315335
E-mail: fssuva@mfa.gov.ki

Ms Reenate Willie
Assistant Mineral Development Officer
Ministry of Fisheries & Marine Resources Development
PO Box 64, Bairiki, Tarawa, Kiribati
Tel: (686) 21099
Fax: (686) 21120
E-mail: reenatew@mfmrd.gov.ki

Following with same address as above:

Ms Toaa Tokoia

Marshall Islands

Ms Kino S. Kabua, Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 1349
Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960
Tel: (692) 625 3181/3012
Fax: (692) 625 4979
E-mail: Kino.Kabua@ntamar.net

H.E. Mr Mack Kaminaga, Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands
PO Box 2038

Government Buildings
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 3387899
Fax: (679) 3387115
E-mail: rmisuva@gmail.com

Nauru

Mr Julian Itsimaera
Director of Regional Affairs
Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade
Government Offices
Yaren District
Republic of Nauru
Tel: (674) 444 3133 Ext 241
Fax: (674) 444 3105
E-mail: julian.itsimaera@naurugov.nr

New Zealand

Ms Deborah Collins
New Zealand Agency for International
Development (NZ Aid)
Nga Hoe Tuputupu-mai-tawhiti
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade
195 Lambton Quay
Private Mail Bag 18-901
Wellington, New Zealand
Tel: (644) 4398 8268
Fax: (644) 4398 8514
E-mail: deborah.collins@nzaid.govt.nz

Mr Michael Hartfield, Programme Manager
Pacific Regional Environment
New Zealand Agency for International Development
195 Lambton Quay
Private Bag 18-901
Wellington 5045, New Zealand
Tel: (644) 439 8737
Fax: (644) 439 8855
Mobile: (64 021) 469 243
E-mail: Michael.hartfield@nzaid.govt.nz

Palau

Mr Isaac Soaladaob, Director
Bureau of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of State
P.O Box 100
Koror, Palau 96940
Tel: (680) 767 2490/767 2408
Fax: (680) 7673680
E-mail: insoaladaob@palaugov.net

Papua New Guinea

Ms Julie Wapo
First Secretary
Papua New Guinea High Commission
P O Box 2447

Government Buildings
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 330 4244
Fax: (679) 3300178
E-mail: kundufj@connect.com.fj

Samoa

Ms Sharon Potoi-Aiafi
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade
GPO Box L1859
Apia, Samoa
Tel: (685) 20698
Fax: (685) 21504
E-mail: sharon@mfat.gov.ws

Ms Silia Ualesi
Ministry of Finance
Private Mail Bag
Apia, Samoa
Tel: (685) 34341
Fax: (685) 21312
E-mail: silia.kilepoa@mof.gov.ws

Solomon Islands

Mr Donn Tolia
Coordinator Special Duties
Ministry of Mines, Energy & Rural Electrification
PO Box G37
Honiara, Solomon Islands
Tel: (677) 21521/21374
Fax: (677) 25811
E-mail: donn@mines.gov.sb

Tonga

Dr Sione N. Halatuituia
Secretary for Lands, Survey & Natural
Resources & Environment
Ministry of Lands, Survey & Natural
Resources & Environment
National Representative of Tonga to SOPAC
PO Box 5, Nuku'alofa
Kingdom of Tonga
Tel: (676) 23611
Fax: (676) 23216
E-mail: naila@lands.gov.to

Tuvalu

Hon Taukelina Finikaso, Minister for Communications,
Transportation & Tourism
Ministry of Communications, Transportation & Tourism
Government Buildings
Funafuti, Tuvalu
Tel: (688) 20051
Fax: (688) 20722
E-mail: tfinikaso@gov.tv

Mr Enele Sopoaga
Secretary for Foreign Affairs & Labour
Department of Foreign Affairs & Labour
Office of the Prime Minister
Government Buildings
Funafuti, Tuvalu
Tel: (688) 20104
Fax: (688) 20843
E-mail: esopoaga@gov.tv

HE Mr Tine Leuelu
High Commissioner
Tuvalu High Commission
GPO Box 14449
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 330 1355
Fax: (679) 330 8479
E-mail: tine_leuelu@yahoo.com

Mr Uale Taleni
Secretary for Natural Resources & Environment
National Representative of Tuvalu to SOPAC
Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment
Private Mail Bag
Funafuti, Tuvalu
Tel: (688) 20170
Fax: (688) 20167
E-mail: utaleni@gov.tv

Following with same address as above:

Ms Teniku Talesi, Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources & Environment
E-mail: ttalesi@gov.tv

Mr Faatasi Malologa
Director of Lands & Survey
E-mail: fmalologa@gmail.com

Ms Loia M. Tausi
Land Valuation Officer
E-mail: lmolipi@gov.tv

Other Members of the Tuvalu National Task Force for hosting the SOPAC 37th Session

Pasuna Tuaga
Chief of Protocol (Foreign Affairs)

Kulene Sokotia
Land Registrar (Lands and Survey)

Laualofa T
Architect (PWD)

Taaku Sekielu
Electrician (Tuvalu Electricity Corporation)

Uiga Pilate
Assistant Civil Aviation Officer

Uatea Vave
Senior Agriculture Officer

Molipi Tausi
Energy Officer

Sele Tomasi
Admin. Officer (Vaiaku Lagi Hotel)

Savali Fatoga
Accounting Officer (Tuvalu Co-operative Society)

Kilifi O'Brien
EIA Officer (Environment Office)

Hellani Tumua
Secretary (Funafuti Kaupule)

Vanuatu

Mr Christopher Ioan, Director
Department of Geology, Mines & Water Resources
P.M.B 9001
Port Vila, Vanuatu
E-mail: cioan@vanuatu.gov.vu

COUNCIL OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS OF THE PACIFIC (CROP)

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)

Mr Feleti Teo, Deputy Secretary-General
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)
Private Mail Bag
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 3312600
Fax: (679) 3301102
E-mail: feletit@forumsec.org.fj

Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)

Mr Bryan Scott
Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)
1 FFA Rd
Honiara, Solomon Islands
Tel: (677) 21124
E-mail: bryan.scott@ffa.int

Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

Dr Jimmie Rodgers, Director-General
Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
BP D5
Noumea Cedex
New Caledonia 98848
Tel: (687) 262000
Fax: (687) 263818
E-mail: JimmieR@spc.int

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Mr Asterio Takesy, Director
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
PO Box 240
Apia, Samoa
Tel: (685) 21929
Fax: (685) 20231
E-mail: asteriot@sprep.org

University of the South Pacific (USP)

Dr Kifle Kahsai, Asst. Dean, Research
Earth and Environmental Sciences
Faculty of Science & Technology
University of the South Pacific
PO Box 1168, Suva
Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 3232052
Fax: (679) 3231539
E-mail: kahsai_k@usp.ac.fj

SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

European Union

Mr Malcom Ponton
Delegation of the European Commission for the Pacific
Private Mail Bag, GPO
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 3313633 Ext 112
Fax: (679) 3300370

United Nations ESCAP

Mr Siliga Kofe, Economic Affairs Officer
United Nations ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre
PMB
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 331 9669
Fax: (679) 331 9671
E-mail: kofe@un.org

Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) (EC-ACP)

Mr José Filipe Fonseca, Senior Programme Coordinator
Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) (EC-ACP)
PO Box 380
6700 AJ Waeningen
The Netherlands
Tel: (31) 317 467 133
Fax: (31) 317 460 067
E-mail: fonseca@cta.int

SUPPORTING NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

CSIRO

Prof Stewart Burn
Senior Principal Research Scientist Stream Leader
Infrastructure Technologies
CSIRO Land & Water
PO Box 56, Highett 3190
Victoria, Australia
Tel: (613) 9252 6032
Fax: (613) 9252 6244
Mob: 04919 106 425
E-mail: Stewart.Burn@csiro.au

Geoscience Australia

Mr Stephen Sagar
Remote Sensing Scientist
Remote Sensing Science & Strategy Project
Geoscience Australia
GPO Box 378
Canberra ACT 2601, Australia
Tel: (612) 6249 9877
Fax: (612) 6249 9911
Mob: 0414 932 264
E-mail: Stephen.Sagar@ga.gov.au

Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science & Technology (JAMSTEC)

Mr Satoru Akatani
JAMSTEC
2-15 Natsushima-cho
Yokosuka, Kanagawa 237-0061
Japan
Tel: (81) 468 67 9922
Fax: (81) 468 67 9215
E-mail: akatanis@jamstec.go.jp

Following with same address as above:

Mr Akihiko Murata
Tel: (81) 468 67 9503
Fax: (81) 468 67 9455
E-mail: murata@jamstec.go.jp

National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research (NIWA)

Mr Doug Ramsay
NIWA
PO Box 11115
Gate 10, Silverdale Road
Hamilton, New Zealand
Tel: (647) 859 1894
Fax: (647) 856 0151
E-mail: d.ramsay@niwa.co.nz

Tuvalu Association of Non Governmental Organisation (TANGO)

Mrs Annie Homasi OBE, Coordinator
TANGO
PO Box 136
Funafuti, Tuvalu
Tel: (688) 20758
Fax: (688) 20959
E-mail: tango@tuvalu.tv

Victoria University of Wellington

Associate Professor John Collen
School of Earth Sciences
Victoria University of Wellington
PO Box 600
Wellington, New Zealand
Tel: (644) 463 5345
Fax: (644) 463 5186
E-mail: john.collen@vuw.ac.nz

OBSERVER GOVERNMENT

Mr Joseph Murphy
Embassy of the United States of America
PO Box 218
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 3313466
Fax: (679) 3302998
E-mail: murphyjp@state.gov

SOPAC SECRETARIAT

Secretariat of the Pacific Applied Geoscience
Commission (SOPAC)
Private Mail Bag GPO
Suva, Fiji Islands
Tel: (679) 3381 377
Fax: (679) 3370 040/3384 461
E-mail: director@sopac.org
Website: www.sopac.org

Cristelle Pratt, Director
E-mail: cristelle@sopac.org

Bhaskar Rao, Deputy Director
E-mail: bhaskar@sopac.org

Mohinish Kumar, Manager Corporate Services
E-mail: mohinish@sopac.org

Mosese Sikivou, Manager Community Risks
E-mail: mosese@sopac.org

Paul Fairbairn, Manager Community Lifelines
E-mail: paul@sopac.org

Angela Ambroz
E-mail: angela@sopac.org

Akuila Tawake
E-mail: akuila@sopac.org

Daryl Woo
E-mail: daryl@sopac.org

Etuate Cocker
E-mail: etuate@sopac.org

Herve Damlamian
E-mail: herve@sopac.org

Jens Kruger
E-mail: jens@sopac.org

Laisa Baravilala-Baoa
E-mail: laisa@sopac.org

Litea Biukoto
E-mail: litea@sopac.org

Litia Waradi
E-mail: litia@sopac.org

Mereseini Lala Bukarau
E-mail: lala@sopac.org

Paula Holland
E-mail: paulah@sopac.org

Peter Sinclair
E-mail: peter@sopac.org

Rhonda Robinson
E-mail: rhonda@sopac.org

Rupeni Mario
E-mail: rupeni@sopac.org

Sakaio Manoa
E-mail: sakaio@sopac.org

Wolf Forstreuter
E-mail: wolf@sopac.org

Programme Monitoring & Evaluation Groups (PMEG)

Ocean & Islands Programme

Dr Gary Greene
Professor – Marine Geology
795 Rider Ridge Rd
Santa Cruz, CA 95065
United States of America
Tel: (831) 425 8750
Fax: (831) 425 8750
E-mail: greene@mlml.calstate.edu

Community Risk programme

Mr John Norton
E-mail: john.norton@nettel.net.nz

Community Lifeline Programme

Mr Jerrold Knight
E-mail: jerrold.knight@gmail.com
knightj@palaugis.org

APPENDIX 2

ADOPTED AGENDA

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND RESOURCES NETWORK (STAR) SESSION

*Theme: Environmental Change and Oceanic Islands
– Especially with Respect to Managing Water Resources and Sanitation on Atolls –*

OPENING SESSION OF GOVERNING COUNCIL

1. OPENING
2. ELECTIONS
 - 2.1 Chair and Vice-Chair of SOPAC
 - 2.2 Chairs of STAR and TAG
 - 2.3 Appointment of Rapporteurs
3. AGENDA AND WORKING PROCEDURES
 - 3.1 Adoption of Agenda
 - 3.2 Appointment of Drafting Committee
 - 3.3 Appointment of Sub-Committees (should any be necessary)
4. REPRESENTATION
 - 4.1 Designation of National Representatives
 - 4.2 Membership Issues
5. STATEMENTS (The intention is that these statements be tabled for inclusion in the Proceedings, and not presented verbally in full)
 - 5.1 Statements from Member Countries
 - 5.2 Statements by CROP Organisations
 - 5.3 Statements from Co-operating Governments and International Agencies
 - 5.4 Statements from National Institutions

COUNCIL – TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (TAG) SESSION

(Member countries and other delegates discuss the SOPAC Technical Work Programme)

6. ISSUES COMMON TO PROGRAMMES
 - 6.1 Director's Report
 - 6.1.1 Introduction
 - 6.1.2 2007 Annual Report Summary
 - 6.1.3 Summary Report of 2008 Donor Support
 - 6.1.4 SOPAC/EU "Reducing Vulnerability of Pacific ACP States" – Report
 - 6.2 STAR Chair Report
 - 6.3 PMEG Chairs Report [On Cross-cutting Issues]
 - 6.4 CROP and PPAC Summary Reports
 - 6.5 Deepsea Minerals – an Emerging Regional Opportunity

7. COMMUNITY LIFELINES PROGRAMME
 - 7.1 Report from the Community Lifelines Programme
 - 7.2 Issues and Opportunities for the Community Lifelines Programme
 - 7.3 Report from the Programme Review Monitoring & Evaluation Group on CLP
8. COMMUNITY RISK PROGRAMME
 - 8.1 Report from the Community Risk Programme
 - 8.2 Issues and Opportunities for the Community Risk Programme
 - 8.3 Report from the Programme Review Monitoring & Evaluation Group on CRP
9. OCEAN AND ISLANDS PROGRAMME
 - 9.1 Report from the Ocean and Islands Programme
 - 9.2 Issues and Opportunities for the Ocean and Islands Programme
 - 9.3 Report from the Programme Review Monitoring & Evaluation Group on OIP

GOVERNING COUNCIL POLICY SESSION

(Items in this session could be restricted to Member Countries and CROP Organisations if the items require only Council consideration. Otherwise this session will be open)

10. ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION
 - 10.1 Paragraphs 251 and 252 – Proceedings of AS36 (RIF)
 - 10.2 CROP Annual Remuneration Review Report [Professional & Support Staff]
 - 10.2.1 Professional Staff
 - 10.2.2 Support Staff
 - 10.3 Secretariat Accommodation and Related Institutional Issues
 - 10.4 Director Position
11. FINANCIAL REPORTS
 - 11.1 Financial Report 2007
 - 11.1.1 2007 Audited Financial Statements, Auditor's Report and Management Report
 - 11.1.2 Report on 2007 Regular Budget Variance and Virement of Funds
 - 11.1.3 Report on Assets & Inventory written off for the year ended 31 December 2007
 - 11.2 Report on 2008 Accounts to 30 June
 - 11.2.1 Report and Financial Accounts for the 6-month period to June 2008
 - 11.2.2 Membership Contributions
12. 2009 WORK PLAN AND BUDGET
 - 12.1 Reserve Fund Ceiling
 - 12.2 Approval of 2009 Work Plan and Budget
 - 12.3 Appointment of Auditors
13. OTHER BUSINESS
14. VENUE AND DATE OF 38TH ANNUAL SESSION
15. ADOPTION OF AGREED RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
16. CLOSING

APPENDIX 3

DESIGNATION OF NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES (as at June 2009)

American Samoa: Mr Michael Keyser, Chief Executive Officer, American Samoa Power Authority, PO Box PPB, Pago Pago 96799. Telephone: (684) 699-1462, Fax: (684) 699-8070, E-mail: michaelk@aspower.com

Australia: H.E. Mr James Batley, High Commissioner, Australian High Commission, PO Box 214, Suva, Fiji Islands. Telephone: (679) 338 2211, Fax: (679) 338 2065, E-mail: james.batley@dfat.gov.au

Cook Islands: Mr Mike Mitchell, Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration, PO Box 105, Rarotonga. Telephone: (682) 29347, Fax: (682) 21247, E-mail: secfa@mfai.gov.ck; mitchell@mfai.gov.ck

Federated States of Micronesia: Hon. Mr Peter M. Christian, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, PO Box 12, Palikir, Pohnpei. Telephone: (691) 3202620, Fax: (691) 3205854, E-mail: fsmrd@dea.fm

Fiji Islands: Mr Ian Fong, Acting Director of Mineral Development, Mineral Resources Department, Private Mail Bag, GPO, Suva. Telephone: (679) 338 7065, Fax: (679) 337 0039, E-mail: director@mrd.gov.fj, ian@mrd.gov.fj

French Polynesia: Mr Bruno Peaucellier, Head of International Affairs, PO Box 2551, 98713 Papeete, Tahiti. Telephone: (689) 472270, Fax: (689) 472271, E-mail: bruno.peaucellier@presidence.pf

Guam: Ms Lorilee Crisostomo, Acting Administrator, Guam Environmental Protection Agency (GEPA), Ahensian Pruteksion Lina'la Guahan, PO Box 22439 GMF, Barrigada 96921. Telephone: 1 (671) 475-1658/1659, Fax: 1 (671) 477-9402, E-mail: Lorilee.Crisostomo@guamepa.net

Kiribati: Mr Ribanataake Awira, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries & Marine Resources Development, PO Box 64, Bairiki, Tarawa. Telephone: (686) 21099, Fax: (686) 21120, E-mail: riba@mfmrd.gov.ki

Marshall Islands: Ms Kino S. Kabua, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of the Marshall Islands, PO Box 1349, Majuro, MI 96960. Telephone: (692) 625 3181/3012, Fax: (692) 625 4979, E-mail: mofapol@ntamar.net, kino.kabua@ntamar.net

Nauru: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Government Offices, Yaren District. Telephone: (674) 444-3133, Fax: (674) 444-3105

New Caledonia: Dr Yves Lafoy, Senior Advisor for Scientific & Technical Cooperation, New Caledonia's Office of Regional Cooperation and External Relations, 8, route des artificas, Noumea Cedex 98849. Telephone: (687) 27 02 37, Fax: (687) 24 65 24, E-mail: yves.lafoy@gouv.nc

New Zealand: Acting High Commissioner, New Zealand High Commission, GPO Box 1378, Suva, Fiji Islands. Telephone: (679) 331-1422, Fax: (679) 330-0842, E-mail: odele.small@mfat.govt.nz

Niue: Secretary to Government, Premier's Department, Office of the Secretary to Government, PO Box 40, Alofi. Telephone: (683) 4200, Fax: (683) 4232/4151, sog.hipa@mail.gov.nu

Palau: Hon. Sandra Pierantozzi, Minister of State, Ministry of State, Republic of Palau, P.O. Box 100, Koror, ROP 96940. Telephone: (680) 488-2509/1189, Fax: (680) 488-2443, E-mail: state@palaugov.net

Papua New Guinea: Ms Nellie James, Acting Secretary, Department of Mining, Office of the Secretary, Private Mail Bag, Port Moresby Post Office. Telephone: (675) 321 2945, Fax: (675) 321 7958, E-mail: nellie_james@mineral.gov.pg

Samoa: Mr Aiono Mose Pouvi Sua, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, GPO Box L1859, Apia. Telephone: (685) 25313/21171, Fax: (685) 21504, E-mail: mfa@mfa.gov.ws

Solomon Islands: Mr Luma Darcy, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Mines, Energy & Rural Electrification, PO Box G37, Honiara. Telephone: (677) 21521/26352, Fax: (677) 25811, E-mail: hupamaza@gmail.com

Tokelau: Mr Jovilisi Suveinakama, General Manager, Fono a te Malo Fakaauau o Tokelau, Council for the Ongoing Government of Tokelau, P O Box 3298, Apia, Samoa. Telephone: (685) 32325, Fax: (685) 32338; E-mail: jsuveinakama@yahoo.com

Tonga: Dr Sione Nailasikau Halatuituia, Secretary for Lands, Survey & Natural Resources & Surveyor General. Ministry of Lands, Surveys and Natural Resources, PO Box 5, Nuku'alofa. Telephone: (676) 23210, 23611, Fax: (676) 23216, E-mail: ceo@lands.gov.to

Tuvalu: Mr Seve Lausaveve, Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Private Mail Bag, Funafuti. Telephone: (688) 20836 or 20160, Fax: (688) 20826

Vanuatu: Mr Russell Nari, Director-General, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Private Mail Bag 007, Port Vila. Telephone: (678) 23105, Fax: (678) 25165, E-mail: rnari@vanuatu.gov.vu

APPENDIX 4

STATEMENTS BY DELEGATIONS

PART I: STATEMENTS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES

COOK ISLANDS

Mr Chairman, Your Excellencies, Distinguished National Representatives, Donor Governments, Partners and Agencies, The CROP Agencies and your Representatives, The SOPAC STAR Community, Ladies & Gentlemen.

The Cook Islands is once more pleased to be represented here in Tuvalu, to participate in this 37th Annual Session of the SOPAC Governing Council.

The Cook Islands wishes to affirm its strong support and continued support for SOPAC and highly values the work of SOPAC in relation to:

- Energy;
- Water & Sanitation;
- Coastal, Foreshore and Maritime Management;
- Disaster Risk Management & Response;
- Information, Communications and Technology (Mapping, GIS, ACCESS – Data Processing);
- Marine Resources – Lagoon Mapping through EDF9;
- Technical Advice to include the Extension of the Continental Shelf; Seabed Mining Framework.

As it continues to assist and improve the lives of the People of the Cook Islands.

Having regard for the SOPAC Core Functions;

- Community Lifelines;
- Community Risk and;
- Oceans & Islands.

The Cook Islands notes the achievements established to date by the SOPAC Secretariat in particular the acquisition of appropriate data, in response to the Member Country Needs.

The focus and direction of the organization is with the aspirations of our people in the Pacific in ensuring that their quality of life is sustained through the consistent engagement of the relevant scientific community and information sharing.

The Cook Islands recognizes and appreciates the many valuable contributions that SOPAC was able to undertake over the past year, and we express our sincere gratitude.

The Cook Islands wishes to acknowledge with sincere appreciation the continued support of the Donor Governments and Agencies, The STAR Group with the Scientists and Technical Experts, in supporting the work of SOPAC and what has been extended to the Cook Islands.

Community Lifelines Programme – Water Sector

1. Pacific Hydrological Cycle Observing System (Pacific HYCOS)

Funded through the European Union's Water Facility the Pacific HYCOS programme is implemented by SOPAC jointly with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), with UNESCO and the Fiji Meteorological Office as Associate Partners. Pacific HYCOS will assist Pacific island countries with the collection, storage and analysis of information necessary for water resource management. Individual country implementation plans have been scoped, which identify a common theme of seriously reduced capacity at the national level for hydro meteorological data collection and storage.

The Project Regional Centre based at SOPAC is now at full strength with a Pacific HYCOS coordinator, two hydrologists, a GIS database specialist and three project officers. To date, Pacific HYCOS has focused on in-country project implementation through installation of new hydrological equipment; provision of a database and GIS training; household surveys of water catchment capacity; and provision of technical support.

Specific in-country activities for the Cook Islands deployment of loggers in the Cook Islands and the scoping of European Union EDF10 national indicative programme interventions in the Cook Islands.

2. *Water Quality Monitoring*

The Water Quality Monitoring project is funded under NZ AID and is jointly implemented by SOPAC, WHO and the USP Institute of Applied Science. The main objective of the programme is to build national capacity for monitoring the quality of drinking water, surface water, ground water and coastal waters.

The Cook Islands as one of the four Countries engaged in a Pilot Programme is being assisted through the provision of basic water testing equipment and in country training on best laboratory practice.

3. *Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)*

Whilst many countries have made great progress with regards to realizing their national objectives for sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and targets, such endeavours have generally been made through sectoral approaches. In doing so the competitive demands of different sectors have become difficult to manage, with increasing stress placed upon water resources as pollution increases and populations continue to grow increasing demand on already fragile water resources.

The IWRM Programme provides a cross-sectoral, multi level approach to water resources management which also provides an entry point to addressing other inter-related sectors such as health and land management.

Two projects comprise the Pacific IWRM Programme and include:

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) funded "Sustainable Integrated Water Resources Management Project in Pacific Island Countries" (Pacific IWRM Project); and, the European Union (EU) Funded "IWRM National Planning Programme".

The GEF funded Pacific IWRM project is being executed by SOPAC and implemented by UNDP and UNEP and includes 14 Pacific Island Countries.

Following a vigorous country driven and designed project design phase, the project was approved for funding by the GEF in April 2008 for USD10.7M. It will be implemented over the period 2009 to 2013.

Under the project there are 13 country demonstration projects to include the Cook Islands, in view of:

IWRM Main Intervention

Water Resources Assessment & Protection

Title of Demonstration Project

Integrated freshwater and coastal management on Rarotonga which will focus on the capture and presentation of on-the-ground IWRM interventions. The regional component intends to focus on national policy reform, improved institutional capacity and change, and IWRM indicator development through multi-county collaboration to address regionally coordinated solutions.

It is anticipated that a Regional Project Coordination (PCU) and national project teams will be in place between October to December 2008 to commence project implementation.

Water Demand Management Programme

SOPAC and the Pacific Water Association (PWA) are implementing the NZAID funded Pacific Water Demand Management Programme in five pilot countries to include the Cook Islands. The purpose of the project is to improve the capacity for water demand management in Pacific urban water utilities.

In partnership with Wide Bay Water Corporation (WBWC) sub-regional workshops were held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands and Pohnpei, FSM. In-country support was provided to establish System Loss Management Plans in each of the pilot countries. The programme is assisting the pilot countries to acquire both "hardware" such as water meters, leak detection equipment or bulk water-saving devices for incentive or rebate schemes, as well as "software" which include training, community education materials and technical expertise.

Community Lifelines Programme – Energy Sector

Wind Energy

Wind Monitoring data download continues for the Cook Islands within a 12 month period. The wind energy project in Mangaia (Cook Islands) was the focus of a full evaluation early in 2007

where detailed cost estimates for upgrading the system, in particular the connectivity to the existing diesel generator grid were prepared.

One of the wind turbines has completely failed during operation and technical difficulties with the other turbine raise the question as to the sustainability of the current installation. Mangaia currently has an upgrade project underway that includes 2 new electronic generators, automatic control systems, transformers and a proposed 10 kW solar PV system.

Community Lifelines Programme – ICT-GIS & Remote Sensing Sector

SOPAC expertise in the application of ICT in networking; Internet provision support; policy development; databases; Geographic Information Systems, Global Positioning Systems and Remote Sensing (GIS/RS); capacity building; and Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) is well established in the region TO INCLUDE THE Cook Islands. An established Pacific-wide network of contacts and a wealth of local knowledge in the Pacific Island Countries is a direct result of years of sustained involvement in this area. This is supported by the e-mail distributing list GIS-PacNet and the PICISOC website.

Through SOPAC the Cook Islands is party to actively participate and contribute to the CROP ICT WG where the primary focus has been on establishing how to assist the implementation of the Digital Strategy of the Pacific Plan. In addition the Government of the Cook Islands through the Office of the Prime Minister's e-Government Team, is playing an active role in advocating ICT in the region through PICISOC (Pacific Chapter of the Internet Society) especially at the recent PICISOC ICT conference PacINET 2008, in Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

Technical Assistance/Support

Technical assistance was provided to the Cook Islands with ICT-related issues (ISP strengthening; LAN/WAN deployment; equipment selection, and deployment); and more specifically the provision of technical assistance and support to utilities in GIS and Remote Sensing, including the provision of information and the procurement of data and satellite imagery.

SOPAC acquired high-resolution satellite imagery for the Cook Islands.

Pacific Plan and the Digital Strategy

Sensitizing Pacific Islander leaders to benefits and obstacles facing development and adoption of ICT has been identified as a key activity for implementation of the Pacific Plan & Digital Strategy (PPDS) and overall ICT development. In supporting the PPDS SOPAC jointly hosted with ESCAP Asia Pacific ICT Center (APCICT) a workshop on Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders (referred to Academy hereinafter) in Cook Islands from 2nd – 5th September 2008.

The Academy aims to equip policy makers and government officials with the essential knowledge and skills they need to fully leverage upon opportunities presented by ICT to achieve national development goals. Through SOPAC, the Cook Islands is benefiting the APCICT Academy's course interventions and has facilitated further training for Cook Islanders in October 2008.

Community Risk Programme

Major Highlights

Development and Implementation of Disaster Risk Management National Action Plans

A major focus over the course of 2007 and 2008 has been to continue the effort to adapt the Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action 2005 – 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (Regional Framework) at a national level within member countries. In February 2006 the Secretariat facilitated the establishment of the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network (Partnership Network) which agreed at its inaugural meeting to support the development and implementation of DRM National Action Plans (NAPs) for Pacific Island Countries.

The NAP exercise for the Cook Islands commenced in April 2008 and a first draft of the NAP was completed in June. SOPAC and other partners expect to finalise the NAP with Cook Islands officials in late September and this should be submitted to the National DRM Council and Cabinet before the end of the year.

Implementation of European Union EDF 9 Project: Reducing Vulnerability in Pacific ACP States

The EU EDF 9 Project: Reducing Vulnerability

in Pacific ACP States draws to a close at the end of December 2008. Over the course of late 2007 (post AS36) and 2008 CRP has assisted the implementation of the following initiatives under this project: The Cook Islands was assisted in Capacity building in geodata management for Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management.

Australian Tsunami Warning System – National Capacity Assessment

Tsunami Warning and Mitigation Systems

The Bureau of Meteorology (the Bureau), in partnership with Geoscience Australia (GA) and Emergency Management Australia (EMA), has been provided \$68.9 million funding over four years by the Australian Government to establish the Australian Tsunami Warning System (ATWS).

The policy objectives of the joint-agency ATWS project are:

1. To provide a comprehensive tsunami warning system for Australia.
2. To support international efforts to establish an Indian Ocean tsunami warning system.
3. To contribute to the facilitation of tsunami warnings for the South West Pacific.

The project aims to work with and enable SOPAC Member Countries to assess their ability to receive, communicate & prepare for and respond to tsunami warnings. The project will help to identify requirements for further capacity building programmes and assist in directing funds from various potential sources to address these requirements.

As at August 2008 capacity assessments had been conducted for the following Cook Islands.

CRP is liaising with partners and country representatives to include the Cook Islands to finalise their NAPs and the Cook Islands is near completion of their NAP Process come November 2008.

World Bank – Catastrophe Risk Insurance Pool for the Pacific

Through SOPAC, the Cook Islands has access with it's PIC members to the World Bank Assistance and the arrangement is phased out and the first phase will involve the development of country-specific catastrophe risk models for the Cook Islands.

14th Regional Disaster Managers Meeting

The 14th Regional Disaster Managers Meeting was held in Nadi, Fiji from 21st – 22nd July 2008. This meeting signaled the move from a biennial to an annual format for the Regional Disaster Managers Meeting, as recommended by the 13th Regional Disaster Managers Meeting held in Majuro in 2007 and is in acknowledgement of the need for regular opportunities for exchange between member countries on matters pertaining to disaster risk management.

The theme of the meeting was Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management in Pacific Island Countries – Addressing National Challenges to Enhance Mainstreaming.

Specific goals were to: increase the understanding of mainstreaming initiatives and share experience from across the Pacific and Asia regions; improve the understanding of mainstreaming strategies and tools; and improve the understanding of accountability and reporting requirements in relation to international and regional instruments for disaster risk management. The Cook Islands was in attendance at the meeting.

Partnership Network Meeting 2007

The Partnership Network was established in 2006 to improve coordination of action by and seek cooperative and collaborative efforts between regional and international organisations that support disaster risk management capacity building in the Pacific. The Partnership has formal reporting requirements to Pacific leaders on the progress of implementation of the relevant DRM strategies under the Pacific Plan.

As the nominated facilitator of the Pacific DRM Partnership Network, SOPAC organised the 2008 meeting in Nadi, Fiji from 22nd – 23rd July 2008. The theme of the meeting was A Call for Action: Strengthening the Partnership Network. A significant focus of the meeting was therefore to examine opportunities for improved strategic alliances and engagement at both the regional and national level within Pacific countries.

The Cook Islands was in attendance at this meeting.

Inaugural Pacific Regional DRM Meeting for Pacific CEOs of Finance/Planning and Disaster Management

Typically, the effort to address disaster risk management has been spearheaded at national

level within Pacific countries by the National Disaster Management Offices. In light however of the need to ensure an improved effort to address disaster risk reduction, SOPAC working with other partner organisations have advocated quite extensively for the involvement of the upper echelon within the various Public Service jurisdictions in the Pacific in terms of ensuring that risk considerations are given a greater prominence in planning and budgeting systems within Government and at each level within the national economy.

In this regard this special meeting was organised to bring together, for the first time in the Pacific, the Chief Executives/Permanent Secretaries of those Ministries responsible for Disaster Management, with Chief Executives/Permanent Secretaries responsible for Finance and Planning.

The theme of the meeting was: Disaster Risk Management to Protect our Future: An Investment for Sustainable Development in Pacific Island Countries. The purpose of the meeting was to enhance the involvement and participation of key chief executives in Pacific governments in disaster risk management as a cornerstone requirement and imperative for supporting sustainable national development.

The Cook Islands was in attendance at this meeting.

Pacific Disaster Risk Management (Training) Programme

SOPAC continued with its commitment to improve disaster risk management skills levels and expertise among Pacific islanders by maintaining its long standing relationship with The Asia Foundation/Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (TAF/OFDA). The Cook Islands has benefited from this training in excellence by the SOPAC and TAF/OFDA, in view of:

- Introduction to Disaster Management;
- Initial Damage Assessment;
- Exercise Management.

In addition to the training, TAF/OFDA and SOPAC have collaborated with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) and the International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to provide scholarship support to Pacific islanders to obtain a Post Graduate Certificate in Disaster Management from the Swinburne University in Melbourne Australia.

The Cook Islands will endeavour to ensure that it's members gains access to the Swinburne University Scholarship.

The Cook Islands would like to acknowledge the assistance of SOPAC and TAF/OFDA and their partners for the assistance to the Cook Islands.

Implement comprehensive hazard and risk management tools within the framework on an integrated holistic approach for Sustainable Development (Island Systems Management)

Cook Islands – Training workshops at Introductory (February) and advanced (June) levels in the use of GIS for Disaster Risk Management were completed. These were multi stakeholder in nature with participants from emergency management, government agencies and the Red Cross. Support was provided for the development of the Cook Islands National Action Plan for Risk Reduction and Management in mid April 2008.

Ocean and Islands Programme

OIP strives to be current with regards to global, regional and national issues and is responsive to the diverse range of geoscience, oceanographic and ocean governance needs of members.

The technical work OIP undertakes is often directed to the collection of baseline data such as bathymetric products and maritime boundaries data, which underpins a range of subsequent planning and decision-making processes and tools.

Related are the exhaustive ongoing efforts to assist those members with Extended Continental Shelf (ECS) potential to complete their ECS submissions by May 2009 (OIP recently received significant additional AusAID funding to better resource these efforts). OIP has also embraced the strategic use of Resource Economics in a two way process where technical solutions can be assessed with regards to their socio-economic viability and in turn, cost / benefit analysis is more effectively implemented when guided by strong technical data and back up.

Despite the significant contributions and achievements of OIP, the foundation to continue this work is threatened. Approximately 80% of its professional technical capacity is

funded through EDF9 Programming, which will end in December 2008.

This will effectively reduce technical output and the ability to respond to regional needs by a similar or greater degree from January 2009 onwards. Not only do Project funds sustain the technical capacity within the Programme but they also provide the greater part of our effective operational budget, without which our timely, proactive and flexible response to member demand cannot be sustained.

This crisis occurs at the worst possible time when donor confidence has been shaken, not by OIP / SOPAC's performance, but by the Forum Leaders decision to rationalize SOPAC services. Additionally, this threat to regional service delivery comes at a time when demand for such services is at an all time high, particularly in light of:

- the impending maritime boundaries ECS deadline,
- the intense regional concern over climate change and the need for appropriate, pragmatic approaches to climate change adaptation.
- the related intensification of efforts to manage near-shore coastal zones and the realization that effective management requires good baseline information,
- the rapidly growing global interest in this region's Deep Sea Mineral resources and the crucial need to establish industrial, legal and fiscal arrangements and guidelines at a regional and national level to ensure PIC interests and environments are protected.

Maritime Boundaries

The Pacific Islands Regional Maritime Information System (PIRMBIS) has continued to be updated and maintained. PIRMBIS contains base line information from maps, and satellite imagery, as well as the computed critical base points, and the extrapolated notional maritime boundaries for American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, RMI, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Work over the last twelve months has included completion of critical base points and maritime limits, verification, GPS survey and data post processing, reef delineation and production of an updated Pacific EEZ map. Existing treaties have also been incorporated into PIRMBIS and updated as appropriate.

Deep Sea Minerals

It is correct that the issue of Deep Sea Minerals appears within this section "Resource Use Solutions" however, the immediate regional priorities for this issue lie more within "Ocean Governance".

With the additional reality that issues of resource use and monitoring physical and chemical change will become equally important as this initiative progresses.

Otherwise, OIP has a clear role to assist nations to participate in the rapidly developing deep-sea mining industry, which has so quickly, re-emerged as a reality within the region. OIP advises that it has transcribed and has available the data generated during the 1985 – 2005 Japan / SOPAC Cooperative Study on Deep Sea Minerals Resources and this data will ultimately reside on OIP's web access "Geonetwork" server, which is also progressing and provides an valuable source for relevant data and information for marine scientific research, as well as mineral exploration.

OIP and SOPAC also retains economic and mineral geology capacity on staff to assist members.

It is recognized however that due to the rapid rise in interest regionally and the interest by some island member countries to issue prospecting licences that a regional response of adequate magnitude is urgently required to ensure that regional and national interests are protected.

The Cook islands has a draft paper in view of legislation to protect itself and wishes to acquire assistance in developing the right formula as aligned with the Madang Guidelines.

Aggregate Resources (sand, gravel & rock for building) SOPAC/EU "Reducing Vulnerability of Pacific ACP States"

Surveys in Cook Islands, Mangaia and Aitutaki have been carried out by SOPAC and will assist to secure sustainable sources of quality building aggregate.

1. Marine and Terrestrial aggregates

Work continued with respect to aggregate-related interventions in the Cook Islands. In addition a significant portion of time was spent on finalization of technical reports. In-country stakeholder workshops to handover project results were held in Cook Islands. These multi-stakeholder workshops drew much interest

and enabled participation of regulatory, community/NGO and industry representatives. Fieldwork to sample terrestrial basaltic material to assess their suitability for use as roading and construction aggregate.

2. Bathymetric charts

A five week marine survey of the Aitutaki Lagoon in the Cook Islands during April/May 2008. Water depths were collected using multibeam echo sounder on the reef slopes, and a single beam echo sounder inside the lagoon. Whilst the single beam dataset consisted of only several thousand points, the project team anticipates deriving a bathymetric map from satellite imagery. Various oceanographic instruments such as wave and tide gauges, acoustic Doppler profilers, and water quality probes were deployed in and around the lagoon at selected locations to collect oceanographic data that will help to calibrate a hydrodynamic model. Marine habitats were investigated by snorkeling, SCUBA diving, and foot transects using a digital camera and GPS.

An intensive field survey was conducted over 6 weeks in Aitutaki, Cook Islands. This included lagoon and outside (ocean drop off) bathymetry, as well as the collection of a comprehensive range of oceanographic and habitat data. These baselines will now be used to produce a hydrodynamic model of lagoon current patterns including the Cook Is Govt. specific concern regarding the impacts and options to increase the volume of the existing harbour channel in Aitutaki. Cook Islands counterparts have been involved in every stage of this process and in August 2008 were brought to SOPAC to join an intensive 3-week training session with the OIP Marine Survey team to complete habitat map products of Aitutaki lagoon.

Habitat maps refer to the complexity of the sea floor and outline important biological features such as corals, seagrass, etc., such maps when combined with water flow information provide the best possible baseline tools for marine resource management and also facilitate and guide development planning and future monitoring.

SPSLCMP Phase IV (South Pacific Sea Level & Climate Monitoring Project)

The Cook Islands through SOPAC's OIP continues its joint arrangement with the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM – Australia) to undertake precision levelling to ensure accuracy and also to maintain and calibrate the SEAFRAME (sea level) gauges and CGPS (Continuous GPS – accurate measurement of vertical land move-

ment) Stations in 12 States across the region. SEAFRAME also collects wind direction and speed, barometric (atmospheric) pressure and temperature data and in response to member requests sea level data from all these stations has been made available to country meteorological services via the Bureau of Meteorology Australia (BoM) web site in real time.

Additionally, SEAFRAME gauges are gradually being upgraded to support tsunami-monitoring needs.

Deep Sea Minerals (DSM)

The Cook Islands like many PICs have been approached with requests for licenses in progressing the Cook islands Deep Sea Mineral potential into an industrial reality.

The Cook Islands has been supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat in view of engaging assistance in furthering its potential in Deep Sea Mining and that of the eCS (Extension of the Continental Shelf)

eCS Status (Extended Continental Shelf)

Those Pacific islands countries with eCS potential to include the Cook Islands must develop and lodge their eCS claim submissions by May 13th 2009. (except KI - 2013).

Recent advice from the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (see SPLOS/183 –

http://www.un.org/Depts/los/meeting_states_parties/documents/splos_183e_advance.pdf, 24th June 2008) indicates there has been relaxation of requirements for ECS submissions however the May 2009 deadline stands.

Due to the intensive efforts of OIP's Maritime Boundaries Programme and our technical partners Geoscience Australia and UNEP GRID, the Cook Islands have progressed their respective submission documents and have significantly increased in-country capacity to complete submission work.

Sufficient momentum has been generated that with continued effort over the next few months the Cook Islands can potentially meet the May 2009 deadline. However, it can not be over emphasized how important internal Govt. support for each country's eCS team will be to ensuring this success.

During the last period OIP has coordinated (with GA and UNEP GRID) and jointly funded two technical “hand-on” eCS development training sessions (Canberra, Feb. and Suva, May) and coordinated a further related workshop by Japan Hydrographic Association (Suva). During these workshops eCS country teams were not only shown how to progress their submissions but worked intensively on these documents and have made very significant progress. A further workshop is planned by the same technical partners in Nov. 2008 (PGSP AusAID funding).

Unlike EEZ declarations, eCS submissions must be defended once lodged to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. Successful defense of these submissions may be a lengthy process and could require countries to adjust their respective claims. As such, successful submission will be dependant on each country’s intimate understanding of the technical and legal justification for each respective claim and their ability to incorporate the recommendations of the Commission.

The Cook Islands Shelf Task Force have been endorsed by Cabinet and they are as follows:

- Keu Mataroa (Executive Officer – MOW);
- Vaipo Mataora (GIS Manager – MOW);
- Mike Mitchell (Secretary of MFAI);
- Tingika Elikana (Crown Solicitor);
- Ian Bertram (Secretary of MMR).

Appreciation

This said, Chair, the Cook Islands would like to join with the other delegations in congratulating you as Chair of Governing Council, and to thank you and your Government for hosting the SOPAC Annual Session, here in Tuvalu and that under your able guidance and leadership, we will be able to accomplish our aims set out in our Working Agenda Items for 2008/09.

May I also, on behalf of the Government of the Cook Islands, acknowledge the valuable contribution and guidance that we have had from the outgoing Chair, that of the Government of Tonga.

With those remarks Chair, the Cook Islands looks forward to working with you and the Secretariat in achieving the best for the Cook Islands and the Pacific Islands as a whole.

Meitaki Maata

Kia Orana e Kia Manuia

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

Mr. Chairman, I wish to take this opportunity to join other delegates around the table in congratulating you on assuming the Chairmanship of the 37th session of the SOPAC Governing Council. Through you Mr. Chairman, it is my pleasure to express my delegation’s appreciation and gratitude to your government and the people of Tuvalu for the generous support and hospitality extended to us since our arrival in Funafuti.

We commend you for your able leadership and guidance and look forward to working with you in the next few days during this annual session and within the next twelve months as you lead the organization forward. We wish you all the best and extend to you the assurance of our full support.

Mr. Chairman, the FSM since the commencement of discussions on the proposed RIF, insists and remains insistent that we will fully support the RIF process if the outcomes would result in improved delivery of services to member countries. The goal of RIF to streamline costs and the subsequent decision of FORUM Leaders to merge SOPAC and SPREP should not result in the derogation or dereliction of services provided to member countries by either organization, separately or in aggregate. We insist that the technical programmes and services delivered to member countries by SOPAC should not be adversely affected by the RIF process nor should it result in the disintegration of critical programmes and services contributing to SOPAC’s overall mission to deliver an integrated approach to resource utilization and management, both living and non-living resources which are intrinsically interconnected.

Mr. Chairman, the FSM values the STAR sessions during SOPAC Council meetings and fully appreciates the voluntary contributions of prominent scientists from within and around the region who have personally delivered relevant scientific information to member countries to enhance decision-making. We value the delivery of the latest scientific information by prominent scientists through the STAR sessions and wish to see their involvement continued and accommodated in any reorganization.

Mr. Chairman, as far as the FSM is concerned, the FORUM Leaders’ communiqué giving a timeline for the RIF process should be indicative only and must be interpreted with flexibility. What is more important and critical is to ensure that the RIF process outcomes are favourable

and fully accepted by all member countries and any member's concerns are adequately addressed and fully considered.

For your information, Mr. Chairman, the recent SREP Council meeting hosted by the FSM in September this year considered the RIF and tasked the Director to begin consultations with SOPAC and SPC for the purpose of determining the best way forward and to report outcomes of the consultations at the next SPREP meeting. We firmly believe that the various governing councils of the affected regional organizations, namely SOPAC, SPREP, and SPC, should be given adequate time to review and analyse any proposals resulting from the CROP consultations to ensure that maximum benefits accrue to all member countries. We recognize and wish to table for consideration that an appropriate name for any new organization resultant from the integration of SOPAC and SPREP might be necessary in light of any the contemplated thematic and programmatic reorganization structure. Just as importantly, any discrepancies in the membership rosters of both organizations would need careful consideration by each SREP and/or SOPAC member country.

Finally Mr. Chairman, the FSM remains committed in offering to host any CROP agency regional office in the north to improve the efficiency of service deliveries to our sub-region, in view of transportation and communication logistical difficulties across the Equator.

Thank you very much.

KIRIBATI

Honourable Minister for Communication and Transport; Mr Chairman; Council Members; Heads and Representatives of CROP Agencies; Development Partners; Director and Staff of SOPAC; Ladies and Gentlemen,

Talofa ao Kam na bane ni Mauri!

I wish at the outset to convey the apologies of Kiribati's national representative, who recently assumed his role following the new appointment taking effect last week and who unfortunately cannot be here but on whose behalf, I am honoured to address this annual session.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kiribati and the delegation, I would like to voice our congratulations to the incoming Chair on the assumption of this important role and I wish to assure you of our support as you navigate our canoe throughout these trying times. On the same note, we applaud the people of

the beautiful islands of Tuvalu for the excellent arrangements and the wonderful hospitality accorded to our humble delegation and for hosting this 37th Annual Council Session.

I further wish to express Kiribati's acknowledgement and appreciation to the people and Government of Kingdom of Tonga for the able leadership over the past twelve months and for that, I offer Kiribati's congratulations to Tonga for the effective guidance.

Kiribati would like to acknowledge and commend the invaluable assistance that SOPAC had and has continually offered through provision of technical advice and support for the many activities implemented through its three core programmes. Kiribati also acknowledges with appreciation the tremendous support that the donor partners including the scientific communities has rendered through their respective roles in realizing the various projects in Kiribati implemented under SOPAC's work programme.

Kiribati was pleased to entertain the visit of the Director in June this year in which the Contribution Agreement for the Kiribati Aggregate Company Project was signed. In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the untiring effort and invaluable assistance of SOPAC that has enabled us to achieve this and we look forward to the challenge as we embark in the early stages of the project implementation. This project is crucial not only as a measure to minimizing the impacts of beach mining but is also fundamental as part of our adapting strategies against the adverse effects of climate change. Our island environments are vulnerably fragile and we continue to seek assistance for their protection and possible conservation for our next generations to come. On this note, I offer our acknowledgement and appreciation to the European Union for its willingness to fund this very important project.

Kiribati acknowledges SOPAC support to its effort on the maritime boundary and continues to seek support and technical assistance on this project. Most significantly, the training opportunity for Kiribati to learn the software tools important in the submission of the extended continental shelf claims which we found very much crucial.

With the project forthcoming and the implementations plan underway, Kiribati will be conducting the GPS Survey for all islands as part of the data upgrade for the purpose of the maritime boundary negotiations which is anticipated to commence in 2009. At this point, I would like to register once again the significant

need of survey equipments which is critical for this exercise.

I am pleased to mention that the drilling exercise which is the second phase of the feasibility study seeking the viability of phosphate re-mining is currently underway and we look forward to the conclusions that it will bring.

However, our national efforts in realizing the many programmes that are anticipated to be achieved are often constrained by our limited professional and technical capacity and in this regard, Kiribati continues to seek the support of the Secretariat particularly in critical needs that were unfortunate to be achieved in the previous work schedule. Kiribati wishes to register its continued interest in achieving these and would welcome any update that the Secretariat can offer in regard to our projects which includes:

- Training on Coastal GIS, aerial photography and multi-temporal analysis as a coastal monitoring tool;
- Developing legal frame work for Marine Scientific Survey in Kiribati Waters;
- Developing legislation to back up the Kiribati Aggregate Company Project now underway with EU funding; and
- Technical necessities required in the upgrading and improvement of the map-server.

These are some of the requests that Kiribati has sought consideration for inclusion in previous work programmes and therefore wishes to register once again the critical need for the above mentioned projects.

While we all applaud and acknowledge SOPAC for its tremendous support and technical assistance that has benefited members over many years, it is unfortunate that we are at the junction of these trying times and one that challenges us to determine the current make up of the SOPAC as part of the rationalization process. Kiribati shares the concern over the likely implications of this process that it may have on the delivery of SOPAC's assistance and programmes to member countries including our national projects. While we acknowledge that the intention is to maximize and improve the delivery of these services, it is our fervent hope and urged those engaged in this rationalization process that the exercise will not diminish the functions of SOPAC and that well defined measures and cautious steps are taken to ensure that the services will continue to bring benefits to member countries in a more efficient and effective manner.

We look forward to the deliberations for the next few days and we wish you all our traditional blessing of Te Mauri, Te Raoi ao Te Tabomoa.

Fakafetai lasi, Kam bati n rabwa!

NAURU

Firstly Honourable Chair, please allow me to congratulate you of your appointment as Chairman of the 37th Annual Session of the Governing Council.

As you would know Chair this meeting is a very important one to members and the Secretariat and in saying so I would like to wish you the very best for your appointment.

Chair through you I would like to thank the Government of Tuvalu and its people for their warm hospitality. I've could not feel more welcome.

Chair I would also like to thank the Secretariat for their excellence in service delivery through its Ocean and Islands, Community Lifeline, and Community Risk programmes. SOPAC was directed to carry out work as usual regardless of the RIF process and that SOPAC did very well. Nauru and its people have continued to enjoy SOPAC's assistance, in particular with our utilities, Water and Power sector. Nauru hopes to continue enjoying SOPAC's programme regardless of the outcome of the RIF process.

Having said that Chair I would also like to take this opportunity to thank EU and other Development partners and the Government of Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of China (Taiwan) for their assistance through SOPAC.

Chair, I would like to also thank the SOPAC Governing Council for understanding our Government's situation with our financial crisis, which have resulted to our outstanding membership contribution. I wish to bring to the Council's attention that Government of Nauru has now managed to include again in its budget for this financial year our membership contribution fee to SOPAC. In regards to our total membership arrears, I wish to bring to members that the Government is still working on the best financial plan to address this.

If you could please allow me Chair, I would like to conclude with some remarks on the RIF process. The Government of Nauru has fully endorsed the leaders decision and stand to take the RIF implementation forward. The Government still see this process as a stepping stone

to a greater integration of all CROP agencies, which would lead to improved service deliveries and reduce cost to member country. Nauru believes that regionalism and regional integration is the way forward for the region.

With that Chair I thank you.

Nauru Delegation.

PALAU

Excellencies, Distinguish Country Representatives, SOPAC Director and staff of SOPAC, Star Chair and Eminent Scientists, Representatives of CROP Agencies, Development Representatives, Ladies and Gentleman.

Let me join others in expressing Palau's appreciation to the People and the Government of Tuvalu for the hospitality afforded to my delegation since arrival. This has indeed been a tremendous welcome, Minister and we note that the scarcity of resources does not dampen the resourcefulness of your people.

Let me also congratulate you for assuming the Chairmanship of this meeting and express Palau's sincere appreciation to the Outgoing Chair, that of the Government of Tonga, for its leadership and stewardship of SOPAC during the last 12 months.

Palau would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication by the SOPAC Secretariat and staff on the continuing and growing programme of assistance that SOPAC is providing to Palau in support of Palau national developments priorities. We have over the past few years enjoyed technical advice and support through SOPAC's technical programme areas such as coastal processes, integrated water resources management, training in GIS, remote sensing and disaster management. The work with regard to maritime boundary delimitation is an excellent one and the current contribution to regional effort with regard to extended continental shelf indeed an excellent example of national capacity development.

Some specific programmes operated through SOPAC are:

1. Water Safety Programme (NZAID/AUSAID)

The World Health Organization (WHO), through SOPAC, gave financial assistance with Educational Outreach for WSP (\$10,000)

1st phase of that funding only received (\$4,900) of which approximately \$3,000 was used for (a)

four separate workshops for School Vice Principal and Nurses across Babeldaob and Koror; (b) rain catchment tank workshop; (c) Outlying states water rain catchment tank workshop; (d) Peleliu state employees and elementary teachers rain catchment tank workshop; (e) WSP committee members rain catchment tank workshop; and (f) Finalizing the Educational Plan.

2. Regional Water Quality Monitoring Programme (NZAID/AUSAID)

- No funding, Palau is recipient of only regional training workshops

3. Integrated Water Resource Management (ACP-EU Water Facility Funding, GEF)

Long name: Sustainable Integrated Water Resources and Wastewater Management in Pacific Island Countries.

Policy and governance funded by the ACP-EU Water Facility from 2008-2010 for SOPAC rep to come to Palau to help with reworking the WSP steering committee and developing Terms of Reference to ensure consistent work; and GEF Demonstration project in Ngerikiil to improve water source. Links closely to and provides an enabling environment of other on-the-ground activities and projects such as the GEF funded IWRM project, HYCOS, ect.

4. EDF-9

- Emergency Management (NEMO)
- Aggregates assessment, still awaiting final report from Akuila (dependent on results of aggregates sent to Guam for analysis).
- Water resource assessment, Site visit in July 2007 by SOPAC programme officer and New Zealand National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) consultant leading into HYCOS.

5. HYCOS (Hydrological Cycle Observing System)

- Technical expertise and support provided to set up a hydrological monitoring network for measurement of water quantity. The equipment is here.
- Awaiting SOPAC for installment and training (November 2008)

6. The SOPAC Programme in cooperation with Geoscience Australia and the UNEP Shelf Programme to support Palau's efforts to claim an extended continental shelf has been absolutely superb and if Palau follows its commitments to the programme will successfully make a claim.

7. SOPAC has actively supported the GIS efforts in Palau by providing the MapServer to PALARIS with sufficient computing power to allow Palau to distribute information over the Internet.

These projects are most important given Palau's limited resources and capacity in the areas. As you will note Palau engagement with SOPAC has been late, but strengthening as we begin to realize the full potential of benefits to be accrued from membership.

The recent political decision by the Forum Leaders in Niue on Regional Institutional Framework Review is still being of great concern to the Republic of Palau. We in Palau believe that in furthering this initiative we want to make sure that we maintain the integrity of SOPAC Work Programme and that, delivery to members interested are indeed not compromised at the expense of what are regional Political decisions. Given the timeframe set by Leaders, the decisions we all this year will therefore be critical ones in the extreme- both in terms of determining the future of SOPAC and ensuring the continuity technical services we receive in the future from SPC and SPREP I urge all therefore to think wisely.

Fafetai

SAMOA

Hon Chairman, Distinguished National Government Representatives, Director of SOPAC, Chair of Star, Chair of PMEG, CROP Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen. Talofa Lava.

I wish to congratulate and welcome you Hon Chair on your assumption of the Chairmanship. I wish you well in guiding the proceedings of this session over the course of the next few days. I also extend our appreciation to the Government and people of Tuvalu for the smooth and excellent meeting arrangements and warm hospitality since our arrival in Funafuti. The food, people and entertainment has been exceptional.

Hon Chair, in the interests of saving time and given the long agenda we have ahead of us, I won't take the floor too long but only wish at this stage to very briefly affirm Samoa's continuous support to SOPAC, in its role as an important regional partner which has assisted in the development of many vital sectors articulated as national development priority areas in Samoa's national development strategic plan or SDS as it is generally called. I refer here to the areas of water and sanitation, energy, geology,

information and communication technology and hazard and risk management sectors. The assistance and support rendered by SOPAC in the areas of capacity building, technical and advisory services and scientific research has been exemplary and plays a critical role in strengthening and complementing our very own national development efforts.

I wish to turn to the RIF exercise and state the Samoan Government's support of the Forum Leader's Directive. It is of utmost importance that we do not lose sight of the technical and scientific nature of SOPAC programmes, which should in no way be compromised, neither should the delivery of services to member countries be impacted in any way, other than to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services delivered to member countries.

The Government of Samoa commends the SOPAC Secretariat for its commitment and important contribution carried out through its various work programmes to member countries. Time and time again, the unique nature of SOPAC has been emphasised, given the predominantly technical focus of its programmes and its scientific mandate. This is aside from the SOPAC Council construct of PMEG, which has allowed SOPAC programmes to be independently evaluated and assessed in terms of relevance, effectiveness and technical soundness.

SOPAC interventions have enhanced programmes towards the monitoring, surveying and assessment of our geological and marine resources not to mention the operation of integrated water management systems which have effectively addressed the difficulties of obtaining clean water and identifying potential groundwater areas. The Secretariat continues to play a pivotal role in the instigation of effective frameworks to improve Samoa's energy sector and particularly to identify alternative sources of energy an area of growing concern to us member countries particularly with the soaring fuel prices and the effect it is having on our small economies.

Efforts to acquaint our vulnerable islands and communities with appropriate emergency and mitigation responses in respect to the inevitable occurrences of natural disasters have been implemented on a national scale. The numerous training, workshops and seminars organised by SOPAC in the various respective fields' complements our own national efforts to develop our human resource capacity.

The follow up visits of Experts, Specialists and technical advisors have strengthened our

proactive role with the implementation of the HYCOS and IWRM project which are progressing well. GEF approved projects benefiting Samoa is an indication of the Secretariats role in perpetually addressing and prioritising the needs of member countries and ensuring that targeted outcomes are achieved. We compliment SOPAC in successfully materializing the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Pool Initiative in collaboration with the World Bank. Of the latest activities is the PESTRAN project currently in its completion stage. SOPAC has played a pivotal role in compiling and establishment of our national databases such as our Energy Database.

In view of Samoa's ongoing developments, I once again affirm our support to the programmes and services provided by the Secretariat. I wish to further appeal for SOPAC's assistance in strengthening the management and sustainability of our coastal and marine ecosystems. Establishing viable solutions and finding alternatives to our energy challenges requires constant engagement of the Secretariat in addition to the need to coordinate and engage in effective responses to our water and sanitation concerns. Our National Disaster Management Plan is an essential component for the implementation of national activities as Samoa is no exception to natural disasters which knows no boundaries.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge with gratitude the continuous assistance and support of our development partners and donor community without which we will not be able to come this far and achieve tangible outcomes towards the sustainable development of our island nations.

I wish our deliberations for the next few days every success.

Faafetai ma ia manuia.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Chairman, Director of SOPAC, Distinguished delegates from SOPAC, Member Countries, Chairman of STAR, Distinguished Scientists, engineers, and Technologist from the region and beyond, Ladies and gentlemen.

It is indeed a Privilege and honour with great pleasure to make representation of my delegation at this 37th Annual Session of SOPAC. I thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to do so.

On the outset, I would like to convey Solomon Islands national representative to SOPAC the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification, Mr. Tione Bugotu's apology for not being able to attend this Session due to pressing domestic issues. He extends his best wishes for a successful 37th Annual Session.

Honourable Chairman, you representing the good people of Tuvalu, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment to the Chairmanship position of SOPAC from now on. I wish you well and I look forward to your good and capable leadership, guidance and facilitation of deliberations in the next few days and more so in the next 12 months. I am sure you will appreciate the next 12 months will not be easy especially as the outcome of the Council's decision at the 36th Annual Session with regard to the "Regional Institutional Framework" issue with the recent dateline imposed by the Forum leaders to complete the rationalization process as soon as possible, preferably in 2009.

Honourable Chairman, during the past year I am to report that our national efforts in the areas of geology, mineral development, energy, water and hazards and disasters have progressed after years of decline during years of the social unrest, although with notable constraints. These sectors highlighted are within the realms of the mandate of SOPAC.

Worth mentioning is the revival of the mineral exploration interest in the country. As of date, more than 70 Prospecting licences have been granted and actual work is aggressively pursued. These prospecting licences are on land and also offshore. The closed Gold Ridge Mine Re-reconstruction work is in progress with gold production is expected hopefully sometime in late 2009 or early 2010.

In the energy sector, under the Pacific Islands Energy Policy and Strategic Action Plan, PIEP-SAP Project (2004 – 2008), a National Energy Policy Framework and Strategic Energy Sector Plan was developed and adopted, Review of the Solomon Islands Electricity Act and development of regulatory framework for rural electrification completed, support to SIEA in enhancing GIS/MIS systems made (March 2007), Tariff review for SIEA conducted and completed (July 2007). Under the energy and gender programme, energy project proposal drafting pursued and documentary filming of energy projects and their socio-economic impact in rural Solomon Islands with emphasis to

equal gender participation. The commitment by New Zealand Government to PIC after the PEMM 2007 (Communique) was noted and we look forward to next one planned for 2009 in Tonga.

Honourable, Chairman our national efforts in the water resources sector had been minimal during the period. The country have had a national network of hydrological stations in the past but have declined to zero level as of date due to various reasons. Efforts under the various SOPAC projects such as the EDF 8 Reducing Vulnerability in Pacific ACP states, Sustainable Integrated Water Resources and Waste water Management (IWRM – GEF funding thru UNDP), and Water Governance projects did not revert the trend. It is hopeful that new EU project Hydrological Cycle Observing System, HYCOS will have some positive impact.

In the hazard and disaster sector, Solomon Islands appreciates the facilitating role played by SOPAC in the efforts towards establishing a sub-regional Melanesian Volcanological Monitoring network. With regard to the aftermath of the April 1 2007 earthquake and subsequent Tsunami in the Western and Choiseul Provinces, reconstruction and rehabilitation phase is now progress but assistance is urgently needed in geohazard mapping of the areas affected before reconstruction especially for major social infrastructures.

The major sector activities outlined above have in away received assistance one way or another from SOPAC. To this effect, may I through you convey Solomon Islands appreciation to SOPAC for the services rendered and I hope this will continue and improve in the next term. It would be remise of me not to thank all donor countries, organizations and institutions for the support to SOPAC, for without which, the efforts of SOPAC would not be possible.

Honourable Chairman our efforts in the Extended Continental Shelf Claim is in progress. Collaboration with PNG and FSM for a joint submission over the OJP is pursued on a technical level is continuing with good progress. Assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat legally and technical had been formally confirmed and received.

It is at this juncture also that I would like to mention the assistance received by Solomon Islands, from RAMSI, without such intervention we would not have been this far. Much had been achieved since RAMSI's arrival five years ago but the sustainability of the achieve-

ments should be the absolute objective now. This could only be achieved through review, redirection of emphasis and approach, and cooperation. Thank you very much for the 15 countries that participated in RAMSI, most of whom are represented here today.

Honourable Chairman, we have noted that Solomon Islands still have two years of outstanding annual contribution arrears. This has improved since as at one stage we were in arrears of six years. I am to inform Council that Solomon Islands is still committed to pay up as we consider SOPAC as a important regional inter-governmental geoscience resource organization which its mandate is complementary to our national goals and programmes in geology, minerals, energy, water resources, geohazards and disasters and other related environmental geosciences.

May I take this opportunity to thank all donor countries and organizations for the support to SOPAC. We look forward to your continual support again next year.

Thank you all for attention.

Special statement in the Deep Sea Minerals Session (Item 6.5)

Solomon Islands welcome the introduction of this very important timely paper and thank the SOPAC Secretariat for taking the initiative to highlight this very subject as an emerging issue in the region.

For Solomon Islands, yes it is an emerging issue which I should say we are not prepared or able to handle it in away that it should be dealt with. The interest in our certain offshore areas within the EEZ & territorial waters is obviously high.

We have recently issued offshore PL to two companies namely Nautilus Minerals and Blue Water Metals and to date 34 Prospecting Licences had been issued. The issuance are made under the Provisions of the Current Mines & Minerals Act 1990. This Act was basically made specifically for onland minerals & mining development.

Currently we don't have a mineral policy for Solomon Islands either for onland or offshore minerals and mining developments. A draft mineral policy was in draft since 1999 by SOPAC which is yet to be timely tuned and formally adopted. It is at this juncture that

I would like to formally request for advisors services be provided from SOPAC to complete this task as well.

SI is one of the countries in the region identified to have the potential to claim for a eCS under Article 76 of UNCLOS. Due to the urgency to meet the dateline of May 2009 to submit a claim especially for the Ontong Java Plateau an area which is of interest to Papua New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia and Solomon Islands, a joint tripartite approach had been agreed upon by the three countries. This means that the three countries will be submitting a joint claim submission. The main objective of countries to claim eCS is due to potential abundant resources including offshore mineral resources in such areas.

Solomon Islands has in excess a total of 1.3 km² of offshore territory. Thus it is only proper that issues concerning offshore areas like the main issue here now is of paramount importance for Solomon Islands.

With this situation, it is warranted that SI has no hesitation to accepting the paper and its intentions and content thus fully endorsed the recommendations of the paper.

Thank you very much.

TUVALU

Honorable Chair, Council members, SOPAC Director and staff, Donor Agencies, members of the Scientific Community, Ladies and Gentlemen.

May I first thank Tonga for chairing SOPAC over the past year, and we are very grateful to take over this challenge this year, and also as host for the meeting this year. We would like to welcome you all to Tuvalu, and we hope that you will all enjoy your time with us.

Mr. Chairman, as we gathered here for the Council meeting, we pray that our deliberations over the next few days will provide a clear path for SOPAC's future, in particular making sure that member countries like Tuvalu and other small island states continues to benefit and take advantages of the scientific and technical assistance that SOPAC has provided over the past few decades.

Tuvalu continues to recognize and appreciates the enormous and valuable contributions that SOPAC undertake over the past year. On the same note, we also like to acknowledge with

sincere appreciation the continuous support of the Donor Government and Agencies, as the Scientific Community with their ongoing collaboration to support the various activities of SOPAC.

Tuvalu would like to commend the professional support that SOPAC has rendered through its three main core programmes; Community Lifelines, Community Risk and Oceans & Islands.

As we deliberate together as Council Members of SOPAC, it is crucial that we equipped our canoe with state of the art equipments and tools, to maintain the momentum and morale of the crew, and of course to continue reaping benefits from SOPAC. PMEG and Council is encouraged to play its quality role steering SOPAC's canoe in the turbulence waters of the RIF process.

Tuvalu would like to address the following;

- Support on maritime boundary median lines with Kiribati, Fiji and France (Wallis & Futuna). Kiribati is encouraged to take the same approach (use of PIRMBIS) so that we could sort out this issue once and for all.
- Possibility of using new data to assess SE shared boundary with France (W & F) for eCS claim, or professional guidance by SOPAC to re- look into this particular area for a possible bathymetry survey to assess any potential for claim beyond our 200nm.
- Aggregates; formulation of project plan for the Funafuti Lagoon Dredging proposal.
- SOPAC to assist on utilizing satellite imagery for shallow water bathymetry (1 – 8 metres) within the lagoon area of islands in Tuvalu.
- Coastal monitoring of other islands in Tuvalu using historical aerials photos and satellite images.
- Support on disaster early warning system, and be part of PI GOOS
- Capacity building on GIS and hands- on training (6- 8 weeks) on Remote Sensing, Tabular and Spatial data handling (Land Resource Classification) in line with FAO, and UN- GEF Sustainable Land Management project currently underway in Tuvalu.
- Guidance on offshore prospects, and re-visiting mining potentials in Tuvalu EEZ

- Acknowledge SOPAC support on water projects in Tuvalu, such as Water tanks production under B- Envelope, seek SOPAC assistance to identify possible donors for continuation in future.

Comments and interventions on each agenda items will be discussed during the meeting.

In closing, I would like to welcome our colleagues from overseas, who are part- taking in this important meeting.

Fakafetai Lasi

VANUATU

Chairman, Fellow National Representatives, Distinguished Donor Representatives, Technical Advisors, Staff of SOPAC, Ladies and Gentlemen

Firstly, I wish to convey the National Representative's humble apologies for not being able to make it on this occasion due to the new incoming government's policy for grounding the Director General's of Ministries from overseas travelling . He however wishes this 37th Governing Council well in its deliberations.

Mr Chairman, I also wish to associate myself to the sentiments expressed by the previous speakers on your appointment as Chairman and through you, to voice our special tank yu tumas to the Government of Tuvalu for having graciously accepting to host this meeting in your lovely country here in Funafuti and the great hospitality accorded to us since our arrival here.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Chair, Tonga for their stewardship and leadership over the past 12 months guiding and steering the SOPAC Committee as a whole through the RIF process as being agreed to in the last SOPAC Annual session in Nukualofa, Tonga.

We'd like to register our appreciation to our traditional and new donors for their continued financial support to this region, in assisting member countries in addressing their various areas of needs which comes under the mandate of the secretariat. Your contributions are invaluable and we surely regard this as an important avenue in paving the way forward to strategically plan towards the sustainable management and development of our natural resources.

On a similar, we wish to acknowledge the tireless contributions of the scientists committed to executing researches and studies within this region. It is our strong desire that the STAR network continue to be main driving force for steering and driving this organization into the future, and remain active in the regional science research and work programmes related to science.

Mr Chairman, we commend on the hard work, the commitment and effort that the Secretariat and its staff had put in order to secure funding in order to execute work programmes as outlined in the Director's 2007 report. We strongly believe in and trust the works the secretariat has been doing in the past years to date to secure a financial and healthy organization that we have today.

Vanuatu has benefited from the secretariat 3 main programme activities, and we wish to note in particular the following:

Community Lifeline Programme:

In the areas of Capacity building:

In IWRM Diploma course – we note the successful enrolment of an officer in the programme.

In the Area of Water Resources Management:

The Pacific HYCOS – which we would like to thank the secretariat for coming in to assist, advancing Vanuatu's work plan activities of Vanuatu HYCOS than anticipated to re-set the systems / equipment lost in the 7th June 2007 fire incident and working towards reviving the hydrological monitoring network systems.

GEF IWRM project – Vanuatu feel proud to be part of this regional project as it comes in well with the development of our National Water Resources Strategy Plan, addressing key issues identified in our Plan. It is highly hope the lessons learnt will be replicated in other watersheds / catchments with support from government / donor financial commitment.

In the Water quality Monitoring and laboratory assistance – similarly we acknowledge and value the work that is currently underway to re-establish our water quality laboratory, also destroyed by the fire incident. Without this level of support, it will be difficult and will surely take time to start all over again.

On the Pacific Water Safety Plan – we're glad to be selected as pilot countries and we're pleased to announce the finalization of 2 water safety plans, the Luganville Water Safety Plan in Santo and the Mele Safety Plan, in Efate.

We also proud to be included in the Water Demand Management pilot project and wish to express our sincere gratitude to the programme manager for attending to our request as per the Tonga annual session request and are glad to note the future work programme of this activity on the Luganville water supply system, in Santo.

Last but not the least, we acknowledge the assistance provided by the secretariat in the rebuilding and restoration of DGMWR information / data / maps / reports / publications related to above in the areas of water resources, water supply, petroleum, minerals and geohazards. This is only the beginning and we still urge distinguished scientist and organization representatives to assist whenever possible. This, we believe, will assist us in retrieving with what we've lost in the 7th June 2007 fire incident that engulfed the Department of Geology, Mines and Water Resources.

Community Risk Programme:

Being the first country to develop National Action Plan on DRR and DM, it has taken a while to commence and maintain the momentum due to new challenges. Despite that the NDMO in Vanuatu with its stakeholders with the support provided by SOPAC through CRP programme have bear some success in the initial implementation for the past three years. Generally speaking the National Action Plan has provided an opportunity for sector to realign their sector plans to ensure DRR is recognized within their programmes.

SOPAC under CRP programme support to Vanuatu is making some progress at National and Provincial level. Particularly, the review of National Disaster Risk Management Arrangement and the NDMO Act which is yet to be completed in 2009. Other areas are the information, information system and knowledge management through Geo-Hazards unit, Meteorology, Seismology and hydrology. SOPAC has been able to support Vanuatu Geo-Hazard in conducting some historical data on tsunami deposit as piloted in three islands. And as part of this research traditional legend are of useful information which need to be documented. SOPAC

through TAF OFDA, has provided assistance under Capacity Development theme. In 2008 two courses and two instructors refresher workshops namely, the Initial Damage Assessment course, Introduction to Disaster Management, and two trainers refresher workshops were completed with approximately over 40 nationals benefited from these courses. Sub-Regional Corporation under MSG countries has been an area where the Melanesian block sees an opportunity to strengthen and foster closer cooperation in the area of Disaster Risk Management. SOPAC has supported Vanuatu and Solomon Island on study tour exchange in order to learn and build on their commonality in cultural value and governance system. In addition, SOPAC also provided TA to the three countries namely, Vanuatu, Solomon and PNG to develop and present a concept paper to MSG meeting in Port Vila calling on MSG secretariat to recognize the vulnerability level of Melanesia a high volcanic prone so as to be able to develop a framework to be presented in next MSG in Fiji 2009. Finally, the support provided to Vanuatu to compile Vanuatu Hyogo report is an important step into further support in the implementation of NAP.

On that note the following are the roll over priorities for 2008/2009 and beyond:

1. Strengthen national policy, legislation, operational and decision making in Disaster Risk Management.
2. Strengthen the practice of Disaster Risk Reduction at all level.
3. Promote and understand hazard vulnerability for Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management.
4. Improve technological system which can impact on Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management
5. Review, strengthen and develop effective National, sector and Provincial Disaster Response and contingency planning.
6. Develop and deliver National, sector and Provincial level DRM Training.
7. Develop and conduct Awareness programme on plans, policies, arrangements, response system, hazard and risk information across sector and communities.
8. Mainstream Disaster Risk Management into all sector plans, programme and budgetary provision.
9. SOPAC to provide resource support to new NDMO and NEOC Establishment 2009.

As part of annual Disaster Managers Meeting, Vanuatu has offered to host 15th Regional Disaster Managers and PDRMP Meeting in Port Vila 2009. A formal note will be sent to seal this commitment to SOPAC Secretariat.

Oceans & Islands Programme:

Maritime Boundaries – Vanuatu would like to register the continue support being provided by the Secretariat in dealing with maritime Delimitation boundary and the work towards the Extended Continental Shelf, the tasks involved is not an easy one but with firm commitments and dedication of the secretariat, our Maritime

Delimitation Boundary is almost completed and possibly achievable.

It should be noted that Vanuatu has approved, in the absence of an offshore mining policy & legislation, 10 deep sea prospecting license to Neptunes covering a total area of 954.4 square km. The Government of Vanuatu has also approved 9 deep sea prospecting licenses covering 810square km and 6 exploration license covering 66,480square km to Bismarck mining corporation (vanuatu) Limited. It is our strong wish that the secretariat assist in the development of this national policy given the fact that deep sea minerals could become a future wealthy and lucrative industry.

PART II: STATEMENTS BY CROP ORGANISATIONS

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY (SPC)

Mr Chairperson, thank you for the opportunity to make a brief statement on behalf of SPC on the subject of RIF.

The SPC Conference endorsed the decision taken by Pacific Forum leaders at the 38th Forum meeting in Tonga in 2007 on the Regional institutional Framework at its meeting in Apia in November 2007. Two weeks ago in Nouma, the SPC CRGA meeting noted the recent decision made by Forum leaders at the 39th Forum Meeting in Alofi, Niue in August this year on RIF and endorsed the process agreed to by the SPREP meeting to implement the Forum Leaders' decision. The principle reason for agreeing to the adopt the same process as the SPREP meeting was to ensure that three organisations and their respective CEOs adopt one mechanism in implementing the decision taken by Pacific Forum Leaders. The full text of the decision by CRGA is attached to this statement.

As members of the SOPAC Council know, SPC and SPREP have participated in the process established by yourselves at your meeting in Tonga last year – the SPOAC Committee of the Whole during 2008 to ensure that we do not run parallel processes in pursuing the decision taken by Forum Leaders in 2007.

At the organisational level, we also participated at the programme trilateral consultations between senior managers of the three agencies, in addition to the three consultations between the three CEOs. The trilateral consultations focussed on synergies as one of the main criteria that would underpin the rationalisation

process of SOPAC programmes into SPREP and SPC. This analysis while useful however cannot be the sole criteria because practically all of SOPAC's programmes have synergies with the programmes of SPREP as well as of SPC.

The decision by the SPREP meeting, endorsed by CRGA two weeks ago and recommended for your consideration by the SOPAC Secretariat today calls on the three CEOs... 'immediately following the 2008 SOPAC Council meeting to determine and jointly identify the new proposed institutional arrangements based on'... four parameters; following which they are to jointly commission and independent analysis of the legal, financial, administrative and programmatic implications of the proposed new institutional arrangements.

The SPC governing body had included three additional parameters to assist the CEOs in deciding on which of SOPAC's programmes best fit with SPREP and which best fit with SPC. It is our view that the most important criteria that should guide the rationalisation of SOPAC's programmes must be to 'achieve an arrangement that will provide the largest benefits to members'. This criteria will in turn ensure that due diligence is used by the three CEOs in indentifying the best possible 'new institutional arrangement'. From SPC's perspective, the rationalisation process is not about the building up or strengthening of either SPC or SPREP, (if this was the case, I would be worried), but rather it is about ensuring the best possible arrangement that will enhance the delivery of SOPAC's services to members. This will involve not only the analysis of synergies, but also organisational capacity and their respective modes of service delivery to members.

In this regard I am fully committed as CEO of SPC to work the Director of SOPAC and the Director of SPREP to reach agreement on the best possible new institutional arrangements that will enhance the delivery of SOPAC programmes to members. As a Pacific Islander CEO I have a vested interest in ensuring Pacific people get the very best out of this process so my approach will be on achieving the best possible arrangement to deliver on this outcome rather than a focus simply on expanding or strengthening either SPC or SPREP.

I thank you chair for allowing me to share these thoughts with the SOPAC Council.

Statement by Dr Jimmie Rodgers, Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Community on RIF at the SOPAC Council Meeting in Funafuti, Tuvalu, Wednesday 29th October, 2008.

Full text of the decision by CRGA (2008)

The CRGA of SPC met in New Caledonia in October 2008 and

- noted the excellent progress achieved during 2008 in responding to the Regional Institutional Framework review and decisions related to rationalising the activities of regional organisations;
 - noted that the CEOs of SPC and SPBEA have agreed on the process for developing an implementation plan for the merger between the two organisations;
 - endorsed and adopted the approach agreed by the SPREP meeting with regard to the RIF process; and
 - directed the Director-General to implement the decision of CRGA38 as set out in Annex 3 of SPC/CRGA 38 (08)/Paper 4.2/Addendum Decision by the CRGA38 on the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF)
1. At its 38th meeting held in Noumea, New Caledonia from 13th to 16th October 2008:
 - recalling the decision made by the 5th Conference of the Pacific Community on the RIF in Apia in November 2007,
 - noting the decision by the SPREP meeting at its recent meeting on the RIF,
 - wishing to establish one mechanism between SPC, SPREP and SOPAC to respond to the RIF review PIF Leaders' decision on the regional institutional arrangements
 - noting that the SOPAC Governing Council will meet after CRGA,

2. CRGA:
 - a. endorsed the process contained in the SPREP decision,
 - b. added three more parameters to the analysis proposed in the SPREP decision, including two that were approved by the 5th Conference of the Pacific Community in Apia in 2007.
3. CRGA also:
 - a. directed the Director General of SPC to engage collaboratively with the CEOs of SOPAC and SPREP immediately following the 2008 SOAPC Council Meeting to determine and jointly identify the new proposed institutional arrangements based on:
 - i. transparency and timeliness with respect to the process, and effective involvement of stakeholders
 - ii. cost effectiveness, and
 - iii. analysis of the core function of each SOPAC programme to assess whether it is primarily (a) an environmental programme or (b) an economic development programme
 - iv. synergies and linkages between programs
 - v. optimising service delivery
 - vi. organisational capacities
 - vii. maintaining the integrity of the applied science and technical services
 - b. directed that the Director General of SPC, in collaboration with the CEOs of SOPAC and SPREP, jointly commission an independent analysis of the legal, financial, administrative, and programmatic implications of the proposed new institutional arrangements;
 - c. directed the Director General of SPC to propose to the other CEOs that the proposed institutional arrangements and analysis of implications are circulated to all member focal points of SPREP, SPC and SOPAC with an invitation for a representative from each Member country to attend a meeting of all countries and territories for consideration by May 2009;
 - d. directed, subject to the guidance of the above-referenced meeting, the Director General of SPC to work collaboratively with the CEOs of SOPAC and SPREP to finalise and jointly recommend new institutional arrangements and implementation plans, to be provided to Members by July 2009, for consideration and decision by their respective Governing Bodies in 2009;

- e. agreed that the 39th meeting of the CRGA and the 6th Conference of the Pacific Community in 2009 will consider the institutional arrangements and implementation plan recommended by three CEOs before the next Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in 2009;
 - f. directed the Director General of SPC to propose to the other CEOs to provide a joint quarterly update on progress and to seek and share the views of, and give due consideration to, all members of SPREP, SPC and SOPAC.
 - g. noted the instruction by the SPREP meeting to the Director of SPREP in his deliberations on the new institutional arrangements to take account of the ICR recommendations and implementation; and
 - h. agreed that an independent external consultancy would be commissioned and if necessary, to assist the three CEOs to achieve the objective of paragraph 3 (a) additional resources would need to be sought.
4. To ensure the three governing bodies and their respective CEOs work together using one mechanism, CRGA requested the Chairperson of CRGA38 to write to respective Chairpersons of the SPREP meeting and the SOPAC Council to inform them that CRGA has endorsed the process contained in the SPREP decision as outlined above.

SECRETARIAT OF THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SPREP)

Mr Chairman, Director and Deputy Director of SOPAC, (Ranking Officials Present), Distinguished Delegates, Fellow- Crop Representatives, Observers, Ladies and Gentlemen ...

On behalf of SPREP I would like to thank you Mr Chairman and the council for according me the honor and opportunity to address this August assembly to share with you SPREP's decision on the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF).

At the outset, I would like to express through Mr. Chairman my sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Tuvalu for the warmth and hospitality they have accorded my wife Justina and me since we set foot in enchanting Funafuti. As well, I do express my thanks to Cristelle and Bhaskar and their staff for the courtesy and kind assistance they have extended to us.

Turning to the main issue at hand, RIF I am pleased to report that the SPREP Governing

Council for the first time had the opportunity at its recently concluded 19th SPREP Meeting that was held in September in Pohnpei, FSM, to address the RIF Review and the Leaders 2007 and 2008 Decisions. First and foremost, SPREP looked upon RIF as opportunities to strengthen the region's environment organisation through the rationalisation of SOPAC functions.

In essence the decision of the SPREP Governing Council on RIF outlines a harmonised process as a way forward that if adopted by the respective governing councils of SOPAC and SPC would ensure that all three organisations and their respective CEOs would have a mechanism for engaging collaboratively in implementing the Leaders 2007 & 2008 decisions on the RIF. At the risk of stealing the thunder from Jimmie, no doubt most if not all of you may have learned that the recently concluded CRGA had endorsed SPREP Council Decisions on the RIF.

I am aware that the your working paper AS37/10.1 suppl 1 on Agenda item 10 Lays out the SPREP Council Decision on the RIF; however, I am duty-bound to register for the record thus:

The 19SM:

- 1) Considered the information provided on the RIF review and its reports;
- 2) Took into account the 2007 and 2008 Forum Leaders' Decision on the RIF Review;
- 3) Considered the opportunities to strengthen the region's environment organization that would be provided by rationalization of SOPAC functions, in whole or part, into SPREP;
- 4) Recognized the need to consider the legal, financial, administrative. And programmatic implications for absorbing SOPAC and /or its functions, in whole or in part, within SPREP;
- 5) Directed the director of SPREP to engage collaboratively with the CEOs of SOPAC and SPC immediately following the 2008 SOPAC Council Meeting to determine and jointly identify proposed institutional arrangement based on an analysis of:
 - A. Synergies and linkages between programs
 - B. Optimizing service delivery
 - C. Organizational capacities
 - D. Maintaining the integrity of the Applied Science and Technical Services
- 6) Directed that the Director of SPREP, in collaboration with the CEOs of SOPAC and

SPC, jointly commissioned an independent analysis of the legal, financial, administrative, and Programmatic implications of their proposed institutional arrangements;

- 7) Directed that the Director of SPREP, to propose to the other CEOs that the proposed institutional arrangements and analysis of implications are circulated to all member focal points of SPREP, SPC and SOPAC with an invitation for a representative from each member country and territory to attend a meeting of all countries and territories for consideration by May 2009;
- 8) Directed, subject to the guidance of the above- referenced meeting, the Director of SPREP to work collaboratively with the CEOs of SOPAC and SPC to finalise and jointly recommend new institutional arrangements and implementation plans, to be provided to the members by July 2009, for consideration and decision by their respective governing bodies in 2009;
- 9) Agreed that the SPREP Meeting meet to consider the institutional arrangements and implementation plan recommended by three CEOs before the next Pacific Island Forum Leaders' Meeting in 2009;
- 10) Directed the Director of SPREP in his deliberation on new institutional arrangements to take account of the Independent Corporate Review (ICR) recommendations and implementation;
- 11) Directed the Director of SPREP to propose to the other CEOs to provide a jointly quarterly update on progress and seek and share the views of, and give due consideration to, all members of SPREP, SPC and SOPAC.

The first aspect of that decision- is that the Director of SPREP is directed by the SPREP Council to engage collaboratively with the CEOs of SOPAC and SPC immediately following the SOPAC Council Meeting to determine and jointly identify proposed institutional arrangements based on an analysis of:

- A. Synergies and linkages between programs
- B. Optimizing service delivery
- C. Organizational capacities
- D. Maintaining the integrity of the Applied Science and Technical Services

Subject to the concurrence of my good colleagues, I would be looking to mid- November as the latest to hold what I would see as an Inception Meeting to commence this harmonized process on RIF.

With respect to the need for an analysis of the proposed institutional arrangements, Cristelle, Jimmie and I are putting the finishing touches to the Terms of References for an Independent Consultant and, subject to the SOPAC Council's decision on SPREP's proposed way forward we should be able to finalize it fairly soon and move to advertising for a consultant shortly thereafter. An independent analysis of the synergies and linkages I believe you can agree is an important first step in deciding which programmes go to which organization. It is expected that this aspect of the process will also be facilitated and supported by the three CEOs.

With respect to the joint members meeting in May 2009 to consider institutional arrangements and analysis of implications, the three CEOs would need to consult closely on draft Agenda and the modalities of holding such a meeting. Again the idea of having the May Meeting is to ensure that there is a harmonised process that brings together all the Governing Council to collaborate and work together on the way forward.

After the May Meeting, the Governing Council of SPREP in their decision in terms of the next steps, envisaged that by July 2009 consideration and decision by the three respective governing bodies would be taken on the rationalization issue. To assist the three councils in their decision- making the SPREP Council directed the Director of SPREP to work collaboratively with the CEOs of SOPAC and SPC to finalise and jointly recommend new institutional arrangements and implementation plans to be provided to the three Governing Councils well before July 2009.

The SPREP Governing Council also agreed that it would need to meet to consider the institutional arrangements and implementation plans recommended by the three CEOs before the next Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in 2009. It is hoped that the Governing Council of SOPAC and SPA likewise would meet to discuss the same institutional arrangements and implementation plans before the 2009 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting.

Following on from the 2008 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting each of the respective Governing Council would meet to consider and decide on the outcome of the Forum's Meeting.

Absorption/merging of SOPAC in whole or in part into SPREP or SPC should therefore commence in January 2010 in Accordance with the Forum Communiqué.

On behalf of the SPREP Council, I wish you Mr. Chairman and your good colleagues a very successful meeting and hope that you will see your way clear to consider endorsing SPREP Council's decision on all important issue of RIF.

As this is my last opportunity to attend SOPAC Council Meetings, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the members and secretariat for the courtesies and kindness you have shown me over the past five years. I have gained a great deal from you all and have come to appreciate and value the unique services SOPAC provides to our region. I take my hat off to the STAR team. Your generosity and valuable contribution to our region through SOPAC is very much appreciated not just by members of SOPAC but also by other CROPS Organisation

that rely on science to deliver services to the people of the region.

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely apologize if I have offended anyone in the course of these meetings; if I have I can assure you it was never my intention. Mr Chairman. Thank you once again for the privilege and honor to speak at this session of the SOPAC Governing Council.

May the Lord be with you and guide your meeting.

Fa'afetai Lasi.

Statement by Mr Asterio Takesy, Director of SPREP at SOPAC Governing Council 37th Session,

Funafuti, Tuvalu, 26 October 2008

PART III: STATEMENTS FROM SUPPORTING GOVERNMENTS, INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES & NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

EUROPEAN DELEGATION

The European Delegation expressed appreciation to the Government of Tuvalu for its warm hospitality and excellent meeting preparations, noting in particular, the creative artwork used in decorating the conference venues.

The European Delegation provided a short summary of European Development Fund support to the region, highlighting the various European Delegation instruments available, in particular the National (NIP) and Pacific Regional Indicative Programmes (PRIP). It was noted that the current portfolio of the PRIP consisted of some seventeen projects valued at over £75 million. Many of these were nearing completion but some would continue to operate in 2009 and beyond.

The ED provided a short account of 10th EDF PRIP programming noting a significant increase in funding from €39 million under the 9th EDF to €95 million under the 10th EDF. This increase was due in part to the relatively good performance of the Pacific, compared with other ACP regions. The 10th EDF PRIP consisted of two focal areas; (1) Regional Economic Integration, and (2) Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. The identification of projects under the 10th EDF PRIP would commence in the coming weeks with the Regional Authorising Officer (the Secretary General of PIFS) launching a call for concept notes.

Project start-up under the 10th EDF PRIP is expected to commence late 2009.

During the past decade SOPAC had become a significant regional partner having been contracted to implement 10 EU-funded projects valued over €37 million. Given this significant level of involvement the ED is particularly interested in the outcome of the RIF and its possible impacts upon existing and future contracts.

NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF WATER ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH LTD (NIWA)

On behalf of New Zealand's National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research (NIWA) I would like to thank you, your Government, and all the people of Tuvalu for their hospital and friendship during our visit to attend this Annual Session.

NIWA has a long and enduring relationship with SOPAC. It is a relationship that we strongly value and are committed to developing to assist SOPAC where we can in providing scientific and technical services to Pacific Island countries.

Over the last year the Island Climate Update has continued in collaboration with SOPAC, SPREP, Pacific Island National Meteorological Offices with ongoing support from NZAID. Now in its eighth year, and approaching its one hundredth issue, its value to the primary users, the Pacific Island National Meteorological Offices, was reconfirmed at a meeting hosted by the Vanuatu Meteorological Service earlier this year.

We have also been active this year in supporting the EU funded Pacific Hycos project, for example providing equipment and training associated with the Rewa river flood forecasting system in Fiji and reviewing water resource monitoring in Palau.

We were also fortunate to host SOPAC's hydrodynamic modeller at our Hamilton office in December last year as part of our work associated with Phase II of the Kiribati Adaptation Project. This permitted the building of a relationship between the two organisations and provides a wider support network for SOPAC in this area which was recognised as an issue in the 2007 PMEG report. It also enabled the Kiribati Adaptation Project to leverage off the considerable amount of work that SOPAC has conducted as part of their EU Reducing Vulnerability of Pacific ACP States Project in Kiribati. This work is directly assisting Kiribati adapt to the effects of climate change on extreme events such as coastal inundation. We value the collaborative benefits such linkages can bring and look forward to building on and developing further such relationships.

Once again on behalf of NIWA we thank you for your warmth and hospital during our stay here and we wish you all the very best with your deliberations over the next few days.

TAIWAN (ROC)

Mr. Chairman, Hon. Minister for Transportation and Communication, SOPAC Director Cristelle Pratt and Deputy Director, Delegation of Member Countries, Delegation of International and Regional Organizations, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen ...

Talofa, first I would like to thank the Tuvaluan Government for having me here to joint the Tuvaluan Delegation at the official opening of the SOPAC council meeting and at Proper Session.

As you have come to see in person, Tuvalu is a small country with a small population but its Government and People are willing to host the SOPAC Annual Meeting. This indicates their courage, determination and aspiration for their vision of prosperity and welfare in future. I am proud of Tuvalu.

With cooperation between Taiwan and Tuvalu in the fields of agriculture, fishery, health, education, environment protection, E-government, Tuvalu has indeed gradually moved ahead toward better living conditions than before.

I would like to name a few important projects of cooperation, such as setting up and maintaining a demonstration farm in Funafuti, costing around 400 thousand US Dollars annually, milkfish farming pond in Vatupu, about 230 thousand US Dollars, implementing waste management and disposal project, about 200 thousand US Dollars, dispatching mobile medical team to Tuvalu twice a year, roughly 200 Thousand US Dollars. On top of that, Taiwan provides much other assistance when Tuvalu Government is really in need of it.

Taiwan helps not only Tuvalu but also regional organisations under PIF. In 2008, donation for Forum Fisheries Agencies (FFA) was 96,000 US Dollars, Pacific Power association (PPA) 30,000 US dollars, Forum Secretariat. (PIFS) 30,000 US Dollars, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) 80,000 US Dollars, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) 50,000 US Dollars, South Pacific Board of Educational Assessment (SPBEA) 30,000 US Dollars, South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission (SOPAC) 40,000 US Dollars, University of the South Pacific (USP) 50,000 US Dollars.

Being a member of international community, the ROC (Taiwan) is always ready to make contribution for its friends, countries or international and regional bodies.

Finally, I wish all of you the best and a successful meeting over the next few days.

Thank you for your attention.

Statement by Charles C.J.LEE, Charge d'Affairs and Acting Ambassador of the Republic of China(Taiwan) to Tuvalu at the Governing Council 37th Session of the SOPAC at Funafuti, Tuvalu on 27 October 2008

THE ASIA FOUNDATION (TAF)

During the past year The Asia Foundation continued its close collaboration with SOPAC's Community Risk Programme on the design, development and delivery of training courses, operational and discussion exercises and other capacity building activities for the Pacific Island countries under the USAID funded Pacific Disaster Risk Management Programme (PDRMP). Significant achievements continue to be made since this USAID/OFDA-funded training programme was set up in 1995. The overall programme goal is to reduce vulnerability of Pacific Island Communities to disasters by building sustainable regional, national, and community level disaster management capacity

in key countries through enhanced training, improved advocacy, and strengthened local institutions. Six training courses have been developed and are delivered for countries in the region with five adapted to meet country-specific training requirements. A seventh course is being considered as the interest and need to gain greater understanding for disaster risk reduction has evolved. The training courses have been acknowledged through a mapping exercise for recognition of prior learning (RPL) articulating into a graduate certificate in disaster management through Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, Australian. Sadly this graduate certificate programme will not continue after 2008, but the Foundation along with SOPAC Community Risk Programme hope to identify a regional institution to provide alternative professional qualification support over the longer term.

The PDRMP continues through to December 2008, with possible funding support for a further 12 months to ensure continuity of an important capacity development programme in disaster risk management for the region.

The Asia Foundation/Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (TAF/OFDA) has been a founding member of the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network established in February 2006 in a response to a call by Pacific leaders for support for the implementation of the Regional DRM Framework. TAF/OFDA has also been instrumental in forming the Pacific Emergency Management Training Advisory Group (PEMTAG) along with other Suva-resident training partners: SOPAC, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the UN-Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Accomplishments over the past twelve months have been noted in the Manager/CRP's report to the Council. Through the PDRMP capacity development continues to be supported through trainings conducted at both regional and national levels:

- Introduction to Disaster Management (IDM)
- Initial Damage Assessment (IDA)

- Exercise Management (ExMan)
- Emergency Operations Centres (EOC)
- Risk Programme Management (RPM)
- Training for Instructors (TFI)

The PDRMP continues to assist countries in the development of exercises to test new legislated arrangements, national plans, agency procedures, and arrangements dealing with a range of management issues for disasters and emergencies, particularly multi-agency coordination.

Statement for the Record from Kathryn Hawley, Programme Director, Pacific Disaster Risk Management Program.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

I would like to thank the Council for the opportunity offered to the United States to participate in this meeting as an observer.

I would also like to thank the government of Tuvalu and the people of Funafuti for their generous hospitality.

Although not a member of SOPAC, the United States has had a long association with this organization and a history of cooperation with it on a number of its activities.

In addition to the membership or association of U.S. territories and the participation of U.S. individuals in STAR, the United States Government currently provides funding for two SPREP activities: The Pacific Disaster Risk Management Programme through The Asia Foundation with funding from USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Pacific Islands – Global Ocean Observing System (PI-GOOS) with funding from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Finally, U.S. technical agencies engage in specific technical cooperation with several other areas of SOPAC's work.

Mr. Chairman, with your consent, I would like to make a written submission for the record.

US Delegate to the SOPAC 37th Session

APPENDIX 5

STAR CHAIR'S REPORT TO COUNCIL 2008

Honourable Chair of SOPAC, Excellencies, Distinguished National representatives and Delegation members, representatives of Institutions and Organisations, Director of SOPAC, Director of SPREP, my TAG colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I. Introduction

Thank you for this opportunity to formally report to this Council on STAR's activities.

Before I begin, though, Honourable Chairman, as Chair of STAR and speaking on behalf of all the scientists, may I thank you our hosts, the Government and people of Tuvalu, for your warmth, welcome and hospitality. Loia Tausi and Faatasi Malologa are the people I have mostly dealt with and I am grateful for their hard work and assistance, but I know that there are many others who have had a busy few weeks, and we thank you all sincerely. Fafetai lasi.

I would also like to respond to the warm words the Honourable Prime Minister, the outgoing Chair of Council and the Director of SOPAC made about STAR this morning. It is a pleasure for all of the STAR scientists to be on Funafuti; this island holds a unique place in respect to the science of atolls. As the Honourable Prime Minister mentioned, Funafuti was the site of the drillholes put down by the 3 Royal Society expeditions between 1896 and 1898 – these were amongst the first detailed scientific investigations of atolls, and certainly the first to physically sample the deep structure of an atoll. And in recent years, of course, Tuvalu has been at the forefront of scientific discussion relating to the effects of global climate change.

My own Pacific research began on this island in 1995 and I've had the good fortune to study three of the topics raised by the Prime Minister – the Royal Society drillholes, the cyclone bank and the issue of lagoon dredging to fill the borrow pits – so it is with considerable pleasure that I am again in Funafuti on scientific matters. There is a very real benefit for scientists from outside the region to have met here. The themes of rising sea levels or fresh water supply, for example, can be debated academically in our own countries but discussing them here gives real focus to the issues that are affecting people's lives on a day-to-day basis.

As usual, STAR is indebted to staff of the SOPAC Secretariat for their cheerful and untiring efforts that make the meeting possible in the usual very short time frame. Vinaka. Thanks too to my colleagues for their presentations, chairing of sessions, support to the Chair, work on PMEGs and, in advance, contributions to the TAG sessions.

And so to STAR - As you all know, STAR is the Science, Technology and Resources Network associated with SOPAC. It is an informal and entirely voluntary grouping of scientists that acts as an interface between the SOPAC Secretariat and its member nations and the international scientific community, and it does this in several ways. At intervals, an international scientific workshop or meeting may be convened by STAR, or held under its auspices, on a theme relevant to the SOPAC region. STAR members also correspond and tender advice in the periods between the annual meetings. And I would like to stress here that STAR scientists are a resource freely available to you at any time, either directly from the relevant scientist or through myself as Chair.

Most obviously, each year a meeting at which scientific papers are presented and discussed, and thematic Working Groups meet, is held prior to this Annual Session of the SOPAC Governing Council. This year, the 25th meeting of STAR was held on October 22nd to 24th here in the Government Buildings.

II. STAR Presentations

As the Minister and the Director of SOPAC explained in their opening addresses this morning, the main theme of this year's STAR meeting was: "Environmental change and oceanic islands – especially with respect to managing water resources and sanitation on atolls".

Perhaps I could expand here on the rationale behind the themes of STAR. The theme is selected each year after discussion between the host nation, the Director of SOPAC and myself. As the theme has the effect of attracting extra scientists working in that particular area, it is an excellent opportunity to ensure that host nations get specialist knowledge in areas that interest them and that we can also bring new developments in science to the attention of the

region. Therefore, the interests of the host nation are paramount.

Presentations on any theme related to Pacific geoscience are welcomed, though, and these expand the breadth, interest and relevance of the meeting. And sometimes it is the unexpected and unsolicited presentations that lead to important new research partnerships.

During the meeting, some 35 scientific papers were presented orally and many others by the posters displaying research results. Abstracts of these are published in SOPAC Miscellaneous Report 672. As is always the case for STAR meetings, the information presented covered a broad range and I recommend the volume of abstracts as a guide to the material covered and as a source of much useful information. This information includes contact details for the presenters, should anyone wish to learn more about a particular item.

The Honourable Minister and the Director of SOPAC both discussed the STAR programme in their addresses this morning and I do not need to repeat their comments. But let me very briefly outline the scope of the presentations for you, simply to indicate the variety and relevance.

The opening sessions and some later papers dealt with the issues of water and sanitation, especially on small islands. The topics ranged from the general, covering principles and issues of a regional, even global nature through to specific discussion of problem solving in individual countries. The papers also ranged from the theoretical to the practical, illustrating the point I made earlier of STAR allowing people researching problems from all sides to come together.

As usual, there was a strong offering of papers dealing with the applied aspects of remote sensing and data gathering. This is technology that has a particular in this widespread region and the quality of the results coming from its application here is impressive.

Other sessions dealt with shallow marine and coastal processes, the physical oceans environment, mining and aggregate geology, and resource economics. Embedded within these sessions, and I offer these simply to illustrate the breadth of the presentations, were discussions of negotiations for maritime boundaries, lagoon environmental change as a result of human activities, the potential effects of climate change on sea levels, and the application of modelling to a range of situations.

Unfortunately, expanded conference sessions with associated working groups on deep sea mining and on human resource issues had to be cancelled at the last minute when delegates were unable to attend.

III. Working Groups and Associated Meetings

In addition to the scientific presentations, a number of working groups also met. These working groups offer an important opportunity for STAR delegates to discuss their own areas of interest and expertise with others whom they might only meet occasionally, focus their attention on the locale where we are meeting, and bring to the attention of Council items of particular scientific and technical importance to the region.

This year, working groups met to discuss marine benthic habitats, energy, water and, for the first time at STAR, GIS & Remote Sensing issues. Other planned working groups did not eventuate because of last minute personal circumstances that prevented their convenors attending this meeting, and their discussions have been rescheduled for next year.

I will not report in detail on the working group deliberations here but the full documents with supporting arguments for the conclusions will be appended to this report.

The Habitat Working Group

The Habitats Working Group discussed the regional interest in this theme and the progress in characterising marine benthic habitats that has been made so far.

They recommended the following:

- SOPAC should continue to pursue shallow water marine benthic habitat mapping efforts and coordinate activities with other regional organizations that have biological and fisheries capabilities. This certainly can be pursued if EU funds are appropriated.
- SOPAC is encouraged to participate in the deep-water habitat project headed by Geoscience Australia and assisted by the CPC in the Pacific.
- SOPAC should encourage synergy between deep-water marine benthic habitat mapping and deep-water minerals exploration and strike up a dialog with such industries as Nautilus Minerals.

- It is recommended that STAR considers the topic of deep-sea minerals and habitats as a scientific theme for the STAR meeting to be held next year in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

The Energy Working Group

The Energy Working Group noted that the issue of energy security remains of primary importance across all PICs and hence its discussions centred around sustainable and efficient use of energy, and reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels.

The Group recommended to Council that:

- Because of the importance of having access to Petroleum advisory services, SOPAC should initiate discussions to establishing a petroleum advisory service within the core energy component of its Community Lifelines Programme.
- SOPAC efforts be continued to support the mainstreaming of the energy policies and plans and their interlinking with the national sustainable development strategies and planning in PICs.
- SOPAC's work in promoting and supporting energy efficiency and conservation should be strengthened.
- As there is a lack of appropriate manuals and guidelines on the production of energy from animal waste and other appropriate sources, SOPAC work towards the development of these guidelines suitable for use in PICs.
- SOPAC work with CSIRO and other institutions and agencies to evaluate the appropriateness of other bio-oil sources and opportunities such as algae growth and conversion.
- SOPAC should consider ways in which it could support the PICs in attaining any necessary ISO certifications and should also attain ISO Certifications for relevant parts of its operations.

The Water Working Group

The Water Working Group discussions focussed on the reduction of water-borne diseases, adaptation in the water sector, the need for water resources assessment and monitoring, and the 5th World Water Forum held in Turkey in March of this year.

Their recommendations included that:

- SOPAC provide guidance resources to countries on the design, installation, main-

tenance, operation and appropriateness of water supply and sanitation systems to better inform in-country implementation where required.

- SOPAC continue with efforts in the area of water resources assessment and monitoring, including such things as the collection of sustained water resource monitoring data sets that will assist the development of integrated water resource management approaches and plans.

The GIS & Remote Sensing Working Group

This was the first GIS & Remote Sensing working group to be convened during a STAR meeting. The group discussed the need to better address the transfer of GIS and RS-related information to decision makers, as well as issues such as the availability of new technologies, hardware and software.

They recommended that:

- SOPAC strengthen and advocate the benefits of GIS&RS applications to decision makers in country.
- SOPAC continue to provide GIS&RS technology transfer and technical capacity development, where specific national priorities are established through a needs assessment. To assist in the delivery of capacity development SOPAC should strengthen partnerships with other organisations and agencies that deliver similar technical support.

Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Groups

I should also mention that 2005 saw the introduction of the Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Groups as the result of a STAR initiative. These groups of scientists again met with SOPAC Programme Managers in Suva immediately prior to this STAR meeting. The PMEG Chair, Professor Gary Greene, will report on this process to Council later in the meeting.

IV. Talks to school students

After the conclusion of the scientific presentations, a number of STAR delegates spoke to some 80 students from Nauti Primary School and Fetuvalu High School about science in general and in the Pacific, and about careers in this subject. Students were also given a little "hands-on" experience in small groups. This is an aspect of our work that we all find very

rewarding and it is something that we hope to develop further in the future.

V. STAR Discussion of the Pacific Islands Regional Institutional Review

I would like now to turn to the issues arising from the Pacific Leaders' decision last year to rationalise SOPAC into another organisation.

I discussed this and tabled a paper that included the history of the STAR/SOPAC relationship and the implications for its future from the point of view of the international science community at last year's Annual Session in Nuku'alofa. Other STAR and TAG delegates gave their views, as did many members of Council. I do not need to cover the details of that discussion again, as it is a matter of record.

I would like to repeat, though, that it is not appropriate for STAR to comment on the organisation or governance of SOPAC. That is the province of Council and of the leaders of the region. Our concern is solely with the continuation of the link between our voluntary organisation of international scientists and the efficient delivery of geoscience to the region.

STAR members have spent much time discussing the implications of this both electronically over the past year and in person here. There is considerable concern for the future of STAR, as it is closely linked to SOPAC. As is to be expected from a group such as ours, opinions as to what will happen and what might be the best course forward vary.

My opinion, which I believe is shared by many STAR scientists, is that, whilst it is theoretically possible for a group such as STAR to continue independently, its persistence in the absence of the focus provided by SOPAC is extremely unlikely. There are many pressures on scientists' time and many other specialist groups within which to pursue our professional interests. Without the interaction with in-island scientists and the ability of its members to contribute their expertise to the region in their own way that the current arrangement provides, STAR as a unit will disappear when SOPAC disappears.

Having said that, we have a strong desire to maintain and grow the organisation into the future if at all possible, once a new framework for Pacific geoscience has developed within the region. Planning for next year's STAR meeting is already underway and we are formulating mechanisms to try to stop or at least slow the current disengagement of our scientists. If a successor group to STAR is to be successful, to

my mind 2010 will be a crucial year. Presumably after this a new organisational framework will be in place. Should the governing body of any new institution wish to reinstate something akin to our present relationship, and providing that it is one with which we can work, we hope that the key components for a successor to STAR might still be available.

With this in mind, the STAR group presents the following comment to Council for its consideration.

Resolution from STAR Business Meeting, 22nd October 2008:

- STAR appreciates the value placed on it by member nations during discussion at the 36th Annual Session in Nuku'alofa, and hopes that the network can continue to contribute to the delivery of scientific services in the region into the future.
- However, STAR realizes that a new relationship will need to be formed and that an interim period of uncertainty will follow the 2009 meeting.
- As STAR is a purely volunteer organization, it is crucial that both a desire and a forum be maintained that encourage participation through this period.
- Therefore, to maintain the momentum of STAR or its successor, STAR suggests that member nations consider supporting a regional scientific meeting to take the place of the STAR conference during 2010.

Perhaps I might just comment briefly on this. Such a meeting, if the nations of the region see merit in the concept, could be held under the auspices of STAR in order to maintain our continuity but be opened to a wider range of science in preparation for the development of the new organisation.

VI. Concluding Remarks

Although I began with some brief thanks to those who have helped and hosted us, I would not be doing them justice or properly representing my colleagues were I to leave it at that.

Since we arrived last Tuesday and were welcomed first by the Reverend Dr Kitiona Tausi and the Honourable Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Labour Mr Enele Sopaga, we have been treated as privileged and honoured guests.

We have all enjoyed many experiences, not least the superb food, and I know that none of us will forget the entertainment provided by the groups from the various islands. If I may be

permitted to use a highly technical scientific phrase, we were blown away by it all! And it is with much anticipation that we await the rest of the week.

From all of us in STAR, Honourable Chair, I would be most grateful if you could convey our thanks and deep appreciation to all in Government and in the community who have made us so welcome.

May I finish my address by offering our congratulations to you as incoming Chair of SOPAC and volunteering the services of STAR if we may be of any assistance during the coming years.

That concludes my address. Thank you all for your time.

John Collen, Chair, Science Technology and Resources Network (STAR)

Funafuti, Tuvalu, 28 October 2008

MINUTES OF STAR WORKING GROUPS

1. Habitats Working Group

The Habitats Working Group met in Fongafale, Funafuti Atoll, Tuvalu October 24, 2008 and discussed the need and interest to characterized marine benthic habitats in the SOPAC region. Considerable interest was given to the pending EU funding that would go to undertaking pilot habitat mapping projects.

The recommendations of last years Habitat Working Group meeting were reviewed and it was reported that a major effort by SOPAC to move ahead with habitat mapping was accomplished with the production of a pilot habitat map of Aitutaki lagoon in the Cook Islands. This mapping exercise indicated that SOPAC has the capacity to characterize marine benthic habitats.

SOPAC is partnering with SPREP and SPC to undertake habitat mapping in shallow waters and have jointly written a proposal for supporting funds from the EU. The intent of the proposed work would be used for siting of aquaculture facilities and fisheries monitoring. If funded, pilot habitat mapping projects would take place in four different countries and would include chemical and physical oceanographic data that can be used to more completely characterize habitats.

The working group suggested that the PI-GOOS monitoring buoy data in and around the Pacific be considered for inclusion in SOPAC's habitat mapping exercises.

Although SOPAC has matured in the collection of habitat data it is still in the learning phase. It is cooperating with several universities and NOAA in formulating its mapping strategy.

Tuvalu representatives expressed interest in habitat mapping projects that could address source and impact of materials that could be extracted for new land development and for siting cultured pearl farming facilities. They also requested that SOPAC consider identifying data gaps within the Funafuti lagoon and assist in measuring nitrates, especially around heavily populated areas where septic tank leakage may be occurring. In addition, the country is considering installing mooring buoys for yachts to tie to, instead of anchoring, to prevent sea-floor disturbances. Assistance is being sought to locate sites that are promising for placing such buoys and certainly SOPAC's capabilities to map the shallow sea floor would be useful in this effort.

In regards to deep-water habitats it was reported that Peter Harris of Geoscience Australia was heading an effort, to be partially funded by UNEP, to map the gross seafloor habitats of the world. The effort in the Pacific is going to be assisted by the Circum-Pacific Council for Energy and Mineral Resources and it is logical to consider having SOPAC as a participant as well. This effort could be complimentary to SOPAC's possible involvement in future deep-sea minerals investigations.

Recommendations:

SOPAC should continue to pursue shallow water marine benthic habitat mapping efforts and coordinate activities with other regional organizations that have biological and fisheries capabilities. This certainly can be pursued if EU funds are appropriated.

SOPAC is encouraged to participate in the deep-water habitat project headed by Geoscience Australia and assisted by the CPC in the Pacific.

SOPAC should encourage synergy between deep-water marine benthic habitat mapping and deep-water minerals exploration and strike up a dialog with such industries as Nautilus.

It is recommended that STAR considers the topic of deep-sea minerals and habitats as its next scientific theme for the STAR meeting to be held next year in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Participants: Herve Damlamian (SOPAC), Gary Greene (MLML/Tombolo), Jens Kruger (SOPAC), Siouala Malua (Aquaculture Office,

Tuvalu Fisheries), Joe Murphy (Environmental Officer, U.S. Embassy, Suva), Tupulaga Poulasi (Fisheries Officer, Tuvalu Fisheries), Stephen Sagar (Geoscience Australia), Akuila Tawake (SOPAC) Sam (Cook Island Farmer).

2. Energy Working Group

The following participated in the Energy Working Group convened on the 23rd October: Mr Molipi Tausi (TV) – Chair, Prof. Stewart Burn (CSIRO), Mr Donn Tolia (SB), Mr Chris Ion (VU), Mr Keu Mataroa (CK), Mr Rupeni Mario, Mr Paul Fairbairn (SOPAC)

Based on a draft agenda the following issues were discussed and recommendations made by the group for the Chair of STAR to commend to the SOPAC Governing Council during its 37th Session in Funafuti, Tuvalu, for inclusion in the SOPAC Work Programme for 2009.

The Chair made reference to the relevant sections of the 2007 Chairs report noting that the substantive progress had been made towards the planning for the 2009 Energy Officials and Energy Ministers Meeting. The Meetings to be held in the Republic of Tonga from the 20-24th April 2009. Work in establishing a separate committee to consider the inter-linkages between “Energy, Water and Climate Variability” had been limited although preliminary work had been addressed through a more informal approach and further limited by human capacity.

For 2008 it was noted that the issue of energy security still remains of primary importance across all PICs. Hence all the topics discussed and following recommendations therefore focus around guiding activities towards the more sustainable and efficient use of energy, and at the same time considering other alternate options that would contribute towards reducing PICs reliance on imported fossil fuels.

Petroleum

Noted the progress made in the development of a draft Memorandum of Understanding for the “Pacific Petroleum Project” - an MoU between the Governments of Forum Island Countries on the Pacific Petroleum Project (addressing the issue of bulk purchasing). The MoU to be presented to the Forum Economic Ministers and the Pacific Islands Energy Minister for consideration and signing.

Noted the departure of the Petroleum Adviser from the Forum Secretariats. In acknowledging the importance of having access to Petroleum

advisory services recommended that SOPAC should take the initiative to commence discussions with the view to establishing a petroleum advisory service within the core energy component of the Community Lifelines Programme at SOPAC.

Energy Policy and Work Plans

Noting that most PICs now have National energy policies and work programmes the implementation of these now becomes the challenge. It is recommended that SOPAC efforts be continue to support the mainstreaming of the energy policies and plans and their interlinking with the national sustainable development strategies and planning in PICs.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation

Acknowledged the work of SOPAC in promoting and supporting energy efficiency and conservation and recommended that support in this area be strengthened. Activities to include, energy efficiency programmes, energy auditing, capacity building and education programmes.

Noted the presentation at STAR by the General Manager of the Tuvalu Energy Corporation (TEC) where energy efficiency activities had lead to significant savings in fossil fuels that as a comparator had far exceed those savings attributed to the 40 kW of grid connected solar photovoltaic installation.

Biogas/Digesters

Recommended that as there appeared to be an opportunity to produce energy from animal waste and other appropriate sources and that there was a lack of appropriate manuals and guidelines for the development and management that SOPAC work towards the development of these guidelines suitable for use in PICs.

Alternate/Substitute Fuels

Noting the current work being progressed in the use of coconut oil as a biofuel it was recommended that SOPAC work with CSIRO and other institutions and agencies to consider the appropriateness of other bio-oil sources and opportunities such as algae growth and conversion.

ISO Certification

Noting the need for some PICs to have ISO Certification (currently required in Tuvalu for

the Aviation Sector) that SOPAC should consider ways in which it could support the PICs in attaining the necessary ISO certification. It was considered that SOPAC should also attain ISO Certifications for relevant parts of its operations.

Energy/ Water/ Wastewater

Noted the nexus between energy / water / wastewater and the looming need to address these in an integrated manner. (Note that this also link to the issues of energy / water and climate variability raised in 2007).

3. GIS & Remote Sensing Working Group

Participants: Wolf Forstreuter, Faatasi Malologa, Kilifi O'Brien, Paul Fairbairn, Steven Sagar, Etuate Cocker, Joseph Murphy, Litea Biukoto

The first GIS & Remote Sensing working group was convened on 24 October 2008 in Funafuti due to the increased interest in GIS & RS at STAR.

Key issues raised were the need to address the better transfer of GIS and RS related information to decision makers. The Group further agreed that technology transfer and technical capacity development is still required following the completion of the SOPAC EU "Reducing Vulnerability" Project in December 2008. The Group noted the current human and financial constraints to effectively respond to national requests.

The WG discussed a number of related GIS&RS matters which included:

- The availability of new data such as
 - o New RADAR data for mapping 1:10,000 for rapid disaster assessments e.g. flooding
- The availability of new techniques/methods such as
 - o Techniques to replace beach profiles through digital elevation models with sub-metre contour lines
 - o Techniques for raster data GIS analysis for water catchment monitoring
 - o Techniques for extracting shallow water bathymetry from satellite imagery particularly for inundation modelling
 - o Techniques for nearshore habitat mapping using satellite imagery
 - o Techniques for modelling impacts of development in a lagoon

- o Techniques in image data pre-processing.
- The availability of new hardware and software
- The need to address specific GIS&RS needs relevant to the Pacific such as
 - o Reference image points which need to be established in all Pacific Islands to improve image data accuracy delivered by vendors

The GIS&RS WG recommended the following:

1. The need to improve transfer of GIS&RS related information to decision makers through SOPAC strengthening and advocating the benefits of GIS&RS applications incountry. In addition, it was agreed that national networks needed to be strengthened where the formation of GIS&RS user groups was considered to be a suitable mechanism.
2. That SOPAC continue to provide GIS&RS technology transfer and technical capacity development, where specific national priorities are established through a needs assessment. To assist in the delivery of capacity development SOPAC should strengthen partnerships with other organisations and agencies that deliver similar technical support.

4. Water Working Group

The following participated in the Water Working Group convened on 23rd October 2008.

Mr Keu Mataroa (CI) – Chair, Loia Tausi (TV), Sione Halatuituia (TO), Kifle Kahsai (USP), Stewart Burn (CSIRO), Doug Ramsay (NIWA), Rhonda Robinson, (SOPAC Water), Peter Sinclair (SOPAC Water), Malakai Finau (FJ), Donn Tolia (SI), Chris Ioan, (VA), Annie Homasi (TV), Paul Fairbairn (SOPAC).

On the basis of a draft agenda provided by SOPAC, the following issues were discussed and recommendations made by the STAR Water Working group for the Chair of STAR to commend to the SOPAC Governing Council during its 37th Session in Funafuti, Tuvalu.

The Chair together with the group reviewed progress made on recommendations from the Energy and Water Working Group 2007, which included:

- Recommendation to re-establish the Pacific Water Association (PWA) in Apia, Samoa including reactivation of its membership coupled with a constitutional review

The Pacific Water Association held its 7th Annual General Meeting (AGM) from 9-11 September in Apia, Samoa. In conjunction with the PWA AGM, the 3rd Pacific Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Water Management Steering Committee was also held as well as a sanitation session to commemorate the International and Pacific Year of Sanitation. The Sanitation session also allowed for the opportunity to review progress against the Pacific Wastewater Policy Statement and Framework for Action.

CSIRO also held their Delphi Workshop in conjunction with the PWA AGM, resulting in a future collaborative effort between CSIRO and PWA in furthering several water and sanitation concepts of which there is some focus on small scale wastewater treatment and local engagement.

The PWA in their broad discussions at their AGM suggested that they would continue to focus support on the Pacific regional water utilities and their leak detection programmes with some development towards using community based water management groups which are currently being used in Samoa.

SOPAC would continue to support the PWA in their endeavours, with specific plans around collaboration in the area of Water Demand Management for which SOPAC are currently implementing a programme in the region funded through NZAID and for which SOPAC are currently recruiting.

- Support the concept of community based interventions

There has been significant effort by SOPAC and partners on developing resource material to support efforts of community workers on the ground. These most recently include the community toolkit for water safety and the community mobilisation guidelines for IWRM.

- SOPAC to convene a sub-committee to develop a methodology that considers the inter-relationships between energy, water and climate variability for PIC's

The nexus between water/energy/wastewater and the looming need to address these in an integrated manner was noted.

Issues identified for discussion at Water Working Group Meeting STAR 2008

1) Reducing water-borne diseases

The annual incidence of diarrhoeal diseases in the Pacific, nearly matches the numbers of its inhabitants with 6.7 million cases of acute

diarrhoea each year, responsible for the annual death of 2.8 thousand people, most of them, children less than 5 years old (WHO, 2008). Not surprisingly, recent country statistics on access to improved sanitation and improved drinking-water reveal that on average, approximately only half of the total population of the Pacific island countries are served with any form of improved drinking-water or sanitation.

Recommendations

- Identified a need to consider a combined approach to water supply and sanitation interventions in-country given the strong impact water supply has on sanitation.
- Supported the need for a coordinated approach in seeking donor funding for water and sanitation initiatives nationally and regionally and noted the efforts of the Pacific Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Water Management as a vehicle to provide this coordination.
- Recommended that SOPAC provide guidance resources to countries on the design, installation, maintenance, operation and appropriateness of water supply and sanitation systems to better inform in-country implementation where required.
- Identified a need for on-going assessment of the performance of community level water and wastewater systems, to guide future implementation.

2) Adaptation in the water sector

The Pacific is facing an increased risk of natural disasters such as floods, droughts, windstorms, landslides, storm-surges, waterborne diseases and epidemics such as dengue and typhoid. It is becoming evident that water-related disasters will be the focus for attention in Pacific island countries when they are preparing to adapt to a changing climate.

Recommendations

- Noted integrated water resources management (IWRM) as an intelligent approach to climate adaptation and acknowledged the work of the Pacific IWRM Programme as a mechanism of allowing for considered efforts in this regard as well as enabling government support for this.
- Noted the need for attention to also be placed on Water Resources Assessment and Monitoring, within an IWRM framework and acknowledged the Pacific Hycos Programme in allowing for this.
- Noted the need for a focus on gathering and providing information which will assist

in understanding the impacts of climate variability and climate change on water resources for longer term national planning and guidance on proposed climate adaptation initiatives.

3) Need for Water Resources Assessment and Monitoring

Water resources monitoring and assessment in the Pacific is currently very poor and has deteriorated in the last 15 years. The sustainability of hydrological observing networks is being threatened by lack of basic equipment and technical support available from government departments such as adequate vehicles to visit remote sites and trained personnel to carry out the work. Pacific HYCOS is providing an injection of funds for equipment and support in training; however it is limited in both time and funds. Concerns are expressed on sustaining this investment and engaging real commitment from government to invest in basic information needs for water management.

Discussion occurred on the use of desktop models and Bayesian model approaches as suggested by CSIRO to identify potential resources and use of the results from climate change models to assess the impact on the resource, identify resources which would be at most risk and targeted monitoring of these areas.

Discussion over whether this was the most appropriate use of SOPAC resources in consideration to country needs. An alternate view was that it would be more an appropriate use of SOPAC resources to focus on assisting countries in monitoring of established and water supplies and assist with resources to assess potential resources. Results from climate change models then applied to these known and assessed resources.

Discussion over a need to generate support within Government for monitoring of resources. To date most of the focus has been on the assessment of resource potential, with little funding or resources on monitoring of the existing resources

Recommendations

- Recommended that SOPAC, continue with efforts in the area of water resources assessment and monitoring including such things as the collection of sustained water resource monitoring data sets that will assist the development of integrated water resource management approaches and plans.
- Noted the urgent need to support countries to monitor existing resources and to assist in generating support through awareness raising for water resources assessment and monitoring within PIC's.
- Identified the need for maintaining monitoring networks through creating products and information based on data that is relevant to government and various other stakeholders.

4) 5th World Water Forum, March 2008, Turkey

A brief background was provided by SOPAC on the World Water Forum Process particularly efforts towards the 5th World water Forum .

Recommendations

- Noted that working group members would review and provide comments to SOPAC on the Pacific Position Paper to be presented at the 5th World Water Forum to be held in March 2008 in Turkey.

APPENDIX 6

PROGRAMME MONITORING EVALUATION GROUPS REPORTS AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

PMEG 2008 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES (in order of priority)

It appears to PMEG that the following cross-cutting topics are an issue needing attention:

1. Communication between and within programmes is not fully effective. In the 2007 PMEG report it was noted that pressures that inevitably accompany a doubling of the SOPAC budget over two years should be addressed through development of appropriate management systems (e.g., Strategic Planning, Work Programming and Management, Human Resources development), which should alleviate problems of duplication of efforts and uncertainty. PMEG strongly recommends that regular meetings (at least monthly, but weekly would be better) of SOPAC's senior management team be required to ensure effective communication between programmes and the CEO.
2. SOPAC lacks an effective information management (IM) strategy to ensure that data and information collected is stored, maintained and made accessible to stakeholders. The creation of the Geonetwork is a commendable start but a much greater effort is required to develop an effective organizational-wide data management culture and system to ensure SOPAC's data are not lost.
3. SOPAC does not have an organizational-wide programme to support staff development and training. PMEG's view is that the responsibility for staff development resides at the agency level and that core funding needs to be allocated to this area.
4. Reporting of SOPAC outputs to donors commonly does not refer to the contribution that the activities make to the broader, strategic goals of SOPAC.

PMEG – What's Next?

PMEG has just completed its fourth year review and in light of the RIF process needs some direction from Council.

Some questions that need to be answered are:

- Has PMEG been effective and has it accomplished the goals expected of it?
- What improvements need to be made?
- Should it continue in a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mode?
- Is there life for PMEG after RIF?

Although PMEG has been stringent and sometimes curse in its reviews the Director of SOPAC and its programme managers have expressed gratitude in the candidness and transparency by which the reviews have been undertaken. It appears that the SOPAC Secretariat finds the reviews beneficial toward seeking continued improvement and ensuring that its work programme outputs are relevant and of quality. However, since PMEG is operating under the direction of the Council, Council needs to evaluate the results and determine if such activity should continue and if so, in what fashion.

Given the fact that implementation of the RIF is yet to occur it may be premature to consider the fate of PMEG. However, if Council agrees that the review process is beneficial to member countries; it may want to recommend to the organizations that absorb the SOPAC programmes to consider introducing a similar M&E process.

The primary purpose of PMEG has been to evaluate SOPAC's work programme in house and its outputs. However, it may be worthwhile for PMEG to also review the outcome of SOPAC'S contribution to both member countries on a country-by-country basis. This may be beneficial to the member countries and the SOPAC Secretariat, as candid and transparent evaluations of outcomes has the potential to alleviate misunderstandings as well as provide insights into improving delivery and impact.

PMEG Review of the Community Lifelines Programme (CLP)

October 15 – 17, 2008

REVIEW TEAM:

- Dr Andrew Matthews, National Science Commissioner, New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO

- Makereta L. Sauturaga, Director of Energy, Department of Energy, Fiji
- Jerrold E. Knight, PALARIS Programme Manager, Palau, (Chair)
- Latu Kupa, Pacific Water Association, was unable to attend
- Dr Kifle Kahsai, USP, was unable to attend

The Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Group (PMEG) for CLP met for three days, October 15 – 17, 2008, at the SOPAC Secretariat in Suva. Substantial detailed documents had been previously provided to the review team and thus they were able to immediately begin the review. These documents included 1) 2007 “Report from the Programme Review Monitoring & Evaluation Group on CLP”; 2) “Report from the Community Lifelines Programme (2008)”; 3) “New Initiatives in the Community Lifelines Programme”; and 4) similar documents from the other SOPAC programmes.

The CLP PMEG had open access to all SOPAC staff who advised on the accomplishments, plans and problems associated with the three Sectors in CLP and the relationship to other SOPAC programmes. These three Sectors, ICT and GIS/Remote Sensing; Energy; and Water and Sanitation, operate relatively independently of each other. The CLP Manager, Mr. Paul Fairbairn, was most helpful in coordination of the discussions and to provide additional information to fill in the gaps from staff interviews. Deputy Director Bhaskar Rao also furnished information vital to the evaluation.

The staff at CLP has gone through rapid growth in the previous two years. As reported by the 2007 PMEG the staffing level in 2006 was 29. In 2007 it had increased to 33 and it is currently at 44. It is noted that there are several staff vacancies, including two key managerial positions. This rapid increase in personnel has created problems with space, and also some minor confusion as to how things actually work together. Mr. Fairbairn is aware of these and is working to bring the entire CLP into a more coordinated working unit.

The rumors of breakup of SOPAC and the rumors of dangerous living conditions in Fiji have contributed to staff turnover and difficulty in filling the high level positions. Rumors, even though unsubstantiated, still seem to contribute to a negative feeling for professional personnel when it comes to working for SOPAC in Fiji at this time.

ICT and GIS/REMOTE SENSING SECTOR Review

ICT (Information, Communications and Technology) has functions both for the corporate infrastructure of SOPAC, but also provides support to the client countries. Since all countries have their own requirements for ICT hardware and software, the ICT team struggles to maintain the expertise needed to assist all. More emphasis should be placed on staff training. The very rapid development in technology in the ICT world requires a constant availability of training opportunities to keep personnel knowledge and skill levels high.

The 2007 report mentioned the internal review and proposed “restructuring to better service its outreach responsibility and secondly, the operational functions to support the secretariat itself.” This process is on going and a proposed structure with space requirements and staffing levels has been prepared. This is a critical issue that the ICT server and vital corporate data be properly secured and maintained. Much progress has been made in coordinating ICT function throughout the other programmes.

The GIS/Remote Sensing section continues with its goal of being a focal point in the Pacific for specialized equipment, services, training and personnel expertise all available to the client countries. The personnel expertise includes database development, and GIS software expertise in both the MapInfo and ArcInfo packages. Expertise in using GPS in coordination with the GIS/RS is available.

The very expensive and specialized equipment includes large format scanner (A0) and large format plotter. Other less expensive, but still specialized equipment include the smaller scanner to scan negatives of aerial photographs and produce a digital image that can be printed out in hard copy. GPS equipment, both survey grade with RTK capability and mapping grade are available for client countries.

The services include purchasing of satellite imagery at greatly reduced cost. Also, in connection with this imagery is the capability to pre-process the imagery.

Other services include digitizing and map production, establishment of digital elevation models. ICT personnel can assist and/or advise on system purchase, installation and maintenance of information systems. SOPAC has provided over 60 training courses in the past five years and continues to provide training

on any of these services if requested. SOPAC has established networking among the ICT professionals of the Pacific using GIS-PacNet, a GIS newsletter, a GIS User Group, and other appropriate methods.

Overall, the CLP PMEG finds the ICT team at SOPAC to be functioning well. The vacant ICT Team Leader and Systems Development positions need to be filled as quickly as possible.

ENERGY SECTOR Review

The Energy Sector includes a number of different activities such as energy resource assessment, energy data and information, technology assessment, gender and energy, energy conservation and efficiency, awareness and policy development.

The PMEG is pleased to note the completion of the independent study on the review of the current status of the energy sector in the region and supports the recommendations provided.

The three-year PIEPSAP Project, extended to four years, which focused on the development of energy policies and plans ended in August 2008 and has resulted in the endorsement of eight national energy policies. The Senior Adviser on Renewables (Biofuel) has also completed his term in the Energy Sector.

At the time of the PMEG review, there are five (5) existing staff (1 professional, 3 support staff, 1 trainee attachment) with three vacant posts.

The activities of the Energy Sector are wide ranging with a need to improve and coordinate the strategic direction. With several staff positions vacant in this sector, the ability to deliver on some projects has been compromised.

The Energy Sector has to be given a clear position and the lack of full-time leadership contributes to reducing the visibility of the Sector and limiting its ability to contribute effectively to energy sector programmes.

With the continuing increases in world oil prices the energy sector needs to be accorded priority and the progress on the regional initiative for bulk purchase of petroleum fuels is to be commended.

WATER and SANITATION SECTOR Review

Considerable advances have been made in the last year in this sector of the programme which is now seeing a real return on the considerable

investment in staff time and resources over the last 8 or more years. The engagement of key staff in the preparation of key strategic regional policy frameworks and action plans is now bearing fruit. This PMEG wishes to emphasise the long lead time that is a necessary prerequisite to enable buy-in at senior Government levels to a process that then has significant local ownership. With this buy in, the articulation at national levels of the importance of water and sanitation and associated donor confidence, the provision of resources and the procurement of qualified staff, the projects are now really starting to deliver on their mandate. The larger, longer term projects also by definition make SOPAC a more attractive employment opportunity and this is reflected in the quality of the new staff who have been attracted to the work in this sector.

We also agree that the focus is on facilitating partnerships, a clearing house for information and providing appropriate capacity development through a range of training courses, secondments and attachments. This is an extremely important philosophical change from the provision of actual technical support – i.e. CLP is not in the business of fixing pumps and laying pipes. We also encourage the engagement of “Technical Fellows” and “Attachment” of technical assistants who extend the human capability of the unit. This direct additional capability and development is a significant and very appropriate overhead of the programme. We also commend the significant progress that has been made in the areas of wastewater management training, the assistance given water demand management, water quality monitoring and in assisting with the A-P Water Summit.

The PMEG recognises the significant issues in the Pacific with regard to the provision of potable water and adequate sanitation to remote communities and notes that diarrhoeal disease causes some 2,800 deaths per year in the region. The cultural and gender issues associated with sanitation are acknowledged by the CLP team and the work in this area is to be commended.

In the area of Integrated Water Resource Management, the new project, now supported by the GEF and in partnership UNEP and UNDP, provides an interesting modality of operation that has potential for other components of SOPAC’s work programme. Country selected and prioritised demonstration projects will advance the concept in the Pacific of valuing water as a natural and precious resource.

Pacific Hydrological Cycle Observing System (HYCOS) project now has support and CLP have made advances in assisting with the upgrading or re-establishment of monitoring networks. However, it will be important for the member States to dedicate the physical resources – for example transport to measurement sites – if indeed these networks are going to fill the data gaps that currently inhibit water resource management and disaster preparedness.

Naturally pressures on water supply, sanitation and flood protection, particularly exacerbated through the shift of populations to the fringes of urban developments and the expansion of the tourist industry are all affected by issues of climate variability and change. The CLP programme continues to play an important role through both assisting in projects that recover historical climate data and therefore provide a better statistical base for the prediction of the future climate and has a direct involvement with real time seasonal climate forecasting which allows a range of sectors in Pacific society to adjust their management practices or institute contingency measures.

Conclusions

1. Staffing vacancies, especially managerial positions, need to be urgently addressed.
2. Staff training is a constant requirement in the quickly evolving world of ICT. Personnel need to maintain high skill and knowledge level of current technologies. Other personnel in Energy and Water should also have access to training.
3. The Energy Sector has to be given a clear positioning and the lack of full-time leadership contributes to reducing the visibility of the Sector and limiting its ability to contribute effectively to energy sector programmes. The issue of the fragmentation of the energy sector across a number of CROP and other agencies needs to be urgently addressed so that the work programmes are coordinated and better reflect the priorities of the Pacific community.
4. The Water and Sanitation Sector is doing very well with its strategic plan and implementation. The work programme is very country driven and this modality brings a better commitment of staff and resources. However, in some areas, particularly with the implementation of the hydrological services project, member States need to commit resources to this project if it is to realize its full potential.

5. Success of SOPAC Programmes in the CLP which are directed at the client countries should be evaluated by whether the service actually benefited the country. This can only be determined by in-country visits or other communication with the people on the ground that received the service.

Recommendation

Council receives the PMEG CLP Report, requests the Director to address relevant concerns and recommendations as the opportunity and need arises in the coming year and the CLP to review outstanding concerns and recommendations.

Report from the Programme Monitoring & Evaluation Group Review of the Community Risk Programme (CRP)

Review Team: Wally Johnson, Geoscience Consultant, Canberra, Australia; John Norton, Norton Consulting Ltd, Wellington, New Zealand (Chair); Angelica Planitz, Programme Officer – Asia/Pacific, ISDR, Bangkok; Joeli Rokovada, Commissioner, Western Division, Fiji Government

Introduction

The CRP PMEG met with the SOPAC Director, Deputy Director, CRP Programme Manager and available staff, other Programme Managers and corporate staff over the period 15 to 17 October 2008. The review involved discussions with the Programme Manager and individual staff on the definition of the programme components, the process of the work development and the outputs achieved. There was also discussion on the strategic direction of on-going work. Discussions were held at the corporate level on the structure and composition of the Work Plan and Budget.

The comments and recommendations of the 2008 PMEG recognise the challenging environment under which the SOPAC Secretariat operates in view of the insecure organisational future and ongoing discussions to rationalize the SOPAC mechanism. Some issues of priority have been highlighted to assist a smooth continuation of the CRP whether in the existing operating environment under SOPAC or in any other regional entity which may be given the mandate to continue the coordination and technical support for disaster risk management in the region.

The PMEG is also recognises the highly variable and multifaceted nature of disaster risk management in the region which is characterised by:

- (a) increasing vulnerabilities of Pacific Island States to natural hazards arising from increasing population densities, poor land use practices and the potential impacts of climate change,
- (b) the need to involve and coordinate a growing number of in-country, regional and international stakeholders operating at different levels towards strengthening the disaster resilience of Pacific nations, and
- (c) competing needs and priorities at the country level which make it difficult to achieve a necessary focus for sustainable results with limited human and financial resources.

Managing these competing demands, increasing expectations and limited resources requires an even greater strategic focus from SOPAC and the CRP, backed by strong management and operating systems.

The PMEG is aware of and would like to highlight the different nature of the CRP activities which have a lesser focus on science and applied-science outputs and a greater orientation towards management arrangements, governance and capacity building compared to its sister programmes within SOPAC. The SOPAC management systems may not always effectively cater for the differences of the CRP.

At the centre of PMEG's attention during this review cycle was the strategic focus and scope of the CRP and its work programme vis-à-vis the SOPAC Strategic Plan as well as the Madang Framework. Related management, priority and coordination issues were taken into consideration. However, a detailed technical review of the outputs and deliverables of the programme could not be achieved within the available time for the PMEG process.

Highlights

As with last year, the PMEG was again impressed with the breadth of work delivered within the programme. Universally the CRP staff were enthusiastic about their work and felt good about what they were achieving. There was a good sense of connection within the CRP group and of valuing the input of the Programme Manager to individual work components although it was noted this was happening

less due to the commitments of the Programme Manager with countries and stakeholders. This was exacerbated by staff shortages and the late commitment of funding components.

Highlights included:

- (a) continuation of the NAP development effort with completion of the Marshalls Island and support for Samoa and the Cook Islands with High Level Advocacy and NAP development.
- (b) initial NAP implementation work for Vanuatu with the review of the National Disaster Plans and Act, although noting funding for the continuing implementation of the NAP (around \$3 million over 3 years) is still not secured.
- (c) commencement of the review of the Solomon Is institutional framework for DRM and the review of the NDC Act and Plan with the potential to integrate climate change adaptation into the arrangements.
- (d) launching of the Pacific Disaster Net. This is a significant achievement and follows two years of hard work in development.
- (e) ongoing stakeholder networking with significant inputs to World Bank (progress with risk reduction activity in the Pacific) and ISDR (development of a framework for monitoring DRM progress) and Australian (Tsunami Warning System) initiatives during the year.
- (f) ongoing networking in the region with country visits and support and the three regional meetings in Nadi in July (14th Regional Disaster Managers Meeting, the Pacific DRM Partnership Network Meeting and the Inaugural Pacific Regional DRM Meeting for CEO's of Finance/Planning and Disaster Management.
- (g) initial economic analysis work in DRM carried out by the Resource Economics Team contributing to the country understanding of the importance of DRM activity.

Issues:

1. Complex Operating Environment for CRP

Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the region involves many players, and expectations of the SOPAC CRP are high from stakeholders and clients at international, regional, and national levels. CRP thus operates in a multifaceted, complex, and ever-changing environment that continues to place considerable pressures on

the work programme of what is basically a small unit of staff. Resources are insufficient to satisfy all of these expectations, and delivery of outputs that genuinely improve the DRM conditions in individual counties and throughout the region remains a challenging issue for CRP.

This is particularly so at the present time as two core staff positions are vacant and four project positions cannot be filled as the programmed 2008 budget has not yet been allocated. Once it is allocated there will be expectations on work commencing. This creates a difficult management environment as it effectively takes 6 months to get new staff and get them into operational mode. The issue then is how best to manage in tandem high stakeholder expectations and an effective but resource-limited work programme. The two core vacancies which exist are for DM advisors, one of which is a senior position.

It is the view of the PMEG that these circumstances of high donor expectations, their short term project funding focus and staffing needs, combined with a limited strategic focus, are creating an unsustainable environment for the Programme Managers role. Attention is needed for SOPAC and donors to address a strategic response to this dilemma.

2. Clarity of Strategic Direction

Clear articulation of the strategic intent of CRP needs to be maintained, not only to stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Programme but to staff as well so that a focused, practical work programme can be defined and then undertaken in disciplined fashion throughout the year. New initiatives and opportunities that appear throughout any one year must be treated cautiously and assessed clearly and objectively in terms of a prioritisation process that involves the Programme commitments already approved by Council.

Short-term spontaneous reactions to following up on too many perceived opportunities can have not only a deleterious impact on output delivery but also add to a work programme that becomes too large and unmanageable bearing in mind the actual resources available. Scarce resources need to be managed for maximum benefit on agreed high-priority outputs. The enthusiasm of individual staff and the identification of possibly real opportunities are to be applauded and encouraged, but the follow-up decision-making process to change the approved work programme, or choose which of the many broadly defined elements will proceed

and which will not, during the course of the year needs to be managed and therefore justified very carefully.

3. CRP Work Programme and Budget

The CRP work programme documentation available to the CRP-PMEG continued to present difficulties in not readily providing the necessary material for understanding the intentions of the work content to allow for an assessment of progress. In addition, the Work Plan is still not sufficiently aligned to the themes of the DRR-DM 'Framework for Action 2005-2015' which should be the primary guideline for the CRP.

The CRP work programme still remains an ambitious document, seemingly to satisfy as many stakeholders as possible. A number of the items were unbudgeted at the time of the Plan preparation and some budgeted items remain unfunded 9 months into the year. Not surprisingly we noted in interviews with CRP staff that there was a generally low level of understanding of where their particular work activities was placed in the work programme and the level of funding available. The document therefore has limited value as a management tool and decisions on what work would progress and what would not appeared to be either ad hoc or determined by donor funding timetables.

This makes the management of outputs and the planning for staff and resource requirements very difficult. It also makes it very difficult to set a strategic direction to allocate limited resources to best effect.

In addition the PMEG was advised that the actual SOPAC budget (and Work Programme) was \$6million less than the Programmed budget and so the CRP PMEG assessment of progress against expected outputs was not possible.

This is a SOPAC planning issue and an instance where the corporate processes are not meeting the needs of the CRP. This issue was raised in the 2007 PMEG report.

4. CRP Programme Structure:

In view of the challenging organisational environment under which SOPAC is currently operating it has been difficult for the organisation to adequately respond to all of its core roles and mandates in disaster risk management under the CRP. The CRP is expected to provide a distinct set of services and responses at multiple levels (international, regional and national), to diverse constituencies (NDMOs, increasingly Ministries of Planning/Finance, regional and

international partners). The current programme and staffing structure may not be best geared to meet all requirements with the necessary strategic and long-term vision, i.e.:

(a) to provide in-country technical assistance to NDMOs in strengthening their capacities in disaster management and preparedness for response;

(2) to promote and facilitate in-country DRM and DRR mainstreaming efforts through the development and implementation of National Action Plans in conjunction with NDMOs, Ministries of Planning, Finance and other Line Ministries.

(3) to coordinate, align and support the efforts of regional and international partners in disaster risk management and to strategically engage donor agencies for mobilising funding support to facilitate the implementation of the Madang Framework and the disaster risk management priorities of PICs.

It is therefore suggested that the CRP identifies a clear set of outputs for each area of engagement and allocates sufficient human resource capacities under each. Since this may be difficult to achieve given the current level of resources, the CRP should further prioritize its work programme in consultation with its member states and donors in order to be able to better manage expectations on its delivery.

5. In-country Commitment to the CRP Programme

Although the CRP has been successful in improving capacity for disaster management in the countries a lot remains to be done. Activity on disaster risk reduction, with its objective of mainstreaming, is just commencing. It is observed that in some cases countries are committed only in the presence of CRP officials during project consultations and planning but the momentum soon faded after they left (out of sight, out of mind). There is high expectation in member countries that CRP will do it all for them. It should be noted that the CRP role is advocacy, process definition and support.

It is the view of PMEG that although CRP will continue to initiate and take a lead role in the development of new initiatives, the countries need to take accountability for managing and ensuring the sustainability of the programme. Countries therefore should pay particular attention to consolidating in-country disaster management and disaster risk reduction ar-

rangements, systems and mechanisms and take ownership of the programme. Essentially the countries should have the necessary technical and financial support for meeting the operational and maintenance requirements of new projects and activities.

Further, PMEG is of the view that the High Level Advocacy Team in the course of its consultation in-country should bring this matter to the attention of governments.

6. Funding of the NAP Process

The NAP activity is identified as the primary output of the CRP Programme giving effect to the 2005 Pacific Plan commitment to the Regional Framework for Action for DRR and DM. Because of the complexity of the environment the NAP's represent a 5-10 year commitment to implementation. There are currently two NAPS completed (Vanuatu in 2007 and RMI in 2008) and two more in development with a further three identified for commencement. Funding requirements for their initial implementation are going to be substantial - around Fj\$1 million per year for 3 years each - a total of \$4 million per year from 2009 and \$7 million per year from 2010 for 3 years and on-going.

There is currently only a nominal commitment of funding of Au\$2.3 million over 3 years (around Fj\$1 million per year for three years compared to a developing need of Fj\$7 million per year) and indications that increasing funding commitments are highly problematic. This uncertainty of implementation support is placing the NAP programme at risk as countries become sceptical of committing the significant effort to the NAP development. It is noted that by the end of 2009 it is expected there will be 7 NAP's in a phase of implementation.

PMEG suggests that SOPAC develops a strategic response to this issue and engages directly with donors to obtain reassurance that a funding regime will be established in some form to give confidence to countries that this is indeed a primary focus of the CRP Programme. It is noted that countries themselves also have a responsibility to address this issue directly with donors in-country. Without proper funding the NAP programme is meaningless

It is noted that in the 2007 PMEG report the issue of SOPAC resources to support the implementation of the increasing number of NAP's was raised. That continues to be an issue of growing concern.

Comment on Responses to the 2007 PMEG Report

1. Programme progress and definition

This remains an issue and is addressed further in Issue 3 above. While it is a cross-cutting issue of SOPAC's strategic programme management and control it is particularly relevant to the complex environment of the CRP Programme.

2. NAP Programme Funding

This remains an issue and is addressed further in Issue 6.

3. DRM Guide

This issue has been addressed well and the Guide is now issued.

4. Country focus and leadership role

The Programme Managers report addresses this issue.

5. Support to disasters

The Programme Managers report addresses this issue and the 2008 initiative in respect to this is acknowledged.

Focus for 2009

It is the view of PMEG that given the current uncertainties and the increasingly complex environment of the DRM activity that the CRP should spend the next year consolidating its position in relation to staffing and strategic direction and address its critical issues to donors and partners to bring expectations in line with capacity. Work commitment decisions must be based on capacity and a clear strategic set of priorities and on committed funding. Donors need to recognise that project resourcing needs a 12 month lead in time for short term project funding.

Recommendations:

The CRP PMEG recommends that Council:

- i. notes the highlights for 2008, the breadth of activity of the CRP outputs given the staffing constraints and the commitment and enthusiasm of the CRP staff
- ii. notes the issues outlined in this report
- iii. commends to countries their role to take accountability for their DRM programmes
- iv. agrees that the CRP should consolidate its

position for staffing and strategic direction during 2009

- v. encourages donors and partners to address the issues of short term project funding to allow the CRP to consolidate its position

Wally Johnson, John Norton (Chair), Angelica Planitz, Joeli Rokovada

27 October 2008

Report from the Programme Review, Monitoring, and Evaluation Group on OIP (2008)

Introduction

The OIP PMEG met from 15-17 November 2008 for its fourth annual review of the Ocean and Islands Programme. The first and second reviews were conducted in September 2005 and 2006 and the third review in November 2007. Terms of References used for this (fourth) review were finalized prior to the second review (see Appendix for Terms of References). The review process included analyses of presentations made by OIP technical staff (selected by the Programme Manager), interviews of these scientists and technicians, examination of reports, maps, web sites and official publications including new and emerging issues and discussions with the Programme Manager and SOPAC's Director and Deputy Director. We found that all requests for information to be in full cooperation. However, many of the OIP staff members were in the field and unavailable for interviews. In addition, due to the changing airline scheduled flights to Tuvalu, the venue of the 37th Annual Session of the SOPAC Governing Council, the PMEG review needed to be truncated.

The primary objective of the OIP PMEG was to review the SOPAC OIP Work Programme for continuity, deliverability, and weaknesses. Similar to the reviews provided in previous years, we also assessed crosscutting issues such as overall management, financial and administrative services, logistical support and synergy between programmes. These crosscutting issues were developed through open and candid discussions between the three different PMEG teams. All aspects of the programme were reviewed in the context of the OIP PMEG 2007 recommendations, and the SOPAC OIP 2008 Work Programme. Review of the SOPAC Strategic Plan was not undertaken because of the pending rationalization (RIF) process. Overall, OIP has made significant progress in addressing the concerns, and implementing the recommendations, of the last (third) PEMG

review and significant advancement is being made in the production of reports, maps and data accessibility. Morale is high, even in light of the pending RIF and short-term contracts offered by SOPAC. Staff are enthusiastic and positive about working at SOPAC and satisfied with the working environment SOPAC provides. However, some uncertainties exist about the fate of SOPAC.

As per the preceding reviews, this report has been divided into four segments: 1) Successes, 2) Concerns, 3) New and Emerging Initiatives, and 4) Recommendation. Although we undertook a critical review, our report is submitted as a constructive instrument designed to assist improving the SOPAC organization.

Successes

- 1) The OIP PMEG was pleased to find that high morale and enthusiasm still existed within the programme. Everyone interviewed said they were happy working at SOPAC and liked the intellectual and collegial intercourse that the organization provided.
- 2) Impressive progress has been made in the last year on the recommendations made during the last review and the OIP PMEG is pleased with the actions taken in regard to concerns and recommendations put forth as all but a few have been thoroughly addressed.
- 3) The new OIP Programme Manager, who is well liked and efficient, has addressed in a sincere and professional manner the concerns of the OIP PMEG of last year and appears to be effectively managing the programme.
- 4) It is again apparent that SOPAC's initiatives in economics, policy and law have added value to the technical and scientific products of the programme with continuing contribution to significant usefulness of these products by addressing the needs of other than science sectors of governments.
- 5) OIP PMEG noted that the production of bathymetric and maritime boundary maps are not only progressing at a healthy rate but that the programme is forward looking in its advancement to include Extended Continental Shelf (ECS) assessments.
- 6) Resource studies in the form of aggregate assessments for various Member Countries of SOPAC is again commendable and contributes handsomely to SOPAC's list of successes.
- 7) Economic assessments of aggregate extractions including environmental considerations is continuing to be undertaken providing a better true cost and benefit of the industry to PICs.
- 8) OIP has made excellent progress in development of its in-house ocean current and wave modelling capability. Staff training has played a crucial role in this area, and has been very successful.
- 9) PMEG congratulates the OIP for its success in obtaining \$0.5 million through AusAid to support the development of regional Extended Continental Shelf submissions for UNCLOS and for regional capacity to submit and define coastal States' submissions.
- 10) PMEG is very impressed with the development of the Geonetwork web-based information management capability during 2008, which has captured essential bathymetric information collected in the region and made it accessible to stakeholders. The Geonetwork is well placed to become the foundation of a broader information management programme within SOPAC.
- 11) OIP is to be congratulated for leading a joint proposal with SPREP and SPC, to be submitted to the European Union for EDF-10 funding, for developing an ecosystem approach to coastal and lagoon management.
- 12) We are pleased to see that OIP has solicited assistance from TAG and STAR members in both reviewing SOPAC reports and in contributing to the publication of peer reviewed scientific journal papers.

Concerns

- 1) Data sets, reports, and maps remain difficult to find and access on SOPAC's web page. In short, SOPAC's web site is still archaic, out-of-date, and not easy to navigate through.
- 2) Charging OIP staff for map printing is still occurring and may result in sub-standard maps being released, as staff may view the charge of \$85FJ per map as prohibitive for printing drafts. Map production is a major part of OIP and it should not be used to subsidize the general budget.
- 3) Communications still need improvement as few or no senior management meetings are being held on a regular basis. OIP staff members are unaware of activities in different programmes that could often complement their efforts.

- 4) Synergy between the three programmes (OIP, CLP, and CRP) of SOPAC still needs improvement, although some progress has been made in the form Friday afternoon seminars.
 - 5) Staff involved with fieldwork should all be trained in small boat handling and first aid, to basic levels of competency. OIP should have in place rules for field party's to bring basic safety equipment (eg. life jackets, first aid, sun block, etc.) on all SOPAC field expeditions. Some staff without appropriate formal training in advanced SCUBA diving still are currently carrying out scientific diving. These are Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) risks for SOPAC.
 - 6) Staff still finds it difficult to obtain time to publish scientific papers. Staff should use the PMS to plan for publishing scientific papers as part of their work agreement with their manager. As an agency that depends on the reputation and quality of its science publications and staff to attract funding, SOPAC could improve its profile by encouraging staff to publish key outputs in the mainstream scientific literature.
 - 7) Job security remains an issue among most of the staff. SOPAC risks loss of critical skills as many people are on short-term (~1 yr) contracts and under present conditions (rationalization) may not wait until their contract expires before seeking employment elsewhere.
 - 8) Succession planning for staff is still an issue for SOPAC, as key skills are not replicated among two or more persons in many instances.
 - 9) It appears that the full cost of potential environmental degradation is still not always considered in economic assessments of resource extraction studies and PMEG thinks more effort should be given to this aspect.
 - 10) The capability of OIP and SOPAC to provide advice and information to support the deep sea minerals industry is limited. Insufficient capability in this area will compromise SOPAC in providing PICs with necessary advice and information to make decisions about mining leases, permits, etc.
- 2) We noted that under the Sea Level and Climate Monitoring project that SOPAC, as a co-implementing partner, has progressed by holding workshops for PICs continued the maintenance of tide gauges and carried out communication and advocacy activities of project results that will help PICs evaluate the rate of SL change. This is a worldwide problem and an emerging field that SOPAC should stay engaged with. Sealevel changes are now well known but shoreline accretion and erosion needs to be investigated further.
 - 3) We noted that the Maritime Boundaries project is coming to a close and although the draft maps of the various boundaries will be completed there is much to do after this in respect of advocacy to negotiate shared boundaries and to declare 200 mile EEZ limits. In addition, support of efforts by coastal States to prepare their extended continental shelf submissions is needed. SOPAC is well positioned to follow-up on the initial effort and could provide final maps that will not only be useful for legal descriptions of boundaries but could be used to support claims for extended continental shelves under the Law of the Sea and to identify habitats and resources of PICs.
 - 4) We noted that much of the bathymetric data being collected by SOPAC is of a standard that may be used for charting purposes and that the project is in contact with international and regional agencies charged with providing safe navigational charts. However, a formal arrangement should be made between SOPAC and PIC maritime authorities to collect data at IHO standard if SOPAC is to provide data for navigational charting purposes.
 - 5) We are pleased to note that SOPAC has initiated physical oceanography and tsunamis modeling projects that can substantially contribute to the understanding of habitats, geohazards, and groundwater intrusion problems and can support interests within the Community Risks and Community Lifelines programmes.
 - 6) As a major geoscience and oceanographic data provider for the Pacific Islands region, SOPAC needs to forge ahead in providing a data information service to the regional community, as this effort will fill a need

New and Emerging Issues

- 1) Marine benthic habitat characterization and mapping is still an emerging field in the SOPAC region that OIP is well positioned to contribute to in the Pacific islands. The

that is basically unavailable today within the region.

Recommendations

- 1) SOPAC members should encourage their advisors and consultants funded through the Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec) to work closely with SOPAC to develop Extended Continental Shelf submissions for UNCLOS in order to assure that maximum benefit occur for them. PMEG suggests that PIC teams involved with this work need to ensure that the most up-to-date datasets are utilised (so that potential claims are maximized) and that provision is made for geoscience experts to be available to defend submissions at UNCLOS.
- 2) The SOPAC Executive should ensure that the working relationship between staff from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and OIP, working jointly on the South Pacific Sealevel Climate Monitoring Project Communications Component be streamlined to improve OIP efficiency and timeliness in delivering communication products and that responsibilities of both parties be clearly defined.
- 3) SOPAC should initiate and coordinate a marine research programme into deep ocean ridge ecosystems that are vulnerable to the effects of mining operations. It is suggested that regional marine research agencies be invited to participate in drafting proposals to relevant funding organizations. The region has been targeted by industry to be the location of the world's first deep sea mining operations and hence the environmental impacts of these operations will be felt first in the region – the subject of the environmental impacts of deep sea mining is poorly understood and fundamental research is urgently required to prepare governments to make decisions regarding the exploitation of these resources.
- 4) To improve communications within OIP and the Secretariat we reiterate the need for regular programme staff meetings. In addition, we suggest that occasionally, but at some regular interval, meetings be held between all staff, programme managers, and the administration.
- 5) The lack of adequate training for SCUBA diving work undertaken by some staff remains a concern. We recommend that SOPAC arrange for the training of these personnel and provide safety instructions and gear such as life jackets to those staff that are active in small boat operations and

other water related activities, as a matter of safety and responsibility.

- 6) As a measure of programme “impact” we recommend that SOPAC should keep a log of all requests for copies of reports, data and other products, web-page hits, as well as feedback from stakeholders on the value of products delivered (outputs).

Agenda Item 10.1, Paragraphs 251 and 252 – Proceedings of AS36 (RIF)

Last year, as part of the review process, the OIP PMEG commented on paragraph 19b. Although the majority of time this year was spent in reviewing OIP's work programme and results, we did examine paragraphs 251 and 252 under Agenda Item 10.1. We respectfully submit to Council our observations and comments in regard to this item.

First we acknowledge with regret that SOPAC will not survive as an entity and will most probably be fragmented in some form. Given this eventuality we encourage Council to obtain assurances that indeed improved service delivery and effectiveness of SOPAC's work programme will occur. However, if an option were available to Council to reverse detrimental actions in the future, we would encourage Council to seriously consider implementing this option in order to assure that critical services to member countries are not lost.

Although the process of rationalization appears to be coming together, there still is not a clear purpose articulated, nor a vision that would indicate how the rationalized components would come together to improve service delivery and effectiveness. We feel it critical to describe the synergy, funds required and people needed to enhance and improve services. To obtain this end there needs to be a clear objective and this objective needs to be articulated in a way that shows a clear path forward.

The RIF exercise is a unique opportunity to provide better services to member countries and everything possible should be done to assure that this occurs. This should include detailed evaluations of SOPAC's programme elements and consideration on how these elements relate to each other. Synergy needs to be understood and protected if high quality applied science and advice is to be maintained and improved.

As stated when we last reported to Council, our intent is to provide candid, constructive advice to Council. We thus respectfully submit our comments on the RIF process.

APPENDIX 7

LIST OF CONFERENCE ROOM DOCUMENTS

NUMBER	TITLE
AS37/1 Info 1	Information Circular
AS37/1 Info 2	Preliminary Timetable
AS37/1 Info 3	Programme for Official Opening (Circulated in Funafuti)
AS37/3.1	Provisional Agenda
AS37/3.1 Rev.1	Adopted Agenda (Revised)
AS37/3.1 Info 1	Provisional Daily Working Schedule
AS37/3.1 Info 2	Working Procedures
AS37/3.1 Info 3	List of Conference Room Documents, as at August 2008
AS37/3.1 Info 3 Rev.1	List of Conference Room Documents
AS37/3.1 Info 3 Rev.2	Final List of Conference Room Documents (this document)
AS37/3.1 Info 4	Provisional List of Participants
AS37/3.1 Info 4 Rev.1	Final List of Participants
AS37/4.1	Designation of National Representatives
AS37/6.1.1	Director's Report – Introduction
AS37/6.1.2	2007 Annual Report Summary
AS37/6.1.3	Summary Report of 2007/2008 Donor Support
AS37/6.1.3 Suppl.	Summary Report of 2007/2008 Donor Support Narrative by the Director
AS37/6.1.4	SOPAC/EU Project Report
AS37/6.2	STAR Chair Report
AS37/6.2 Revised	STAR Chair Report as presented to Council in Funafuti
AS37/6.3	PMEG Chairs Report on Cross-cutting Programme Issues (Circulated in Funafuti)
AS37/6.4	CROP and PPAC Summary Report
AS37/6.5	Deep Sea Minerals – an Emerging Regional Opportunity
AS37/7.1	Report from the Community Lifelines Programme
AS37/7.2	New Initiatives in the Community Lifelines Programme
AS37/7.3	Report from the Programme Review Monitoring & Evaluation Group on CLP
AS37/8.1	Report from the Community Risk Programme
AS37/8.2	New Initiatives in the Community Risk Programme

AS37/8.3	Report from the Programme Review Monitoring & Evaluation Group on CRP
AS37/9.1	Report from the Ocean and Islands Programme
AS37/9.2	New Initiatives in the Ocean and Islands Programme
AS37/9.3	Report from the Programme Review Monitoring & Evaluation Group on OIP
AS37/10.1*	Paragraphs 251 and 252 – Proceedings of AS36 (RIF)
AS37/10.1 Suppl.1*	2008 Governing Body Decisions of the PIF Leaders; SPREP and SPC
AS37/10.1 Suppl.2*	Abridged Summary of Legal and Contractual Issues Pertaining to SOPAC should it decide to Dissolve or Suspend its Operations
AS37/10.2.1*	CROP Annual Remuneration Review Report – Professional Staff
AS37/10.2.2*	CROP Annual Remuneration Review Report – Support Staff
AS37/10.3*	Secretariat Accommodation and Related Institutional Issues
AS37/10.4*	Director Position
AS37/11.1.1*	2007 Audited Financial Statements, Auditor’s Report and Management Report
AS37/11.1.2*	Report on 2007 Regular Budget Variance and Virement of Funds
AS37/11.1.3*	Report on Assets & Inventory written off for the year ended 31 December 2007
AS37/11.2.1*	Report and Financial Accounts for the 6-month period to June 2008
AS37/11.2.2*	Membership Contributions
AS37/11.2.2 Rev.1*	Membership Contributions Revision, 30 June 2008
AS37/11.2.2 Rev.2*	Membership Contributions Revision, 29 September 2008
AS37/12.1*	Reserve Fund Ceiling
AS37/12.2*	Approval of 2009 Work Plan and Budget
AS37/12.2 Rev*	Approved 2009 Work Plan and Budget
AS37/12.3*	Appointment of Auditors

* Circulation restricted to Governing Council members only

APPENDIX 8

ACRONYMS

AAPG	– American Association of Petroleum Geologists (Tulsa, USA)	APPL	– Application of Petroleum Prospecting Licenses
ACDP	– Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler	APSC	– Australian Public Service Commission
ACIAR	– Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research	ARGO	– Array for Real-time Geostrophic Oceanography
ACP	– African, Caribbean and the Pacific countries of the Lome Convention	ARGOS	– A satellite location and data collection system (CNES/NOAA)
ACTEW	– Australian Capital Territory Electricity and Water Corporation	AS	– Annual Session (SOPAC)
ADB	– Asian Development Bank	ASAP	– Alf Simpson and Associates Pacific Ltd
ADCP	– acoustic doppler current profiler	ASEAN	– Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ADITC	– Australian Drilling Industry Training Committee	ASLR	– accelerated sea-level rise
ADO	– Automotive Diesel Oil	ASPA	– American Samoa Power Authority
AFAC	– Australasian Fire Authorities Council	ASTM	– American Society for Testing Materials (original name)
AGC	– Atlantic Geoscience Center (Canada)	ATP	– authority to prospect
AGL	– Land and Water Development Division of the Agriculture Department of the FAO (UN)	ATWS	– Australian Tsunami Warning System
AGSO	– Australian Geological Survey Organisation	AU	– Australia
AIACC	– Assessments of Impacts and Adaptations to Climate Change	AUD	– Australian Dollar
AIDAB	– Australian International Development Assistance Bureau	AusAID	– Australian Agency for International Development
AMSAT	– Australia Marine Science & Technology Limited	AUSLIG	– Australian Surveying and Land Information Group
ANZECC	– Australia and New Zealand Conservation Council	AVI	– Australian Volunteers International
ANU	– Australian National University	AVHRR	– Advanced Very High Resolution Radiometer
AOSIS	– Alliance of Small Island States	AWA	– Australia Water Association
AOPC	– Atmospheric Observing Panel for Climate	AWWA	– American Water Works Association
AOSIS	– Alliance of Small Island States	BAC	– Climate Alert Bulletin
APACE-VFEG	– Appropriate Technology for Community and Environment – Village First Electrical Group	BGR	– Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (Germany)
APAN	– Asia Pacific Area Network	BGS	– British Geological Survey
APEC	– Asia-Pacific Economic Commission	BINAS	– Biosafety Information Network and Advisory Service
APPA	– American Public Power Association	BIO	– Bedford Institute of Oceanography (Canada)
APPEA	– Australian Petroleum Production Exploration Association	BOM	– Bureau of Meteorology (Australia)
		BPoA	– Barbados Plan of Action
		BRGM	– Bureau de Recherche Géologiques

BSc	– Bachelor of Science	C-GOOS	– Coastal-Global Ocean Observing System
CalCOFI	– California Cooperative Fishery Investigation	CGPS (cGPS)	– Continuous Global Positioning System
CalTech	– California Institute of Technology	CHARM	– Comprehensive Hazards and Risk Management
CAR	– Communities At Risk	CIA	– Central Intelligence Agency (United States)
CARICOM	– Caribbean Community and Common Market	CIDA	– Canadian International Development Agency
CATD	– Centre for Appropriate Technology & Development (Nadave, Fiji)	CIESIN	– Centre for International Earth Science Information Network
CBD	– Convention of Biological Diversity	CIF	– Cost, Insurance and Freight
CCA	– Climate Change Adaptation	CISNet	– Coastal Index Site Network
CCCC	– Climate Change Carrying Capacity	CISO	– Chief Information Security Officer
CCCCC	– Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre	CLIPS	– Climate Information and Prediction Services
CCD	– Convention to Combat Desertification	CLCS	– Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
CBO	– Community-Based Organisations	CLIVAR	– Climate Variability and Predictability
CCAMLR	– Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources	CLP	– Community Lifelines Programme (SOPAC)
CCOP	– Committee for Coordination of Joint Prospecting for Mineral Resources in Asian Offshore Areas (ESCAP)	C-MAN	– Coastal Marine Automated Network
CCOP/SOPAC	– Committee for Coordination of Joint Prospecting for Mineral Resources in South Pacific Offshore Areas (now SOPAC)	CMM	– Commission for Marine Meteorology
CDM	– Clean Development Mechanism	CNES	– Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (National Center for Space Studies)
CD-ROM	– Compact Disc Read Only Memory	CNMI	– Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
CDPI	– Community Development and Participation Initiatives	CNO	– Crude Coconut Oil
CDR	– Centre for Disaster Research (of UPNG)	CNRS	– Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (National Center for Scientific Research), France
CEA	– Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique (Atomic Energy Commission), France	CNRT	– National Research and Technology Centre for Nickel and its Environment (of New Caledonia)
CEHI	– Caribbean Environmental Health Institute	COE	– Corps of Engineers (properly USACE) (USA)
CELT	– Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching	COLA	– cost of living adjustment
CEO	– Centre for Earth Observation	COM	– College of Micronesia (of FSM)
CEO	– Chief Executive Officer	COMBAS	– a joint Japanese-French project to study active marginal basins in the Southwest Pacific (followed the STARMER programme)
CEOS	– Committee on Earth Observation Satellites	COME	– Coconut Oil Methyl Ester
CERMP	– Cyclone Emergency and Risk Management Project (Tonga)	ComSec	– Commonwealth Secretariat (UK)
CESMG	– see ESMG	COOP	– Coastal Ocean Processes Programme
CFTC	– Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation		

CORA	– Canadian Ocean Resource Associates Inc.	DFID	– Department for International Development (UK)
CP1	– Core Project 1, the Global Description of the World Ocean	DGMWR	– Department of Geology, Mines and Water Resources (Vanuatu)
CPCEMR	– Circum-Pacific Council for Energy and Mineral Resources	DGPS	– Differential Global Positioning System
CPI	– Consumer Price Index	DIMENC	– Direction de l'Industrie, des Mines et de L'Energie (New Caledonia)
CPPS	– Permanent Commission for the South Pacific	DISMAC	– Disaster Management Centre
CPWC	– Collaborative Programme on Water and Climate	DMA	– Defence Mapping Agency (US)
CRED	– Centre for Research on Epidemiology of Disasters	DME	– Direct Micro Expelling
CRES	– Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies (of the Australian National University)	DMU	– Disaster Management Unit (SOPAC Secretariat)
CRGA	– Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (of South Pacific Community)	DO	– Dissolved Oxygen
CROP	– Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (formerly SPOCC)	DOE	– Department of Energy (Fiji, and elsewhere)
CROP ICT WG	– CROP Information and Communication Technologies Working Group	DoM	– Department of Mining (PNG)
CRP	– Community Risk Programme (SOPAC)	DOALOS	– (UN) Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
CSA	– Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (USA)	DORD	– Deep Ocean Resources Development Co. Ltd, Japan
CSC	– Commonwealth Science Council	DOS	– Disk Operating System
CSD	– Commission on Sustainable Development (of United Nations)	DOWA	– Deep Ocean Water Applications
CSI	– Coastal Regions and Small Islands (of UNESCO)	DRR & DM	– Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management
CSIRO	– Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (Australia)	DRM	– Disaster Risk Management
CSO	– Civil Society Organisation	DSDP	– Deep Sea Drilling Project
CSP	– Conservation Society of Pohnpei	DSM	– Demand Side Management
CSPOD	– Canadian South Pacific Ocean Development Programme	DSTO	– Defense and Science and Technology Organisation (Australia)
CT	– Composting Toilet	DTM	– Digital Terrain Modelling
CTA	– Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (Netherlands)	DWC	– Dialogue on Water and Climate
CTD	– Conductivity/Temperature/Depth Device	EC	– European Commission
DANIDA	– Danish International Development Agency	eCS	– Extended Continental Shelf
DBCP	– Data Buoy Cooperation Panel	ECLAC	– Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
DDSMS	– Department of Development Support and Management Services (of UNDP)	ECOSOC	– Economic and Social Council (UN)
		ECU	– European Currency Unit
		EDF	– European Development Fund
		EEZ	– Exclusive Economic Zone
		EFH	– Essential Fish Habitat
		EIA	– Environmental Impact Assessment
		EMA	– Emergency Management Australia
		EMA	– Engine Manufacturers Association (US)

EMDAT	– Emergency Events Database (CRED, OFDA, OECD, WHO)	FAO	– Food Agriculture Organisation (UN)
EMM	– Energy Ministers Meeting	FAU	– Finance and Administration Unit (of SOPAC Work Programme)
EMP	– Ecosystem Monitoring Programme	FAUST	– French-Australia Seismic Transect
EMT	– Executive Management Team (SOPAC)	FCCC	– Framework Convention on Climate Change
EMWIN	– Emergency Managers Weather Information Network	FEA	– Fiji Electricity Authority
ENSO	– El Niño Southern Oscillation	FEPC	– Federation of Electric Power Companies (Japan)
ENVISAT	– Environmental Satellite	FEMA	– Federal Emergency Management Agency (US)
EPA	– Environment Protection Agency	FEMM	– Forum Economic Ministers Meeting
EPC	– Electric Power Corporation (Samoa)	FFA	– Free Fatty Acids
EPC	– thermal graphic recorder used in mapping (probably after company founder: Edward P. Curly)	FFA	– Forum Fisheries Agency
EPG	– Eminent Persons Group	FFEM	– Fonds Française pour l'Environnement Mondial (French Funds for Global Environment)
EMWIN	– Emergency Management Weather Information Network	FEMS	– Fiji Forest Export Marketing System
EPCS	– Electronic Particle Counting System	FICs	– Forum Island Countries
EPM	– Environmental Programme for the Mediterranean	FIELD	– Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development
ER	– Internal SOPAC Secretariat abbreviation for EU-SOPAC Project reports	FINNIDA	– Finnish Department of International Development Cooperation
ESCAP	– Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN)	FINTEL	– Fiji's International Telecommunications Provider
ESMG	– Earth Science and Marine Geology (SOPAC certificate course)	FIT	– Fiji Institute of Technology
ESRI	– Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.	FJD	– Fijian Dollar
ESSI	– Earth Search Science Incorporation	FLIS	– Fiji Land Information System
EST	– Environmentally Sound Technologies	FMS	– Fiji Meteorological Service
EU	– European Union	FNPF	– Fiji National Provident Fund
EUEF	– European Union Energy Fund	FNTC	– Fiji National Training Council (now TPAF)
EUEI	– European Union Energy Initiative [for Poverty Eradication for Sustainable Development]	FOAM	– Forecast Ocean Atmosphere Model
EUMETSAT	– European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites	FOB	– Free On Board (Incoterm)
EVI	– Environmental Vulnerability Index	FOC	– Forum Officials Committee
EUWF	– European Union Water Facility	FRI	– Fisheries Research Institute
EWG	– Energy Working Group (CROP)	FSM	– Federated States of Micronesia
EWS	– Early Warning System	FSP	– Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific
FADS	– Fish Aggregation Devices	FSPI	– Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific International
FAME	– Fatty Acid Methyl Ester	FTIB	– Fiji Trade and Investment Board
		GCOS	– Global Climate Observing System
		GCRMN	– Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network

GCSI	– Global Change Strategies International Inc.	EuroGOOS	– European GOOS
GDIN	– Global Disaster Information Network	I-GOOS	– Intergovernmental GOOS
GDP	– Gross Domestic Product	NEARGOOS	– North East Asian Region GOOS
GEBCO	– General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (IOC-IHO)	MedGOOS	– Mediterranean GOOS
GEF	– Global Environmental Facility (World Bank-UNEP-UNDP)	PI-GOOS	– Pacific Island GOOS
GEF-PAS	– Global Environmental Facility Pacific Alliance for Sustainability	GOSSP	– Global Observing Systems Space Panel
GEO3	– Global Environment Outlook 3 (EVI)	GPA	– Global Plan for Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
GEOHAB	– Global Ecology of Harmful Algal Blooms	GPDRR	– Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
GEOSS	– Global Earth Observing System of Systems	GPF	– General Purpose Fund
GERIS	– Geological and Earth Resources Information System (PNG)	GPS	– Global Positioning System
GEST	– Group for the Export of Services and Technology (of New Caledonia)	GRID	– Global Resource Information Database (UNEP)
GHCN	– Global Historical Climatology Network (NOAA, US)	GROMS	– Global Register of Migratory Species
GHG	– Greenhouse Gas	GSC	– Geological Survey of Canada
GII	– Geophysical Institute of Israel	GSJ	– Geological Survey of Japan
GIPCO	– GOOS Integrated Panel for the Coastal Ocean	GTOS	– Global Terrestrial Observing System
GIPME	– Global Investigation of Pollution in the Marine Environment	GTQ	– Gas to Queensland Project (Papua New Guinea)
GIS	– Geographic Information Systems	GTS	– Global Telecommunications System (of WMO)
GIS/RS	– Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing	GTSP	– Global Temperature-Salinity Pilot Programme
GIWA	– Global and International Waters Assessment	GTZ	– German Technical Cooperation
GLI	– Global Imager	GWP	– Global Water Partnership
GLOBEC	– Global Ocean Ecosystems Dynamics Programme	HAB	– Harmful Algal Blooms
GLOSS	– Global Sea-Level Observing System	HAU	– Hazards Assessment Unit (SOPAC Secretariat)
GMA	– Global Marine Assessment	HDI	– Human Development Index
GMO	– Genetically-Modified Organism	HDR	– Human Development Report (UNDP)
GNP	– Gross National Product	HELP	– Hydrology for Environment, Life and Policy
GNS	– Institute of Geological & Nuclear Sciences (of New Zealand)	HfA	– Hyogo Framework for Action
GODAE	– Global Ocean Data Assimilation Experiment	HIG	– Hawaii Institute of Geophysics (of UH)
GOES	– Geosynchronous Operational Environmental Satellite	HLC	– High-Level Consultation
GOOS	– Global Ocean Observing System	HOTO	– Health Of The Oceans (IOC)
		HOTS	– Hawaii Ocean Time Series Station
		HPLC	– High Performance Liquid Chromatography

HRD	- Human Resources Development Unit (of SOPAC Work Programme)	IFREMER	- Institut Francaise de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer (Formerly CNEOX)
HTML	- HyperText Markup Language	IGBP	- International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme
HURL	- Hawaii Undersea Research Laboratory (of UH)	IGES	- Institute for Global Environmental Strategies
HYCOS	- Hydrological Cycle Observing System	IGNS	- Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences (of New Zealand)
IAEA	- International Atomic Energy Agency	IGODS	- Interactive Graphical Ocean Database System
IAMSLIC	- International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers	I-GOOS	- Intergovernmental Committee for GOOS
IAS	- Institute of Applied Science (USP)	IGOSS	- Integrated Global Ocean Services Systems
IAVCEI	- International Association of Volcanism and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior	IHO	- International Hydrographic Organisation (of IOC/UNESCO) French Oceanographic Research Institute
IBTS	- International Bottom Trawl Survey	IHP	- International Hydrological Programme (of UNESCO)
ICCEPT	- Imperial College Centre for Energy Policy and Technology	IIEC	- International Institute for Energy Conservation
ICES	- International Council for the Exploration of the Sea	IISEE	- International Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering
ICG/PTWS	- Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Pacific Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System	IKONOS	- High Resolution Satellite Imagery
ICLEI	- International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives	IMA	- International Market Allowance
ICM	- Integrated Catchment Management	IMarEST	- Institute of Marine Engineering Science and Technology (based in UK)
ICOD	- International Centre for Ocean Development (Canada)	IMO	- International Maritime Organisation
ICOGS	- International Consortium of Geological Surveys	INET	- Internet Conference organised by ISOC
ICRI	- International Coral Reef Initiative	IOC	- Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (of UNESCO)
ICSU	- International Council of Scientific Unions	IODE	- International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange
ICT	- Information and Communication Technologies	IOI	- International Ocean Institute
ICU	- [Pacific] Islands Climate Update (NZAID)	IOS	- Initial Observing System of GOOS
ICZM	- Integrated Coastal Zone Management	IPCC	- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IDA	- Initial Damage Assessment	IRC	- Internal Revenue Commission (PNG)
IDM	- Introduction to Disaster Management (course by TAF/OFDA)	IRD	- Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (ex ORSTOM)
IDNDR	- International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction	IRETA	- Institute for Research Extension and Training in Agriculture (USP)
IEDS	- Integrated Exploration and Development Services Limited (Australia)	IRI	- International Research Institute for Climate Prediction
IETC	- International Environmental Technology Centre	IRIS	- Incorporated Research Institution for Seismology
IFRC	- International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	ISA	- International Seabed Authority

ISAAA	– International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications	JIBC	– Japan Bank of International Cooperation
ISC	– Interim Sub-Committee (of SOPAC Governing Council to deal with future role and direction of SOPAC)	JICA	– Japan International Co-operation Agency
ISDR	– see UNISDR	JNOC	– Japan National Oil Corporation
ISDWC	– International Secretariat of the Dialogue on Water and Climate	JOGMEC	– Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (formerly MMAJ)
ISM	– Island Systems Management	JPfA	– Joint Caribbean-Pacific Programme for Action on Water and Climate
ISOC	– Internet Society	JPOI	– Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
ISP	– Internet Service Provider	JREC	– Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition
ISPRS	– International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing	JWP	– Just World Partners (UK)
I-SSEP	– Interiors-Science Steering and Evaluation Panel	KEEP	– Kiribati Environmental Education Project
IT	– Information Technology	kgoe	– kilogram of oil equivalents
IT-Pacnet	– Annual meeting of the CROP ICT Working Group	KIGAM	– Korea Institute of Geology, Mining and Minerals
ITIC	– International Tsunami Information Centre	KMPC	– Korea Mining Promotion Corporation
ITOPF	– International Tanker-Owners Pollution Federation Ltd	KOICA	– Korea International Cooperation Agency
ITSU	– International Coordination Group for the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific	KORDI	– Korea Ocean Research and Development Institute
ITTO	– International Tropical Timber Organisation	ktoe	– kiloton of oil equivalents
ITU	– Information Technology Unit (SOPAC Secretariat)	LADS	– Laser Airborne Depth Sounder
IUCN	– International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (The World Conservation Union)	LAFIA	– Leading Australia's Future in Asia
IUG	– International Union of Geographers	LAN/WAN	– Local Area Network/Wide Area Network
IWCAM	– Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Management	LDC	Least Developed Countries
IWP	– International Water Programme	LDG	– Less Developed Countries (UN)
IWRM	– Integrated Water Resources Management	LEO	– Long-term Ecosystem Observatories
IYO	– International Year of the Ocean (also YOTO)	LITHP	– JOIDES Lithosphere Panel
JAFOOS	– Joint Australian Facility for Ocean Observing Systems	LME	– Large Marine Ecosystems
JAIF	– Japan Atomic Industrial Forum	LMER	– Land-Margin Ecosystem Research Programme
JAMSTEC	– Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (formerly Japan Marine Science and Technology Centre)	LMR	– Living Marine Resources
JCOMM	– Joint WMO/IOC Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology	LOA	– Letter of Agreement
JGOFS	– Joint Global Ocean Flux Study	LOICZ	– Land-Ocean Interactions in the Coastal Zone
		LOIS	– Large Ocean Island States
		LRD	– Land Resources Division (of SPC)
		LTER	– Long-Term Ecological Research
		LUCC	– Land Use and Cover Change Programme

LV	– Low Voltage	NDMO	– National Disaster Management Office (various countries)
MARPOL	– International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships	NEDO	– New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organisation (of Japan)
MBSM	– Multi-Beam Swath Mapper	NEMS	– National Environmental Management Strategy (various countries by SPREP)
MCDEM	– Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (New Zealand)	NESDIS	– National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service (NOAA, US)
MDG	– Millennium Development Goals	NGCC	– National GOOS Coordination Committee
MEA	– Multilateral Environmental Agreement	NGDC	– National Geophysical Data Center (US)
MERIS	– Medium Resolution Imaging Spectrometer	NGO	– Non-Government Organisation
MEXT	– (Japanese) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology	NIO	– National Institute of Oceanography (India)
MHWS	– Mean High Water Spring (tides)	NIRE	– National Institute for Resources and Environment (of Japan)
MIMRA	– Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority	NIWA	– National Institute for Water and Atmospheric Research (New Zealand)
MITI	– Ministry of International Trade and Industry (Japan)	NLTB	– Native Land Trust Board (Fiji)
MLML	– Moss Landing Marine Laboratory	NMFS	– National Marine Fisheries Service
MLSNR	– Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources (Tonga)	NOAA	– National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (US)
MMAJ	– Metal Mining Agency of Japan (now JOGMEC)	NODC	– National Oceanographic Data Centre
MMTC	– Marine Minerals Technology Center (University of Hawaii)	NOPACCS	– Northwest Pacific Carbon Cycle Study
MNRD	– Ministry of Natural Resources Development	NORAD	– Norwegian Agency for International Development
MODIS	– Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer	NPK	– Nitrogen, Phosphate, Potassium
MOMAF	– Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (Korea)	NSF	– National Science Foundation (US)
MONBUSHO	– Ministry of Education and Science (Japan)	NTCA	– National Tidal Centre Australia
MOU	– Memorandum of Understanding	NURP	– National Undersea Research Programme (US)
MRD	– Mineral Resources Department (of Fiji Islands)	NZ	– New Zealand
MRU	– Mineral Resources Unit (SOPAC Secretariat)	NZAID	– New Zealand Agency for International Development (formerly known as NZODA)
MSR	– Marine Scientific Research	NZIGNS	– New Zealand Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences
MTR	– Mid-Term Review	NZODA	– New Zealand Overseas Development Assistance (now NZAID)
MVN	– Melanesian Volcanological Network	NZWWA	– New Zealand Water and Wastewater Association
NAML	– North American Marine Laboratories Network	OBS	– ocean bottom seismometer
NAO	– North Atlantic Oscillation	OCEANOR	– Oceanographic Company of Norway AS
NAP	– National Action Plan		
NASA	– National Aeronautics and Space Administration (US)		

OCHA	– see UNOCHA	PACINET	– Pacific Island Partnership Network for Taxonomy
OCT	– Overseas Countries and Territories (which are associated with the European Union)	PACPOL	– Pacific Ocean Pollution Prevention (Programme)
ODA	– Overseas Development Agency	PAFPNet	– Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Policy Network
ODI	– Overseas Development Institute	PALM	– Pacific Island Leaders Meeting (acronym used to refer to Japan-PIFS Summit Meetings, begun in 1997, 2nd Summit in 2000, and 3rd in May 2003)
ODP	– Ocean Drilling Programme	PAMBU	– Pacific Manuscripts Bureau
OECD	– Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	PAOOP	Potential Applications of Ocean Observations for the Pacific Islands Region
OECS	– Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States	PAR	– Photosynthetic Active Radiation
OEDC	– Ocean Engineering Development Company (Japan)	PAYE	– Pay as you Earn
OFDA	– Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance	PCAE-SD	– Pacific Centre for the Environment and Sustainable Development (of USP)
OHP	– Operational Hydrology Programme (of WMO)	PCGIAP	– Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific
OIP	– Ocean and Islands Programme (SOPAC)	PCM	– Participatory Watershed Management
OISCA	– Organisation for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement	PcSs	Pacific Coastal States
OJP	– Ontong Java Plateau	PDC	– Pacific Disaster Center
O&M&R&R	– Operations & Maintenance & Repairs & Replacement	PDF	– Portable Document Format
OOPC	– Ocean Observations Panel for Climate	PDL	– Petroleum Development Licenses
OOSDP	– Ocean Observing System Development Panel	PDO	– Pacific Decadal Oscillation
OPCs	– Optical Plankton Counters	PDRMPN	– Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network
OPRET	– Office of the Promotion of Renewable Energy Technologies	PDWBC	– Pacific Deep Western Boundary Current
ORAP	– Ocean Research Advisory Panel		– Pacific ENSO Application Center
ORI	– Ocean Research Institute (University of Tokyo)	PEACESAT	– Pan-Pacific Education and Communications Experiment by Satellite
ORMP	– Ocean Resources Management Programme (of USP)	PEAMIS	– Pacific Environment Assessment and Management Information System
ORSTOM	– Institut Francaise de Recherche Scientifique pour le Développement en Coopération (formerly Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre-Mer) (French Institute of Scientific Research for Cooperative Development), see IRD	PECC	– Pacific Economic Cooperation Council
OTEC	– Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion	PEG	– Pacific Energy and Gender Network
PACE-SD	– Pacific Centre for the Environment and Sustainable Development	PEMM	– Pacific Energy Ministers' Meeting
PACER	– Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations	PEMTAG	– Pacific Emergency Management & Training Advisory Group
PacESD	– Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development	PEN	– Pacific Energy News (SOPAC)
		PESA	– Petroleum Exploration Society of Australia
		PESTRAN	– Promotion of Environmentally Sustainable Transport in the Pacific Islands

PET '98	- Pacific Exploration Technology (conference of 1998, Nadi, Fiji Islands)	PIMM	- Pacific Islands Management Model
PFTAC	- Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre	PIMRIS	- Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information System
PIAS (DG)	- Pacific Institute for the Advanced Studies in Development and Governance	PIRATA	- Pilot Research Array in the Tropical Atlantic
PIBA	- Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association	PIRC	- Pacific Internet Resource Centre PIREIS - Pacific Island Resource and Environment Information Service
PIC	- Pacific Island Country (s)	PIREN	- Pacific Island Renewable Energy Network
PICCAP	- Pacific Islands Climate Change Assistance Programme	PIREP	- Pacific Islands Renewable Energy Project (SPREP)
PICES	- North Pacific Marine Science Organisation	PIRMBIS	- Pacific Islands Regional Maritime Boundaries Information System
PICHTR	- Pacific International Center for High Technology Research	PIROF	- Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Forum
PICISOC	- Pacific Islands Chapter of the Internet Society	PIROF-ISA	- Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Framework - Integrated Strategic Action
PICPP	- Pacific Island Climate Prediction Programme	PIROIS	- Pacific Islands Region Ocean Information System
PICTAR	- Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement	PIROP	- Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy
PICTs	- Pacific Islands Countries and Territories	PITA	- Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association
PIDP	- Pacific Islands Development Program PIEP - Pacific Islands Energy Policy	PLU	- Publications and Library Unit (of SOPAC Work Programme)
PIEPP	- Pacific Islands Energy Policy and Plan (superceded)	PMEG	- Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Group(s) (SOPAC)
PIEPSAP	- Pacific Islands Energy Policies and Strategic Action Plan	PMEL	- Pacific Marine Environment Laboratory (of NOAA)
PIESAP	- Pacific Islands Energy Strategic Action Plan	PMS	- Performance Management System
PIESD	- Pacific Islands Energy for Sustainable Development	PNG	- Papua New Guinea
PIFACC	- Pacific Islands Framework for Action for Climate Change	POC	- Physical Oceanography Committee
PIFS	- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat	POGO	- Partnership for Observation for the Global Ocean
PIFSA	- Pacific Islands Fire Service Association	PPA	- Pacific Power Association
PIG	- Pacific Island Gold	PPAC	- Pacific Plan Action Committee
PIGS	- Pacific Islands Geological Society	PPB	- private post bag
PIGGAREP	- Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Renewable Energy Project (PIREP Phase II)	PPISWM	- Pacific Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Water Management
PIIPP	- Pacific Islands Information and Communications Technologies Policy and Strategic Plan	PPL	- Petroleum Prospecting Licenses
PIMD	- Pacific Institute of Management and Development	PORTS	- Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System
		PRAP	- Pacific Regional Action Plan on Sustainable Water Management
		PRC	- People's Republic of China
		PRDMM	- Pacific Regional Disaster Management Meeting

PREA	– Pacific Regional Energy Assessment	RfA	– Regional Framework for Action
PREFACE	– Pacific Rural Renewable Energy France-Australia Common Endeavour Project	RIF	– Regional Institutional Framework
PREP	– Pacific Regional Energy Programme	RIFRR	– Regional Institutional Framework Review Report
PRETI	– Pacific Renewable Energy Training Initiative	RINEX	– Receiver Independent Exchange Format
PRIP	– Pacific Regional Indicative Programme	RMI	– Republic of the Marshall Islands
PSSA	– Particularly Sensitive Sea Area	RMP	– Regional Maritime Programme
PPSEAWA	– Pan-Pacific South-East Asia Women Association	ROC	– Republic of China (Taiwan)
PTWC	– Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre	ROV	– remotely operated vehicles
PUB	– Public Utilities Board	RPN	– Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network
PUC	– Pohnpei Public Utilities Corporation	RTFP	– Regional Trade Facilitation Programme (Pacific)
PV	– Photo Voltaic	RS	– remote sensing
PWA	– Pacific Water Association	RSC	– Regional Steering Committee (of UNESCO, IHP in the Asia-Pacific region)
PWD	– Public Works Department	SAP	– Strategic Action Plan for International Waters
PWP	– Pacific Water Partnership	SAPHE	– Sanitation, Public Health and Environmental Improvement (Project)
RAC	– Regional Analysis Centers	SAR	– synthetic aperture radar
RAF	– resource allocation framework (GEF terminology)	SBSTA	– Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
RAMP	– Rapid Assessment of Marine Pollution	SCW	– SOPAC Council Committee of the Whole
RAMSAR	– Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat	SCOR	– Scientific Committee on Ocean Research
RAMSI	– Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands	SDI	– Sustainable Development Indicators
RAO	– Regional Authorising Office (EU)	SDR	– Special Drawing Rights
RAP	– Regional Action Plan	SDWG	– Sustainable Development Working Group (CROP)
RB	– Regular Budget	SEACAMP	– Southeast Asian Centre for Atmospheric and Marine Prediction
RCI	– Regional Coordinating Institution	SEAFRAME	– Sea Level Fine Resolution Acoustic Measuring Equipment
RE	– Rural Electrification	SEDAC	– Social Economic Data Applications Centre
RE	– Renewable Energy	SERED	– Scientific Educational Resources and Experience Associated with the Deployment of Argo profiling floats in the South Pacific Ocean
REEEP	– Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership	SeaWIFs	– Sea-viewing Wide Field of View Sensor
REM	– Regional Energy Meeting	SEI	– Special Events Imager
REP	– Rural Electrification Policy	SHMAK	– Stream Health Monitoring and Assessment kit (New Zealand)
REP-PoR	– Regional Energy Programme for Poverty Reduction		
REPP	– Regional Energy Policy and Plan		
RESCO	– Renewable Energy Service Company		
REU	– Rural Electrification Unit (Fiji Department of Energy)		

SIDS	– Small Island Developing States	SPOCC	– South Pacific Organisations Coordinating Committee (now CROP)
SIEA	– Solomon Islands Electricity Authority	SPPO	– South Pacific Programme Office (of UNDHA)
SIO	– Scripps Institute of Oceanography (University of California, US)	SPREP	– Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SIS	– Small Island States	SPSLCMP	– South Pacific Sea Level and Climate Monitoring Project
SIWA	– Solomon Islands Water Authority	SPT	– Station Polynesienne de Teledetection (Papeete, Tahiti)
SIWIN	– Small Islands Water Information Network	SPTO	– South Pacific Tourism Organisation
SLH	– Sea Level Height	SST	– Sea Surface Temperature
SM	– SPREP Meeting	STA	– Science and Technology Agency (of Japan)
SMEC	– Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation (Australia)	STAR	– Science, Technology and Resources Network (SOPAC)
SOA	– State Oceanic Administration (China)	START	– (Global Change) System for Analysis Research and Training (IGBP)
SOE	– State of the Environment	SURE	– Sustainable Use of Renewable Energy
SOC	– Southampton Oceanography Centre	SWA	– Samoa Water Authority
SOEST	– School of Ocean and Earth Science Technology (of UH)	SWPHC	– South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission
SOI	– Southern Oscillation Index	SYSMIN	– A special financing facility intended for ACP States whose mining sector plays a major role in their economy and is faced with known or foreseeable difficulties
SOOP	– Ship-of-Opportunity Programme	TAF	– The Asia Foundation
SOPAC	– Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission; and also – Secretariat for the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission	TAG	– Technical Advisory Group
SPACHEE	– South Pacific Action Committee for Human Ecology and Environment	TANGO	– Tuvalu Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
SPAS	– School of Pure and Applied Sciences (USP)	TAO-IP	– Tropical Atmosphere Ocean Implementation Panel
SPaRCE	– Schools of the Pacific Rainfall Climate Experiment	TCDT	– Tonga Community Development Trust (now called Tonga Trust)
SPBCP	– South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme	TCSP	– Tourism Council of the South Pacific
SPBEA	– South Pacific Board of Educational Assessment	TCWUP	– Tropical Cyclone Warning Upgrade Project
SPC	– Secretariat of the Pacific Community	T-DEM	– Time-Domain Electromagnetic
SPDRP	– South Pacific Disaster Reduction Programme	TEC	– Tuvalu Electricity Corporation
SPICE	– Southwest Pacific Circulation and Climate Experiment	TEC-MIS	– Tuvalu Electricity Corporation – Management Information System
SPILLCON	– Asia Pacific marine environmental pollution prevention & response conference	TEMA	– IOC Training, Education and Mutual Assistance programme
SPILLS	– Worldwide Tanker Spill Database (etcentre.org)	TEPB	– Tonga Electric Power Board
SPM	– Sustainable Project Management	TESL	– Teaching English as a Second Language
		TNA	– Training Needs Analysis

TNC	– The Nature Conservancy (Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia)	UNFCCC COP	– United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Conference of the Parties)
TOGA	– Tropical Ocean Global Atmosphere Research Programme	UNICEF	– United Nations Children’s Fund
TOPEX	– Typhoon Operational Experiment	UNICPOLOS	– UN Informal Consultative Process on the Law of the Sea
ToR	– Terms of Reference	UNIFEM	– United Nations Development Fund for Women
TPAF	– Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (formerly FNTC)	UNISDR	– United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
TQM	– total quality management	UNISPACE	– United National Conference on Outer Space
TRITON	– Triangle Trans-Oceans Buoy Network	UNOCHA	– United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (formerly UNDHA)
TTPI	– Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands	UNU	– United Nations University
TWAS	– Third World Academy of Sciences	UoG	– University of Guam
TWB	– Tonga Water Board	UPNG	– University of Papua New Guinea
UFP	– Universite Francaise du Pacifique	URL	– Universal Resource Locator
UH	– University of Hawaii	US	– United States
UK	– United Kingdom	USACE	– United States Army Corps of Engineers
UN	– United Nations	USAID	– United States Agency for International Development
UNCED	– United Nations Conference on Environment and Development	USD	– United States Dollar
UNCLCS	– United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf	USDIA	– United States Department of Industrial Accidents
UNCLOS	– United Nations on the Law of the Sea	USDOE	– United States Department of Energy
UNCTAD	– United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	USGS	– United States Geological Survey
UNDESA	– United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs	USP	– University of the South Pacific
UNDHA	– United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs	VEI	– Volcanic Explosivity Index (EVI)
UNDOALOS	– United Nations Office of Legal Affairs/ Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea	VISSR	– Visible and Infrared Spin-Scan Radiometer
UNDP	– United Nations Development Programme	VMS	– Vessel Monitoring System
UNEP	– United Nations Environment Programme	VOS	– Voluntary Observing Ship
GRID-Arendal	– A collaborating centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), established in 1989 by the Government of Norway as a Norwegian Foundation, located in Arendal Southern Norway, with outposted offices in Geneva, Ottawa and Stockholm	VOME	– Vegetable Oil Methyl Ester
UNESCO	– United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation	VPA	– Virtual Population Analysis
UNESCO-IHE	– Institute for Water Education	VSAT	– Very Small Aperture Terminal
UNFA	– United Nations Fisheries Agreement	VUW	– Victoria University of Wellington
		WAGIS	– Wide Area Geographic Information System
		WASH	– Water Sanitation Hygiene (WSSCC)
		WASH WG	– Water, Sanitation & Hygiene Working Group (STAR)
		WCMC	– World Conservation Monitoring Centre

WCRP	– World Climate Research Programme	WRI	– World Resources Institute
WDI	– World Development Indicators	WRU	– Water Resources Unit (SOPAC Secretariat)
WERI	– Water and Environmental Research Institute of the Western Pacific (of University of Guam)	WSIS	– World Summit on the Information Society
WESTPAC	– IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific	WSP	– Water Safety Plan(ning)
WGNE	– Working Group on Numerical Experimentation	WSSCC	– Water Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council
WHO	– World Health Organisation	WSSD	– World Summit on Sustainable Development
WHOI	– Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (US)	WTO	– World Trade Organisation
WHYCOS	– World Hydrological Cycle Observing System	WWF	– World Wide Fund for Nature
WIOMAP	– Western Indian Ocean Marine Applications Project	WWF-SPP	– World Wide Fund for Nature – South Pacific Programme
WMO	– World Meteorological Organisation	3rd WWF	– Third World Water Forum
WPTWG	– Western Pacific Tsunami Working Group	WWG	– Water Working Group (STAR)
WPSs	– Work Programme Strategies (SOPAC)	WWII	– World War 2
WQM	– Water Quality Monitoring	WWSSN	– World Wide Seismic Network
		XBTs	– Expandable Bathy-Thermographs
		YOTO	– Year of the Ocean
		YPR	– Yield-Per-Recruit