



# SPREP-tok

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'tok' being island pidgin English for talk...

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*This newsletter, SPREP-tok, includes a list of monthly e-brief headlines that were published since the first edition in July 2006. Called 'SPREP Highlights', full stories can be found on the SPREP website. Let us know if you would like to be on the electronic mailing list.*

*SPREP-tok is available also on the SPREP website. We welcome suggestions for improvement and contributions in the form of text and pictures.*

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## Climate Change:

### The Pacific Region Learns to Adapt

If there is one environmental issue that threatens to cripple atoll countries and territories in the Pacific Islands region, it's climate change. While the wider scientific fraternity continues to wrangle over climate change details, the Pacific, let alone the world, cannot ignore the looming threat. Current signs are that it is already impacting Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) and the region is learning to adapt to changes.

Espen Ronneberg, SPREP's new Climate Change Advisor, is adamant that climate change is and will continue to be a Pacific threat: "...the impacts [of climate change] has the potential to undermine all past, present and future efforts that we make at sustainable development to build a better economic future in the region," Espen says.



The Pacific region presents a cocktail of challenges by virtue of its topographical makeup, reduced capacity to deal with environmental change, and a general lack of local expertise. Recent media reports highlight the incalculable costs of climate change that would impact on policy decisions and the ethics associated with the causes and impacts of this global problem.

A 29 October 2006 article in the Samoa newspaper, *Newsline*, quotes the 2005 Stern Report by English economist Sir Nicholas Stern that climate change could cost the global economy up to 3.68 trillion pounds or US\$7 trillion (that's 7 million million US

*continued on p. 4*

# Micronesia sets its Environment Agenda

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is driving environmental solidarity among its constituents in the North Pacific region, aiming to reinforce stakeholder partnerships. A national environment conference in Pohnpei

brought together partners with a common interest in boosting sustainable

environmental stewardship in the North Pacific.

The October conference set an environmental agenda for the four FSM States of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap.

Twenty-four resolutions were generated under three themes - biodiversity, sustainable management and climate change.

SPREP Director Asterio

Takesy was at the meeting with Island Biodiversity Officer Ana Tiraa, and Pollution Prevention and Waste Management Advisor Frank Griffin, to provide support and advice on SPREP services.

Marion Henry, Assistant Secretary for Resource Management and Development of the FSM Department of Economic Affairs

chaired the conference. He expressed good agreement between the FSM national government and conservation agencies over environment goals relating to the wider Pacific Region. The Micronesia Challenge has the capacity to galvanise support and



integrate environmental ideas into the political arena and development processes. First announced by Palau President Tommy Remengesau Jr, the initiative aims to boost conservation work

in Palau and neighbouring FSM, Guam, the Marshall Islands and the Northern Mariana Islands. In the

face of major

conservation issues, the bold initiative challenges the Micronesian countries and territories to conserve 30 percent of their marine resources and 20 percent of forest cover by 2020.

FSM Vice-President Redley Killion highlighted the move during the global 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the

Parties to the Convention on Biological Biodiversity in Brazil in March 2006.

“The Micronesia Challenge is going to be the core of our efforts,” said Willy Kostka, Director of the Micronesia Conservation Trust. One successful example of collaborative partnership across Micronesia is the Protected Area Network initiative, which started in early 2006.

Mr Henry adds: “There is a growing realisation on the part of government now that we need the involvement of communities: they are the true owners and beneficiaries of natural resources; and NGOs are our representatives in this area.”

One of these NGOs, the Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation, offers an opportunity to bridge partnerships and support the implementation of the Island Biodiversity Programme of Work in the Pacific islands region.

The FSM environmental conference is to take place every two years. The 2008 session will be held in either Chuuk or Kosrae.



*For details on the resolutions, contact the FSM Department of Economic Affairs - [fsmdea@mail.fm](mailto:fsmdea@mail.fm)*

*“There is growing realisation on the part of government now that we need the involvement of communities: they are the true resource owners and beneficiaries of natural resources...”  
Marion Henry*

# Pacific in line with Global Marine Pollution Protocols

The 17<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting in New Caledonia in September 2006 saw several achievements. One success involved three marine pollution protocols that were mostly brought into line with their global equivalent, a move requested by Member countries party to both the regional and global instruments. These protocols will reduce potential conflicts arising from inconsistencies that existed in their previous versions.



signed. The document is open for a year for further signatures. After that it's open for ratification," Sefanaia added. The revised Protocol on pollution by dumping now takes a tighter approach. It specifies the types of materials that can be safely dumped into the ocean. Materials that don't make the safe list are required to undergo a permitting process to determine their safety level. The Protocols are dependent on national government policies that need to be in place.

The two new instruments are the: Protocol on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in the Pacific Region; and the Protocol on Hazardous and Noxious Substances Pollution, Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in the Pacific Region. The amended protocol is the Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution of the Pacific Region by Dumping. SPREP's obligation to Member countries under these new instruments remains unchanged.

SPREP's Marine Pollution Advisor, Sefanaia Nawadra, says that the updates "reaffirms the region's intent to address the issues that fall under the Protocols."

"We're quite satisfied with the number of countries that have

In the latter part of 2006, SPREP has been working with Tuvalu and the Federated States of Micronesia through in-country training. A national contingency plan was drafted for Tuvalu. In the process of sifting through Tuvalu's national legislations, it was discovered that a 1991 Act - the Marine Pollution Prevention Act, existed, although inactive.

"Since a lot of the institutional arrangements have changed, we reviewed the responsibilities that the departments of environment and marine need to carry out to enforce the Act. Situations differ in each country. Sometimes you discover things when you are actually in the country you're assisting." Shipping ports pose a different challenge. In some Pacific

Island countries, ports no longer fall under government rule.

SPREP's involvement with ports authorities in the past four years has been through the Association of Pacific Ports. An APP environment working group that SPREP are advisors to now exists.

Pacific ports are now implementing the following: environment management plans and a ship's waste reception arrangement. Sefanaia says that the next move is looking at contingency plans to oversee small spills that are the responsibility of individual facilities such as oil terminals, ports, power plants or other facility that stores oil in bulk. Nawadra urges Member countries to rectify and sign the Protocols.



## 17<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting Reports



The 17<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting and associated meeting Reports are now available on the SPREP website in English and in French. Included is the Approved 2007 Work Plan and Budget. Other than the report on the Waigani Convention (which has no francophone parties), all documents are printed in both languages. They can be found at - <http://www.sprep.org/COP-SPREP-meetings/Index.htm>

*Climate: continued from p. 1*

dollars) if drastic action is not taken. Already international governments are imposing green taxes and other measures to curb greenhouse gas emissions. The eventual blows that these emissions will strike on the global environment will ignore nations' boundaries.

Pacific leaders are demanding on behalf of their people that the international community take notice. Kiribati President Anote Tong voiced his concern at this year's Pacific Leaders' Forum that was held in Nadi, Fiji. President Tong cautioned Australia and New Zealand of

a mass exodus of Kiribati nationals to the two developed Pacific nations within the next 10 years, if the coastline surrounding the low-lying atoll continues to erode through rising sea levels. It has forced some islanders to shift further inland. Kiribati is not the only vulnerable Pacific country and while the pollution rages, the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are focusing energies towards climate change adaptation.

A three-person Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) team

visited 11 PICs over a four-month span to assist them in defining one key area each that needed strengthening to cope with climatic change.

The consultation team consisted of Taito Nakalevu, SPREP's Climate Change Adaptation Officer; Misa

Andriamihaja of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and PACC Consultant, Dr Graham Sem. Of the 11 PICs under the PACC project, Cook Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu and the Federated States of



*"Pacific Island countries are likely to adjust to a certain amount of hardship, but whether they would be able to cope with a combination of different types of hardship happening at the same time is uncertain." Espen Ronneberg*

Micronesia agreed for the PACC project to pilot climate change adaptation

in each of their coastal zones. Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands will prioritise food production and food security for adaptation intervention. Nauru, Niue, Tuvalu and Tonga will focus on water resource management.

The Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) have pledged their full support and have agreed to work with SPREP in the development and implementation phases of PACC. The PACC framework

Espen says that there is scientific consensus on greenhouse effects and on the fact that climate change is occurring. But speculation remains on whether global temperatures will continue to be a gradual increase or whether there will be surprise events. "For example, we know that coral reefs and island ecosystems can naturally adapt within certain limits, but we don't know what happens when you hit those perimeters very fast.

"Pacific Island countries are likely to adapt and adjust to a certain amount of hardship, but whether they would be able to cope with a combination of different types of hardship happening at the same time is uncertain," he says.

"SPREP is pursuing several 'no-regrets policies'. These are policies that have direct impact on a country's resilience to climate change and making such resilience-building policies part of the national development portfolio. But there are policies that make sense in their own right, for example, policies relating to waste and water management that also impact on a country's resilience to climate change.

"As with any of the adaptations that we're discussing with PICs, the policies need to be locally sensitive and tailored to the specific conditions of each country."



# Partnerships Strengthened through Education for Sustainable Development

The sustainable use of the Pacific's natural resources relies on a myriad of influences. The role of education in supporting decision-making processes is experiencing a resurgence with a renewed focus on a learning approach called Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

ESD aims to encourage people to think through their actions, through critical and systems thinking, advocates for reorienting of curricula with broader systematic approaches, and promotes participatory skills. ESD advocates for an action-oriented approach, encourages partnerships and collaboration between agencies promoting sustainable development. The period 2005 to 2014 is the UN Decade for ESD and UNESCO is the lead agency.

Sustainable development acknowledges the need for growth; at the same time it cautions the need to use resources in ways that will not reduce the enjoyment of these resources by future generations.

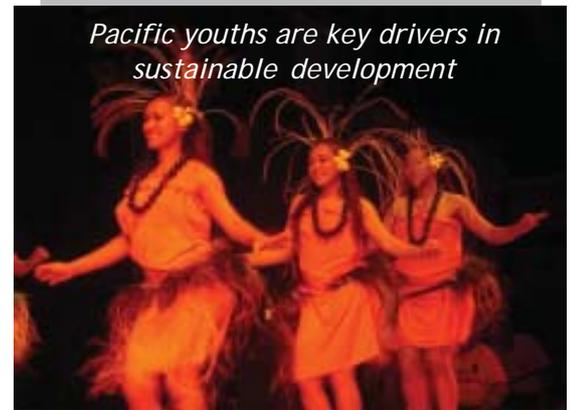
The fresh learning technique builds on the foundation of environmental education by highlighting the role of critical thought in making decisions about how to properly use natural resources.

In September 2006, Pacific Education Ministers endorsed the Pacific Framework for Education for Sustainable Development (PFESD). The Framework was prepared by a Working Group comprised of key partners, including SPREP. PFESD identifies three key priority areas: formal education and training, community-based education and policy development, and innovation. The Framework can be used by both national and regional organisations to identify priority initiatives for implementation in ESD within the Pacific.

Consultation has taken place with a variety of stakeholders from regional to community organisations, governments, educators and the private sector.

With UNESCO as the lead agency, the ESD Framework sets a course of coordinated action for ESD until 2014. In 2007, SPREP will work with its Members to develop a focussed response, based on the key actions and priorities highlighted by SPREP's Member countries.

Perhaps ESD can reinvigorate us to revisit our priorities, the decisions that we make, how we arrive at these decisions,



*Pacific youths are key drivers in sustainable development*

what we should do differently, among other concerns. The result is an able group of individuals making sound decisions to ensure sustainable use of our natural resources, and who can take the lead at the community and national levels. ESD brings the focus back onto communications and education to promote sustainable development and advocates for an action oriented approach for change.



*"Rubbish is a Resource! A Waste Resource Kit for the Pacific Islands" aims to help by showing how to extract valuable resources from the waste stream.*

*The new Kit contains a DVD with many "waste" resources compiled by Alice Leney. He did the work on behalf of the International Waters Programme, which ends this year.*

*The other Kit component is a 64-page book containing the main text. Both DVD and printed book will be available soon, but the pdf of the main text is already accessible on the SPREP website.*





# Highlights

SPREP issues monthly electronic briefs called SPREP Highlights. Since the first edition of SPREP-tok came out in September with Highlights as an insert, more events have been publicised by email. Below is a list of news items you can access on the SPREP website. Through Highlights we aim to keep you in the loop on events that the Samoa-based regional Secretariat was involved during a given month.

## August - October 2006

- Lady Vini makes waves
- 4-year regional solid waste project
- Turtle trial database
- Plastic pains
- Whale and dolphin action plan
- Education for sustainable development
- Coastal resource management exchange programme
- 17th SPREP Meeting reports
- Tokelau tackles waste
- Marine pollution
- First FSM environment meeting
- Pacific Invasives Learning Network
- 17th annual SPREP Meeting in a nutshell
- Whale and dolphin conservation
- Year of Action Against Waste award
- International Waters Project video
- Environmental Protocols adopted
- Commemorative postage stamp
- SPREP-tok newsletter
- Sustainable land management in the Pacific
- International day of peace
- National marine workshop
- Guts and busts and fishing for nappies
- Samoa launches ozone legislation
- PEIN training attachment
- Pacific Islands community-based conservation course
- CROP heads meeting
- Free/open source software training
- Pacific adaptation to climate change project
- In-country assistance to Tonga - Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
- 11th regional meteorological services directors' meeting
- Island Life publication

## About SPREP

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is an inter-governmental organisation that works with Pacific Island Countries and Territories to strengthen environmental management and promote sustainable development. Its main focus areas are climate change, waste control, and biodiversity.

SPREP's 21 Pacific Island Member countries are: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna. As well there are four "metropolitan" members with interests in the region: Australia, France, New Zealand, and the United States.



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- p.5 Pacific Youth Festival, New Caledonia - Tamara Logan
- p.6 SPREP compound, Apia - Jaap Jasperse