

FINAL DRAFT OF THE SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH SOPAC SESSION

FORMAL OPENING SESSION

1. OPENING

The Thirty-sixth Annual Session of the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) was held in Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga, from 22nd to 28th November 2007. Its Council Sessions including the joint session with its Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and the preceding three-day scientific meeting of its Science, Technology and Resources Network (STAR) were all held at the Fa'onehua Convention Centre, Nuku'alofa. The STAR meeting was its 24th with the theme "Pacific Marine Resources and Geohazards with particular emphasis on Geoscience and the Challenge of preparing submission for an Extended Continental Shelf, as well as Coastal Hazards and Protection".

The master of ceremony, Tevita Tukunga of the Ministry of Lands, Survey, Natural Resources and Environment initiated the official opening ceremony by requesting delegates to be seated and then invited Reverend Dr Manase Tafea of the Tofoa Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga to offer the opening prayer.

The outgoing Chair of the SOPAC Governing Council, Mr Donn Tolia, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Geology, Mines and Energy (Solomon Islands) called the meeting to order and welcomed all the delegates. He acknowledged the host country, the Kingdom of Tonga; and declared that during the Solomon Islands' chairship, SOPAC continued to deliver services "despite the most recent emerging difficulties of the Forum decision."

The Director of SOPAC, Ms Cristelle Pratt, prior to welcoming all the delegates to the SOPAC Governing Council meeting, called for a minute of silence to contemplate the losses experienced from two extreme natural events that occurred in the region in 2007 – (1) the lives lost in the earthquake and tsunami events in the Western Province of Solomon Islands in April 2007; and (2) more recently from the torrential rains and flooding in the provinces of Oro and Milne Bay in Papua New Guinea. A founding father of SOPAC, Anthony Utanga of the Cook Islands who passed away this year, was also remembered.

The SOPAC Director further touched on the success of this year's STAR meeting where about 70 scientific and technical papers from regional and international scientists and technical professionals were presented. This year's STAR theme "including our entire work programme comprise our raison d'être and are critical if we are to maximise development and minimise disasters." The matter of extended continental shelf was discussed in a number of presentations and for some SOPAC member states this matter holds immediate scientific and technical challenges as they prepare their submissions for potential claims to an extended continental shelf, against a very pressing deadline of May 2009. Clearly the potential benefits to accrue if they are successful in claiming extended continental shelf would be rights over those marine resources that occur on and below the seabed. The Director's Opening Remarks will be included in full in the Proceedings volume.

The Honourable Tuita, Minister of Lands, Survey, Natural Resources and Environment of the Government of Tonga delivered the Opening Address on behalf of the Government and people of the Kingdom of Tonga. Honourable Tuita welcomed all delegates and the Secretariat to Tonga and thanked the Outgoing Chair of the SOPAC Governing Council (the Government of Solomon Islands). He enumerated that his Government was hosting the SOPAC Session for the fourth time, having previously hosted in 1973, 1983 and 1992. He recognised and welcomed the

1 Science, Technology and Resources Network (STAR) and the theme for this year, considering
2 the fact that the ocean formed the bulk of all PICs national jurisdictions and a major resource, with
3 most of Pacific people living on the coast. The chosen mix of themes was critical to the present
4 and in particular future livelihoods of Pacific islanders. Bringing leading scientists and technical
5 professionals from within the region and the wider global community together (through STAR) to
6 discuss issues of relevance to our region was deemed a major achievement of SOPAC.

7
8 Honourable Tuita recalled that SOPAC was founded in 1972 as a response to the expressed
9 desire of the then small number of our island members including New Zealand for deepsea
10 mineral resources prospecting and petroleum exploration due to the implications of the Law of the
11 Sea. SOPAC'S relevance is demonstrated by the growth over 35 years in the membership of the
12 Commission to the present number of 21; and drew attention to Tonga's own Sione Tongilava;
13 the most prolific of SOPAC's founding fathers who passed away 10 years ago. Honourable Tuita
14 dedicated the 36th SOPAC Session to the memory of Sione and his considerable contribution to
15 SOPAC.

16
17 Honourable Tuita further urged Council members to carefully consider the decision made by the
18 Forum Leaders with regard to rationalising the functions of the Pacific Islands Applied
19 Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) with the view to absorbing those functions of SOPAC into
20 SPC and SPREP. Honourable Tuita emphasised that this could be pursued as a matter of due
21 process within a framework of principles underpinned by good governance. The aim was to
22 achieve an outcome of more effective management of limited resources, excellence in terms of
23 services and production, and greater effectiveness of delivery. Honourable Tuita concluded his
24 address by calling on Council members to decide on a correct way forward based on the value it
25 places on scientific and technical advice and information. The Council must decide how best to
26 ensure that worthwhile programmes of SOPAC can continue to be delivered without a gap or
27 hindrance such that "we in the Pacific can address issues relevant to sustainable development of
28 our natural resources and that we do develop resilience to disasters, natural or human-induced."
29 Honourable Tuita's Opening Address will be tabled in full in the Proceedings volume.

30
31 The head of the Fiji delegation and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Honourable Ratu Epeli Nailatikau
32 delivered a short reply on behalf of the Council, where he fully endorsed the dedication of this 36th
33 annual session to the late Sione Tongilava as the longest-serving Tongan national representative
34 to SOPAC. Sione Tongilava's commitment was visible in his efforts to ensure that SOPAC was a
35 specialised scientific and technical regional organisation. Also, the Honourable Nailatikau fully
36 supported the sentiments expressed by the Honourable Minister of Lands, Survey, Natural
37 Resources and Environment that it was most important that the correct way forward (with respect
38 to rationalising the functions of SOPAC) be found with the guidance of the Chair; which Council
39 would have ownership of. His remarks will be included in full in the Proceedings volume.

40
41 Delegates from the following member countries were in attendance: American Samoa, Australia,
42 Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati,
43 Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa,
44 Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. A full list of participants is annexed as
45 **Appendix 1.**

46
47 The following national institutions attended as observers: BECA International Consultants Ltd,
48 Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), East West Center,
49 Georgia Institute of Technology, Geoscience Australia, Institute of Geological & Nuclear Sciences
50 (GNS), IRD/OSTROM, Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science & Technology (JAMSTEC), KEW
51 Consult Ltd, Korea Ocean Research & Development Institute (KORDI), Landcare Research New
52 Zealand, Matadrevula Advisory Services, Meteorological Service of New Zealand, National
53 Institute of Earth Science and Disaster Prevention (NIED/JICA), National Institute of Water &
54 Atmospheric Research (NIWA), Nautilus Minerals, Pacific Water Association, Samoa Water
55 Authority, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, The University of Texas at Austin, Tonga

1 Community Development Trust, Tonga Electric Power Board, University of New South Wales,
2 University of Hawai'i and Victoria University of Wellington.

3
4 Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS); Pacific Power Association (PPA); the Secretariat of the
5 Pacific Community (SPC); University of the South Pacific (USP), and the Secretariat of the Pacific
6 Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP) were the CROP agencies that were represented.

7
8 Contact details for participants are included in the List of Participants in **Appendix 1**.

9
10 On behalf of the Government of the Solomon Islands as Outgoing Chair, Mr Donn Tolia,
11 expressed his gratitude to his fellow Governing Council members and the Secretariat for their
12 support and assistance during Solomon Island's tenure as Chair of the SOPAC Governing
13 Council. He then called for the election of new office bearers.

14 15 16 **2.1 Chairs and Vice-Chair of SOPAC**

17
18 In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, Tonga assumed the Chair of the SOPAC Governing
19 Council; and the representative of Tuvalu was appointed Vice-Chair of SOPAC.

20 21 22 **2.2 Chairs of STAR and TAG**

23
24 Council accepted STAR's nomination of Professor John Collen of Victoria University of Wellington
25 to continue as Chair of STAR and Joe Buleka of Papua New Guinea, to continue as Vice Chair.

26
27 The Honourable Tuita, Minister of Lands, Survey, Natural Resources and Environment, also
28 assumed the role of chairing the Joint Council-TAG Session, on behalf of the Government of
29 Tonga.

30 31 32 **2.3 Appointment of Rapporteurs**

33
34 Ms Lala Bukarau (SOPAC) was appointed rapporteur and was tasked with the Secretariat to
35 prepare a summary record of proceedings of the 36th SOPAC Session, under the supervision of
36 the Drafting Committee.

37 38 39 **3. AGENDA AND WORKING PROCEDURES**

40 41 **3.1 Adoption of Agenda**

42
43 The Governing Council adopted the revised provisional agenda as presented in AS36/3.1 Rev.1.
44 The approved agenda is attached in **Appendix 2**. The draft working schedule was also adopted
45 (AS36/3.1/Info 1) with the revised time changes of an 8.30 am start every morning and a 5.30 pm
46 finish for the day. The Working Procedures (AS36/3.1/Info 2) were also noted.

47 48 49 **3.2 Appointment of Drafting Committee**

50
51 An open-ended drafting committee chaired by Tuvalu and comprising Marshall Islands, Samoa,
52 Tonga, Australia, Fiji and Guam as the core group, was tasked with overseeing the production of
53 a summary record of proceedings.

1 **4. REPRESENTATION**

2
3 **4.1 Designation of National Representatives**

4
5 Chair encouraged member country delegations to provide the Secretariat with details of any
6 amendments to the list of national representatives provided in paper AS36/4.1. See details as at
7 September 2007 in [Appendix 3](#).

8
9
10 **5. STATEMENTS**

11
12 In the interest of getting through the meeting business in the allocated time of three days;
13 member country delegations made short interventions mostly commending the host country for
14 the wonderful hospitality being enjoyed by all delegates; acknowledging donor support; and
15 making various remarks on the recent Forum Leaders' decision about SOPAC. Country
16 statements would be handed in for publication in full in the Proceedings volume (see [Appendix 4](#)).
17 (Substantive member country statements particularly pertaining to the Regional Institutional
18 Framework are also part of [Appendix 7](#).)

19
20 Delegates from supporting and partner agencies followed suit expressing best wishes to the host
21 country and their continued commitment to working in partnership with SOPAC to achieve
22 common goals in the SOPAC region. Delegates were reminded to hand in written statements to
23 the Secretariat to be tabled in full in the Council's 36th Session Proceedings.

24
25
26 **5.1 Statements by Member Countries**

27
28 These statements are tabled in full in [Appendix 4](#).

29
30
31 **5.2 Statements by CROP Organisations**

32
33 These statements are tabled in full in [Appendix 4](#).

34
35
36 **5.3 Statements by Cooperating Governments and International Agencies**

37
38 These statements are tabled in full in [Appendix 4](#).

39
40
41 **5.4 Statements by National Institutions**

42
43 One written statement was submitted under this item.
44
45
46

JOINT COUNCIL-TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (TAG) SESSION

6. ISSUES COMMON TO PROGRAMMES

6.1 Director's Report

6.1.1 Introduction

The Director informed Council that the purpose of the TAG session over the next three and a half days was to assess the performance of technical work programmes over the period 2006-2007; and to present new initiatives and emerging issues, and the proposed budget for 2007-2008. The key focus of technical programmes in the period 2005 to 2009 of the current SOPAC Strategic Plan is effective strategic management, good governance over the medium term with the accompanying business plan as the operational framework.

The Director highlighted that service delivery against work programmes was reliant on recruitment and retention of qualified technical personnel whose performances were monitored through a Performance Management System (PMS).

The Director informed the council that in 2007, independent reviews of the communications and outreach, and human resource management strategies were also conducted. Key recommendations that have little or no financial implications for SOPAC and will be implemented as soon as possible and those recommendations with financial implications would be mapped out.

The Director's Introduction is tabled in full in paper AS36/6.1.1 that will be part of the post-meeting CD to accompany the Proceedings volume.

Chair acknowledged that the comprehensive introduction given by the Director would be taken as a brief annual report to Council.

6.1.2 2006 Annual Report Summary

The Director noted that the Annual Report Summary related to the time period of September 2005 to September 2006 and that its primary purpose was to promote SOPAC to development partners and inform the SOPAC membership; however, the report was published very late in 2007 so opportunities to maximise its use as an advocacy and awareness tool was largely missed. The Director assured Council that the Annual Report for 2007/2008 would be published in early 2008. She sought comments on format and content of the document or any other suggestions that would improve it.

Papua New Guinea commended SOPAC on the annual report for being easy to read and even though it was late in being published it was a useful source of information and that he had no problems with its content or format.

Tuvalu commended SOPAC for its continued focus on member priorities and on sustainable development of small island states as stipulated in the Barbados Plan of Action.

Marshall Islands joined Papua New Guinea in commending the Secretariat for a very good annual report and posed a question to the Director on whether there was a timeline for comments on the format of the annual report.

1 The Director encouraged delegates to send comments in writing or by email and if there were any
2 immediate suggestions, she would welcome hearing them, and clarified that any comments or
3 suggested improvements for the next annual report could be sent over the next few months.
4

5 Tonga noted that the strategic plan should be incorporated into the annual report with regard to
6 addressing the three pillars for sustainable development.
7

8 The Director assured the representative of Tonga that a way would be found to accommodate
9 their suggestions to present progress against meeting strategic objectives under technical
10 programme areas; however, she also noted that the full strategic plan would be too
11 comprehensive to attach to the annual report but how to address progress against strategic plans
12 and priorities identified under the Mauritius Strategy could be reviewed.
13

14 Council accepted the 2006 Annual Report Summary and agreed to use it in promoting the work of
15 SOPAC.
16

18 *6.1.3 Summary Report of 2007 Donor Report*

19
20 The Director presented to Council the summary report of donor support to SOPAC in the period
21 2006/2007 (AS36/6.1.3).
22

23 The Director further noted that the project contributions from development partners were critical to
24 programme delivery and that it was extremely important to acknowledge development partners
25 who provided this support.
26

27 New Zealand thanked the Director for the detailed enumeration of donor support and offered
28 congratulations on the success in securing important resources for SOPAC work. She queried
29 whether the Director would be able to provide advice on the amount of support that was available
30 for core business and core programmes that came from extra-budgetary support
31

32 The Director noted that SOPAC had programming arrangements with Australia and New Zealand
33 but that with extra budget initiatives such as with the EU, core resources accounted for 3-5% of
34 total funds and for other smaller projects (~\$100,000) overhead costs were about 12-13%.
35

36 Samoa stated her agreement with the Director that donor partners should be accorded the
37 gratitude and appreciation they deserve and that it would be difficult to carry out work
38 programmes without their assistance. She suggested that a fourth recommendation be inserted
39 for Council to direct the Secretariat to continue to pursue and secure new and additional
40 resources and support from external sources, for the effective implementation of SOPAC work
41 programmes to member countries.
42

43 Tuvalu commended the Secretariat for producing a brief and easy to understand annual report
44 and acknowledged the Secretariat for its engagement at national and international levels for
45 securing funding for SOPAC programmes. The delegate enquired about whether there had been
46 any further developments on the issues raised during the last annual meeting on donors adopting
47 a programmatic longer-term approach to funding for SOPAC.
48

49 The Director thanked Samoa for its recommendation and asked for the appropriate words in
50 writing if Council was agreeable to the Samoa proposal. The Director further suggested, in
51 response to Tuvalu's request for an update on the move towards the programmatic approach to
52 funding, that development partners such as Australia and New Zealand could adopt the
53 leadership role for championing this approach to funding, in order to encourage other
54 development partners to follow their lead for engaging with regional organisations. She thought

1 that this message coming chiefly from major donors such as Australia and New Zealand would be
2 more compelling; and enhance donor coordination and harmonisation.

3
4 Papua New Guinea commended development partners for the assistance they provided in the
5 region and requested that the recommendation proposed could be extended to include written
6 letters of gratitude from SOPAC to development partners thanking donors for assistance in
7 delivery of the SOPAC work programmes as well as urging them to stay actively engaged and to
8 look favourably at future requests.

9
10 The Director was not sure that the Samoa and Papua New Guinea suggestions with respect to
11 the recommendations in the paper were the same since securing additional resources and
12 pursuing other non-traditional funds was somewhat different from merely expressing gratitude to
13 current donors.

14
15 The delegate from Samoa stated that she had no objections to the additional input from Papua
16 New Guinea to what was already suggested to continue to pursue and secure additional financial
17 resources from external donors.

18
19 Australia thanked the Secretariat for the donor report and for the addition proposed by Samoa.
20 The delegate advised that while it was good to think about actively securing funds, this should be
21 balanced against effective implementation of current work plans.

22
23 New Zealand noted that another dimension in addition to securing additional resources were
24 sustainability and security aspects, so that in securing more funding it was important to consider
25 resources going into overheads since there was a great disparity between funds for business
26 services versus programming. She questioned the Director on whether SOPAC had considered
27 developing a policy around the level of overhead-related costs that were optimal and which ought
28 to be argued for, since other CROP agencies had such policies and urged the Secretariat to think
29 about developing such a policy and bringing it back to Council.

30
31 The Director clarified that arrangements with EU included overheads of 3-5% of total funds but
32 that although these were small service costs, there was a large contribution for technical
33 assistance; and apologised for not being comprehensive in her earlier reply in addressing this
34 question.

35
36 Council:

- 37 1. accepted the summary record of donor support.
- 38 2. acknowledged with appreciation the strong donor support received, which was essential
39 for effective work programme delivery and requested the Secretariat to write to all donors
40 and supporting partners to thank them for their support in enabling service delivery of
41 SOPAC's work programmes and to request them to remain actively engaged and to
42 consider favourably any future requests.
- 43 3. noted with appreciation that some member countries are contributing directly to supporting
44 work programme delivery.
- 45 4. directed the Secretariat to actively pursue and secure additional financial resources from
46 external sources and ensure the effective implementation and sustainability of the SOPAC
47 work programmes.

48
49
50 *6.1.4 SOPAC/EU Project Report (AS36/6.1.4; AS36/6.1.4 Suppl)*

51
52 The Deputy Director presented papers AS36/6.1.4 and AS36/6.1.4 Suppl describing the progress
53 on the 2006/2007 Work Plan for the SOPAC/EU Project, *Reducing Vulnerability of Pacific ACP*

1 States. Council was advised that due to the substantial sizes of the attachments, these were
2 provided only electronically on the pre-meeting CD sent to member countries prior to the meeting.
3

4 Council was informed that following their recommendation at the 35th Session in Honiara, the
5 Secretariat with the RAO made a submission to the European Commission for an extension of
6 EDF9 and the subsequent re-extension of EDF8 to the same end date. Unfortunately, only an
7 extension of EDF9 was considered. Following formal advice in July 2007, a revised work
8 programme and budget was developed to secure EDF8 staff beyond December 2007 given that
9 EDF8 staff and resources were essential to the successful delivery of EDF9 activities. The
10 Secretariat was also informed that any unspent EDF8 funds as at 31 December 2007 would need
11 to be reimbursed and therefore lost to the region. In light of this, urgent discussions commenced
12 with RAO, the EU Delegation and SOPAC EDF8/9 Project Staff on an appropriate EDF8 exit
13 strategy to secure enough savings under 9ACP RPA5 to engage as many of the EDF8 technical
14 and professional staff during 2008 to effectively complete and deliver programmed EDF9 tasks.
15 All global costs (equipment, advocacy, regional workshops) were also transferred to EDF8.
16

17 Council was advised that a series of project advocacy and outcomes documentation and products
18 as well as final reports and products were being consolidated for each country, highlighting key
19 results and potential outcomes/benefits. These would include documentaries, maps, charts and
20 terminal reports.
21

22 A summary of the work undertaken by the Project under each of the KRAs was presented to
23 Council.
24

25 The Secretariat informed Council that the supplementary paper (AS36/6.1.4 Suppl) was the
26 record of the discussions held on the 21 November 2007 and acknowledged that most countries
27 participated and had made interventions on the way forward.
28

29 Vanuatu acknowledged the aggregate work executed by the Project and the interventions made
30 in disaster risk management (DRM) with the development of NAP. He especially commended the
31 work undertaken by the Project geologist on aggregate resource assessment which was then
32 used to support the development of an aggregate guideline and policy document. Vanuatu
33 commended the invaluable support provided to the Task Force during the development of NAP
34 and requested the Secretariat for support in its implementation of priorities. Vanuatu raised that
35 within the duration of the Project, Vanuatu had changed its Country Intern twice and
36 recommended that for future Projects, coordinators be appointed from within the Ministry to
37 ensure the sustainability of the position and the work plus ensures that the person would also
38 then be accountable to the Public Service Commission. Vanuatu noted the completion of the
39 Project and supported the efforts made by the Secretariat in maintaining EDF8 staff under EDF9
40 and commended the Secretariat on integrating the Project work under the main SOPAC work
41 programmes.
42

43 Fiji commended the Secretariat for the activities reported also noting Agenda Items 6.1.1, 6.1.2,
44 and 6.1.3 and the reports produced reflecting the achievements and progress made. He reflected
45 on the business plan presented in 2006 and noted particularly the progress made in extending the
46 benefits of work done right down to the community level. Fiji stressed that the priorities to
47 Capacity Building (KRA5) were important to ensure continuity. The challenge for the Secretariat is
48 the implementation of the 2008 action plan.
49

50 Tonga noted that KRA5 should be addressed under each KRA and stressed that Tonga required
51 capacity development at all levels from individuals to institutions to government level to ensure
52 sustainability.
53

54 Kiribati conveyed their appreciation and gratitude to the Secretariat for the delivery of scientific
55 and technical services to member countries noting in particular the work carried out on the

1 sustainable development of coastal zones. Kiribati sought clarification on whether with the end of
2 EDF8 in December 2007, the Secretariat could still undertake unfulfilled requested tasks through
3 EDF9, as indicated in their country statement.

4
5 The Secretariat responded that implementation of EDF8 components of the Project would cease
6 with termination of that component in December 2007. EDF9 implementation was restricted to the
7 six new ACP countries: Palau, Niue, Marshall Islands, Cook Islands, Nauru and Federated States
8 of Micronesia. The Secretariat suggested that additional work in the EDF8 countries might be
9 better pursued through bilateral arrangements and encouraged Kiribati to proceed in that
10 direction.

11
12 Kiribati thanked the Secretariat for the clarification and agreed that they could seek bilateral
13 assistance for the additional EDF8-type tasks they wished to extend to other areas within country.

14
15 Australia sought clarification on the recommendations being considered; those in the first paper or
16 those in the supplementary paper. The Secretariat responded that since the two were related
17 Council was being asked to consider all of the recommendations in both papers.

18
19 Consequently, Papua New Guinea asked for an explanation of the recommendation relating to
20 the Secretariat seeking additional resources and funding to support EDF8 initiatives beyond the
21 Project's lifetime; to which the Secretariat response was that the EDF8 Project was never
22 intended for a whole-of-country approach but rather pilot studies for small areas, in a handful of
23 specific sectors.

24
25 Papua New Guinea suggested that given the limited and restrictive nature of the EDF Project,
26 additional work being sought by EDF8 countries could be pursued on a bilateral basis and not be
27 the responsibility of the Secretariat to seek funding. While the Secretariat further elaborated that
28 some EDF8 and 9-type initiatives were quite large and warranted treatment as a regional
29 initiative; Papua New Guinea was still of the view that if funding could be sourced bilaterally; that
30 countries should pursue that avenue.

31
32 New Zealand thanked the Secretariat for some achievements of the Project and enquired whether
33 EDF8 and 9 components were fully integrated within the SOPAC work programme or not. The
34 Secretariat responded that though the Project was now fully integrated within the work
35 programmes, the original funding agreement required that it was reported separately. New
36 Zealand's concern was that if the EDF8 and 9 projects were integrated as stated, aside from
37 management and funding issues, there was no need for double reporting to Council. Relevant
38 activities would be covered in the reports of the three programme managers (separate reporting
39 from SOPAC to the donor would of course continue as agreed).

40
41 The Director reiterated that from the outset there was a requirement for the EDF Project to be
42 reported separately. Sustainability of the Project activities beyond end date along with the
43 recommendations of the mid-term review resulted in it being integrated into the SOPAC work
44 programmes.

45
46 Council:

- 47 • noted the completion date of the EDF8 component of 31 December 2007 and the
48 extension of the EDF9 component for a further 18 months from June 2007 until 31
49 December 2008 and approved the strategy adopted to retain EDF8 project staff for the
50 additional 12 months to ensure that effective project delivery support is provided.
- 51 • accepted the progress report on the SOPAC/EU Project for the 2006/2007 year.
- 52 • noted the excellent work undertaken by the EU Project "Reducing Vulnerability of Pacific
53 ACP states in the three key focal areas in the island system: hazard mitigation and risk
54 assessment; aggregates for construction; and water resources supply and sanitation".

- 1 • recognised the completion dates for EDF8 and 9, and the need for technical expertise to
2 continue the work begun under EDF8, up to the end of the EDF9.
- 3 • while recommending that the Secretariat seek additional resources and funding to support
4 EDF8-type initiatives beyond the Project's lifetime; encouraged those countries able to
5 secure bilateral funding support to pursue that avenue for continuing the initiatives piloted
6 by the EDF Project.
- 7 • recommended the Secretariat strengthen its advocacy and communication strategy in
8 order to engage countries in the implementation of regional initiatives.
9
10

6.2 STAR Chair Report

Chair invited the Chair of STAR, Professor John Collen of the Victoria University of Wellington, to address Council.

The Chair of STAR read his report to Council (see [Appendix 5](#)); highlighting the activities undertaken during the STAR 2007 meeting. He reported that 120 scientists from around the world attended this year's meeting and that in terms of presentations it was the largest STAR meeting to date.

The meeting theme of the STAR Session was "*Pacific Marine Resources and Geohazards, with particular respect to 1. Geoscience and the ECS Challenge and 2. Coastal Hazards and Protection*". 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.

For example, given Tonga's interest in extended continental shelf issues, the opening sessions of this year's STAR Session dealt with Extended Continental Shelf claims, covering not only the background geoscience and the positions reached by some of the member nations but also the processes involved in submitting applications and having them approved. The latter information was extremely valuable for members of those delegations yet to advance this issue in New York and nicely integrated geoscientific, political and procedural aspects of this important issue.

The Chair of STAR also reported that STAR scientists spent much time prior to, and during the meeting on discussing the implications of Paragraph 19b of the Forum Leaders' 2007 Communiqué to be discussed under agenda item 11.1. There was considerable concern expressed over the future of STAR; given that it is closely linked to SOPAC. He drew attention to paper AS36/11.1 Suppl. 2 which contained recommendations unanimously endorsed by the group to be passed on to Council, through its Chair.

The Chair of STAR acknowledged that it was not its place to comment on the organisation or governance of SOPAC; but wished to communicate that the STAR group's sole concern was the continuation of the link between STAR's voluntary organisation of international scientists and the efficient delivery of geoscience to the region.

The Chair of STAR added his own perspective to further enlighten Council on what might be lost to the region should the unique link between STAR and SOPAC be a casualty of reform:

"I am always wary about using the tags "basic or experimental" and "applied" science, as the distinction is often not at all clear. Nonetheless, SOPAC is obviously an organisation charged with applying scientific and technical knowledge in practical solutions to perceived problems.

Why do I raise this? The world is facing two unprecedented and interconnected global crises – those of energy supply and environmental change. These will likely require new answers to problems that we don't yet know exist, and many of these solutions will come out of basic, not applied, research. The well known science and science fiction writer Isaac Asimov once said "The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not 'Eureka! (I've found it)' but 'That's funny...' This recognition of something out of the ordinary is what eventually leads to new insights and solutions. And my own view, perhaps a simplistic one, of the value of STAR to SOPAC is that, as well as giving the access to equipment and experience and databases and ships and libraries that others have spoken about, it keeps SOPAC in touch with the people who say "That's funny.....".

1 STAR acknowledges that change is inevitable but expresses the strong desire that a mechanism
2 be found that will enable STAR and the benefits that it brings to the region to continue. STAR has
3 been steadily growing throughout its lifetime; and with a little modification, if the region wished,
4 the meetings could become one of the premier scientific conferences of the Pacific Basin. Yet the
5 attributes that give STAR its strength – its lack of a formal structure, its eclectic membership and
6 independence – could also be a fatal weakness. Without the interaction with in-island scientists
7 and the ability of its members to contribute their expertise to the region in their own way, STAR
8 could very easily and very abruptly disappear.

9
10 The Chair of STAR concluded his statement by offering the services of its senior scientists to
11 provide whatever advice and support to Council in its deliberations over this issue. The Report of
12 the Chair of STAR to Council in 2007 (AS36/6.2 Suppl.) will be appended in full to the
13 Proceedings of the 36th Session (see [Appendix 5](#)).

14
15 Chair invited Council members to comment on the STAR Chair's report.

16
17 Papua New Guinea thanked the Chair of STAR for his succinct presentation and eloquent
18 validation delivered with passion on the future of STAR's relationship with SOPAC. Papua New
19 Guinea acknowledged the vital contribution of STAR since its inception, and congratulated the
20 (STAR) Chair and Vice-Chair (Papua New Guinea's Jo Buleka) for the confidence of the STAR
21 group in re-electing both of them for another term. Papua New Guinea further noted the nature of
22 STAR's relationship to SOPAC and he expressed confidence that some mechanism would be
23 found to ensure STAR's future participation, including whether they become the premier scientific
24 meeting of the Pacific Basin.

25
26 Marshall Islands joined Papua New Guinea in commending the very clear presentation by the
27 STAR Chair and acknowledged the usefulness of the work of STAR scientists, which had been
28 personally witnessed and understood by both speakers. Regardless of the Leaders' decision on
29 the RIF, Marshall Islands urged STAR scientists to continue the good work that they do in the
30 region; and that a mechanism should be found for this good work to be made known to the policy
31 makers of the region so they also may understand and appreciate the importance of this work.

32
33 Council noted the STAR Chair's report; and the STAR comments with respect to the RIF and the
34 future of SOPAC (and consequently STAR), which would be revisited later in the week under
35 agenda item 11.1.

36 37 38 **6.3 PMEG Chair Report on Cross-cutting Programme Issues**

39
40 Chair invited the Chair of the Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Group, Professor Gary
41 Greene of the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, to address the SOPAC Governing Council on
42 the cross-cutting programme issues noted by PMEG in their 2007 review.

43
44 The PMEG Chair noted that the PMEG was approved during the 33rd SOPAC Annual Session,
45 and that members of PMEG were elected for three-year terms and selected based on experience
46 and knowledge of the region and willingness to volunteer their services. The PMEG Chair stated
47 that the purpose of PMEG was to bring to Council issues which would help strengthen work
48 programmes but that this transparent process was not without its inherent risk. The Chair further
49 noted that SOPAC should be congratulated for being prepared to engage in these activities and
50 being transparent, and has constructively responded to issues brought forward.

51
52 The PMEG Chair reported that SOPAC was an effective, hardworking and dedicated organisation
53 with a "can do" attitude but like all organisations of similar size SOPAC experienced problems that
54 need addressing to improve on its ability to deliver on its programmes. The PMEG Chair further
55 advised that annual reviews are important for good governance and that Council should continue

1 with these efforts, but that PMEG should also be involved in the mid-term review of the strategic
2 plan. He further suggested that there be an in-country representative within each PMEG.

3
4 The full text of the PMEG Chair's address is tabled in the new paper AS36/6.3 Suppl and will be
5 included in the post-meeting CD, and appended in full to the Proceedings of the 36th Session.

6
7 Following the report on cross-cutting issues, the PMEG Chair asked for the Chair's indulgence to
8 allow him to comment on Paragraph 19b of the 2007 Forum Leaders' Communiqué. PMEG was
9 tasked in its Terms of Reference to report on all internal and external activities that affect the
10 operation of SOPAC, and since Paragraph 19b has significant implications for the organisation;
11 the PMEG considered that it was duty bound to address the issue.

12
13 The PMEG Chair recorded that PMEG was not opposed to rationalisation but the paragraph was
14 unclear on how rationalisation would take place or how it would improve the quality of service
15 delivery; and that if it was to occur then more information was needed. PMEG thought that
16 rationalisation could be a healthy exercise, but that without a clear process in mind, it could have
17 the opposite effect. PMEG expressed the view that if the process was not done carefully, SOPAC
18 member countries would lose important products. In order to avoid this, the PMEG advised taking
19 time to arrive at a clear process for rationalisation, and did not understand the need to rush given
20 the dire consequences for member countries.

21
22 The full text of the PMEG comments on Paragraph 19b is tabled in paper AS36/11.1 Suppl 3; and
23 will be reviewed by Council under the appropriate agenda item. The PMEG Chair concluded his
24 remarks on the RIF by presenting graphs which demonstrated the financial health of SOPAC; and
25 another presentation offering some light relief on how "attitude" was the way to give or get 100%
26 out of life.

27
28 The delegate from Fiji commended the voluntary participation of STAR and PMEG members and
29 the particular emphasis on good governance and programme delivery and noted that the process
30 should be embraced by other CROP agencies. Fiji further supported the views expressed by
31 STAR and PMEG, that rationalisation should be approached with proper assessment of SOPAC
32 and stated that no decision on the fate of SOPAC had yet been taken by Council and that it was
33 erroneous to say that SOPAC was being disintegrated.

34
35 Papua New Guinea advised that issues raised by PMEG were issues for which a consultative
36 process should be undertaken to look at the specific impact of the Leaders' decision on SOPAC
37 based on Council's decision on how to approach this issue. He pointed out that the word
38 'disintegration' was never at any time used in the Leaders' decision. Papua New Guinea further
39 counselled that a building-block approach should be taken and that the process be consultative to
40 ensure that SOPAC does not suffer.

41
42 The Chair of PMEG acknowledged his use of the word 'fragmentation' that could well imply
43 'disintegration'; and that he stood corrected.

44
45 Council noted the Chair of PMEG's report on cross-cutting issues; and deferred substantial
46 discussion on PMEG comments on the RIF to the appropriate agenda item.

47
48 The Programme Monitoring Evaluation Groups full reports can be found in **Appendix 6**.

51 **6.4 CROP and PPAC Summary Reports**

52
53 The Director presented paper AS36/6.4.

1 Samoa enquired about the position of the Pacific Plan Action Committee (PPAC), which she
2 presumed also played a vital monitoring role with respect to the implementation of Pacific Plan
3 initiatives. She noted that at the recent CRGA meeting in Apia, the Samoan delegation had
4 spoken of the importance of PPAC and the need to see what was actually being delivered by
5 CROP agencies at the country level. She wondered whether too much energy and effort was
6 going towards facilitating regional action plans and frameworks with limited and focus on
7 implementing key initiatives at the ground level. She further suggested that a matrix of SOPAC's
8 assistance at the regional and national levels would be useful.

9
10 Papua New Guinea (as Chair of PPAC) reported that many countries did not file reports on areas
11 where national action was required to dovetail into regional initiatives, and as a result it was not
12 possible to identify efforts already being carried out by member countries in implementing the
13 Pacific Plan. He clarified that it wasn't the lack of implementation; but rather the lack of reporting
14 on implementation.

15
16 Tuvalu requested whether it would be possible to see actual CROP remuneration figures, with
17 respect to harmonisation of CROP remuneration.

18
19 The Director thanked Papua New Guinea for clarifying reporting on the Pacific Plan and noted
20 that SOPAC takes its role very seriously as lead coordinating agency for some key Pacific Plan
21 initiatives, and gave the example of disaster risk management and its emphasis on the
22 implementation of the regional framework and consolidation and implementation at the national
23 level, as well as mainstreaming into national development plans. The Director stated that SOPAC
24 endeavoured to provide timely reports to the Pacific Plan Office at the regional and national level
25 and that it would be helpful to have harmonisation in reporting to reduce the number of reports
26 being produced. The Director also clarified that remuneration figures as queried by Tuvalu would
27 be discussed in greater detail under agenda item 11.2.

28
29 Council noted the Summary Reports of the 2007 meetings of the CROP and the 2007 meetings of
30 the PPAC, acknowledging that items of relevance to SOPAC would be raised under appropriate
31 agenda items.

32 33 **7. COMMUNITY LIFELINES PROGRAMME**

34 **7.1 Report from the Community Lifelines Programme**

35 The CLP Manager presented a summary of the 2007 Component Outputs with major
36 achievements of the Community Lifelines Programme in: Resource Assessment, Development
37 and Management; Asset Management; and Advocacy and Governance noting the inter-linkages
38 between the different projects within the programme in particular IWRM inter-linking ongoing
39 water-related activities.

40 Guam recognised that ArcGIS was being utilised in American Samoa and Guam as well as in the
41 Republic of the Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia. Guam stated that they
42 would appreciate SOPAC flexibility in accepting this system.

43 Samoa acknowledged the achievements of the CLP but sought clarification on the additional
44 HYCOS staffing positions as referenced noting that at the Brisbane Meeting the Steering
45 Committee was advised that the TOR of the positions would be circulated to members of the
46 Steering Team. A request for a hydrological survey was not carried out because a staffing
47 position was not filled as expected. Samoa reiterated its interest in the same. High-resolution
48 satellite images had been acquired for Upolu and the request for the purchase of similar imagery
49 for Savai'i was noted.

1 Marshall Islands thanked the Manager for CLP for work done in the region. He then raised the
2 issue of reporting on the implementation of the Pacific Plan, in particular with respect to country
3 activities and noted that it would be useful if SOPAC contacted the in-country PPAC person in
4 SIDS responsible for reporting back to the Pacific Plan Office so that they could collaboratively
5 prepare reports and ensure that all relevant information was reported; and that a total and
6 complete record of activities/support are included in the PPAC reporting.

7 Fiji acknowledged the achievements and progress of CLP and raised a number of issues. Firstly,
8 Fiji noted that SOPAC should focus on assisting countries with the development and
9 implementation of their energy policies. Secondly, he noted that it would be useful if policymakers
10 could be made aware of the outputs of the pilot projects in order to assist with raising awareness
11 and advocacy with the view to leveraging funding. Fiji further commended the report on capacity
12 building where accountability and sustainability at national level is addressed.

13 In response to Guam's comments, the Secretariat noted that SOPAC had, during 2007, up-skilled
14 its staff to provide assistance to Northern countries noting that the first training had been
15 conducted in the Federated States of Micronesia. It was noted that USP currently only trains in
16 ArcGIS where previously there had been efforts to standardise software products so as to enable
17 improved levels of technical support to be provided as well as inter-country exchange. Therefore,
18 USP is encouraged to provide training in both ArcGIS and MapInfo as the failure to do this will
19 cause additional cost to countries in purchasing alternate software (ArcGIS) among a number of
20 other technical issues.

21 The Secretariat noted in response to comments made by Samoa that the HYCOS Project
22 effectively had three staff since one project officer within the project was currently in transition, the
23 additional numbers would in fact remain at two. The Secretariat further noted that since seeking
24 endorsement of staff TORs was a lengthy process and found not to be practical, position
25 statements were instead cleared by the Director. Further it was understood that for recruitment
26 and for technical equipment the requirement had been relaxed. The Secretariat noted that the
27 QuickBird satellite imagery for Upolu funded under EDF8 now provides 100% coverage to extend
28 the power utility work. The request for Savai'i imagery was to have been funded under another
29 Project within the programme; however, this did not eventuate due to the expense.

30 The Secretariat acknowledged the recommendations of the Republic of the Marshall Islands that
31 there would be benefits in linking reporting through the national focal point responsible for
32 reporting on the Pacific Plan Action Committee in order to reduce replication of the reporting
33 process but that this could be a challenge with respect to timing and resources. SOPAC noted the
34 comprehensive reporting framework of the Pacific Plan and that it added to the Secretariat's
35 commitment to report against its own work programmes to the SOPAC Annual Session, CROP
36 PPAC, as well as donors.

37 In response to comments made by Fiji that there was a need to develop energy policies in-
38 country, the Secretariat offered to assist with this, and once policies were adopted and endorsed;
39 SOPAC could assist in developing work plans. The Secretariat also highlighted the intention to
40 use Fiji Department of Energy Staff to assist with replication of the energy labelling pilot project.
41 The presentation of pilot project outcomes to policymakers in Tuvalu; and the development of
42 Samoa's energy policy which was published in both Samoan and English were also noted.

43 New Zealand commended the staff of CLP for a busy year and that it was exciting to see
44 technology being applied to development challenges of countries in the region. However, while
45 acknowledging an affinity to CLP because all special grant funding went to this programme, New
46 Zealand observed that this funding was ignored in the PMEG report. The work done as part of the
47 Pacific Energy Ministers' Meeting was exciting given the importance of energy issues in the
48 region. While noting with appreciation the reporting provided, New Zealand encouraged the
49 Secretariat to move towards outcomes-based reporting to demonstrate the value of SOPAC work
50 in the region to policymakers. New Zealand asked the Secretariat whether any changes had been
51 brought about as a result of SOPAC work in energy and gender, and water and gender.

1 The Secretariat responded that initially the gender work in these sectors faced many challenges
2 since these are male-dominated sectors; however, the impacts in rural communities on women
3 and children are large, and this was beginning to be acknowledged in development projects such
4 as the LED lighting projects in Kiribati and Solomon Islands where a participatory approach with
5 communities had been adopted. Ongoing work with communities in water, health and sanitation,
6 rainwater harvesting, and capacity building activities were noted. Increased understanding of the
7 need to involve communities had assisted in strengthening these sectors which was helping PICs
8 achieve Millennium Development Goals.

9 Kiribati acknowledged the work of the CLP and requested the upgrading of their mapserver and
10 establishment of GIS in their water and power sectors. Environmentally friendly projects
11 conducted in outer islands were also noted with appreciation.

12 Vanuatu commended the progress made and advised Council on national development with the
13 completion of the National Energy Policy and Master Plan, and National Water Plan. Vanuatu
14 acknowledged the assistance of the Government of New Zealand in the funding for their National
15 Strategic Plan and development of National Energy Policy and Master Plan. Activities presented
16 have been addressed in both plans. In terms of capacity building, Vanuatu requested that the
17 water demand management piloted in some countries be extended to Vanuatu. Vanuatu
18 endorsed Fiji's comments on policy development to support sustainable development with
19 investors coming in. Vanuatu also requested scientists and countries who may hold (hydrological,
20 geological, geoscience) data and information on Vanuatu to help in rebuilding their information
21 dataset as much of their information had been lost in a recent fire.

22 Tuvalu raised the need for member countries to have energy policies and given the recent
23 success of the Pacific Energy Ministers' Meeting (PEMM), it was important that efforts at national
24 level were in keeping with decisions made by the Leaders. It was also noted that Tuvalu's energy
25 policy was endorsed; but SOPAC assistance was still needed to progress implementation.

26 Samoa noted the use of GIS for mapping water 'meter' assets in Fiji and are interested to be
27 included in the 2nd phase of this pilot project. The use of satellite images to assess coconut
28 density on Rotuma (Fiji) interested Samoa because of the possibility of adopting the same
29 approach on Savai'i. The exorbitant cost of satellite images which was to have been funded under
30 WasSP was prohibitive.

31 The Secretariat thanked Kiribati and noted that the proposal to upgrade their mapserver was
32 going ahead and appropriate equipment was being procured. Furthermore, the water and power
33 sectors were part of the GIS asset management programme, where work in this area had been
34 programmed for 2008 to progress this work into a number of new countries.

35 The Secretariat reported that it had responded to Vanuatu's plea for data providing copies of
36 information and data held in Suva; and encouraged countries and scientists to provide Vanuatu
37 with relevant data they held. The development of national policies has been supported by earlier
38 developed and endorsed regional policies for water, energy, oceans, disaster and risk and climate
39 including a number of framework documents which were all part of a bigger toolkit. There was a
40 need to work effectively to develop policies in country, and that the Secretariat would assist but
41 the onus was on countries to progress policies through their national governments. The
42 ministerial focus on getting energy policy integrated into economic development policies to ensure
43 long-term sustainable development was noted. The Leaders acknowledged the direction provided
44 to the region by its Energy Ministers, when they endorsed the comprehensive implementation of
45 the recommendations out of the Energy Ministers' April 2007 Communiqué, including the
46 proposal that SOPAC convene another energy ministerial meeting in 2009 with the next officials'
47 meeting.

48 The Secretariat noted issues raised by Tuvalu reinforced the earlier statement on policy and took
49 forward the outcomes from the regional energy meeting.

1 In response to Samoa, the ability to replicate the water meter mapping project as implemented in
2 Fiji within Samoa was acknowledged and was simply a matter of having base stations and rover
3 equipment available, where such work would link with the MapServer and utilise the work already
4 being carried out at EPC. SOPAC noted a significant level of work had been implemented with
5 EPC on power utility projects and that there was close to 100% satellite imagery coverage of
6 utility assets on Upolu. A household survey was conducted on Savai'i in order to estimate
7 demand for energy and the opportunities and viability of using coconut oil, using the same
8 methodology used on Rotuma.

9 The Secretariat in response to New Zealand's suggestion concurred that SOPAC reporting could
10 be further improved and issues moved from outputs-focused to outcomes-based reporting as
11 articulated in the Strategic Plan 2005-2009. There had been some discussion on how a
12 partnership between SOPAC and member countries could be built on and how to achieve
13 outcomes. Since donors are outcomes focused, the Secretariat should be as well and confirmed
14 the intention to carry out a mid-term review of the SOPAC Strategic Plan in 2008 with PMEG
15 involvement and consideration of how indicators could be developed and refined. SOPAC
16 indicated that this would also provide the opportunity to convene an external review of the IT
17 sector.

18 Council accepted the report on the 2007 Work Plan for the Community Lifelines Programme.

19

20 **7.2 New Initiatives in the Community Lifelines Programme**

21 The CLP Manager highlighted the new initiatives in the CLP including work conducted under
22 Water for Life; initiatives to support the International Year of Sanitation; taking forward outcomes
23 from the Pacific Energy Ministers' Meeting; the extension of PIEPSAP; biofuel activities; data
24 information and security through the development of an energy database; delivery of activities
25 under the Digital Strategy; internal review of the ICT programme; and development of a SOPAC
26 IT strategy.

27 New Caledonia acknowledged the tremendous amount of work carried out by CLP. New
28 Caledonia's strong interest in HYCOS, water resource assessments and water quality
29 assessments were noted. Since New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis are highly
30 dependent on imported fossil fuels, EU funding had been secured for renewable energy
31 programmes and one output from this will be to share regional solar experience with SOPAC
32 countries.

33 Council:

- 34 1. noted and accepted the positive progress made with implementation of the ICT, Energy
35 and Water and Sanitation sectors against the Pacific Plan.
- 36 2. noted the progress made in developing the Integrated Water Resources Management
37 (IWRM) programme proposal and commended the prioritisation, by countries, of this
38 regional initiative within the GEF-Pacific Alliance for Sustainability Framework for its
39 implementation.
- 40 3. noted the outcomes of the meetings of the Pacific Energy Ministers (PEMM) and Regional
41 Energy Officials (REM) and recognised the urgent need for securing required levels of
42 financial and human resources that will ensure the successful implementation of the
43 initiatives articulated in the PEMM 2007 Communiqué; and the priorities in the Pacific
44 Island Energy Policy and related Strategic Action Plan.
- 45 4. noted the decisions of the PPAC with respect to the PEMM 2007 Communiqué and the
46 actions and resources necessary, both nationally and regionally, for these to be achieved.

- 1 5. acknowledged the recommendation of the PEMM to Leaders to convene an Energy
2 Ministers' Meeting in 2009 and tasked the Secretariat to secure appropriate levels of
3 resources for this purpose including through reprioritising of existing resources as
4 encouraged by the PPAC.
- 5 6. noted the progress made with the development of national energy policies, strategic action
6 plans and the contribution made to other key areas within the energy sector through the
7 PIEPSAP Project. Further, Council requested the Secretariat to consider building upon
8 activities under the PIEPSAP delivered over the last three years, supporting further follow-
9 up work and secure additional opportunities to ensure sustainability.
- 10 7. noted progress made in evaluating the feasibility of using biofuels within the region and
11 encouraged the Secretariat to continue monitoring and evaluating the technical, economic
12 and financial feasibility of biofuels in the Pacific. Further, Council recognised that work had
13 commenced toward the development of biofuel standards that can be used as a basis for
14 developing national biofuel standards.
- 15 8. noted the desirability and multiple benefits of establishing a remote backup site for
16 SOPAC's data and information and directed the Secretariat to proceed with the urgent
17 implementation of this initiative.
- 18 9. noted the ongoing participation and support of the SOPAC Secretariat in the
19 implementation of the Digital Strategy which is then coordinated by SPC and encouraged
20 it to secure appropriate levels of resources to maintain an active role in supporting the
21 implementation of the Digital Strategy with respect to e-Government, information
22 management policies, GIS and remote sensing and targeted capacity development.
- 23 10. noted the urgent need for dialogue with the University of the South Pacific (USP) to
24 establish and provide basic training in both MapInfo and ArcGIS in the immediate future.
25 Council also recognised and commended the pivotal role that the Secretariat plays in-
26 country in on-the-ground/on-the-job training and the application of GIS and Remote
27 Sensing. Further, Council acknowledged that this would continue to be an area of further
28 development and focus in the immediate term.
- 29 11. noted the internal review of the SOPAC ICT sector and supported a refocusing toward
30 outreach functions that strengthen technical capacity in utilising spatial data and
31 information to achieve sustainable development solutions; and internal establishment of a
32 robust service support environment that ensures effective delivery of the SOPAC Work
33 Programme.

34

35 **7.3 Report from the Programme Review Monitoring and Evaluation Group on CLP**

36 Dr Kifle Kahsai, Chair of the CLP PMEG presented the findings of their review. He highlighted
37 how very difficult it was to do analysis given the limited time to review all programme activities.

38 The PMEG noted that the team recommended last year that an internal review of ICT outreach
39 and operational functions in the Secretariat be conducted. He reported that there had been a
40 failure by CLP to do more with information. He urged the Secretariat to undertake the review in
41 2008 and to take seriously the need to address information management issues. He also
42 highlighted that the SOPAC website needs serious upgrading.

43 PMEG commended CLP for an excellent job in the area of water; noting that there was especially
44 good coordination with other agencies such as the US Environmental Protection Agency to avoid
45 duplication.

1 PMEG noted the achievements from the regional Pacific Energy Ministers' Meeting and
2 commended SOPAC on its work in energy economics. He noted the need to concentrate more on
3 energy efficiency since this was a priority issue in PICs, and recommended improving
4 relationships with key partners such as the PPA.

5 Australia thanked PMEG for the thorough briefing and acknowledged that two days was indeed a
6 short amount of time to deal with the breadth of work handled by CLP and wondered whether
7 there was any way of extending the timeframe given the potential benefit of commencing the
8 review process earlier. It was felt that it would be helpful if PMEG findings could be tested at the
9 national level with measurable outcomes on the ground.

10 Marshall Islands confirmed that it was important to continue with the valuable review of SOPAC
11 work programmes by PMEG which is appreciated by member countries and he further suggested
12 that it is equally important and valuable to include member countries in the process in order to
13 reflect the views of the recipients of the work programmes of SOPAC.

14 Samoa thanked the evaluation team for the report and questioned whether the team looked at the
15 effectiveness of training for HYCOS, noting that more advanced training was needed for the water
16 resource division beyond basic training provided by SOPAC.

17 Kiribati agreed that evaluation from member countries should be part of the PMEG assessment
18 and a longer time frame should be adopted; thanking the PMEG for the free service provided to
19 date.

20 Tonga questioned whether the PMEG team was able to identify overlaps between IWRM and
21 HYCOS. PMEG responded that the team was looking at interrelations between HYCOS and
22 IWRM and that they had tried to look objectively at duplication in this area.

23 The Secretariat assured that the findings of PMEG were taken seriously and became part of the
24 annual session recommendations; and as appropriate would implement those recommendations
25 that would result in improved work programme delivery. With respect to time spent at the
26 Secretariat by the PMEG evaluation teams, this was subject to constant discussions and although
27 there was merit in extending the time frame, it was important to ensure that this did not become a
28 costly exercise. Countries were interested in participating in the PMEG process and that having
29 country representation in future PMEGs would be pursued. In response to Tonga's comments on
30 overlaps between programmes, the Secretariat responded that there were in fact good
31 complementarities between key water initiatives, and stressed the importance of coordination at
32 the national level.

33

34 **8. COMMUNITY RISK PROGRAMME**

35

36 **8.1 Report of the Community Risk Programme 2007 (AS36/8.1)**

37

38 The Secretariat referred to paper AS36/8.1 Report of the Community Risk Programme 2007.

39

40 The CRP Manager presented a summary of 2007 outputs with major achievements of the
41 Community Risk Programme in the three components of (1) Strengthening Resilience to
42 Disasters; (2) Mitigating against Hazards; and (3) Mainstreaming DRM, noting in particular the
43 development of the DRM National Action Plans.

44

45 The CRP Manager highlighted several activities undertaken in 2007 related to the following:

46

- 47 • Development of Disaster Risk Management National Action Plans for Vanuatu and RMI
48 and related implementation programmes.
- 49 • Implementation of EU EDF8/9 Project – Reducing Vulnerability of Pacific ACP States.
- 2007 Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network Meeting.

- 1 • 13th Regional Disaster Managers' Meeting, Majuro.
- 2 • Pacific Disaster Net.
- 3 • Pacific Disaster Risk Management (Training) Programme (PDRMP).
- 4 • Pacific Emergency Management Training Advisory Group (PEMTAG).

5
6 The Secretariat presented a summary of progress of the 2007 work plan including the issues
7 raised at the SOPAC 35th Session (2006) and by PMEG.

8
9 Samoa acknowledged with appreciation the report provided by the Secretariat and commended
10 the management and staff of CRP for all the hard work which enabled the successful
11 implementation of 2007 Work Programme activities. Samoa also expressed its appreciation of the
12 financial and technical assistance provided under the CRP which enabled the implementation of
13 their disaster risk management programmes in particular the National Disaster Awareness Day
14 this year which marked the coming into effect of Samoa's Disaster and Emergency Management
15 Act and National Disaster Management Plan and the inception of operationalising the national
16 tsunami early warning system as well as the opportunity given to all the National Disaster
17 Management Offices in the region to submit priority activities for inclusion in the CRP 2008 work
18 programme.

19
20 Cook Islands acknowledged the work carried out by CRP and highlighted the progress in the
21 Cook Islands and the assistance to date with the formulation of the emergency management
22 legislation. They noted the request to national governments for assistance to be granted to
23 disaster managers to work as an integrated group to ensure appropriate delivery. The Cook
24 Islands sought clarification if the Pacific Emergency Management Training Advisory Group
25 (PEMTAG) had considered institutes other than the University of the South Pacific noting that
26 Auckland University offered professional qualifications in Disaster Management. The Cook
27 Islands commended the Secretariat for other training initiatives carried out in the Cook Islands
28 including Initial Damage Assessment, Introduction to Disaster Management and Emergency
29 Operations Centres. The Cook Islands concurred with the comments of the Secretariat on the
30 need for a whole-of-country approach for the successful implementation of DRM. The Cook
31 Islands noted that with the current training programmes, stakeholders were given training in non-
32 traditional emergency response roles building in-country capacity to deal with an emergency
33 situation such as being a controller in the Emergency Operations Centre during a disaster. The
34 Cook Islands registered their interest in the 2008 work programme.

35
36 Niue echoed the comments made in the report and expressed his appreciation of the support
37 SOPAC has provided to Niue including recent interventions to address the demands and needs of
38 the country, in particular the coastal development policy. Niue acknowledged that once the policy
39 was produced there was still a need to enforce it.

40
41 Marshall Islands reflected on the position of Leaders this year with respect to the RIF but was
42 pleased to note that SOPAC continued to perform in meeting the needs of the member countries.
43 Marshall Islands expressed his appreciation to the CRP Manager for his commitment to the
44 Marshall Islands in developing their NAP. He also encouraged SOPAC and its staff to continue to
45 perform their duties as usual.

46
47 Vanuatu expressed gratitude to the Secretariat for programmed investments made in Vanuatu
48 particularly on the development of NAP. Council was informed that Vanuatu was now looking at
49 implementation with the Government encouraging sectors to build on decisions before
50 development partners come in. Vanuatu thanked development partners for the support given to
51 the development of the NAP and declared to Council that the Government had committed for the
52 next two years to address immediate needs. Vanuatu noted that the success of the NAP process
53 was a result of Ministers being involved and engaged in national and regional arenas through the
54 assistance of Australia, New Zealand and UNDP.

1 Kiribati commended the CRP manager on the comprehensive report and work implemented and
2 asked the Secretariat if there were opportunities to incorporate some of the DRM activities into
3 Phase II of the WB-funded Kiribati Adaptation Project (KAP II).

4
5 The Secretariat thanked Council for the words of gratitude and the interventions made. In
6 response to the Cook Islands query on graduate courses available, he responded that USP was
7 the only institute with whom discussions had been made however, Swinburne University
8 acknowledges the TAF/OFDA courses as “recognition of prior learning” and credits these
9 achievements towards the post-graduate course.

10
11 In response to Kiribati, the Secretariat advised that the Kiribati Government had indicated its
12 desire to establish a Disaster Management office and would formally seek SOPAC’s support the
13 facility. The Directorate continued regarding KAP II, that the Secretariat has worked closely with
14 the World Bank, Australia and Kiribati governments in relation to water interventions made.
15 Council was also reminded that the coastal initiative of the SOPAC work programme resulted in
16 the establishment of the dredging company to mine aggregates from the lagoon.

17
18 Fiji expressed appreciation of the report and commended SOPAC on the progress made. He
19 encouraged Council to advocate for the development of NAP in their respective countries in
20 ensuring safe and resilient communities noting that Vanuatu was the only country with successful
21 NAP development. Fiji requested that the Secretariat document the lessons learnt in DRM
22 experiences in particular in the development of NAP in Vanuatu and Marshall Islands.

23
24 Cook Islands concurred with Vanuatu in ensuring Government commitment by inviting Ministers
25 to meetings and joint sessions in order to expose them to initiatives being developed. In addition,
26 the Cook Islands noted the need to also advocate and build the capacity of non-traditional
27 emergency responders or DRM practitioners such as the Ministry of Works in the Cook Islands
28 and the Outer Island Mayors who all play a critical role in emergency response in the Cook
29 Islands.

30
31 Council accepted the report on the 2007 Work Plan for the Community Risk Work Programme,
32 and noted the measures taken to address issues arising from the 35th Annual Session and the
33 2006 PMEG Report.

34 35 36 **8.2 New Initiatives and Emerging Issues in the Community Risk Programme (AS36/8.2)**

37
38 The Secretariat referred to paper AS36/8.2 on New Initiatives and Emerging Issues in the
39 Community Risk Programme.

40
41 The Secretariat highlighted the following new initiatives:

- 42 • Regional Early Warning Strategy
- 43 • EU B-Envelope
- 44 • Annual Disaster Management Meeting
- 45 • ACP/EU Natural Disaster Facility

46
47 Emerging opportunities include the Melanesian Volcanological Network, Regional Meeting of
48 DRM and Finance/Planning Secretaries, AusAID NAP Facility, World Bank Global Facility for
49 Disaster Reduction and Recovery, SOPAC Post Disaster Engagement Policy, Inter NDMO
50 Support Programme, Pacific DRM Partnership Network and Catastrophe Insurance Feasibility
51 Study.

52
53 Marshall Islands thanked the CRP Manager for the clear presentation of new initiatives and
54 emerging issues and sought clarification on whether the DM meeting was to be held annually as

1 of 2008. The Secretariat confirmed that this was the intention under the proposed 2008 Work
2 Programme.

3
4 The Cook Islands registered its appreciation of the work carried out by SOPAC and the donor
5 partners. He sought clarification on the use of different terminology such as “multi-hazard” and “all
6 hazards”. From the interventions by SOPAC through HLAT the term “all hazards” approach was
7 used during dialogue and has thus been reflected in the Cook Islands emergency management
8 legislation. He also queried whether the same applied to the Regional Early Warning Strategy
9 which he felt indicated biological hazards and if this included pandemics as well.

10
11 Australia also noted its concern that, in light of the RIF and recommendations put forward under
12 agenda item 11.1, it is important that any effort to expand the three current programmes be
13 undertaken as a consultative process with the relevant CROP agency.

14
15 Fiji thanked the Secretariat for the report and sought clarification if satellite imagery before, during
16 and after extreme events could be purchased under recommendation 5 on post-disaster technical
17 assistance.

18
19 The Secretariat responded to the Cook Islands on the terminology adopted as “all hazards” for
20 whole-of-government approach to DRM. The use of the terms can be considered as
21 interchangeable. With respect to the REWS the focus was predominantly on various natural
22 hazards. Other regional and international agencies have a mandate for the development of early
23 warning systems to address hazards other than natural. In response to Fiji’s comments the
24 Secretariat advised Council that imagery was purchased for the Solomon Islands however, this
25 decision was based on the need at the time.

26
27 Council was informed that the reports of two side meetings to address improved early warnings in
28 relation to tsunami would present their reports.

29
30 The report of a Science and Technical Experts Working Group on Paleo-earthquake and tsunami
31 history of active plate margins within the Pacific Islands Region, and the report of the Ad Hoc
32 Meeting of the Pacific Tsunami Warning System, Working Group for the South West Pacific are
33 attached in [Appendix 5](#).

34
35 Council:

- 36 • noted actions taken to progress various issues raised at the 35th Annual Session.
- 37 • endorsed the Regional Early Warning Strategy (refer Attachment 3 of the Council paper)
38 discussed and endorsed at the 13th Regional Disaster Managers Meeting in Majuro,
39 Marshall Islands and noted the institutional and regional resource implications for its
40 urgent and necessary implementation.
- 41 • acknowledged the support provided by the European Union to the Region to implement
42 the Regional Framework under the ACP/EU Natural Disaster Facility, and noted the
43 progress towards implementing Disaster Risk Reduction tasks through the EDF9
44 Envelope B Multi-Country Project for Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands,
45 Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu.
- 46 • strongly supported SOPAC to progress the urgent development of initiatives with Australia
47 and the World Bank and other partners of the Regional DRM Partnership Network to
48 assist member countries in their efforts towards the development and implementation of
49 National Action Plans for Disaster Risk Management.
- 50 • encouraged SOPAC to develop a post-disaster engagement policy, particularly to support
51 and coordinate post-disaster technical assessment programmes, as well as developing
52 mechanisms whereby regional NDMOs could link and assist neighbouring states during
53 times of disaster and extreme events.

- 1 • noted the challenges facing the Pacific Disaster Risk Management Partnership Network
2 and supported the need to ensure that SOPAC as facilitator of the Network had the
3 necessary resources to enable its effectiveness.
4
5

6 **8.3 Report from the Programme Review Monitoring & Evaluation Group on CRP** 7 **(AS36/8.3)** 8

9 The Programme Review and Monitoring Group for the Community Risk Programme (PMEG-CRP)
10 was carried out solely by John Norton (New Zealand) due to the unavailability of Dr Wally
11 Johnson (Australia), and Dr Stan Goosby (Pacific Disaster Centre, Hawai'i).
12

13 The PMEG-CRP informed Council that CRP staff are committed to the work implemented and
14 reminded Council that the Manager had only been in the position for a year. He noted the breadth
15 of work undertaken by the programme and its interactions with the CLP and OIP and reiterated
16 that the management systems to support programmes require attention. PMEG raised that there
17 is a competition between the leadership/advocacy role CRP plays and the commitment required
18 of countries for work plan implementation. PMEG noted that though policy developed reflected
19 the DRR work there was still a need to have it done for DM as well.
20

21 Some of the highlights of the programme were presented including NAP, development of the
22 Guidelines for NAP, development of Pacific Disaster Net; EU suite of on the ground risk reduction
23 studies, early warning strategy, Pacific DRM Partnership network and the Bi-ennial Regional DM
24 meeting.
25

26 Some of the issues include programme progress and definition, potential risks to NAP programme
27 delivery and management as a result of a substantial increase in funds, DRM Guide, country
28 focus and leadership role, support to disasters including mapping of impacts, 2008 Work Plan and
29 resourcing and focus for 2008 – consolidate the efforts.
30

31 New Zealand thanked PMEG for the report and noted the significant lift in programme budget for
32 CRP in 2008 where the Secretariat rather than having to seek other resources now needed to
33 meet the capacity to deliver on its work programme.
34

35 Australia extended its gratitude for the good report noting that it would have been beneficial to
36 Council to have received the report in advance. Australia concurred with New Zealand's
37 comments on capacity required and recommended to the Secretariat that for projects requiring
38 additional funding that donors be charged adequate management fees on project funding to
39 support implementation.
40

41 Council:

- 42 • noted the highlights for 2007, the breadth of activity of the CRP outputs and the
43 commitment and enthusiasm of the staff for the work they are doing.
- 44 • reinforced its commitment to the NAP programme as a major core activity of the CRP and
45 sought real progress on this in the coming 12 months.
- 46 • instructed the Secretariat to address programming and resourcing issues in the CRP to
47 provide for improved programme control, reporting and progress on the Work Plan.
- 48 • noted that making progress on the CRP is hard work which requires programme
49 leadership and advocacy and in-country commitment and that any arrangements to re-
50 cast the functions of SOPAC keep this firmly in focus to avoid the risk of these
51 programmes stalling.
52

1
2 **9. OCEAN AND ISLANDS PROGRAMME**
3

4 **9.1 Report from the Oceans and Islands Programme**
5

6 The Chair referred Council to paper AS36/9.1 relating to work undertaken under the Ocean and
7 Islands Programme for 2007 and introduced the Acting Manager OIP who presented on the work.
8

9 The Acting Manager OIP emphasised the breadth of work undertaken in the OIP (socio-
10 economic, physical analysis, mapping, modelling), describing key activities undertaken. He noted
11 those activities that will be ongoing throughout 2008 and reminded Council that ongoing activities
12 are also detailed in the OIP work plan and budget (paper AS36/12.2 which the Corporate
13 Services Manager would address under agenda item 12).
14

15 Solomon Islands thanked SOPAC for the presentation and asked about the process SOPAC used
16 to identify projects, noting with concern that some countries seemed to enjoy more SOPAC
17 activities than others. The Secretariat explained that activities arise for a number of reasons,
18 including through country requests throughout the year, ongoing national communications with
19 national representatives and, in the case of the EDF Vulnerability Reduction Project, through two
20 rounds of multi-stakeholder consultations.
21

22 Papua New Guinea acknowledged the importance of the work conducted by the OIP in small
23 island states generally and, in particular, the value of the bathymetric studies conducted by OIP in
24 Papua New Guinea. He requested that copies of the bathymetric data collected on behalf of PNG
25 be provided to the Papua New Guinea Geological Survey section. The Secretariat observed that
26 the bathymetric data produced has been processed but commented that this data is not yet in a
27 condition to produce final charts. Nevertheless, he confirmed that the data would certainly be
28 passed on as soon as it was ready.
29

30 Papua New Guinea also queried the assumptions used in inundation models developed under the
31 OIP. The Secretariat acknowledged the importance of assumptions in models, noting that SOPAC
32 lacked strong data for inundation modelling; however, he also clarified that the models he had
33 referred to during his presentation were actually water movement models, not inundation models.
34

35 Finally, Papua New Guinea asked whether the bathymetric equipment used for mapping could be
36 used for hazard mapping. The Acting Manager OIP confirmed that this was so, noting that
37 bathymetry data was a key component of understanding risk.
38

39 Cook Islands expressed appreciation for the presentation and requested assistance from SOPAC
40 in relation to extended shelf delimitation.
41

42 In response to a question by Tonga on the uses of hydrodynamic modelling, the Secretariat
43 confirmed that modelling was key to understanding environmental impacts (e.g. potential pollution
44 risks from pipe installations along the coast).
45

46 Tuvalu gratefully acknowledged the work of the OIP in Tuvalu, particularly in relation to aggregate
47 and requested that the work follow the same pattern as had occurred in Kiribati. The Secretariat
48 observed that the OIP was undertaking an economic analysis and household survey to provide
49 basic understanding of the nature of the aggregate situation in Tuvalu and that this mirrored the
50 activities undertaken in Kiribati. He stated that, following this work, SOPAC would be in a better
51 position to work on proposals for sustainable development of the lagoon aggregates resource. He
52 acknowledged that this was a slow process but emphasised that it was necessary to produce
53 sound proposals.
54

1 Vanuatu thanked the Secretariat for its 2007 activities. It joined the Cook Islands in requesting
2 assistance with extended continental shelf work. He also asked about the range of data in the
3 petroleum database. The Secretariat clarified that the new digitised petroleum database contains
4 all of the original data associated with the database and reminded Council that a data disk is now
5 available for each country involved. However, he also observed that not all seismic data was yet
6 available for some surveys as re-formatting some of these older products is a time consuming
7 and complex process. Nevertheless, he stated that the completed data should be ready early next
8 year.
9

10 Samoa thanked the Secretariat for the overview and commended the Secretariat for its focus on
11 technical capacity building and encouraged SOPAC to continue with this. She noted that one of
12 the biggest challenges faced by Samoa and other small island nations in their efforts to achieve
13 sustainable development was lack of national technical capacity to sustain work programmes.
14 Samoa advised that initial negotiations with USA on maritime boundary delimitation had
15 commenced and asked when the full dataset established under the regional maritime boundaries
16 project would be ready as such information may be useful for negotiations.
17

18 The SOPAC Director clarified that the maritime boundaries project is demand driven and, to this
19 end, although Samoa had taken advantage of numerous training opportunities provided under the
20 project to identify base points, no one from Samoa had been provided to work intensively with
21 SOPAC. This was because Samoa, like Tonga, had developed its own arrangements to produce
22 its technical solutions. She emphasised that SOPAC could only offer support if countries
23 requested assistance.
24

25 The Director also reminded countries that, once base points, baselines and technical solutions
26 have been identified, the information would be sent by SOPAC to Geoscience Australia to ensure
27 quality control of submissions. The submissions would then be signed off and could then be used
28 by countries in their negotiations. She emphasised that all the data generated in the maritime
29 boundaries project was confidential until treaties were confirmed and accepted. After that point,
30 the data would become public.
31

32 Kiribati thanked the Secretariat for the presentation, acknowledging SOPAC's move towards the
33 collection of baseline data and its work in building the technical capacity of national staff. He
34 acknowledged the aggregate work that the OIP had conducted in Kiribati and SOPAC assistance
35 to staff attachments. He stated that Kiribati would like to work with SOPAC to conduct further work
36 in Banaba related to the reassessment of phosphate reserves and, in this respect, gratefully
37 acknowledged that the Secretariat had recognised the need to complete this work in the
38 presentation. Finally, he stated that Kiribati would like to work with SOPAC on bathymetric work of
39 the outer islands. This was particularly important to Kiribati where the Government wants to
40 decentralise services and it was recognised that such data would provide important
41 environmental and development planning guidance.
42

43 Samoa enquired whether SOPAC would be in a position to assist in considering the impacts of
44 aggregate dredging. The Secretariat observed that the aggregate work undertaken for Samoa
45 had occurred under the EDF8 component of the Reducing Vulnerability Project which was now at
46 an end. The work had occurred early on in the project when OIP modelling capacity had not been
47 developed; and that the absence of specific baseline data could mean that further assessments
48 would be a significant undertaking and would be most appropriately dealt with as a new task.
49 Nevertheless, he stressed that a guideline document on best practice for aggregates had been
50 prepared under the EDF8 component project and that this should still cover some aspects of
51 Samoa's needs.
52

53 New Caledonia observed that the post of Manager for the OIP in SOPAC had been vacant since
54 August. He commended the acting Manager for his work and commended SOPAC generally for
55 the OIP achievements. He noted that there were several areas of complementarity of work

1 between the government of France/New Caledonia and that of SOPAC, in particular marine
2 survey, the funding of a high-level group for offshore geological data exchange and the
3 submission of claims for continental shelf. He expressed satisfaction at the idea that the OIP was
4 moving into habitat mapping. He also commented on the successful GeoHab conference hosted
5 by New Caledonia in 2007 and noted that this represents a very significant cooperative
6 achievement. The Secretariat acknowledged New Caledonia for its support.
7

8 Fiji observed that most in-country activities conducted by the OIP appeared to be targeted at very
9 specific locations and took the form of pilot projects. He noted the need for SOPAC to ensure that
10 all stakeholders understood the nature of these projects and increase efforts to demonstrate the
11 benefits derived from these activities; and that it must be clearly shown that only through wider
12 adoption would governments realise the full benefits of such work. The Secretariat confirmed that
13 many project activities did take the form of pilot projects and agreed with the need to ensure that
14 benefits are communicated at the national level.
15

16 Council considered and accepted the report on the 2007 Work Plan for the Oceans and Islands
17 Programme.
18

19 **9.2 New Initiatives in the Oceans and Islands Programme**

20
21
22 The Acting Manager OIP described a number of issues emerging in OIP and referred Council to
23 paper AS36/9.2 which explained these issues in detail. Among other things, he emphasised the
24 imminent end of the EDF Vulnerability Reduction Project and its impact on staffing levels,
25 together with the need for a full time tsunami coordinator to support the large increase in activities
26 related to the issue of tsunami. He also outlined the need to address issues of data storage,
27 access and the recovery of historical data. The issue of coastal vulnerability was also raised and
28 the great need to enhance regional approaches to shoreline monitoring. The issue of inadequate
29 topographic data to support modelling approaches was also raised.
30

31 Cook Islands noted the interest of commercial investors in minerals in the Cook Islands and
32 asked for SOPAC assistance in scrutinising potential investors and asked for assistance with
33 respect to correct procedures for making decisions. The SOPAC Director acknowledged the
34 importance of this work. She also confirmed that SOPAC had been approached for assistance
35 and had provided the Cook Islands with information on regulations as well as guidelines.
36

37 Fiji thanked the Secretariat for the establishment of its baseline survey. On the issue of databank
38 storage, Fiji encouraged SOPAC to finalise the databank since several potential investors were
39 interested in investing in Fiji and the Government of Fiji therefore had a great need for the
40 baseline data. The Secretariat acknowledged that data recovery and digitisation was of critical
41 importance but also noted that it was a specialised and intensive task requiring significant
42 resources. He continued that it would take dedicated capacity, resources and time to complete
43 this task.
44

45 Finally, Fiji asked whether countries had to actively approach SOPAC to be involved and
46 participate in the new and emerging initiatives. The Secretariat confirmed that emerging issues by
47 their nature are not yet attached to specific countries and are often of regional importance in their
48 nature. He indicated that if members were interested in participating in such activities, they should
49 indeed approach SOPAC with an official request. He also noted that SOPAC has an established,
50 multi-disciplinary team to conduct such technical work and that any specific activity was not
51 necessarily approached by the same technical staff with the same technical response but was
52 tailored to specific situations.
53

54 Council considered and:

- 1 (a) noted the imminent completion of the data digitisation project and the move of digital
2 records to SOPAC to be housed as part of the OIP marine data collection. It endorsed
3 continued free access (except for costs outlined above) to the Petroleum Data Bank via
4 the custodian (SOPAC) who will undertake to record all details of access requests and
5 report these on an annual basis to the Council.
- 6 (b) reaffirmed the importance of rationalising the storage and recovery of historical datasets
7 and ensuring their ready net-based access via the Ocean Information System. It agreed
8 that adequate, appropriate, ongoing resources be committed to this important task to allow
9 the reformatting and compilation of historical data and continued administration and
10 maintenance of the system.
- 11 (c) requested the Secretariat to remain actively engaged in the further development of marine
12 and coastal survey methodologies including mapping, modelling, coastal vulnerability
13 assessment and further urged the Secretariat to, as a matter of urgency, explore avenues
14 to ensure that current levels of activity, staffing and technical capacity are maintained and
15 enhanced.
- 16 (d) requested the Secretariat to work closely with regional partners and organisations to
17 develop a regional ongoing and systematic approach to monitoring shoreline systems; and
18 develop local and regional understanding of how and why shorelines may be changing
19 and what the most appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies may be.
- 20 (e) requested the Secretariat to work closely with donor, regional and national agencies to
21 explore opportunities to fund and develop a regional coordinator position within the
22 Secretariat to ensure a robust and effective Tsunami Warning System for the Pacific
23 Islands Region.
- 24 (f) acknowledged this important (baseline) information gap and urged the Secretariat to work
25 with regional and international partners to develop programmes and approaches to
26 address this important need. Council recognised that only with such an investment in
27 accurate baseline information collection can accurate wave incursion, sea-level rise
28 inundation and coastal zone hazard mapping be pursued with precision and accuracy.
- 29 (g) recognised that habitat characterisation (identification and mapping) is an important step
30 towards better management of marine resources and encouraged and supported
31 SOPAC's efforts to enhance in-house capacity to collect and develop such products.
- 32 (h) commended the significant progress made to date on providing technical solutions for
33 maritime boundaries delimitation and the development and maintenance of the PIRMBIS
34 and encouraged those members who have the potential to submit claims for an extended
35 continental shelf to remain mindful of the fast approaching deadline on May 2009.

38 **9.3 Report from the Programme Review Monitoring and Evaluation Group on OIP**

39
40 Dr Gary Greene of the PMEG referred Council to the Programme Review report on the OIP
41 (paper AS36/9.3) and presented a brief summary of the findings. He acknowledged queries
42 raised in sessions 7 and 8 regarding the short time given to conduct the programme monitoring
43 and evaluation exercise but also noted that the evaluations are conducted for free by volunteers,
44 hence the limited time of the exercise. He also acknowledged the large volume of work and high
45 quality of products which has moved through the OIP during 2007 and significant progress on
46 many of the 2006 PMEG recommendations.

47
48 Papua New Guinea thanked PMEG for the review. He noted PMEG concerns about the lack of
49 exposure by the OIP for the work it does and wondered if the issue of profile was also a matter for
50 national representatives to address by raising the profile of work at a national policy level. He
51 stated that national representatives had a responsibility to alert their governments about the work
52 that OIP was conducting.

1
2 On a separate issue, Papua New Guinea wondered whether the PMEG was contributing to some
3 scare mongering in relation to the RIF recommendations, particularly in relation to retention of
4 scientific skills in the region. He acknowledged the importance of science but also observed that
5 the number of young scientists in the region was growing. He suggested that the Forum Leaders
6 had certainly considered all issues in making their recommendation and suggested that everyone
7 work together to make the RIF review work.

8
9 Prof. John Collen (STAR Chair) agreed with the PMEG assessment of the need to raise the
10 profile of OIP work. He reiterated previous suggestions that OIP staff produce papers for
11 submission to refereed journals, noting that this would not only raise the profile of work but also
12 assist in staff professional development. He also suggested that SOPAC staff make use of the
13 STAR scientists to review work and possibly speed editorial processes.

14
15 Cook Islands thanked the team for the review and commented that it agreed to the importance of
16 training for scuba diving in the OIP. On the issue raised by the PMEG in accounting procedures,
17 he suggested the development of more user friendly procedures to guide OIP staff.

18
19 Fiji thanked the PMEG review team for its work and report on the activities of the OIP and looked
20 forward to what is planned and possible in 2008 with optimism and togetherness.

21
22 Tuvalu endorsed the recommendation by the PMEG that SOPAC establish metrics for outputs
23 and outcomes. He noted that it was important to have clarification on how SOPAC products are
24 used.

25
26 Australia pursued this theme, noting that, given SOPAC's \$30 million budget, there was a need to
27 consider using a portion of this budget to assist the PMEG and STAR to undertake appropriate
28 evaluations of SOPAC. She cautioned that Australia's recurrent development budget is now
29 subject to proving effectiveness on an annual basis and Australia is looking to regional
30 organisations they work with countries to produce measurable outcomes to prove effectiveness.

31
32 Finally on this issue, Cook Islands reinforced the importance of the PMEG 'watch dog' and
33 extended his satisfaction at the knowledge that SOPAC had such a team to assist and guide
34 them.

35
36 Council received the PMEG OIP report and accepted all the PMEG recommendations, requesting
37 the SOPAC Director to address relevant concerns and recommendations as the opportunity and
38 need arises in the coming year. Council also directed the PMEG OIP to review outstanding
39 concerns and recommendations as part of their next report.

40 41 42 **GOVERNING COUNCIL POLICY SESSION**

43 44 **10. FINANCIAL REPORTS**

45
46 Chair introduced the Manager Corporate Services who presented most of the financial reports to
47 Council.

48 49 50 **10.1 Financial Report 2006**

51
52 *10.1.1 2006 Audited Financial Statements, Auditor's Report and Management Report*

1
2 The Secretariat referred Council to paper AS36/10.1.1, and presented the 2006 Audited Financial
3 Statements, Auditor's Report and Auditor's Management Letter.

4
5 The Secretariat explained that in accordance with Regulations 17(e) and 24 of the SOPAC
6 Financial Regulations, the Audited Financial Statements of SOPAC for the year ended 31 De-
7 cember 2006 had been prepared on an accrual basis of accounting and SOPAC's external
8 auditors Ernst & Young audited the full set of accounts.

9
10 The Secretariat referred Council to the Statement of Revenue and Expenditure for the year ended
11 31 December 2006 and Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2006 (AS36/10.1.1), noting three
12 important issues of membership contributions, United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund and
13 capitalisation of assets.

14
15 Australia thanked the Secretariat for a well presented financial report. However, noted in
16 reviewing the summary of extra budget funds, it showed no movement in some of the tasks
17 between 2005 and 2006 and requested for explanations or justifications.

18
19 The Secretariat explained that those tasks are either completed or require additional funds for its
20 completion. In some cases, the Secretariat has to seek endorsement from donors who have
21 funded those tasks to move funds to other activities which require additional funding or are in
22 deficit.

23
24 The Secretariat drew Council's attention to providing guidance with regard to the outstanding
25 dues by United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund. Australia commended the Secretariat's efforts to
26 date on resolving the matter and requested urgent reimbursement of funds to SOPAC and sought
27 interventions from those countries for whom funds were provided. Papua New Guinea and Tonga
28 stated that they will follow up and meet the amount owed. Solomon Islands commented that they
29 will follow it up with their UN office in New York.

30
31 Federated States of Micronesia congratulated the Secretariat in getting an unqualified audit
32 report. Fiji and Tonga confirmed that they would follow up with their member contributions.

33
34 Council received and accepted the 2006 Audited Financial Statements, Auditor's Report and
35 Auditor's Management Letter, and noted the significant management letter point with respect to:

- 36 i) Recoverability of membership contributions;
37 ii) United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund; and
38 iii) Capitalisation of property, plant and equipment.

39
40
41 *10.1.2 Report on 2006 Regular Budget Variance and Virement of Funds*

42
43 The Secretariat presented paper AS36/10.1.2 on the 2006 Budget Variance and Virement of
44 Funds, noting the Regular Budget Expenditure Variance Report (Annex 1), Explanations Report
45 (Annex 2), Information on Savings Achieved (Annex 3) and Overall Variance Summary (Annex 4).

46
47 The Federated States of Micronesia queried how much of the EDF8 funds would be left after this
48 year. The Secretariat responded that there would be hardly any funds left to return as to date
49 about 95% of the 2007 budget had been exhausted.

50

1 Council noted and accepted the Report on the 2006 Budget Variance and Virement of funds.

2
3
4 *10.1.3 Report on Assets and Inventory written off for the year ended 31 December 2006*

5
6 The Secretariat introduced paper AS36/10.1.3 and reported to Council on the Non-Current (Fixed
7 Assets) written off during the year by disposal due to irreparable damage.

8
9 Council accepted the report on assets and inventory written off for the year ended 31 December
10 2006.

11
12
13 **10.2 Report on 2007 Accounts to 30 June**

14
15 *10.2.1 Report and Financial Accounts for the 6-month period to June 2007*

16
17 The Secretariat introduced paper AS36/10.2.1, and presented to Council the Report on the 2007
18 Accounts to 30 June, stating that it had not been audited.

19
20 The Council noted and accepted the report on the 2007 Accounts to 30 June.

21
22
23 *10.2.2.1 Membership Contributions*

24
25 The Secretariat presented paper AS36/10.2.2.1 on the Status of Membership Contributions as of
26 June 2007 and its supplementary as of 27 November 2007.

27
28 Solomon Islands and Palau explained that they would meet their outstanding contributions in due
29 course. The Secretariat informed Council that Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of
30 Micronesia had paid in advance part of their contributions for 2008. The Secretariat also noted it
31 had received Tonga's contribution for 2007 at the time this paper was presented.

32
33 Guam reaffirmed its commitments to SOPAC and its work programme and had provided almost
34 US\$ 60,000 earlier this year for its member contributions.

35
36 Nauru drew Council's attention to its financial situation and stated that the Nauru Government is
37 still unable to make the necessary payment to SOPAC for its membership. Nauru understood that
38 the amount owed to the Secretariat is quite significant. Nauru would like to seek Council's kind
39 consideration of the challenges that Nauru is facing and further seek exemption to any new
40 measures that Council may wish to enforce. However, Nauru assured Council and the Secretariat
41 that Nauru valued SOPAC's work to Nauru and that Nauru is committed to clear its arrears and
42 will come up with a payment plan.

43
44 Fiji emphasised that the countries should pay up their country contribution and acknowledged the
45 support from the donor community for their continuous support and confidence in SOPAC in past
46 and future years, in particular AusAID, NZAID, EU, JICA, UN; to name a few. Fiji also noted that
47 various projects undertaken by the Secretariat have touched the lives of families and villages in
48 various communities in our Island nations. These benefits were made possible through the
49 donors contributions in funding, manpower expertise and training of local staff.

1 The Secretariat acknowledged with thanks the continuous support from both New Caledonia and
2 French Polynesia via their voluntary contributions to SOPAC. French Polynesia requested that in
3 future this paper should include the voluntary contributions from the associate membership and
4 that they were committed to paying their voluntary contribution of \$20,000 annually.
5

6 Papua New Guinea expressed concern at some of the recovery procedures on doubtful and bad
7 debts being proposed in paper AS36/10.2.2.1 Supplementary, which had just been received by
8 Council. This was an issue having wide-ranging impact on membership and he would have
9 preferred an earlier submission of the document to members. These things have to be considered
10 carefully; and being aware of how many countries were going through very serious financial
11 difficulties, it was important to look at the recovery procedures thoroughly and maybe make
12 comments out of session as Papua New Guinea would like to fully respond to some of these
13 proposals.
14

15 The Secretariat acknowledged that the supplementary paper had just been circulated, and this
16 was because the document (the Guidelines and Procedures Manual) was received in Suva just
17 prior to the departure for Tonga, it was still in draft format and would be the operational manual to
18 accompany the Financial Regulations. The document was substantial and was available to
19 Council electronically at this point.
20

21 Samoa was glad to see that there were now proposed steps to recover outstanding member
22 contributions which had become a concern as some overdue arrears went as far back as seven
23 years. She also supported penalising those who had accumulated their dues to SOPAC and
24 welcomed the gesture by member countries to settle their contributions as soon as possible.
25

26 Australia wanted it noted that in terms of considering the additional attachment to the paper in
27 AS36/10.2.2.1 Supplementary from the Financial Regulations they echoed Papua New Guinea's
28 concerns about it and that more time was necessary to fully digest what was being proposed (see
29 under agenda item 11.3 for Council decision with respect to these concerns).
30

31 Council received the Status of Membership Contributions report, and recommended that the
32 Chair of Governing Council request the countries with significant longstanding arrears to assume
33 responsibility in ensuring that membership contributions be paid on time.
34

35 36 *10.2.2.2 Membership Contributions Increase* 37

38 The Secretariat introduced paper AS36/10.2.2.2 and presented to Council a case for increasing
39 the current, assessed membership contribution by 10% relative to that set and agreed by Council
40 at its 29th Annual Session (2000).
41

42 Papua New Guinea responded to the paper by saying that although Papua New Guinea valued
43 what SOPAC does, he was not totally convinced by the reasons given for the proposed increase
44 and would like to see some increase in SOPAC involvement in Papua New Guinea. However if
45 Council members agreed then Papua New Guinea would support it.
46

47 New Zealand queried the proposed increase, noting that the meeting had heard earlier about
48 challenges some members have had in meeting current contributions. Further, the RIF process
49 was to be considered and perhaps this was not an appropriate time to consider an increase in
50 membership contributions.
51

52 Samoa advised that it did not accept an increase to member country assessed contributions in
53 light of the recent Forum outcome on the Regional Institutional Framework and particularly given
54 this period of uncertainty as to the future of SOPAC. Samoa added that she had difficulties with

1 agreeing to increase assessed member contributions when already the Secretariat was having a
2 difficult time in trying to get members to settle their dues on time. Whilst she recognised that the
3 extra funds will be welcoming to SOPAC, she felt that even without the increase, the Secretariat
4 would still be able to provide the level and quality of its current services to member countries.
5

6 The Republic of Marshall Islands recalled the SOPAC programme presentations during the last
7 two days and the need for more resources was apparent. He was of the view that countries
8 requesting assistance from SOPAC should in principle be supportive of the increase. He went on
9 to endorse the proposed 10 % increase.
10

11 Fiji enquired if additional funds could not be found from within the organisation using other
12 means.
13

14 Nauru mentioned that they were already facing difficulty in trying to come up with the necessary
15 funds to settle their outstanding membership contribution and whilst 10% may seem minimal to
16 some SOPAC member countries, to the Nauru Government it would be a substantial increase and
17 add further to their current financial burden.
18

19 Niue also indicated their financial situation would make it difficult for Niue to support a 10%
20 increase in membership contributions.
21

22 The Cooks Islands, Palau, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu supported the Secretariat paper
23 and endorsed the 10% increase in membership contributions.
24

25 Tuvalu's support was based on Tuvalu being one of the most vulnerable countries to natural
26 hazards and the delegate felt that it must contribute to efforts on adaptation.
27

28 Council agreed with New Zealand's suggestion to revise the recommendation as follows:

29 "that Council recognised the pressures on the Secretariat in light of significant expansion of
30 staff and programme resources and requested the Director to explore all avenues so that all
31 new project funding and contribution arrangements include adequate provision for support
32 service requirements."
33

34 35 **11. ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

36 **11.1 Regional Institutional Framework**

37 Chair introduced the item advising Council members to treat the item as being of critical
38 importance to the Commission. Furthermore he informed members that due to this he would be
39 allowing time for every delegation to make an intervention (even several as the case may be) and
40 urged Council members to be clear and concise when making comments.

41 Chair's instruction to the Secretariat with respect to the minuting of this agenda item was that a
42 summary of what Council agreed would be part of the summary record, while a verbatim record of
43 all substantive interventions was to be prepared for appending in full to the Proceedings of the
44 SOPAC 36th Session (see [Appendix 7](#)).

45 Chair invited the Director of SOPAC Secretariat to introduce papers AS36/11.1; AS36/11.1
46 Suppl.1; AS36/11.1 Suppl.2; and AS36/11.1 Suppl.3; and provide the context to each for the
47 benefit of newly-arrived Council members, and CROP agencies who were in attendance only to
48 participate in this agenda item.

49 Papua New Guinea was also invited to address Council in their capacity as Chair of the RIF Task
50 Force. Most of what he said was already part of meeting documentation in paper AS36/11.1.

1 From the outset Papua New Guinea informed Council that his brief was to engage in a process
2 which would “mutually benefit” and be palatable to all.

3 Chair then encouraged all member country representatives to make interventions, most of whom
4 read short written statements (see **Appendices 4 and 7**).

5 The majority wanted to respond positively to the Leaders’ decision; and generally agreed that the
6 processes for rationalisation neither disrupt service delivery; nor subject SOPAC’s current work
7 programmes to fragmentation; and that the excellent science being mobilised through the STAR
8 network must be retained as a highly valued resource for the region.

9 While most small island member states were against attaching timelines to the rationalisation
10 processes because they didn’t want the current level of service delivery diminished; a handful of
11 the larger countries felt that delaying would cause the very disruption they were hoping to avoid.
12 Different views were discussed on various other issues, including around the role of the SOPAC
13 Governing Council and the Secretary General of Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in the process
14 of taking forward the leaders’ decision.

15 At various stages during these discussions the Chairs of STAR and PMEG; and the chief
16 executives of SPREP and SPC, were invited to address Council to assist it in getting some clarity
17 and clear direction on the best way forward for implementing the Leaders’ decision. The
18 Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat had addressed Council earlier on
19 before departing the meeting to catch a flight. He provided background to the Leaders’ decision
20 and offered his assistance in the rationalisation process.

21 Council sat as a Committee of the Whole to consider the recommendations in paper AS36/11.1
22 Suppl. which was agreed to be a good starting point for drawing out a set of guiding principles for
23 the way forward. After much discussion and debate from afternoon tea until after 8 pm, the
24 Committee of the Whole finally adjourned after deciding to re-look at the text being negotiated
25 with fresh eyes at 8:00 am the next morning.

26 The Secretariat was asked to clean up the text of the recommendations and provide copies to
27 delegations overnight, so they might have more time to mull over it before re-convening over the
28 same issue in the morning.

29 In conclusion Council:

30 (i) noted that the core business of SOPAC is excellence in applied scientific and technical
31 information and knowledge of earth systems, and demonstrating how this knowledge
32 contributes to sustainable development for its island members.
33

34 (ii) noted that SOPAC has grown substantially over the past 35 years in many aspects into a
35 well-established, and well respected regional organisation serving its Pacific Island
36 members in developing natural resources, principally non-living resources, in a sustainable
37 manner and strengthening resilience through integrated solutions in its three programme
38 areas: Ocean and Islands management, Community Lifelines development and Community
39 Risk management.
40

41 (iii) recognised that partners currently identify with SOPAC to the extent that the Commission
42 now enjoys a substantial, annual budget which includes the attraction of non-traditional
43 “new” money to support service delivery to its members.
44

45 (iv) recognised further that throughout its existence the Commission has been regularly
46 “reviewed” in regard to its future, its role, and its direction, to which it has responded
47 positively and emerged with improved and strengthened delivery of services to its members.
48

49 (v) noted that some members expressed concern that whilst the 2007 Leaders’ Communiqué
50 does not call for a review of SOPAC, it in fact goes further to suggest radical changes to

1 SOPAC, but is not supported by any evidence of due diligence and consideration by
2 members during the RIF process.

- 3
- 4 (vi) acknowledged with concern that change processes increase demands on the Secretariat,
5 and cause stress on the staff, that will impact current levels of service delivery.
6
- 7 (vii) is fully cognisant of the need to maintain the momentum established by the Leaders
8 decision, in order to ensure the continuity in both the quality and effective delivery of service
9 in meeting the needs of the people.
10
- 11 (viii) recognised the critical need to adhere to a set of principles of:
12
 - 13 • Transparency;
 - 14 • Timeliness;
 - 15 • Cost effectiveness;
 - 16 • Focus on the RIF objective of creating an institutional framework that further improves
17 service delivery to PICTS and assists with effective implementation of the Pacific Plan;
 - 18 • Consideration of staff welfare;
 - 19 • The need to address the full range of legal, organisational, administrative, governance,
20 membership and financial implications.

21 Council therefore:

- 22
- 23 1. Agreed to accept the challenge offered by the 2007 Leaders' Communiqué which states
24 "the need to rationalise the functions of SOPAC with the work programmes of SPC and
25 SPREP, with the view to absorbing those functions of SOPAC into SPC and SPREP".
26
- 27 2. Agreed the following course of action as a way forward in responding to the Leaders'
28 decision:
29
- 30 (i) Agreed that a Committee of the "SOPAC Council as a Whole", be established and
31 adequately resourced, to guide and advise the Director during the consultative
32 process with the Terms of Reference to be agreed at its first meeting.
33
- 34 (ii) Agreed that the Director of SOPAC engage in a consultative process with the Director
35 General of SPC and Director of SPREP, with the option of engaging the Secretary
36 General of PIFS as appropriate, providing regular briefings to the Chair of SOPAC
37 Governing Council in the preparation of a draft road map to be submitted to the
38 SOPAC Governing Council for consideration and approval with the intent of a final
39 road map submitted to the Forum by 2010.
40
- 41 (iii) Agreed that during this consultative process some of the issues to be considered will
42 include:
43
 - 44 • Proposing possible options for rationalisation and possible organisational models
45 for the new arrangements taking into account realities such as the wider range of
46 technical programmes, the possible rationalisation of certain common support
47 services, the geographic location, and the membership differences.
 - 48 • Examining the costs and benefits of the options considered during the process,
49 the technical programmes, the memberships, and the external supporting
50 agencies, identifying opportunities for improved service delivery.
 - 51 • Proposing a realistic timing for implementation that would need to be taken into
52 account including practical, legal, contractual obligations, and or any other
53 problems that might require prior resolution as a result of rationalisation.
 - Finding a mechanism that will enable the benefits of STAR to be continued.

- 1
2 (iv) Agreed to emphasise to all stakeholders, especially members, donor partners, and
3 Secretariat staff that in the interim the Commission would continue with its current
4 work and efforts to secure resources for sustained service delivery keeping in mind
5 consultations with the Director General of SPC and Director of SPREP.
6
7 (v) Agreed to immediately respond by writing to the Forum Chair, Chairs of the SPC and
8 SPREP Governing Councils, Chair of STAR, donor partners and key stakeholders
9 advising of the outcomes of its consideration of the issue at the 2007 Council Meeting.
10

11 **11.2 CROP Annual Remuneration Review Report**

12 13 *11.2.1 Professional Staff*

14
15 The Directorate introduced AS 36/11.2.1 on CROP remuneration Review Report which included
16 the proposed salary adjustments agreed by CROP Heads at their meeting of August 2007, with
17 respect to professional staff. Council was advised that SOPAC participated in the CROP
18 harmonisation process along with other CROP agencies.

19 New Zealand agreed with the recommendations and commended the Secretariat's involvement
20 in the remuneration harmonisation exercise. New Zealand also noted that other CROP governing
21 bodies had endorsed the decision for the proposed salary adjustment except for SPBEA due to
22 affordability issues.
23

24 Cook Islands, Fiji and Tonga concurred with the New Zealand comments and also agreed to the
25 recommendations made in the paper.
26

27 Australia thanked the Secretariat for preparing the paper and concurred with the other delegates
28 in that this was a good example of CROP harmonisation.
29

30 Samoa recommended that Council endorse the recommendations as they stand, and Papua New
31 Guinea seconded.
32

33 Council

- 34 1. approved the application of 80% of the average of the 3 reference markets as outlined in
35 Table 4 in accordance with the CROP consensus.
36 2. approved that salary adjustments be effective from 1 January 2008.
37

38 39 *11.2.2 Support Staff*

40
41 The Directorate introduced AS36/11.2.2 on CROP Remuneration Review Report which includes
42 the proposed salary adjustments agreed by CROP Heads at their meeting of August 2007, with
43 respect to support staff.
44

45 Council was advised on the 2006 Support Staff Triennial Review undertaken by
46 PriceWaterhouseCoopers and confirmed that the Fiji All Organisations Market is the appropriate
47 market against which the Suva-based support staff salary scale should be benchmarked. At their
48 meeting of 27 August 2007, CROP Heads agreed to increases for support staff.
49

50 New Zealand reiterated his previous comments that the sums involved are comparatively small
51 and it is imperative that the hard work of SOPAC's staff be recognised. New Zealand
52 recommended accepting the recommendations, and was seconded by the Cook Islands.

1
2 Council :

- 3 1. approved the increases as outlined in Table 2 in accordance with the CROP consensus.
4 2. approved that salary adjustments be effective from 1 January 2008.

5
6
7 **11.3 Report on Review of the Financial Regulations**
8

9 The Secretariat introduced AS36/11.3 noting the 2006 Review of the Financial Regulations
10 submitted at the 35th Session. The Regulations had been circulated for comments and no further
11 comments had been received. He referred to the Financial Guidelines and Procedures Manual,
12 which had just been received from the Auditor prior to the meeting. The Guidelines and
13 Procedures Manual was available for Council to review however, due to the large size of the
14 document he recommended that digital (rather than hard) copies be obtained from the
15 Secretariat.

16
17 Australia referred Council to paper AS36/10.2.2.2.1 on the status of membership contributions;
18 requested clarification on whether the attachment to the paper had been lifted out of Guidelines
19 and Procedures Manual or the Financial Regulations. She agreed to look at the documents out of
20 session.

21
22 The Secretariat clarified that the Financial Regulations was a policy document whereas the
23 Guidelines and Procedures Manual was what the Secretariat would apply during day-to-day
24 business. The attachment to paper AS36/10.2.2.2 referred to by Australia was from the
25 Guidelines and Procedures Manual. The Secretariat also noted that there were opportunities to
26 discuss this further with the Suva-based missions.

27
28 New Zealand in light of Australia's response noted that amendments to the Manual could take
29 place as an inter-sessional discussion on AS36/11.3.

30
31 Cook Islands moved for Council to accept the recommendation.

32
33 Council approved the amended SOPAC Financial Regulations and agreed to consider the related
34 Financial Guidelines and Procedures Manual inter-sessionally.

35
36 **11.4 Secretariat Accommodation and Related Institutional Issues**
37

38 The Directorate introduced Agenda AS36/11.4 on Secretariat Accommodation and Related
39 Institutional Issues. Council was informed that due to the expansion of the work programmes the
40 Secretariat urgently needed space. Council was reminded that it had approved the use of savings
41 to construct a building however, due to the situation in Fiji in December 2006, when construction
42 of the building was due to begin, the exercise has been deferred indefinitely. Ideally, the
43 Secretariat did intend to relocate the organisation as a whole to maintain the integration of the
44 programmes to another location, although costs were prohibitive. Subsequently, with the
45 agreement of the Mineral Resources Department, an old warehouse was refurbished and the
46 Community Risk Programme operations moved there in 2007. The Secretariat also informed
47 Council that discussions with MRD and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade were favourable and
48 a positive outcome on accommodation was anticipated.

49
50 On matters relating to the Agreement Establishing SOPAC and issues relating to it, the
51 Secretariat reported that Council at its 35th Session formed an open-ended subcommittee of
52 Suva-based missions to prepare a revision for circulation and consideration before the 36th

1 Session. In July the subcommittee met to discuss the matter; and in light of the RIF process and
2 the implications for SOPAC, the subcommittee agreed to defer further work on the Agreement.

3
4 On the Memorandum of Understanding between SOPAC and Fiji, this matter was also deferred
5 for the same reasons.

6
7 The Secretariat also presented the key findings of two independent reviews of (1) SOPAC's
8 Communications Strategy; and (2) Human Resources Management Capability. Contracts for the
9 reviews were awarded to SAMBA! and PriceWaterhouseCooper, respectively.

10
11 Council:

- 12 1. acknowledged the urgent, immediate need for additional office space to ensure effective work
13 programme delivery and requested the Secretariat to work closely with the Government of Fiji
14 as host Government of the SOPAC Secretariat to explore appropriate options.
- 15 2. decided that in light of the Leaders' decision with respect to the RIF, the intent to review and
16 amend the Agreement Establishing SOPAC; and to develop an MoU between SOPAC and
17 the Government of Fiji, be deferred indefinitely.
- 18 3. recognised and encouraged the proactive measures being undertaken by the Secretariat to
19 strengthen its Human Resources Management and its Communications and Outreach
20 functions and noting the role of PMEG, as it strives to enhance programme and project
21 delivery.
- 22 4. noted that implementation of specific recommendations under the two independent reviews
23 would have financial implications on the core budget.

24 25 **12. 2008 WORKPLAN AND BUDGET**

26 27 **12.1 Reserve Fund Ceiling**

28
29 The Manager of Corporate Services referred Council to paper AS36/12.1 reporting to Council, as
30 required, the annual ceiling on the Reserve Fund. He noted the relevance of this fund to Financial
31 Regulation 14. Having explained the assumptions underlying the value, he reminded Council that
32 it had agreed in previous meetings to maintain the reserve at FJ\$400 000.

33
34 The delegate for the Cook Islands acknowledged the interventions of Council in previous years
35 and recommended support for the recommendation of the Secretariat.

36
37 Council agreed that the Reserve Fund ceiling remain at FJD 400,000.

38 39 40 **12.2 Approval of 2008 Work Plan and Budget**

41
42 The Deputy Director introduced paper AS36/12.2 on the draft 2008 Work Plan and Budget, noting
43 that this paper had been revised following discussion by Council earlier in the week on item
44 10.2.2.2 (Membership Contributions Increase). He reminded Council that Programme Managers
45 had already highlighted key activities of the 2008 Work Plan under session items 7.2, 8.2 and 9.2.
46 The Manager of Corporate Services then presented further detail on the budget for 2008, noting
47 unsecured funding and efforts to cover these through savings and other means.

48
49 The delegate for Australia thanked the Secretariat for the presentations and congratulated it on its
50 impressive progress against the 2007 Work Plan. She also reminded the Secretariat of
51 recommendations made earlier in the Session to appropriately resource the PMEG mechanism to

1 enable it to further evaluate SOPAC work programmes, especially in relation to outcomes at the
2 national level, as well as operations at the headquarters level.

3
4 The delegate for the Cook Islands acknowledged the comments by Australia and noted with
5 pleasure the amount of funds that the Secretariat had been able to secure, highlighting that, for
6 the past three years, 98 per cent of funds had been secured. He moved for Council to accept the
7 recommendations in paper AS36/12.2 and invited the Secretariat to commence work.

8
9 The delegate for Vanuatu thanked the Secretariat for its explanation of the 2008 Work Plan and
10 Budget and for its hard work in securing funds to implement the work for member countries.

11
12 Council considered and approved the 2007 Revised Budget of \$18,404,082 and the 2008
13 Work Plan and Budget of \$30,126,987.

14 15 **13. OTHER BUSINESS**

16
17 The Secretariat referred to paper AS36/13.1 on the constitution of PMEG under the technical
18 programmes. The concept of PMEG and their terms of engagement were approved at the 33rd
19 Annual Session of SOPAC in 2004; and 2007 was the third year of PMEG engagement.

20
21 The Secretariat suggested that the process of engagement of PMEG members be a rolling one
22 with perhaps a PMEG member moving out each year; and reported that PMEG chairs had
23 suggested greater involvement of island nations with a request that there be at least one PIC
24 national (with strong expertise and interest in a relevant area) in each PMEG. The suggestion
25 was welcome and has had support through discussions under agenda items AS36/7.3, 8.3 and
26 9.3.

27
28 Papua New Guinea, while acknowledging the usefulness of guiding the Secretariat, expressed
29 reservation at involving only Suva-based missions. He preferred that resources be found to
30 engage home-based nationals.

31
32 Council

- 33 • noted the invaluable role played by PMEG in their assessment and refinement of
34 SOPAC's technical programme and thanked PMEG members for their voluntary service
35 over the past three years.
- 36 • instructed the Secretariat to commence discussions with PMEG, STAR, TAG for suitable
37 nominations with regard to replacement noting the need for continuity and the greater
38 involvement of member countries in the PMEG process, with a view to agreeing these
39 inter-sessionally.

40 41 42 **14. VENUE AND DATE OF 37th ANNUAL SESSION**

43
44 The delegate from Tuvalu informed Council that his Government intended to host the 37th SOPAC
45 Annual Session, and he was going to be liaising closely with the Secretariat regarding dates and
46 other details at a more appropriate time. This intent is documented in Tuvalu's Country Statement
47 to the SOPAC 36th Session (see [Appendix 4](#)).

48
49 Council acknowledged Tuvalu's intent to host the 37th Annual Session of the Governing Council of
50 SOPAC by acclamation.

1 **15. ADOPTION OF AGREED RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

2 Since the meeting schedule had been exceeded by more than twelve hours, there was therefore
3 no time to produce the record of the final day's discussions; and for the Drafting Committee to
4 complete its work. Council agreed to the suggestion by the Director that this item be considered
5 out of session. With the exception of Samoa, Guam and Tonga, the Drafting Committee chaired
6 by Tuvalu all have Suva-based representatives. The Director proposed that the Drafting
7 Committee meet in Suva the following week to clear the summary record for agenda items 11 to
8 16, with a view to sending out the full summary record for whole-of-Council clearance over the
9 holiday period.

10

11 **16. CLOSING**

12

13 Chair invited the SOPAC Director to make final comments. The SOPAC Director thanked the
14 Chair for his stewardship of the meeting. She acknowledged the long hours that delegates had
15 invested in the meeting, thanking Council for the clear directives they had given her for 2008.

16

17 She thanked the PMEG groups and the STAR for their contributions throughout the week. She
18 expressed particular thanks to the Government of Tonga for hosting the session and thanked the
19 Government of Tuvalu for offering to host the next session in 2008. She finished by thanking the
20 staff of the SOPAC Secretariat for their support to her throughout the year and at the meeting.

21

22 Chair thanked all the delegates for their patience during the session, acknowledging the
23 importance of the issues that had been discussed. He thanked the Director of SOPAC for her
24 assistance and advice throughout the meeting. He then thanked the SOPAC staff for their service
25 to the meeting, as well as the staff of the various departments of the Government of Tonga for
26 their assistance and logistical support of the SOPAC 36th Session.

27

28 He acknowledged the efforts of the chairs of the STAR and PMEG groups who had assisted
29 throughout the meeting. He looked forward to carrying out his duties as Chair during 2008.

30

31 Fiji offered the vote of thanks on behalf of Council to the Chair for his work throughout the
32 meeting, attributing the achievements of the meeting to the excellent stewardship from the head
33 table.

34

35 The Chair declared the 36th Annual Session of the SOPAC Governing Council closed at 4:16 pm,
36 Thursday, 29 November 2007.