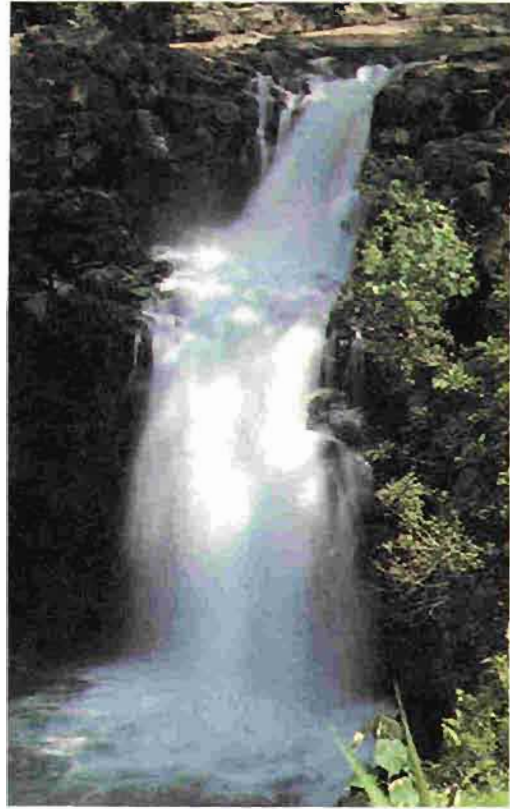


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**Fifth**  
**South Pacific Conference**  
**on Nature Conservation**  
**and Protected Areas**

4 - 8 October 1993



Volume 1:  
Conference Report

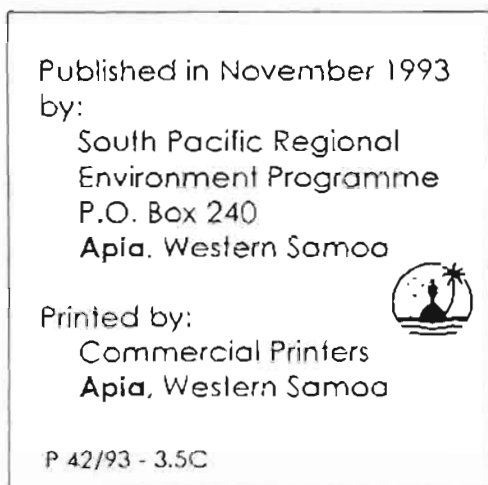


South Pacific Regional Environment Programme

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Original Text: English



Printed with financial assistance from the  
Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the  
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

#### USP Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas (5th - Nuku'alofa, Tonga)

Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. Volume 1, Conference report, 4-8 October 1993. Queen Salote Hall, Nuku'alofa, Tonga. - Apia, Western Samoa : SPREP, 1993.

vi, 49p. : 29 cm.

ISBN: 982-04-0004-X

I. Nature conservation - Oceania - Congresses 2. Conservation of natural resources - Oceania - Congresses 3. Environmental protection - Oceania - Congresses I. South Pacific Regional Environment Programme II. Title

QH77.O3S68

333.72'0995

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**Volume 1:**  
**Conference Report**

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NUKU'ALOFA, Tonga



# Foreword

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas held in Nuku'alofa, Kingdom of Tonga, on 4-8 October 1993, continued the series of conferences held in New Zealand (1975), Australia (1979), Western Samoa (1985) and Vanuatu (1989). Until the conference in Western Samoa, the series was known as the 'National Parks and Reserves' conferences. At the Western Samoan conference the name was changed to the present one, to better reflect the importance of the wider issues of biological diversity conservation to the region.

Decision-makers throughout the region are recognising the vulnerability of island environments to the rapid loss of biological diversity from growing human populations and introduction of new technologies. At the same time, it is apparent that without the integral involvement of local communities, conservation of biodiversity in the region will fail. In recognition of these needs, the theme for the Fifth Conference was "community involvement in conserving biodiversity in the South Pacific Region".

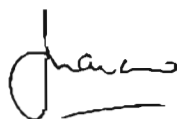
There have been a number of achievements in conserving the biological diversity of the region since the Fourth Conference in 1989, such as the coming into force of both the SPREP and Apia Conventions; the increasing number of Pacific island countries which have signed or ratified the international Convention on Biological Diversity (which came into force on 29 December 1993); and the increasing number of joint government, non-government and local community biodiversity conservation projects - many of which are described in these volumes.

In light of these major achievements, together with other regionally and locally significant events, Pacific Island countries must be commended. However there is no time for complacency. Conserving the region's biological diversity will continue to require urgent and ongoing action at all levels, from development and implementation of international conventions and agreements, through to local community involvement and control. The messages from the conference are clear - in particular the need to continue and improve the partnerships between government and non-government organisations and local communities, by building mutual trust and respect, and by giving priority to listening to local people. The challenge is to ensure that the right messages reach all people in the region, as well as encouraging support from people and organisations throughout the world.

The Conference reports comprise two parts. Part I covers the Conference proceedings, including the opening and closing sessions and resolutions, and summarises all the papers. Part II contains working papers, key issue papers, case studies and information papers presented in full.

Finally, I wish to express thanks to the sponsors of the Fifth Conference, to the Kingdom of Tonga for hosting the conference, and to the Federated States of Micronesia for offering to host the next conference.

I wish us all well in our continuing efforts to conserve the biodiversity of the region.



**Vili Fuavao**  
Director, SPREP

## **Acknowledgements**

SPREP gratefully acknowledges the major sponsor of the Conference: the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP), funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP). The Conference and/or its participants were also kindly sponsored by the Australian Nature Conservation Agency (ANCA), the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species Secretariat (CITES), the Australian Department of Environment, Sport and Tourism (DEST), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), the New Zealand Maori Society, the United States Agency for International Development Biodiversity Support Program (US AID's BSP), and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

SPREP also thanks the Kingdom of Tonga for hosting the Conference.

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# 1. Introduction

The vast South Pacific region consists of twenty two island states and territories scattered over a 29 million square kilometre area, roughly the size of Africa. Oceanic areas are vast and land covers only 550 000 square kilometres, or a mere 87 000 square kilometres if the largest country, Papua New Guinea is excluded. The majority of states and territories have land areas of less than 1 000 square kilometres and several less than 100 square kilometres.

The region is beset with environmental problems. Consequently there is an enormous task ahead to ensure that biological resources are conserved. The series of conferences, of which this is the fifth, enables the region to focus on issues relating to conservation and sustainable development. Importantly, this conference highlights the need for local community involvement in the conservation of biodiversity. This is indicated in the theme of the conference, "community involvement in conserving biodiversity in the South Pacific Region". This theme is an extension of the theme from the fourth conference, "the role of protected areas in sustaining Pacific Island societies".

The conference was organised by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in conjunction with the host country, the Kingdom of Tonga. The major sponsor was the Global Environment Facility through the United Nations Development Programme. Other sponsors include the Australian International Development Aid Bureau (AIDAB), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), World Conservation Union (IUCN), United States Agency for International Development's Biodiversity Support Program (US AID's BSP), Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), Australian Nature Conservation Agency (ANCA) and the Australian Department of Environment, Sport and Territories (DEST). The success of the conference was largely due to the support and generosity of these sponsors. We wish to extend our grateful thanks to these organisations and to the Kingdom of Tonga for hosting the conference.

An offer to host the Sixth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas has been made by the country representative from the Federated States of Micronesia.

## Format of conference proceedings

This is Part I of two parts which comprise the Conference reports. Part I covers the Conference proceedings, including the opening and closing sessions and resolutions, and summarises all the papers. Part II contains working papers, key issue papers, case studies and information papers presented in full.

## 2. Opening Session

### 2.1 Opening Ceremony

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas was held at the Queen Salote Hall from 4-8 October 1993. The Conference was attended by approximately 120 participants, representing Governments, regional and local Non-Government Organisations, and other institutions and individuals. The meeting was honoured by the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Nanasipau'u 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata; the Honourable Dr. Ma'afu Tupou, Minister for Lands, Survey and Natural Resources; and the Noble Vahai.

Rev Dr 'Alifaleti Mone, Secretary of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, led the opening prayers, scripture readings, hymns and benediction. During the hymns he was joined by the Queen Salote College choir and members of the audience. He emphasised that all people have a responsibility to look after the environment through the Lord's teachings.

Doctor Samuela Ma'afu Tupou, Honourable Minister of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources, Kingdom of Tonga, welcomed participants on behalf of the Tongan Government. He commended the ongoing international, national and regional attention to environmental protection and conservation, and commented on the successful role of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) as a regional environment organisation. Since its establishment in 1982, SPREP has made significant environmental achievements possible in the region.

Dr Tupou pointed out the diverse nature of environmental characteristics in the South Pacific as reflected by the range of island countries represented at the conference. The different experiences of the participants should enrich debates at the conference. He commended SPREP on its work in translating ideas and concepts into practical initiatives throughout the region, in particular acknowledging SPREP's contributions in Tonga under the Regional Environment Technical Assistance (RETA) programme, funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Dr Tupou urged countries in the region to adopt a more cooperative approach in their dealings on environmental issues, both with SPREP and within the countries themselves. On that note, he declared the conference open. (See Annex 4 for the full text of Dr Tupou's address).

Mr Ernest Bani, Principal Environment Officer, Environment Unit, Vanuatu, and Chairman of the Fourth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, responded to the Minister's address, thanking him on behalf of the Conference participants for his country's generosity in hosting the meeting.

Dr Vili Fuavao, Director, SPREP, welcomed participants and guests to the conference.

He described the series of Conferences commencing in New Zealand in 1975, of which the present Conference is the fifth. Dr Fuavao commented that, given the theme of this year's conference, he was pleased to see the high level of representation from NGOs. He commented on the relevancy of the theme, and on the fact that it is consistent with 1993 being the Year of Indigenous People.

The success of conservation strategies in the South Pacific is dependent on the support, understanding and, particularly, the involvement of the local communities. Dr Fuavao stated that this will be the subject of discussion during the conference, and put forward the following questions for consideration: How do we involve the communities? How do we work with them? How do we fund their conservation ideas? What policies and legislation are needed to support this work?

Dr Fuavao then outlined the objectives of the conference (see Annex 1), and mentioned the opportunity for reviewing progress of the *Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region* during the course of the conference.

Dr Fuavao made reference to the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme, noted the instrumental role of the Programme Manager, Mr Iosefatu Reti, and expressed gratitude towards UNDP and AIDAB for co-funding the Programme.

Dr Fuavao highlighted the need for communication between experts and country delegates, and for the country delegates to be the driving force at the Conference. The role of non-government organisations is to assist the countries to realise their conservation needs. Cooperation rather than confrontation between the NGOs and the countries must be emphasised.

He concluded by thanking His Majesty's Government for hosting the conference, and expressed particular thanks for the efforts of the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources, and to the Queen Salote College for the venue. He also thanked the sponsors of the conference, including the major sponsor, the Global Environment Facility/United Nations Development Program. (See Annex 5 for the full text of Dr Fuavao's address).

## **2.2 Meeting Arrangements**

Mr Sione Tongilava, Secretary, Ministry of Lands, Survey and Environment, Kingdom of Tonga, was elected as Chair. Mr Ernest Bani, the country delegate from Vanuatu, was elected as Vice-Chair. As Vice-Chair, Mr Bani automatically became Chair of the Drafting Committee. Representatives from Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Western Samoa agreed to participate in the Drafting Committee.

The provisional agenda was formally adopted.

## 3. Regional Overview

### 3.1 Regional Review

- **Progress with the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region**

*Ms Adrienne Farago, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme:*

One of the objectives of the conference was to review progress made by South Pacific countries over the past four years in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the *Action Strategy for Protected Areas in the South Pacific*.

The status of regional and international conventions associated with protection of biodiversity can be used as a good indicator of progress over the past four years. Both the Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (Apia Convention) and the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific (SPREP Convention) have come into force since the last Conference.

Coincidentally, the thirtieth ratification of the International Convention on Biological Diversity (Biodiversity Convention), the final ratification necessary for the Convention to come into force, took place during the Conference. The Convention comes into force on 29 December 1993.

Ms Farago listed the goals and objectives of the *Action Strategy*, and used examples from those countries which had submitted country reviews to the Conference to illustrate progress towards implementation of those goals and objectives. A general summary of some of the achievements includes:

- fifteen countries have either completed or are preparing National Environmental Management Strategies (NEMS);
- SPREP has commenced a Population and Environment Project to assist with the integration of population concerns in environmental management;
- a great deal of activity has occurred throughout the region in promoting self-reliance and achievement of sustainable resource management, including institutional strengthening and production of management plans;
- information bases are being developed, and large amounts of information are available for biodiversity planning - the challenge is to use this information efficiently;
- ensuring the continued viability of the full range of ecosystem types in the region remains as the inner heart of the *Action Strategy*, and progress in this area has been mixed;
- the establishment of a representative system of conservation areas and conservation of island ecosystems has not progressed far, although the few examples of where progress has occurred is very encouraging;
- countries throughout the region appear to be taking greater notice of the need to integrate traditional knowledge into conservation policies and practices;
- fostering positive links between tourism and nature conservation has included the encouragement of village-based enterprises, improved communication, and the difficult (and not always successful) search for appropriate financial mechanisms to support nature conservation. Both the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP) and the Profitable Environment Project (PEP) have the search for sustainable income generation opportunities as an important focus;
- maximising community involvement through public awareness is seen as a high priority in every country's NEMS;
- undertaking appropriate training and education in nature conservation is seen to be best achieved through in-country rather than regional or sub-regional workshops;

- SPREP has strengthened its role as the regional coordinating agency for natural resource management and conservation, the activities of NGOs is increasing, and cooperation amongst governments in the area of shared resources is improving.

Ms Farago summarised action taken on resolutions passed at the Fourth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas.

In conclusion, progress under the *Action Strategy* has been more forward than backward. Finances and other resources are more readily available now than ever before. However this opportunity will not be available for ever. It is essential that resources are used efficiently now so that good progress can be achieved over the next four years.

- **Status and distribution of protected areas in the South Pacific**

*Mr James Paine, World Conservation Monitoring Centre, United Kingdom:*

Mr Paine gave a brief overview of the protected areas system in the Pacific, together with an overview of the *1991 IUCN Directory of Protected Areas in Oceania*.

The data in the *IUCN Directory* is managed in the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) database. A systems review for each country summarises the coverage of protected areas, together with any recommendations by governments and NGOs to extend the system. The bulk of the *Directory* comprises detailed site descriptions. Preparation of such a publication relies heavily on the cooperation of agencies and individuals within the region.

Data is also maintained on the WCMC Geographic Information System.

Analyses can be made using data from the *Directory* and from other more recent sources. Protected areas can be compared using the IUCN nomenclature system. This nomenclature system is presently being revised and a new system will be established in 1994.

Mr Paine ended by recommending:

- that WCMC and SPREP explore means to collaborate in the management of conservation data in order to provide a better service to the region;
- that the data within the *Directory* continue to be maintained by WCMC in collaboration with SPREP, IUCN and national agencies;
- that preparations be made to publish a revised *Directory* at the Sixth Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas.

### **3.2 Report on Current Initiatives**

- **National Environment Management Strategies**

*Ms Neva Wendt, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP):*

The involvement of many South Pacific island countries in the NEMS process, indicates the widespread recognition of the need to produce strategies and plan for biodiversity conservation.

Ms Wendt explained that NEMS are designed to ensure that economic development activities have due regard for sustainability of the environment. They are a statement of a country's environmental principles, and a detailed plan of that country's long-term environmental goals. Specifically the process includes comprehensive planning/strategy development, institutional strengthening, training and community awareness raising.

Financial assistance for these strategies are provided through two major SPREP projects, the NEMS (funded by UNDP) and RETA (funded by ADB) projects. The fifteen NEMS undertaken by the South Pacific countries are at various stages of development.

An important component of NEMS development, is that the process results in something owned by the local people and community. To link the strategies themselves with actual projects, specific programme profiles have been outlined.

In summary, NEMS are recognised by governments and their constituents as a tool to assist with biodiversity conservation on a sustainable basis. Donor organisations should heed the concerns expressed by people of the South Pacific and provide adequate assistance in support of these activities.

- **South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme**

*Mr Iosefatu Reti, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)*

The South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP) is a five year, US \$10 million programme to establish and initially manage a series of large, diverse conservation areas (CAs). It is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), a joint effort of the World Bank, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). SPREP is the executing agency. Fourteen South Pacific countries are eligible for technical and financial assistance. Other SPREP member countries and territories may participate in SPBCP supported activities, although they will not be able to receive financial support from the GEF.

Mr Reti explained that the intimate involvement of local land owning groups is particularly important in the Pacific island context and is fundamental to the success of the SPBCP. The SPBCP encourages the involvement of local NGOs. The emphasis of the SPBCP is on action, not academic studies.

For the purposes of the SPBCP, a conservation area (CA) is defined as: "a large diverse area which contains important features for the conservation of the biological diversity of the region or country, and in which human activities are guided to protect these features and to enable the sustainable use of the area's natural resources in the long term". The important word in the definition is "guided". It represents the need to ensure that permitted activities do not degrade the ecology of the conservation area. It is also clear that CAs are not necessarily national parks or nature reserves.

To qualify as a CA under the SPBCP, a site must meet certain essential criteria, and as many as possible of certain desirable criteria.

In summary, the SPBCP provides an excellent opportunity for South Pacific countries to preserve biodiversity through the establishment of conservation areas.

- **International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources: European Community - protected area initiatives**

*Mr P H C (Bing) Lucas, Chair, Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, IUCN*

A Memorandum of Understanding formalises the relationship between the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the SPREP. As a result, agreed cooperative programmes are undertaken.

IUCN has prepared a draft Strategic Plan to be presented at its General Assembly in Argentina in January 1994. The draft plan emphasises greater regionalisation, and it is encouraging to see this put into practice in the South Pacific region through the activities of SPREP.

Mr Lucas' presentation on IUCN initiatives in protected areas covered:

- The Caracas Action Plan
- A European Community initiative on Protected Areas
- Development under the World Heritage Convention
- Protected Areas work by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre.

The Caracas Action Plan was the key product of the Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas held in Caracas, Venezuela, in February 1992. The Action Plan provides a framework for action under four major objectives. Central to implementing the Action Plan is the preparation and implementation of regional action plans or strategies, such as the *Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region*. Implementation of this plan means that the South Pacific is ahead of most regions in the world where regional action plans are only now being prepared.

The European Community (EC) initiative has as its principle objective the preparation of a strategy which will develop and strengthen institutional capacity in the planning and management of protected areas. It is intended that the proposal be funded by the European Development Fund (EDF) which provides for technical and financial cooperation between the EC and developing countries.

Since the fourth of these conferences in Vanuatu, more countries have become parties to the World Heritage Convention, giving it more member states than any other conservation Convention. The relevance of the Convention to the region was discussed at a Seminar on Sustainable Tourism Development in South Pacific Countries held at Suva in November 1991, at which a view was expressed that attention should be given to modifying the World Heritage criteria to include the specific requirements of Pacific islands countries. As a result, the operational guidelines for 'cultural landscapes' have been revised to move on from a Eurocentric approach, towards greater relevance to the South Pacific.

- **IUCN/CNPPA Marine Protected Areas in the South Pacific**

*Mr Graham Kelleher/Richard Kenchington, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Australia*

Mr Kenchington explained that the South Pacific region has avoided many of the problems encountered in marine areas in other parts of the world. Therefore there is an opportunity for leadership in marine conservation by the South Pacific region.

Almost all people in the South Pacific region can be described as living in a coastal environment. To cope with the potential detrimental impacts of people in this environment, there is a need for integrated management of the marine environment. This approach is preferable to either management of individual activities, such as fisheries, involving little coordination with other activities; or to setting aside of marine protected areas without coordinating management of the surrounding areas.

To help meet the challenge of achieving ecologically sustainable development, IUCN adopted a primary goal for marine management at its General Assembly in 1988. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) is coordinating the CNPPA Marine Protected Areas Programme for IUCN with the aim of promoting the development of this global system.

GBRMPA would like to propose a management system based on establishing marine protected areas as an integral component of integrated management regimes, to be managed by Marine Management Authorities.

### **3.3 Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region - Principles for a Proposed Revision**

The first *Action Strategy for Protected Areas in the South Pacific Region* was prepared at the 1985 South Pacific National Parks and Reserves Conference held in Apia in Western Samoa. The *Action Strategy* was then revised at the Fourth South Pacific Conference held in Vanuatu in 1989. The purpose of this, the second review, is to make sure it continues its usefulness as a guiding document for the next four years.

The present review of principles was undertaken by a consultant, Mr Samuelu Sesega from Western Samoa. All comments and suggestions made during the Conference are being taken by the SPREP Secretariat to be used towards a revision of the *Action Strategy*.

In Mr Sesega's view the *Action Strategy* suffers from the lack of a clear guiding philosophy of nature conservation. The Consultant pointed out that there is no clear framework in the *Action Strategy* for the philosophical shift from 'protected area' (implying 'locked up' parks and reserves) to 'conservation area' (implying the incorporation of people use); and that the logical consequences of this philosophical shift are inadequately followed through. This deficiency means that there is some confusion as to which goals are 'ends' and which are 'means'. Articulating the philosophy explicitly is therefore essential.

In particular, the Consultant emphasised that "improved awareness and appreciation of biodiversity conservation values is a necessary but insufficient condition for achieving the protection of conservation areas. The second necessary condition is the provision of real tangible incentives."

Following is a list of the eight recommendations for revision of the *Action Strategy* which were formulated by the Consultant prior to the conference:

1. The philosophy must be explicitly and succinctly stated in the preambular section preferably under the 'Approach' section.
2. The *Action Strategy* should be reorganised to have two paramount goals as follows:
  - a) the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources (a new goal);
  - b) the continued viability of the full range of ecosystem types and species that make up the region's natural heritage and contribute to its cultures (currently Goal B).
3. The current goals A, C, D, E, F and G be organised either into a second tier of 'goals' or first tier of 'objectives'.
4. The *Action Strategy* must explore:
  - a) possibilities for revenue earning activities from compatible uses in addition to tourism;
  - b) **other means** of satisfying the second condition (ie the provision of real, tangible incentives) stated above, including the direct transfer of financial or in-kind support;
  - c) the development of innovative delivery mechanisms for the transfer of the resources that constitute the incentives for grassroots beneficiaries;
  - d) ways of approaching and convincing regional and international funding organisations and individuals of the inevitability of the need for the provision of incentives, and to elicit financial support for this activity.
5. That the fundamental rationale underpinning the *Action Strategy* be revisited in the light of recent experience, to re-examine the assumptions constituting the foundation of current approaches to biodiversity conservation. This would be the first step of the review exercise, as well as a means of facilitating a systematic review process.
6. That (a), (b), (c) and (d) of Recommendation 4 above be considered as additional specific activities of the Strategy.
7. The following elements are recommended for strengthening the links between the Biodiversity Convention (BC) and the Caracas Action Plan (CAP), and the revised *Action Strategy*:
  - the development of financial plans for protected areas (CAP);
  - consideration of intellectual property rights and the fair and equitable distribution of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources (BC and CAP);
  - requirement for identification and monitoring (Art 7 of BC);
  - *ex-situ* conservation and its potential for revenue generation (BC), (*in-situ* conservation already being adequately addressed in the *Action Strategy*).



## 4. Presentation of Key Issues and Case Study Papers

Each Plenary Session was on a different theme. Each session commenced with the presentation of a Key Issue paper, followed by (usually) four case studies. The Conference then broke into three workshop groups to discuss the issues raised by the speakers. Workshop reports were presented back to the full Conference, and formed the basis for the Conference resolutions prepared by the Drafting Committee for discussion and adoption by the full Conference on the last day of the meeting. The full text of the Key Issue and Case Study presentations can be found in Part II of this report.

### 4.1 People in Protected Areas

This session was chaired by Mr Iosefatu Reti.

Mr Iosefatu Reti, Programme Manager of the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme, presented the Key Issue paper on the subject of People in Protected Areas. He expressed the view that poverty is one of the greatest threats to protected areas. He described the failure of attempts to protect areas of important biological diversity without recognition of, or negotiation with, local land and resource owners. Because South Pacific people rely heavily on the biological resources of the natural environment to supplement their subsistence or semi-subsistence lifestyles, and because most land and resources are held in customary ownership, the participation and involvement of local people in decisions relating to the establishment of protected areas is crucial to the success of such efforts.

Pacific societies have had their own traditional ways of protecting important ecological and cultural sites and landscapes. *Tapu (taboo)* areas have been effective means to protect important land and resources. *Tapu* areas recognise the rights of people not only to use natural resources (which are not 'locked away'), but also to protect them for the future.

Mr Reti listed a number of points that need to be remembered when involving local people in protected area initiatives. Firstly, the establishment of a protected area can create conflict with local people. Too often society reaps the benefits of protected areas and local people bear the costs. Secondly, local people cannot by themselves effectively manage protected areas. They need financial assistance, advice and support. Thirdly, benefits flowing to local people from protected areas will be limited; and finally, these areas cannot be managed in a 'hands-off' or 'hand-out' fashion.

Protected areas proposed by local people on customary lands must remain under their control. However first of all the local people must be prepared to accept the long-term responsibilities which go with this, without necessarily being compensated for doing so.

Mr Reti ended by listing seven points towards a strategy for involving people in protected areas:

1. Assess the priority needs of the local communities. Community development projects such as school buildings and roads are likely to rank high in the list of priorities and should not be discounted. However these projects should not be considered at the expense of direct support for protected areas.
2. Propose immediate and long term action to establish and strengthen protected areas. Basic priorities may be clear, but action should address threats to protected areas and the needs of economic development in surrounding communities. Action plans must remain flexible as priorities change over time.
3. Propose appropriate institutional structures for the management of protected areas. Representation by various community groups such as women's groups, youth and church groups will be essential. As much as possible existing local structures should be used.
4. Provide incentives for establishing community-owned protected areas. Financial and other incentives will enhance support for the establishment of protected areas. But such incentives should be as far as possible directly linked to the protected area itself.

5. Ensure the sustainability of protected areas and their contribution to the protection of natural resources. How viable a protected area is over the long term will depend on how well it is ecologically, socially and economically integrated into the surrounding region.
6. Expand the management objectives of protected areas to include the full scope of economic and conservation goals. Protected areas can contribute to the economic well-being of local communities without detracting from conservation objectives.
7. Enhance community capacity to establish protected areas. The availability of skilled and committed people is the key to the success of community-owned protected areas.

There were four Case Studies on the subject of People in Protected Areas.

Mr Mike Hill of the Australia Nature Conservation Agency described Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in natural resource management in Australia, focusing on Kakadu and Uluru National Parks, the jointly managed National Parks on Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory. Mr Hill described the benefits to conservation and the environment, and the benefits to Aboriginal people, of joint management. He explained that the success of joint management relies on a commitment from all individuals and institutions involved.

Dr Geoff Park of the New Zealand Department of Conservation and Mr Cedric Schuster (for Mr Samuelu Sesega) of the Division of Environment and Conservation, Western Samoa, spoke of the biological diversity of the coastal lowlands of Western Samoa. A scientific survey was undertaken in 1991 to establish a network of conservation areas representative of Western Samoa's ecosystems, and to bring the issues of biodiversity conservation to the attention of the villages owning the ecosystems. Recognising the important role villages were going to play in the future, the survey operated through villages, meeting with village councils before field work was undertaken, and using local people to assist with the survey. After the identification of 14 high priority areas for conservation, representatives of the survey returned to the villages which owned the high priority sites, to advise them of the survey's findings.

Mr Uilou Samani, Department of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources, Tonga, described the proposed 'Eua National Park in Tonga, which is an example of a conservation endeavour in which the parties involved are not working cooperatively. Experience has indicated that more cooperation between the parties is required in order to successfully conclude the project.

Ms Tanya Leary, from The Nature Conservancy, (on behalf of herself and Mr Moses Biliki from the Ministry of Natural Resources, Solomon Islands) described the high biodiversity values of the proposed Arnavaon Islands Marine Conservation Area, Solomon Islands. She described the growing interest on the part of the two communities which claim ownership of the islands, and the third community which is considered the primary resource user, in managing the islands as a Conservation Area in order to protect and sustainably manage turtles and other marine resources. She concluded by describing the consultative approach being taken towards development of a Marine Conservation Area where resource use is sustainably managed over the long term.

Workshops on the theme of People in Protected Areas concentrated on the questions:

1. What is the role of local people in protected areas?
2. How do we generate sustainable employment opportunities for local people in protected areas?
3. Traditional use of resources - how should this continue?
4. What are appropriate strategies for involving people in protected areas?

## **4.2 Local Conservation Area Ownership and Management**

This session was chaired by Mr Bradley Punu.

Mr Abraham Baeanisía and Mr Francis Tarihao, on behalf of Mr Connor, Ms Houlbrooke and Mr Tarihao of the Solomon Islands Development Trust, presented the Key Issue paper on the subject of Local Conservation Area Ownership and Traditional Management.

The speakers explained that it is now widely recognised in the Pacific that centrally-planned conservation initiatives that do not include landowners in every stage of planning and implementation are likely to fail. Pacific social and land tenure systems require local ownership of, and management involvement with, protected areas.

The speakers presented Integrated Conservation And Development projects (ICADs or ICDPs) as suitable for these conditions. These projects represent a new approach to conservation currently being pursued in a number of countries where conflicts have arisen between the management of established conservation areas and local people. The strategy is based on the concept that resource owners in a subsistence economy require security of food production and development of social services, to gain their commitment to establishing large protected areas and managing these on a long term basis. They also require opportunities for economic development, so small scale ecologically sustainable cash earning enterprises are an integral part of the ICAD approach.

Components of ICAD projects include:

- Research for planning, monitoring, and assessment; conservation of the resource base and environmental management, including village-based management planning for land and resource use and conservation; conservation education; social and economic development; institutional strengthening for local stewardship of resources; and resolving conflicts and balancing interests.

To do this new work, conservationists need a new array of tools:

- social and biological surveys;
- recording and affirming the value of traditional knowledge;
- community level planning;
- enterprise development;
- provision of community services;
- conservation education;
- institutional strengthening at all levels from local to national;
- baseline information, for planning and priority setting;
- skills in mediation to assist with balancing interests and resolving disputes;
- cooperation; requiring conservation agencies to form new alliances with development agencies in government and the local NGO sector, with sociologists and anthropologists, with universities, with aid agencies, with international NGOs, and most urgently with land owners themselves.

The speakers concluded with points for consideration by national conservation agencies:

1. Local ownership and management of future conservation areas is not only possible but essential if we are to extend biodiversity protection in the Pacific.
2. Local institutions are the key to good management of these conservation areas.
3. In order to secure and sustain commitment to protected areas on customary land, landowners need locally controlled small scale development alternatives that deliver tangible benefits in both the short and the long term.
4. ICADs are a promising way of achieving conservation and development together.
5. Local NGOs, working in conservation, development, and other areas, are an important feature of the institutional mechanisms available to assist with ICAD establishment.
6. An enabling policy environment is needed to coordinate efforts to establish ICADs. Government policies need to be supportive and consistent across departments.

7. The appointment of officers within government conservation agencies and SPREP to service and provide liaison with ICADs would be beneficial.
8. Responsibility for monitoring and enforcement of protected area rules should be vested in local communities.

There were four Case Studies on the subject of Local Conservation Area Ownership and Management.

Mr Clark Peteru, O Le Siosiomaga Inc., Western Samoa, described forest conservation initiatives in the villages of Falealupo and Tafua in Western Samoa. These are examples of bilateral agreements entered into between an external donor and a village or villages, for the purpose of protecting village-owned rainforest. Villages agree to prevent logging for a period such as fifty years, in return for provision of credit or infrastructure development (such as provision of a school or road). Experience of these agreements has resulted in reservations about this approach to rainforest conservation, largely because the process has not resulted in the villages having any sense of ownership of the projects. On the contrary, there is a perception that it is the outside donor that is benefiting from the protection of the rainforest, and that villages can use the rainforest as a bargaining tool to get more from donors.

Mr Herson Anson, Chief of Forestry, Pohnpei, and Mr Bill Raynor, The Nature Conservancy, Federated States of Micronesia, spoke of the status and future management of the montane cloud forests in Micronesia, and the community-based management approach to watershed management in Pohnpei. The health of these ecosystems depends on involving the traditional leaders and local communities in their management and preservation. Pohnpei's experience demonstrates that while legislation 'on paper' is an important first step, success can only be realised by its adoption by the local community. Modern and traditional resource managers of Pohnpei's forests have been able to develop a mutually agreeable strategy of co-management, effectively incorporating community and land owner input into forest planning and management. Their success has been largely based on effectively integrating traditional forest management practices with sound scientific information.

Mr Moses Biliki, Ministry of Natural Resources, Solomon Islands, spoke on the Komarindi Catchment Conservation Area (KCCA) project, Guadalcanal Province, Solomon Islands. The KCCA is a proposed integrated conservation and tourism project to operate in conjunction with the proposed Komarindi hydro-electric development scheme. The KCCA will be owned and largely managed by the landowners themselves. The conservation area is proposed both as a basis for the sustained operation of the hydro-electricity scheme, and to protect the biological diversity of the catchment. It is proposed that there be appropriate tourist and recreational development in the KCCA, and continued appropriate and sustainable traditional uses of the land by land owners. The activities will be management by entities which will involve representation from relevant government and non-government bodies, and local communities.

Mr Bradley Punu, previously Environment Officer, Niue, spoke on the Hakupu Tapu Forest and Wildlife Reserve, Niue. The Hakupu Tapu Forest and Wildlife Reserve has been well known to the people of Hakupu village for many generations. The respect and recognition accorded by the village people is an ongoing tradition and *mana* passed on by the ancestors to the present generation. The area has never been surveyed or registered, and day to day protection of the area is mainly done by the soul or spirit of the ancestors. It is believed that those who enter the area are cursed, as are their children and grandchildren. However the Hakupu Tapu Forest and Wildlife Reserve is only sufficient to serve the needs of Hakupu village, not the whole of Niue. In previous times, other villages have protected similar areas for the purpose of conservation. It is only recently that some people are again interested in re-establishing these areas, and this will be necessary if Niue's next generation is to enjoy the same resources from the land and sea enjoyed by the current generation.

Workshops on theme of Local Conservation Area Ownership and Management concentrated on the questions:

1. How can long term security for local conservation be achieved?
2. What are the ways to resolve possible conflict between traditional ownership/use of land and protection of biodiversity?
3. Should government/community partnership be promoted and encouraged?
4. What are the appropriate strategies for managing locally owned protected areas?

### 4.3 The Role of Non-Government Organisations in Conserving Biodiversity

This session was chaired by Ms Julita Tellei.

Ms Caroline Sinaavaiana, from O le Vaomatua Society in Pago Pago, Amerika Samoa, presented the Key Issue paper on the subject of the Role of Non-governmental Organisations in Conserving Biodiversity in the South Pacific. Ms Sinaavaiana explored various issues relating to the unique potential of NGOs to conserve biodiversity in the South Pacific region. She argued for (1) the essential correlation between cultural and biological diversity; (2) the integration of cultural and historical perspectives into resource management debates; and (3) the necessity to build and cultivate the capacity of 'local' NGOs to act as mediators between their communities and governments.

Ms Sinaavaiana also addressed some specific logistical concerns:

- The relationship between NGOs and governments. While the potential for conflict between the two is real, there appears to be a shift towards complementary rather than opposing roles. Local NGOs are in the unique position of mediating between their communities and their governments.
- The capacity of regular NGOs. NGOs have the potential to revitalise indigenous practices of cooperation and community. Other key functions of NGOs include advocacy, education, and information sharing/networking with others.
- Some advantages of NGOs over government organisations. A major advantage of NGOs is their potential for autonomy from business interests and political partisanship. Another advantage lies in their potential to model social change. Because local NGOs are situated within communities, they are conversant with indigenous forms of social organisation and customary practices, for example, information-sharing, consensus-building and decision-making.
- NGO access to information and funds. NGO access to resources depends on cooperation with other NGOs, especially international NGOs. However, one disturbing trend is the increasing polarisation between politically powerful international NGOs and smaller local groups. The potential of the powerful 'internationals' to develop into an NGO version of a multi-national conglomerate needs to be addressed.

Ms Sinaavaiana concluded with suggestions for increasing the meaningful role of NGOs in protected area management. She suggested that NGOs at all levels need to consider:

1. Translating 'biodiversity' as a concept into grassroots terms, clarifying the correlation between biodiversity and economic survival;
2. Using traditional cultural art forms and other indigenous media to convey environmental concepts;
3. Devising development goals that are generated, guided, and driven by grassroots communities, including planning, implementation, and evaluation;
4. Developing sustainability plans based on holistic perspectives, thus revitalising indigenous management practices;
5. Developing holistic, interdisciplinary-team approaches, including expertise in both natural and social sciences, humanities, arts, and inter-cultural mediation;
6. Designing projects structured to include members from particular communities as trainees and/or consultants, and to facilitate the exchange of skills between visiting team members and their counterparts from local communities;
7. Joining and creating international NGO networks based on decentralised models of social organisation and committed to workable, accountable models of cooperation;
8. Devising rules for such networks of NGOs to effectively approach policy-making and other opportunities in ways that are most beneficial to all concerned.

There were four Case Studies on the subject of the Role of Non-Government Organisations in Conserving Biodiversity.

Sister Marina Tu'inukuafe, Coordinator for the Diocesan Commission for Justice, Peace and Development in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, presented a paper prepared by Peter Salamonsen of the Pacific Conference of Churches, Fiji, on the Response of Pacific Christian Churches and Their Communities to the Conservation of Biodiversity. Member churches of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) speak for 90 per cent of Pacific Christians. Sister Marina spoke of the dilemma symbolised by the debate between dominion versus stewardship of the earth, as being the Creator's mandate to humankind. However in 1983, the World Council of Churches Vancouver Assembly called upon the Christian Churches to engage, as a priority, in a process of commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation. These three are inseparable, and form the basis for the justice, peace and development programme at PCC. Sister Marina ended by stating that the future of our Pacific environment continues to call for joint action. The PCC has been, and will continue to, work towards this at any time and place within the region.

Ms Julita Tellei, from the Palau Resource Institute (PRI), commenced her case study with a Palauan chant. She described her organisation, with three women Directors, as one of the five women-driven NGOs in Palau. PRI believes that development must balance the needs of the local people, the environment and the economy; and is currently working on the critical issues of a) the current rapid rate of development or inappropriate development; b) the insufficient level of awareness, knowledge and appreciation of Palau's natural resources; c) the fact that environmental conservation, protection and appropriate management of natural resources is not a priority concern in Palau; d) the increase in the non-indigenous population; and e) a growing alcohol and drug abuse problem. PRI interacts with other organisations, agencies and groups as a partner, as a consulting agency, as a research organisation or simply as organisers or facilitators of activities. The PRI directors have recently made a conscious decision to focus on natural resource conservation and protection at least 75% of the time.

Mr Birandra Singh from the National Trust for Fiji spoke on the importance of taking into account time factors in the establishment of protected areas on native communally owned lands. He used the example of the time taken for establishment of a biodiversity reserve on mataqali Waisali lands, Cakaudrove Province, Vanua Levu, Fiji, to indicate why both 'real' and 'lapsed' time needs to be considered when costing these types of projects. Mr Singh emphasised that while 'real' time spent on specific actions is small compared to time 'lapsed' between actions, a monetary valuation needs to be attached to 'lapsed' time. He concluded by suggesting that there is the need for practitioners of nature conservation on native communally owned lands to proceed at the pace of the host community; and not be governed by a desire to develop a large number of sites quickly because funding is available, nor to work within the confines of the yearly budgetary cycles of the donor agencies and host governments.

Mr Jaky Bryant, from Atu Atu te Natura in French Polynesia, spoke on *Rahui*, or Traditional Management, Protection and Conservation. He described the practice of *rahui*, or 'traditional practice', which is found under various names throughout French Polynesia. There are different types of *rahui*, which all refer to ways to manage nature. The historical study of the way in which nature was managed prior to European settlement seeks to answer the universal questions 'where do we come from' and 'where are we going'. Mr Bryant concluded by saying that human pressures on the natural environment have resulted in tolerance levels already being reached. Communities should draw upon their heritage to form a response to these concerns.

Workshops on the theme of the Role of Non-Government Organisations in Conserving Biodiversity concentrated on the questions:

1. What are the different roles of non-government organisations and government organisations in protected areas?
2. What sort of relationship should there be between government and non-government organisations?
3. How can we improve access to funds for non-government organisations?
4. What are the appropriate strategies for increasing non-government organisations' role in protected area management?

## 4.4 Funding Mechanisms for Biodiversity Conservation

This session was chaired by Mr Moses Biliki.

Mr John Waugh, from the World Conservation Union (IUCN), presented a Key Issue paper on the subject of Steps Toward Financing Effective Conservation Action. Mr Waugh commenced his talk with the statement that raising more money does not guarantee successful conservation of biological diversity, and that to be successful it is just as important to be clear about the kind of support that is most needed. Mr Waugh provided a brief overview of the range of options currently being employed by conservation managers:

- funds allocated from the Treasury;
- revenues and special funds generated for conservation. These can be national or site-specific. They include debt-for-nature swaps, national trust funds, and special fees or taxes created by state agencies, such as a special hotel or airport tax;
- money from donors. These commonly fund defined projects with a fixed duration;
- loans from development banks.

Mr Waugh recommended the development of funding plans, (which are the products of a structured process for assessing needs and opportunities), for both individual conservation areas and national conservation systems. The overall goal of a plan should be to create a diverse, and therefore stable, portfolio of funding sources that can be counted on to provide a continuous stream of funding over time.

Four basic elements essential to any strategy for funding conservation areas are:

- a determination of how much money is required to plan, develop, and operate the system and its component parts;
- a reliable plan for selecting and working with the funding sources which will provide the necessary money;
- concurrence from government at the highest levels with the objectives and strategy for funding the protected-area system; and
- consideration of an array of potential/alternative sources of funding.

Major donors are less interested in covering recurrent costs than they are in funding planning and infrastructure. It is therefore imperative that local sources of financing become available. At the moment however, the concept of financially self-sufficient conservation areas is unfortunately far from becoming a reality.

Mr Waugh described some requirements for successful conservation financing as: ensuring a commitment to environmental goals at local community and national government levels; and ensuring coordination of funding efforts at the local, national, and international levels, including multiple governmental agencies, civic organisations, and the private sector.

He explained that national funds have emerged in recent years as a new mechanism with the potential for addressing these challenges. National funds can include appropriations from the national budget, fees, special use taxes, and conversion of national debt instruments into local currency. Though experience so far is limited, those funds that have been the most successful have been those set up as autonomous entities with broad participation in their management.

National or regional funds can nurture environmental action at the grass-roots level by releasing funds for conservation in manageable amounts fitted to the local context, sensitive to local cultures and knowledge, susceptible to immediate feed-back, and open to a variety of actors and options. Well designed funds are participatory, representative and robust. They build a cooperative, participatory ethos; permit work at an appropriate scale; allow growth of projects without detracting from existing projects; have a large absorptive capacity; and create a focal point for donor and recipient interactions.



There were five Case Studies on the subject of Funding Mechanisms for Biodiversity Conservation.

Mr Trevor Sofield, from the Hong Kong Polytechnic, was unfortunately unable to attend the Conference. His case study was to be on Ecotourism as a Funding Mechanism.

Dr Nora Devoe of the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific, Port Vila, spoke on the Profitable Environmental Protection Project: Will Conservation Pay its Own Way? Dr Devoe explained that the purpose of the Profitable Environmental Protection Project is to develop and disseminate examples of profitable enterprises that safeguard priority biological resources. The purpose of the project is to provide technical assistance to design enterprises which maximise conservation benefits; to support the pursuit of such enterprises in rural communities; and to disseminate successful examples of such enterprises. Services to businesses include help with planning, access to credit/capital, marketing, training, and seed money. Social support includes community organising, environmental education, participatory planning and management, monitoring and evaluation. The profit from the enterprises, and the enterprises themselves, provide motivation for and finance conservation activities.

Mr Peter Thomas, Director of The Nature Conservancy in Auckland, New Zealand, spoke on the Komarindi Catchment Conservation Area as a Model of Providing for Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas Through a Resource Rent and other Income Generation; on behalf of himself and Mr Graeme Worboys, Regional Manager at the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, Australia. Mr Thomas described how a proposal for an integrated hydroelectric development scheme and land owner-managed Conservation Area for the Komarindi River catchment area and access corridor, Guadalcanal Province, Solomon Islands led to the investigation of opportunities for the sustainable management of the Conservation Area primarily through charging of a resource rent. The basis of the resource rent is that the hydroelectric scheme requires a reliable high water yield catchment, and therefore cannot proceed unless the permanent protection of the catchment's water yield and quality is guaranteed. Agreement was reached with the proponent of the hydroelectric scheme, the Solomon Islands Electricity Authority, that the principle of investing in the maintenance of the catchment was a legitimate cost against the operation of the scheme. If implemented, the resulting resource rent provides landowners with a financial capacity to conserve the catchment.

Ms Annette Lees, from the Maruia Society and Conservation International, New Zealand, spoke on behalf of herself and Mr Bryan Evans, a Small Business Development Expert, on Helping Conservation Pay: Village Microenterprise Development in the Solomon Islands. Ms Lees explained that microenterprise development (small business) offers a positive and potentially rewarding way of building local commitment to conservation, and discussed ten issues important to conservation microenterprises: selecting a suitable income-generating project for a conservation area; providing technical assistance; marketing; replicability; environmental impacts of projects; business development by grants; accessing finance; linking conservation and development; working in the local culture; and understanding the impacts of assistance.

Mr Seri Hite and Ms Kath Means, World Wide Fund for Nature, spoke on the Achievements and Challenges in Community Resource Conservation: Butubutu Kobakokovapa Case Study, Solomon Islands (paper not included in Part II of the Conference report). The speakers explained that the project concerns three communities, involving three clan groups, near Marovo Lagoon. Mr Hite described the area's important biodiversity values, but explained the community's emerging social problems as: loss of traditional skills; youth moving to Honiara; and overharvesting of both terrestrial (such as forest) and marine (such as beche de mer) resources. Under increasing pressure from logging companies, the communities decided to find alternative income generation activities. The community has now formalised policies for population control and community control over resource management and development. Small family projects such as poultry growing and beekeeping, and some community projects such as guest houses, are being commenced. Ms Means concluded by saying that the task in projects like these is to **manage change**. Communities require facilitation, not just technical skills. The communities need to be assisted to assess their own needs, in ways appropriate to their culture. Communities then need to decide on their future, in response to their needs as they perceive it, and to monitor it, themselves.



Workshops on the theme of Funding Mechanisms for Biodiversity Conservation concentrated on the questions:

1. Who should pay for conservation?
2. How should local involvement in protected areas be funded?
3. Are Trust Funds feasible, and if so, how should they be funded?
4. What are the appropriate strategies to ensure self-sufficiency of protected areas?

#### 4.5 Conservation Policy and Legislation

This session was chaired by Ms Nicola Pain.

Ms Nicola Pain, from the Australian Commonwealth Environment Protection Agency, presented the Key Issue paper on the subject of Protected Area and Biodiversity Conservation Policy and Legislation in the South Pacific Region. Ms Pain explained that each SPREP country has its own unique legal and administrative system, however some common features are: the majority of land is held under customary tenure; decisions about land and marine resource use are made at the village level, but there is no formal legal recognition of these decisions by national or provincial governments; there is constitutional recognition of customary law but this will often be expressed as being subject to the laws of the national Parliament. However customary land ownership cannot be overridden by national laws.

Ms Pain described the regional and global conventions relevant to biodiversity conservation in the South Pacific. She explained that the effectiveness of international and regional conventions is determined by the extent to which these are ratified and implemented by State parties. Conventions can be useful for providing an international framework for regional and domestic policies and legislation, but for many Pacific Island countries, fulfilling international obligations has important resource implications, and the provision of funding for national implementation of conventions is an important consideration.

Ms Pain talked about the importance of customary law in developing legislation aimed at biodiversity conservation, and expressed the view that incorporation and recognition of customary law and usage should be part of any legislative scheme.

Ms Pain stated that conservation area legislation at national or provincial level, while useful for establishing a framework in many cases, is not always necessary. Conservation areas can also be created by administrative arrangements which do not require legislative backing, for example, by conservation area agreements between governments and local landowners. Alternatively, conservation area legislation can help ensure that local communities and resource owners take a central role in decision making, for example by requiring that management plans be based on customary practices, and by backing this up through enforcement. Management plans drawn up by traditional owners could also be gazetted under law.

Legislation can allow for conservation areas to be formed at the request of land owners, such as the Wildlife Management Areas under the PNG *Fauna (Protection and Conservation) Act*; and legislation can also ensure that all parties with an interest in the proposed conservation area participate in decisions, by including a list of interests that must be represented in discussions.

Ms Pain also discussed factors for improving the effectiveness of fisheries, forestry, mining, wildlife protection and Environmental Impact Assessment legislation. She concluded by stressing the importance of education as an adjunct to any regulations or legislation.

There were five Case Studies on the subject of Conservation Policy and Legislation.

Ms Suia Pelasio, Environment Officer, Tokelau, was unfortunately unable to attend the Conference. Her case study on Village Traditional Rules relating to Biodiversity/Protected Areas in Tokelau is included in Part II.

Mr Gaikovina Kula, from the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) in Papua New Guinea, spoke on Conservation Policy and Strategy Development in PNG. Mr Kula gave an overview of PNG's biodiversity conservation significance, and of the relevant policies of the Government of Papua New Guinea. He outlined the social, environmental and ecological contexts, and the links between the National Forestry and Conservation Action Programme (NFCAP) and conservation and environmental management issues generally. Mr Kula then described the Strategic Plan for the Department of Environment and Conservation, which equips the department with a definitive and realistic planning framework for the next five years, and is a central component of all the department's conservation activities. A principal priority of the department is to *"systematically build the skills, experience, resources and general capability of the department so that it has the capacity to fulfill the mission and statutory responsibilities given to it by the Government"*. Thus a review of DEC's Human Resource Development and Management Systems is being carried out. Mr Kula also described the Government's National Forestry and Conservation Action Programme.

Mr Bernard Moutou, SPREP's Legal Officer, spoke on the Constraints and Opportunities of Using Legislation as a Tool for Community Involvement in Biodiversity Protection. Mr Moutou explained that local community involvement is a prerequisite to sustainable biodiversity conservation. This involvement will be achieved through community participation in the development, implementation and enforcement of legal rules governing the protected areas. This implies involving communities at a very early stage, and on an ongoing basis, in the conservation and management process. Certain behaviour and social values will have to be translated into legal terms. In addition, it will be necessary to identify a legal framework vested with the competence and powers required.

Ms Raewyn Peart, from the New Zealand Maruia Society spoke on Supporting Traditional Conservation Laws through Legislation: A Case Study, from Isabel Province, Solomon Islands. Ms Peart described three Conservation Ordinances passed by the Isabel Provincial Government. These enable the establishment and management of forest areas, marine and freshwater areas, and village water supply catchment areas at the village level; and were the result of concerns expressed by customary landowners about the increasing difficulties of managing their resources through traditional mechanisms. Ms Peart described the process of designing environmental legislation in a village setting; and outlined possible legislative solutions to the problems customary landowners have with managing their natural resources.

Mr Richard Chesher, Marine Research Foundation, spoke on a Giant Clam Sanctuaries project in Vava'u, Kingdom of Tonga, and gave some pointers for community-based projects (paper not included in Part II of the Conference report):

1. The goal of environmental improvement projects is to change people's behaviour so that there is a measurable improvement in the resource under consideration.
2. Projects need a measurable goal. In the case of the Giant Clam Sanctuaries project, the goal is a circle of healthy giant clams just outside the village, under the protection of the village.
3. Projects need to aim to break 'cultural habit addictions', ie the idea that "if I don't take it the next person will". It should be made clear that every person is being asked to do something against their immediate self interest.
4. Raising awareness, and 'throwing money at a problem' are not sufficient. The important task is to empower people and to increase their feelings of self worth, and hence increase their ability to tackle their own problems and find solutions.

Workshops on theme of the Conservation Policy and Legislation concentrated on the questions:

1. How can problems with the enforcement of legislation in the South Pacific be solved?
2. Formal legislation or village rules - when are they appropriate?
3. How effective are regional and international conventions?
4. What legislative developments are necessary now and in the future to increase the involvement of local people in protected areas?

## 4.6 Future Directions for Biodiversity Conservation

This session was chaired by the Conference Chair, Mr Sione Tongilava.

Dr Vili Fuavao, the Director of SPREP, presented the Key Issue paper on the subject of Future Directions for Biodiversity Conservation in the South Pacific Region - An Overview.

Dr Fuavao described the points he felt had surfaced during the week of the Conference, particularly that the interest and well-being of the local communities are central.

1. The success of future efforts to conserve biodiversity through protected areas will depend largely on our ability to access and conserve resources on customary-owned lands.
2. The full participation and support of land-owning groups in the planning, establishment and management of protected areas is crucial to the long-term viability of protected areas.
3. Partnership arrangements between governments, NGOs and land owning groups can be an effective way to manage protected areas.
4. Plans to establish protected areas must also include programmes to improve the standard of living of those living in or around protected areas.

Dr Fuavao then suggested some common elements in strategies for ensuring that people participate fully in decisions and action in management and sustainable use of the resources in protected areas:

1. Create conditions and incentives for effective conservation by local communities. Local structures and organisations should be respected, encouraged and supported in their efforts to conserve and protect biodiversity in protected areas.
2. Improve local capacity to conserve and use biodiversity sustainably. Conservation action by local communities can succeed only if people understand the value of biodiversity. Research and studies undertaken on locally-owned areas should grow out of consultation with those who will need and use the data, and data resulting from such studies should be provided in a form easily understood by the local communities.
3. The tools for conserving biodiversity must be strengthened and applied more broadly. Appropriate tools must be chosen depending on the needs and aspirations of the local communities. Where protected areas are considered too large and inappropriate for small communities, seed banks, botanic gardens and sanctuaries could be effective.
4. Encourage partnerships between local communities, NGOs and Governments. Small management groups comprising representatives of the parties involved in the project could be an effective way of ensuring closer cooperation between the parties. Such groups should be adequately supported with resources from governments, NGOs and donor agencies.
5. Compensate individuals or local communities who own or depend on land or resources used for protected areas. Compensation, whether cash, alternative tracts of land, or services, directly supports protected areas. Such compensation must be perceived as just and fair, and must reach the hands of the affected communities. Compensation should be supplemented by incentives which aim to promote continued interest and concern for the long-term sustainability of the protected area. Trust Funds can be an effective mechanism. Sustainable economic activities should be encouraged within protected areas.
6. Promote recognition of the value of local knowledge in the management of protected areas.

Dr Fuavao concluded by asking the questions: "Now that we have successfully concluded the Fifth Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, and have exhausted discussions on the means and ways to involve local communities in nature conservation, what then should we do next? Are we really satisfied that what we said as being necessary to win the confidence and support of local communities for protected areas, is achievable and practical? Additionally, are we now clear about our responsibilities to each other, to the communities we will be working with, and to the areas we will jointly manage and protect?"

Workshops on theme of the Future Directions for Biodiversity Conservation concentrated on the question: What are the important components of a strategy for involving local people in biodiversity conservation in the future?

## 5. Observer statements from participants to the Conference

An important feature of the Conference was the strong representation and very active participation of a wide range of local, regional and international non-government organisations; and a range of other organisations and individuals interested in and working towards biodiversity conservation in the South Pacific.

The Conference many times during the preceding week emphasised the need for partnerships between the various levels of organisations and institutions in working towards the mutual goal of community involvement in biodiversity conservation. The following organisations and individuals spoke on their activities in the region or expressed views on the subjects raised at the Conference.

### United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

#### Mr Trevor Sankey

Mr Sankey introduced UNESCO's science programmes relating to nature conservation. UNESCO and IUCN collaborate in the World Heritage Convention. Several more Pacific states and territories are actively interested in ratifying the convention and proposing sites. Heritage site projects will succeed only where the local communities are fully involved and committed to their success.

The UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) promotes the Biosphere Reserve, a flexible framework for protected areas combining the possibility of sustainable resource use and community development with conservation and scientific study. The International Biosphere Reserve Network will contribute to the proposed Global Terrestrial Observing System.

Science activities of UNESCO and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) relevant to Pacific island conservation include the Diversitas programme of basic biodiversity research, the People and Plants ethnobotany programme, island ecology and development, ecological economics, the global carbon cycle and global change, coastal zones, coral reefs, and mangroves. UNESCO will build bridges between global work on these topics and Pacific activities, and can support networking, provide seed money for research initiatives and undertake some training; large scale activities will require additional funds from donor agencies. Working closely with SPREP, USP, government environment units etc, effort will be focused on scientific questions that really concern Pacific environmental managers, through collaborative research programmes. In the process people from the region will be trained and the regional institutions strengthened. A joint activity with SPREP on mangroves is planned as a first step.

Recently UNESCO helped set up the International Scientific Council for Island Development (INSULA), an NGO to promote sustainable development of small islands worldwide. INSULA has a small project in FSM for development of one atoll, which will set up an endowment fund to provide long term income, as suggested by the community leaders themselves.

There is a close relation between biodiversity conservation and a community culture that respects and applies its heritage of traditional knowledge. Pacific member countries have asked UNESCO to set up a major project on culture and development, *Vaka Moana*. One theme will be the historic and contemporary links between Pacific peoples, including those in science and environment. UNESCO also plays a major coordinating role in the regional development of education, and will help member states upgrade their school curricula to meet current environmental challenges, including much local culture and traditional knowledge related to the child's own experience.

### WAU Ecology Institute, Papua New Guinea

#### Mr Harry Sakulas

Mr Sakulas thanked SPREP for the opportunity for NGOs to be present at the Conference, and suggested that SPREP provide assistance for professional development for environmental professionals in the region, as well as the environmental education and awareness assistance it already provides.

## **New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW NPWS Australia)**

**Mr Peter Wilson**

Mr Wilson expressed his personal view of the many parallels between the problems of the South Pacific and those of New South Wales. NSW NPWS (Australia) is changing its emphasis from the acquisition and management of strict conservation reserves, to the broader issue of working with landowners, community groups, NGOs and other government agencies towards a common goal. That goal is the sustainable use of resources without jeopardising the natural and cultural heritage.

The NSW NPWS is responsible for the management of over 4 million hectares of land, which includes over seventy national parks and hundreds of nature reserves.

The Service has developed a great deal of field management expertise in its twenty-six years of operation. The service, through its Memorandum of Understanding with SPREP, is able to provide SPREP member countries with modest support in areas of practical conservation area management. This support includes:

- scientific survey and analysis;
- park planning;
- park construction (roads, tracks, buildings etc);
- park design (architects, engineers);
- education, interpretation; and,
- ranger training.

There is therefore much that the NSW NPWS can offer to Pacific nations.

## **University of Auckland, New Zealand**

**Mr Charles Crothers**

Mr Crothers commented that the topic of 'community involvement' centrally involves sociology, and more generally social research, and that these deserve focused reflection. Involvement by sociologists often enhances conservation projects and their absence may contribute to unfortunate failures.

Involvement by sociologists may take a number of forms:

- including sociologists in a team;
- including quasi-sociologists (eg local liaison people);
- drawing on general social science material pertinent to the region;
- using social research tools (eg Participatory Rural Appraisal); and,
- drawing on more sophisticated conceptualisations of 'community'.

Community involvement in sustainable development and biodiversity conservation is not an 'optional extra'.

## **Monash University, Australia**

**Mr Brian Furze**

Mr Furze suggested the need to remember that the social sciences, particularly sociology, have some insight to offer in the transition to integrate conservation with local people, through the use and management of conservation areas.

In particular Mr Furze stressed that a 'community' is not a given, but a dynamic entity complete with hierarchy, inequalities and links with the broader world. He suggested that what we are doing, ultimately, is intervening in community processes and maybe acting as agents of change; and that it is very easy to impose external values on this dynamic entity, for good or for ill. Sociology tells us that it is important to search for alternatives to the dominant development paradigm.

In summary, Mr Furze reminded the Conference that social science provides a great deal of experience of both the uses and abuses of local level integration into wider structures, which can be drawn upon, particularly from the community development and rural development literature and experience, and that it will not be necessary to reinvent the wheel.

## **Greenpeace Pacific**

### **Mr Lafcadio Cortesi**

Mr Cortesi reminded the Conference that protected areas are not the only way to protect biodiversity or the region's natural and cultural heritage. SPREP has a range of other initiatives such as the NEMS, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, information development and dissemination, education, waste management etc., which, when seen together with the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme, begin to achieve a more holistic way of approaching nature conservation in the Pacific.

There are a range of other threats that directly undermine the establishment of conservation areas. In Melanesia logging is destroying natural ecosystems and customary lifestyles at an alarming rate. The greed and dishonest practices of many logging companies, coupled with the irresponsible and unethical practices of certain politicians and landholders is making this possible. Greenpeace believes that all of us need to work together to address this situation. In particular, we need to find ways to change the current political climate, and the culture of consumption which is driving this destruction, and which is keeping us from achieving our goal of conserving the Pacific's natural and cultural heritage. Greenpeace believes it is urgent to discuss these issues and to work together to transform this situation as soon as possible.

### **Mr John Salong, farmer and fisherman, Vanuatu; and Mr Kalaveti Batibasaga, farmer, Fiji:**

Mr Salong raised a question asked early in the Conference - that of whether villages should be recognised as NGOs. He asked the international community to recognise that the Pacific islands have had NGOs for the thousands of years that life has been sustained on the islands.

Mr Salong stressed the complexity and diversity of value systems, cultures and languages used by the conservation practitioners who are the human roots of the Pacific islands. Mr Salong asked the Conference to recognise that the people of the islands are conservation practitioners, and that their complicated conservation values and practices need to be revitalised.

Mr Salong introduced Mr Batibasaga, who gave an oration on the subject of the need to raise community awareness. Mr Batibasaga warned that attitudes can only be changed by touching the hearts, and not the minds, of the community. This does not necessarily require much money. His point was that conservation work starts with 'people', not 'programmes'.

## **GEF Project Papua New Guinea**

### **Mr Bruce Jefferies, Project Manager and Chief Technical Advisor**

Mr Jefferies commented that there seems little hard evidence that we are winning the fight to conserve biodiversity. In this climate we need to ask how long major donors, and other interest groups, can be expected to maintain support for Integrated Conservation and Development projects.

The Conference has discussed cooperative management and the need to build partnerships and consensus, but there has been no discussion about how to deal with our competitors, how to deal with greed at all levels, from local through to multinational companies which operate in a ruthless manner.

Mr Jefferies expressed thanks for the opportunity to experience the idealism, faith and conservation commitment exhibited at the Conference. He ended with the caution that this is a very complex area. Efforts to blend conservation of biodiversity with economic and social components demands more than a commitment to live and work with local people. He commented on the need to learn to listen, not only to people, but also to the forests, mountains, sea, rivers and reefs.

## **Palau Resources Institute**

**Ms Julita Tellei**

Ms Tellei commenced her statement with a Palauan chant addressed to the Conference, and thanked SPREP for the invitation to the Palau Resources Institute to attend.

The invitation has demonstrated to the Palau community that conservation is not just a job for government, nor just a project of outside experts, but that it is everybody's business.

Issues relevant to NGOs involved with biodiversity that were addressed at the Conference are:

- local capacity building;
- education and training;
- the need for funding and other resources;
- the importance of not duplicating each others efforts;
- the need to share data and information;
- practicality;
- cultural sensitivity;
- the need to network;
- the need to developing positive partnerships;
- the need to be accountable to people, and to build credibility.

Ms Tellei felt that local NGOs have been heard at this Conference. The next step is to reach out to business, professionals, educators, churches, and ordinary men, women and children.

Ms Tellei urged her fellow NGOs to help people to reflect on the values important to indigenous people; and to work and network together, and support each other, and not worry too much about who gets the credit.

## **Solomon Islands**

**Mr Moses Biliki**

As a government representative and a land owner, Mr Biliki thanked SPREP, Conference donors, participants, and those who presented observer statements. Mr Biliki also particularly thanked all the NGOs working to conserve biodiversity in the Solomon Islands.

## 6. Revision of the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region

Mr Iosefatu Reti and Ms Audrey Newman presented the proposed principles for the second revision to the *Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region*. Their proposals were the result of a Working Group working for the duration of the Conference. The Working Group based its deliberations on the proposals suggested by Mr Samuelu Sesega, consultant to SPREP, and presented on the first day.

A proposed mission statement and six objectives for the *Action Strategy* were presented and discussed. The version as revised by the Conference is contained in Annex 3. This will again be circulated to the Drafting Committee and local community representatives for comment. The Conference requested that the final wording of the *Action Strategy* be simple, to allow the message to be taken to local communities; and that the emphasis be on action and implementation, not words. The Conference also requested that the need for monitoring be taken into account.

The Conference discussed the process for revision of the *Action Strategy*, and agreed on the following:

- revise objectives with community input;
- develop priority actions from:
  - 1989 *Action Strategy*
  - National Environmental Management Strategies
  - Conference recommendations
  - consultation
- update background;
- incorporate comments;
- approval from SPREP Meeting in September 1994.

Members of the Drafting Committee, who can be contacted with further comments and suggestions, are:

Mr Joe Reti (Chair)

Mr Herson Anson

Mr Ernest Bani

Mr Moses Biliki

Ms Jaquetta Bradshaw

Mr Jacky Bryant

Ms Nancy Daschbach

Mr Paul Dingwall

Mr Bruce Jefferies

Mr Richard Kenchington

Mr Gaikovina Kula

Mr P H C (Bing) Lucas

Mr Bernard Moutou (SPREP Secretariat)

Ms Audrey Newman

Mr Birandra Singh

Mr Peter Thomas

Ms Yolande Vernaudon

Mr Graeme Worboys



## 7. Conference Resolutions

The Conference adopted the following resolutions.

### Resolution Number 1 - Partnership for Conservation

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** the substantial commitment by government and non-government organisations to the development of partnerships between conservation bodies and local people;

**Noting** the variety of approaches to the development of such partnerships, which have been trialled in the South Pacific region;

**Recognising** that there are nevertheless certain principles underlying all such approaches to community participation, such as the need to build mutual trust and respect, the need to give priority to listening to local people, and the need to have relevant site specific information;

**Urges** the SPREP Secretariat to develop, in close consultation with governments and non-government organisations, a set of principles to guide these organisations in their efforts to develop effective partnerships with local people; and

**Requests** all organisations working in the fields of conservation area development and management, including donors, to use such principles in their work.

### Resolution 2 - Incentives for Conservation

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** the strong commitment to environmental protection in most Pacific Island communities; but

**Aware** that communities have a legitimate demand for an improvement in their material standard of living;

**Mindful** that limited resources are available to government and non-government conservation bodies to assist communities to satisfy such demands;

**Agrees** that it is appropriate that incentives should be provided to communities to assist them to manage their lands and waters for conservation; but

**Urges** that any such incentives should be appropriate to the situation of resource owners and users concerned. This requires that the incentives provide long-term ongoing benefits and be directly linked to the resource owners' and users' informed decision to conserve biodiversity.

### Resolution 3 - Mechanisms to Avoid Immediate Threats to Biodiversity

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** that the development of long-term arrangements for a community-based conservation area is a process that requires sustained effort over a considerable period; but

**Noting** that ongoing activities or new proposals often pose an immediate threat;

**Noting** the unsustainable level of natural resource exploitation that is currently taking place in many parts of the South Pacific with consequent loss of biodiversity;

**Urges** government and non-government organisations seeking to develop proposals for community-based conservation areas, to ensure that mechanisms are put in place to avoid immediate threats to the area concerned.

## Resolution 4 - Traditional Resource Management

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Noting** that traditional resource management rules have been an important factor in sustaining culture and the natural environment for generations;

**Noting** the loss of such knowledge and practice may contribute to environmental degradation;

**Urges** government and non-government organisations to work within the established community / village structure; and

**Further urges** such organisations to recognise these traditional resource management rules which contribute to sustainable use of resources, and assist communities with the application of these rules.

## Resolution 5 - Education and Training

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** the importance of education and training for ensuring conservation and sustainable use of resources;

**Noting** that education should build respect for traditional knowledge, language, and management practice in all subjects;

**Further noting** that education which does not address traditional knowledge **can** make things worse by eroding respect for the old knowledge and the elders who have it;

**Considering** that existing education and training programmes in such areas requires strengthening and extension to other areas;

**Recommends** that:

- educational syllabuses **stress** the need to **teach** students traditional environmental knowledge, and ensure that sufficient education materials are available;
- communities are provided with full information and processes about the potential impacts on their environment and lifestyle of new projects, **before** they are asked to make decisions about whether such projects should proceed;
- any project that aims to provide sources of income for communities within conservation areas, should incorporate necessary training for local people;
- strengthen the capacity of government and non-government organisations through development of training programmes in critical areas where necessary; and

**Urges** SPREP, member governments, international and local non-government organisations to implement these recommendations.

## Resolution 6 - Role of Non Government Organisations

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** the importance of non-government organisations in **assist**ing with the conservation of biodiversity;

**Calls** for improved communication, information exchange and dialogue between non-government organisations and government;

**Urges** that governments involve non-government organisations in the development and implementation of environment and development policies and conservation areas;

## **Resolution 7 - The Importance of Church Organisations**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** the growth and expansion of non-governmental organisations, and the wide range of goals, approaches and capacity of such organisations;

**Considers** that there should be improved coordination between non-government organisations at all levels, in order to reduce duplication of effort and competition, and to promote accountability. Such accountability is necessary for non-government organisations to earn and maintain public trust;

**Notes** the willingness of the Pacific Council of Churches to work towards the facilitation of a programme of environmental education and to enhance appreciation of the environment at the local level;

**Urges** SPREP, member governments and non-government organisations to work closely with Church organisations to further conservation and environment programmes in the Pacific.

## **Resolution 8 - Establishment of Trust Funds**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** that as the wider community derives significant benefits from conservation areas, it is appropriate that the wider community contributes to maintenance of these areas on equity grounds;

**Urges** that SPREP should coordinate with national governments the development of strategies involving local people, all levels of government, and international organisations, to ensure independent long-term sustainability of natural resources;

**Urges** member governments to consider innovative funding mechanisms;

**Recognises** that trust funds would be of great benefit in the region and should be established at the local, national and regional levels to take most advantage of different funding sources and strategies;

**Urges** that SPREP should investigate options for the establishment of trust funds to support conservation initiatives, especially urgent ones, which have strong community commitment.

## **Resolution 9 - International Convention on Biological Diversity**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** the potential income to be derived by South Pacific Island people from intellectual property rights in traditional environmental knowledge and biodiversity;

**Urges** the member countries to sign and ratify the International Convention on Biological Diversity, and requests that SPREP assist with the development and implementation of national legislation.

## **Resolution 10 - Relationship between National Legislation and Local Communities**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Noting** the considerable work that has been undertaken in the development of National Environmental Management Strategies, EIA processes, the environmental legislation reviews, and IUCN guidelines for environmental legislation, such as the guidelines for establishing marine protected areas;

**Urges** member governments when enacting conservation legislation to take into account, or where appropriate to base it on, traditional management systems and the concerns of local communities.

**Considers** that national legislation should provide a framework for management of conservation areas, and that within this structure, local communities should have the responsibility to develop their plan of management, in consultation with interested parties. Management plans would provide for appropriate enforcement.

### **Resolution 11 - Other International Conventions**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Noting** international conventions which promote the conservation of biodiversity, such as the Apia Convention, Biodiversity Convention, Bonn Convention, CITES, Ramsar Convention, and the World Heritage Convention;

**Urges** countries which have not already done so become parties to these Conventions

### **Resolution 12 - Four Yearly South Pacific Conferences on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** that the South Pacific Conferences on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas play an important role in raising awareness of biodiversity conservation and its implementation and management,

**Recommends** that such meetings continue to be held on a 4 yearly basis.

### **Resolution 13 - Revised Directory of Protected Areas**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** the positive contribution of the World Conservation Monitoring Centre to the documentation of conservation areas in the South Pacific;

**Recommends** that further collaboration be continued with SPREP, IUCN, international NGOs and national agencies to assist in the production of a revised directory of Protected Areas in the South Pacific for the Sixth South Pacific Conference on Protected Areas and Nature Conservation.

### **Resolution 14 - Marine Environment**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** that the sea is the primary environmental linkage and major source of resources in the South Pacific and consequently that conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment and its resources is vital to the culture and well being of local communities;

**Noting** the global conservation significance of marine ecosystems of the South Pacific region and that SPREP is a major partner in IUCN's programme for the establishment of a global representative system of marine protected areas;

**Recommends** that donor agencies support the efforts of SPREP, Governments and non-government organisations to ensure that local communities play the major role in the establishment and management of marine conservation areas and other strategies that result in the wise and sustainable use of the marine environment and resources of the South Pacific.

## **Resolution 15 - Invasive Species In the South Pacific**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Recognising** the threats to biodiversity posed by invasive species of animals and plants in the islands of the South Pacific;

**Aware** of the existence of information on risks of further spread of invasive species in the region;

**Aware also** of the development of new techniques for controlling or eradicating such species;

**Mindful** of the need to make such information and techniques available at all community levels;

**Requests** that SPREP seek the involvement of the IUCN-Species Survival Commission in undertaking a review of conservation problems caused by invasive species in the South Pacific and, in doing so, to give practical advice on how to prevent introductions of invasive species, how to deal with them when they occur, and how to restore invaded ecosystems.

## **Resolution 16 - Appreciation of the Conference**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Having** met in Nuku'alofa the capital of the friendly islands of the Kingdom of Tonga;

**Appreciative** of the welcome and support provided by the Royal Family;

**Having** enjoyed the hospitality and friendliness of the people of the Kingdom of Tonga;

**Thankful** for the untiring efforts of the principal, staff and students of Queen Salote College;

**Expresses** its gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga for hosting the conference.

## **Resolution 17 - Appreciation to Contributing Organisations**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Expresses** its appreciation and gratitude to the following organisations for their generous financial and other assistance in the support of the Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

- South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme,
- United Nations Development Programme (GEF),
- Australian Nature Conservation Agency,
- Australian International Development Assistance Bureau,
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species Secretariat,
- Australian Department of Environment, Sport and Tourism,
- IUCN World Conservation Union,
- New Zealand Maruia Society,
- World Wide Fund for Nature,
- United States AID Biodiversity Support Programme, and
- South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

## **Resolution 18- Appreciation to Pacific Environmentalists**

The Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas:

**Appreciative** of the long-standing and enthusiastic commitment of Mr Sione Latu'ila Tongilava, Secretary of the Ministry of Land Survey and Natural Resources of the Kingdom of Tonga;

**Acknowledging** the contribution of Mr Bing Lucas, Chair of the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA) of the IUCN, and Mr Muliagatele Iosefatu Reti, Vice-Chair of the CNPPA;

**Expresses** its utmost appreciation, on the retirement from their positions, for their contribution to biodiversity conservation in the South Pacific region.

## 8. Closing Session

### 8.1 Fred M. Packard International Parks Merit Award (IUCN/CNPPA)

Mr Bing Lucas, Chair of the CNPPA, explained that the International Park Management Award honours Fred Packard, who served as honorary secretary to the CNPPA for many years. On his death his friends commenced an award in honour of his services to national parks and protected areas. The last award in the South Pacific region was given to The Nature Conservancy in Hawaii.

The current award is given to a group of traditional owners in the Cook Islands who have created a protected area, on their own initiative, and on their own land. The CNPPA presents the Fred M. Packard International Parks Merit Award to the Arongo Mana of the island of Atiu, Cook Islands, in recognition of outstanding service in furthering the conservation objectives of protected areas to society. Mr Lucas presented a certificate and a small cheque to Mr Tauraki Raea, Publicity Officer of the Cook Islands Conservation Service, who represented the Cook Islands government at the Conference. Mr Raea accepted the certificate and cheque on behalf of the recipients.

The citation on the certificate reads "The Arongo Mana of Atiu have been legal trustees of Takutea Islands since 1950 and, as traditional island leaders, have conserved Takutea Island as a Wildlife Sanctuary. Takutea is a coral cay of 122 hectares, 22 kilometres north of Atiu Island in the Cook Islands Group in the South Pacific. Takutea has a history of resource use but, under the trusteeship of Arongo Mana of Atiu, has remained uninhabited with most of its forest regenerated and with protection for its seabird colonies, the largest and most important in the Southern Cook Islands".

### 8.2 Venue for Next Conference

In keeping with Resolution 12 of this Conference which resolved that the South Pacific Conferences on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas continue to be held every four years, the next Conference will be in 1997.

Mr Herson Anson, representing the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, offered FSM as the host country for the next Conference. The Chairman warmly accepted the offer on behalf of the Conference, noting that this will be the first South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas to be held in Micronesia.

### 8.3 Closing Ceremony

Dr Fuavao, Director of SPREP, thanked all the donors and participants to the Conference, and welcomed the opportunity to increase partnerships with NGOs. He also thanked Queen Salote College and its staff and students. He thanked the Chairs of the various Committees, and the translation and interpretation team. Dr Fuavao thanked the representative of FSM for his country's offer to host the Sixth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, and thanked all the numerous people working behind the scenes who have helped to ensure the Conference ran smoothly.

Finally Dr Fuavao thanked the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga for hosting the Conference, and the Chair of the Conference for his untiring efforts. The Chairman concluded the Conference with a prayer.





# Annexes

## Annex 1: Conference Objectives and Agenda

### Conference Theme and Objectives

The theme of the conference is "Community Involvement in Conserving Biodiversity in the South Pacific Region".

The theme was chosen as it:

1. reflects the urgency of biodiversity conservation in the region
2. highlights the integral role that local communities have in conserving biodiversity in the region.

The principal objectives of the conference are:

- to review and demonstrate the value of community involvement in conserving biodiversity in the South Pacific region;
- to develop strategies to increase effective community involvement in conserving biodiversity in the South Pacific region; and,
- to clarify future directions for biodiversity conservation in the South Pacific region.

### Agenda

#### Saturday 2 October

1.00 - 5.00 pm      Registration, Conference Venue - Queen Salote College Hall

#### Monday 4 October

8.00 - 9.00 am      Registration, Conference Venue - Queen Salote College Hall

9.00 - 10.00 am    **Opening Session**

Opening Prayer by the Rev Dr 'Alifaleti Mone, Secretary of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga. Hymns by the Queen Salote College Choir. (See copy of Service attached for order of Devotions).

Opening address by Dr Samuela Ma'afu Tupou, Honourable Minister of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources

Address by Dr Vili A. Fuavao, Director, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Meeting Arrangements - election of Chair, election of Drafting Committee, Agenda adoption etc.

Official photograph

10.00 - 10.30 am    **MORNING TEA**

10.30 am - 12 noon **Regional Review**

Conference chair

*Summary of country reviews - Includes significant progress or activities on nature conservation since 1989.* Presented by Adrienne Farago, SPREP.

Discussion about country reviews

*Status and distribution of protected areas in the South Pacific.* James Paine, World Conservation Monitoring Centre, United Kingdom.

12 noon -1.30 pm    **LUNCH**

- 1.30 - 3.00 pm **Report on current initiatives**  
*National Environmental Management Strategies.* Neva Wendt, SPREP  
*South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Program.* Iosefatu Reti, SPREP  
*International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources: European Community - Protected Area Initiatives.* P.H.C. (Bing) Lucas, Chair, Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, IUCN  
*IUCN/CNPPA Marine Protected Areas in the South Pacific.* Prepared by Graham Kelleher, presented by Richard Kenchington, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Australia

3.00 - 3.30 pm **AFTERNOON TEA**

3.30 - 5.00 pm **Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region - principles for a proposed revision.** Presentation of consultant's recommendations. Prepared by Samuelu Sesega, Division of Environment and Conservation, Western Samoa

7.00 - 9.00 pm **Function** hosted by Samuela Ma'afu Tupou the Honourable Minister of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources, Tonga, at the International Dateline Hotel

**Tuesday 5 October**

**Plenary Session 1 People in Conservation**

Chair: Samuelu Sesega, Western Samoa

8.30 - 10.00 am **Key Issue Paper**

*People in protected areas in the South Pacific.* Iosefatu Reti, SPREP

**Case Studies**

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in natural resource management in Australia.* Prepared by Kevin McLeod/Steve Szabo, presented by Mike Hill, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Australian Nature Conservation Agency, Australia

*The conservation of biological diversity in the coastal lowlands of Western Samoa - village liaison.* Samuelu Sesega, Division of Environment and Conservation, Western Samoa and Geoff Park, Department of Conservation, New Zealand

*Community involvement for the proposed 'Eua National Park Plan of Management.* Uilou Samani, Environment Officer, Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources, Tonga

*Arnavon Islands Marine Conservation Area Project, Solomon Islands.* Tanya Leary, The Nature Conservancy, Solomon Islands

10.00 - 10.30 am **MORNING TEA**

10.30 am - 12 noon **Workshops**

Discussion on key issue - People in protected areas in the South Pacific

Report back to Plenary with recommendations

12 noon - 1.30 pm **LUNCH**

**Plenary Session 2 Local Conservation Area Ownership and Management**

Chair: Bradley Punu, Niue

1.30 - 3.00 pm **Key Issue Paper**

*Local conservation area ownership and traditional management.* Robin Connor, Rachel Houlbrooke, Francis Tarihao, Solomon Islands Development Trust, Solomon Islands

**Case Studies**

*Forest conservation initiatives of villoges in Western Samoa - Falealupo/Tafua.* Clark Pctenu, O le Siosiomaga Society, Western Samoa

*Montane cloud forests in Micronesia: status and future management.* Herson Anson, Director, State Forest Service, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, and Bill Raynor, The Nature Conservancy, Federated States of Micronesia

*Komarindi Project.* Moses Biliki, Chief Environment and Conservation Officer, Ministry of Natural Resources, Honiara, Solomon Islands

*Hakupu Tapu Forest and Wildlife Reserve.* Bradley Punu, Secretary to the Government, Department of Community Affairs, Niue

3.00 - 3.30 pm **AFTERNOON TEA**

3.30 - 5.00 pm **Workshops**

Discussion on key issue - Local conservation area ownership and traditional management

Report back to Plenary with recommendations

6.30 - 8.30 pm **Function hosted by SPREP**

**Wednesday 6 October**

**Plenary Session 3 The Role of Non-Government Organisations in Conserving Biodiversity**

Chair: Julita Tellei, Palau

8.30 - 10.00 am **Key Issue Paper**

*The role of non-government organisations in conserving biodiversity in the South Pacific.* Caroline Sinavaiana, Le Vaomatua, American Samoa

**Case Studies**

*The response of Pacific Christian churches and their communities to the conservation of biodiversity.* Prepared by Peter Salamonsen, Pacific Conference of Churches, Fiji, presented by Sister Marina Edith Tu'inukuafe RSM, Coordinator, Diocesan Commission for Justice, Peace and Development, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

*The role of women in nature conservation in Palau.* Julita Tellei, Palau Resource Institute, Palau

*Time consideration for establishment of protected areas on native comunally owned lands.* Birandra Singh, Director, National Trust for Fiji, Suva, Fiji

*Atu Atu Te Natura Case study.* Jaky Bryant, Atu Atu te Natura, French Polynesia

10.00 - 10.30 am **MORNING TEA**

10.30 am - 12 noon **Workshops**

Discussion on key issue - The role of non-government organisations in conserving biodiversity in the South Pacific

Report back to Plenary with recommendations

12 noon - 1.30 pm **LUNCH**

**Plenary Session 4 Funding Mechanisms for Biodiversity Conservation**

Chair: Moses Biliki, Solomon Islands

1.30 - 3.00 pm **Key Issue Paper**

*Funding mechanisms for protected areas and conserving biodiversity.* John Waugh, IUCN, United States of America

**Case Studies**

*Eco tourism as a funding mechanism.* Prepared by Trevor Sofield, Hong Kong Polytechnic, Hong Kong

*The Profitable Environmental Protection Project - will conservation pay its own way?.* Nora Devoe, Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific, Vanuatu

*The Komarindi Catchment Conservation Area model - resource rent.* Peter Thomas, The Nature Conservancy, New Zealand, and Graham Worboys, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Australia

*Helping conservation pay: village microenterprise development in the Solomon Islands.* Annette Lees, Maruia Society, New Zealand

- 3.00 - 3.30 pm **AFTERNOON TEA**
- 3.30 - 5.00 pm **Workshops**  
 Discussion on key issue - Funding mechanisms for protected areas and conserving biodiversity  
 Report back to Plenary with recommendations
- Evening **Meeting of the South Pacific Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA / IUCN).** Venue: Conference Room, Ramanlal Hotel

**Thursday 7 October**

**Plenary Session 5 Conservation Policy and Legislation**

Chair: Nicola Paine, Australia

8.30 - 10.00 am **Key Issue Paper**

*Protected area and biodiversity conservation policy and legislation in the South Pacific Region.* Nicola Paine, Commonwealth Environment Protection Agency, Australia

**Case Studies**

*Tokelau - village traditional rules relating to biodiversity/protected areas.* Suia Pelasio, Environment Officer, Office of Tokelau Affairs

*Conservation Policy and Strategy Development in Papua New Guinea.* Gaikovina Kula, Department of Environment and Conservation, Papua New Guinea

*Constraints and opportunities of using legislation as a tool for community involvement in biodiversity protection.* Bernard Moutou, SPREP

*Supporting traditional conservation laws through legislation - a case study from Isabel Province, Solomon Islands.* Raewyn Pearl, Maruia Society, New Zealand

10.00 - 10.30 am **MORNING TEA**

10.30 - 12 noon **Workshops**

Discussion on key issue - Protected area and biodiversity conservation policy and legislation in the South Pacific Region

Report back to Plenary with recommendations

12 noon - 1.30 pm **LUNCH**

**Plenary Session 6 Future Directions for Biodiversity Conservation**

Conference Chair

1.30 - 3.00 pm **Key Issue Paper**

*Future directions for conserving biodiversity in the South Pacific Region - an overview.* Vili Fuavao, Director, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme

**Workshops**

Discussion on recommendations of future directions for biodiversity conservation

3.00 - 3.30 pm **AFTERNOON TEA**

3.30 - 5.00 pm **Workshops**

Discussion on recommendations of future directions for biodiversity conservation (continued)

Report back to Plenary with recommendations

Evening **Meeting of Non-Government Organisations**

**Friday 8 October**

8.30 - 10.00 am Statements by representatives of sponsors and by observers

10.00 - 10.30 am **MORNING TEA**

10.30 - 12 noon Revision of *Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region*

12 noon - 1.30 pm    **LUNCH**

1.30 - 3.00 pm    Presentation and adoption of workshop recommendations and resolutions

3.00 - 3.30 pm    **AFTERNOON TEA**

3.30 - 5.00 pm    International Park Merit Award - IUCN/CNPPA

                          Venue for next conference

                          Closing ceremony

Evening            Slide / video presentation (if participants are interested)

**Saturday 9 October**

                          Field trip (optional) around the island of Tongatapu

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### **Annex 3: Proposed Revisions to the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region**

The Mission Statement and Objectives below outline the proposed major areas of focus for the next 4-5 years in the region, which were accepted in principle by the Plenary. The Plenary also agreed to revise the *Action Strategy* to incorporate the consultant's suggestions described in the paper by Samuelu Sesega, with minor modifications. The Drafting Committee will work to clarify the language further, and to identify high priority activities for each objective. They will also strive to make these activities specific and measurable to assist in assessing our progress. The approved process for finalising these objectives and actions are described in the text of this report.

#### **Mission:**

*To protect the rich natural heritage of the South Pacific forever through the conservation and sustainable management of its natural resources for the benefit of the peoples of the South Pacific and the world.*

#### **Major Objectives for the Next 4-5 Years:**

1. To develop and implement national conservation and sustainable resource management strategies for all countries and territories within the region.
2. To identify and address the most urgent threats to the region's biodiversity and protect these plants, animals and ecosystems for future generations.
3. To build upon the long history of natural resource management by local communities and involve communities as senior partners in cooperative management that strengthens land owner rights and uses traditional knowledge and customs.
4. To implement programmes of training and extension that strengthen and utilise local expertise and technical ability in planning and implementing sustainable natural resource management programmes for marine and terrestrial environments.
5. To develop and advocate funding mechanisms for the sustained support of conservation activities at the local, national and regional levels.
6. To build broad partnerships and information sharing at the local, national, regional and international levels in support of conservation activities.

#### **Proposed addition** (to be incorporated as an objective or priority action):

7. To recognise the economic, social and cultural value of biodiversity, during the evaluation and implementation of development projects and programmes.

#### **Next Steps:**

For each objective, priority action strategies will be identified, which will include many of the comments made by the conference about monitoring, legislation, research and other essential activities not specifically mentioned in these objectives.

## Annex 4: Opening Address

By Dr Samuela Ma'afu Tupou, Hon. Minister of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources,  
Kingdom of Tonga

Your Royal Highnesses - Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, Princess Nanasipau'u 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata,  
Princess 'Elisiva Fusipala Vaha'i, Princess 'Ofeina 'e he Langi Fakafanua,

Honourable Ministers of the Realm;

Members of the Nobility Rank;

Representatives of the United Nations Specialised Agencies;

Distinguished Participants representing international Non-Governmental Organisations;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of His Majesty's Government, I wish to extend to you all a warm welcome to this Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, and to Tonga in particular for those participants who have come from other destinations. I am fully aware of the impacts - both physically and financially - associated with long distance travelling; your presence here today bears witness to the escalating attention being given at present to environmental conservation both at the international and national agenda.

A brief consideration of the title of this conference as well as its theme reflects the importance and urgent need for sustainable utilisation of environmental resources today. The title of this conference - South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas - specifies the issues of environmental protection and environmental conservation; these issues have traditionally been in conflict and at present the international community is giving them the attention that they duly deserve. In similar fashion, the theme of the conference - Community Involvement in Conserving Biodiversity in the South Pacific - once again draws attention to the same issues but specifically narrowing it to the South Pacific. It is most encouraging to see that ongoing attention is being accorded to these issues whether internationally, regionally or nationally and continuous efforts of this nature will no doubt lead to a clear and practical translation of the popular concept of sustainable development.

The debate on environmental protection and environmental conservation has been at the fore for quite sometime. It started in the United States in the early part of the last century when two colourful personalities, namely David Muir and later Gifford Pinchot gained access to the top echelon of the US decision-making machinery. David Muir was a prophet of complete environmental protection calling for strict and rigid rules and regulations on the use of environmental resources. Remnants of this school of thought are still surviving today operating under the banner of 'Deep Ecology'. On the other hand, Gifford Pinchot was a follower of the 'Shallow Ecology' movement - a movement which puts emphasis on responding to both the material needs of people and the biological needs of renewable environmental resources. The debate between these two schools of thought resembles that on environmental protection and conservation and it is a healthy indication that such discussion is still going on because it reminds us once again that man and nature both have intrinsic needs which must be met in order to allow for harmonious and unlimited co-existence in our planet Earth.

In the South Pacific region, a similar process has been going on since the early part of the 1970s. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment which was convened in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972 is a watershed as far as environmental work in the South Pacific is concerned. This conference created the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) which later established under its work programme a Regional Seas Programme directed at extending the frontier of environmental work to all corners of the globe. A direct outgrowth of this development was the Special Programme on Nature Conservation in the South Pacific initiated by UNEP, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the South Pacific Commission (SPC) in 1974.

This programme, despite its simple and humble beginning, has made possible far-reaching implications as far as development of environmental work in the South Pacific is concerned. We have in the region at present a full-fledged regional organisation for the environment, namely the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). This organisation has since its initial beginning in Noumea, New Caledonia in 1982 made significant developments in environmental work in the South Pacific possible. We also have in the region at present several international conventions which provide the legal frameworks for environmental work in the South Pacific.

Among these conventions are the Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific (Apia Convention), the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific (SPREP Convention) and related protocols, and the SPREP Treaty. These regional conventions apart from setting up the institutional frameworks which we now witness in the region also promote research and practical initiatives for the environment in the region.

A good and clear example of this is this conference which was first convened in Wellington, New Zealand in 1975 after the Apia Convention was concluded in 1974. Similar gatherings have been convened in Australia, Western Samoa and Vanuatu. This conference is the fifth in the series and no doubt more will likely follow in the future but still endeavouring to address the issues of environmental protection and environmental conservation in the South Pacific.

One further reminder that this conference makes possible is the diverse nature of environmental characteristics observable in the South Pacific. We have in this forum distinguished participants who are representing island countries with various types of physical and biological characteristics. Their first hand experiences with living in atoll, raised limestone, volcanic or high continental island environments will no doubt enrich the debate and discussion in this conference as I am told that various presentations during the conference will cover the whole spectrum of man's environment including the socio-economic, political and ecological aspects.

Whilst it is important that we indulge in fruitful debate and discussions, perhaps it is even more important that we put particular efforts into translating our ideas and concepts into practical and useful realities. Very often these two entities do not go together mainly because we lack the means to achieve that or we normally choose to be in our own pigeonholes without reaching out to others. I know that SPREP is now working diligently on translating ideas and concepts into practical initiatives throughout the region under its various working programmes. In mentioning that, I think I am obliged to acknowledge the contributions that SPREP has extended to Tonga in particular under its Regional Environment Technical Assistance programme. I am sure that SPREP's assistance is not restricted to Tonga and that other SPREP member countries have been assisted by SPREP in various forms.

What is urgently needed is a more cooperative approach by the countries in the region in their dealings with SPREP through sharing of experiences and resources. Equally important of course is the need for more cooperation in dealing with environmental issues within the countries of the region. So far, the experience suggests that we have not gone very far in this regard and perhaps the inclusion of the words 'community involvement' in the theme of this conference is a useful reminder that there is an urgent need for more cooperation both at the national and regional levels in the promotion of environmental work. I am confident that if this spirit of cooperation is achieved in the dealings of the countries between themselves and also with SPREP, the emphasis on conserving biodiversity in the South Pacific will be improved quite significantly. In this regard, I urge you all to bear in mind the need for better cooperation in conserving biodiversity in the region during the various discussions in this conference.

On this note Ladies and Gentlemen, it is indeed a pleasure for me to declare the Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas open and I wish you all the best in your deliberations.

*Malo 'aupito.*



## Annex 5: Opening Statement

Dr Vill Fuavao, Director, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Your Royal Highness, Princess Nanasipau'u 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata

Honourable Dr. Ma'afu Tupou, Minister for Lands, Survey and Natural Resources

Members of the Nobility Rank

Rev. Dr. 'Alifeleti Mone

Honoured Guests

Distinguished Country Delegates

Representatives of Donor Agencies and Non Governmental Organisations

Observers

Friends of SPREP

Ladies And Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Fifth South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. This conference continues the series of National Parks and Reserves conferences held in New Zealand in 1975, Sydney, Australia in 1979, Apia, Western Samoa in 1985, and Port Vila, Vanuatu in 1989. The Apia conference decided to change the name of the four-yearly conference to the South Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas to better reflect the importance of the wider issues of biodiversity conservation to the region.

The Vanuatu Conference, four years ago, had about 90 participants with fourteen of the island countries represented, together with international and multilateral aid donor organisations; regional and international conservation NGOs; and tertiary institutions. This year we have more participants with seventeen of the SPREP member countries and territories represented, once again together with many donor organisations, NGOs and tertiary institutions. And given the theme of the conference this year, I am pleased to see the high level of participation from NGOs.

The theme of our conference is 'Community Involvement in Conserving Biodiversity in the South Pacific'. This theme follows a theme of the United Nation Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) - that of relating and involving people in the protection of their environment, and is consistent with 1993 being the Year of the Indigenous People.

Although often viewed as a tropical paradise, the South Pacific today is a region beset with development and environment problems. Forests are being cleared for agriculture and timber, exposing soils which are eroding or degrading, reefs are being polluted and destroyed, beaches mined, rivers dammed or polluted and mangroves and estuaries cut or filled. The degradation of natural ecosystems which is taking place, together with over exploitation of commercially valuable resources and popular food species such as marine turtle, coconut crab and giant clam, is resulting in the rapid loss of the region's natural biodiversity and is undermining the ability of the island governments to support their human populations.

In recognition of the vulnerability of island societies to these human induced impacts, the theme of the Vanuatu Conference some four years ago was 'The Role of Protected Areas in Sustaining Island Societies'. The theme of our conference this week is an extension of the effort started in Vanuatu.

We have learned over the years in the Pacific that the success of conservation strategies to protect important areas and species relies to a large extent on the local island communities. Local communities in Pacific island countries are the most important owners and managers of the resources that we would like to protect - and without their support, understanding and more importantly involvement, conservation objectives will not be achieved. This is the subject of discussion for the next five days. How do we involve the communities? How do we work with them? We must ask ourselves! How do we fund their conservation ideas? What policies and legislation are needed to support their work?

The objectives of the conference are:

1. to review and demonstrate the value of community involvement in conserving biodiversity in the South Pacific region;
2. to develop ways and means to increase effective community involvement in conserving biodiversity in the South Pacific region; and
3. to set the future directions for biodiversity conservation in the South Pacific region.

In this context I would reiterate the philosophy behind the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme which is based in some way on the physical realities of the small Pacific Islands. SPREP is honoured to host this 5-year, ten-million dollar programme and note that the Programme Manager, Mr. Iosefatu Reti, is instrumental in organising this conference. We are very grateful to UNDP and AIDAB for co-funding this important program. The former Executive Director of UNEP summed this up well when he alluded to the fact that "One cannot expect to have success on conservation without development, or for that matter sustainable economic development, without conservation". The two go hand in hand.

As well as discussing the many important strategies for involving the communities in conserving biodiversity during the conference, we will also have an opportunity to:

1. Review progress over the last four years since the last conference, particularly in relation to the implementation of the goals and objectives of the *Action Strategy For Nature Conservation in the South Pacific Region* approved at the last conference in 1989.
2. We must ask ourselves what have we accomplished in the last four years. Further we must review the strategy in light of the many conservation initiatives on global, regional and more importantly on national fronts.

The challenge in the days ahead lie with communication between the experts and country delegates. I urge the delegates to be forthright with your views and not to be overwhelmed by the number of experts available. At the end of the day and for us to make headway in the conservation area the views of the countries delegates have to be the driving force in this conference. We all agree that non governmental organisations have a lot to offer in the area of conservation. I for one see their role as assisting the countries to realise their conservation needs and it would be a grave mistake if the NGOs believe otherwise. The time has come when 'cooperation' instead of 'confrontation' between NGOs and countries is emphasised.

Lastly I would like to thank His Majesty's Government for hosting this important conference, in particular the efforts of the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Natural Resources, and the Queen Salote College for making available this beautiful venue. I would also like to acknowledge the major sponsor of the conference the Global Environment Facility, through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Other sponsors include AIDAB, CITES, IUCN, US AID, WWF, Australian Nature Conservation Agency and Australian Department of Environment, Sport and Territories.

I hope this week is not all meeting and I would strongly suggest that you take the opportunity to visit the many historical sites in Tonga. After all it is part of our programme to conserve the identity and diversity of our region. I wish you well in your deliberations.

*Malo 'aupito.*

*Tu'a eiki 'ofa atu.*