

# SPREP-Tok

A monthly e-bulletin from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

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## MESSAGE FROM MR. KOSI LATU, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SPREP

Merry Christmas to you all,

As we come to the end of a difficult year, we express our appreciation and gratitude to our Members and Partners for your support and fellowship this year. 2020 was a year filled with uncertainty as many of us had to adjust to new circumstances in the space of days as we faced a life with COVID-19, a global pandemic. Our Pacific resiliency shone as many of us adapted and continued to achieve successful outcomes in many areas, through new and different ways.

Our highlight this month was a new Pacific islands milestone achieved through the 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas - the endorsement of the Vemööre Declaration for Pacific Conservation. The Conference, hosted by New Caledonia in partnership with SPREP and our Pacific Islands Roundtable for Nature Conservation, was a resounding success with over 1,700 delegates participating in the virtual event. Congratulations and thank you to our partners and everyone that joined us on this journey. You'll read more about the Conference in this month's SPREP Tok, along with other news from November.

2020 was a challenging year for many of us - we stand with our Members that are experiencing tragedy over this time and express our deepest condolences. Please know that as Members of our SPREP family our thoughts are with you all.

As the last SPREP Tok for 2020 I'd like to convey to you all a Merry Christmas on behalf of us all at SPREP.

May you have a peaceful and joyful time with family and friends,

Until next year,

Soifua,



Mr. Kosi Latu, Director General of SPREP.

## SPREP-Tok LATEST NEWS



### PACIFIC NATURE CONFERENCE CONCLUDES, COUNTRIES ENDORSE VEMÖÖRE DECLARATION

The 10th Pacific Island Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, the biggest virtual event in the Pacific region in 2020, has officially closed. The three-day conference ended on a high note with 13 Pacific island countries and territories, partner countries, and the Heads of Organisations of 12 members of the PIRT endorsing the Vemööre Declaration, which sets out commitments to nature conservation actions in the Pacific 2020-2025.

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Our vision: A resilient Pacific environment sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.

 Click to follow us on [FACEBOOK](#) and [TWITTER](#).

### LESSONS FROM THE PAST: A METHOD TO ASSESS THE IMPACT OF ADAPTATION IN THE PACIFIC



A review to help understanding the impact of climate change adaptation and activities across the Pacific will be underway in Tonga. This will help guide future change adaptation initiatives in the Pacific, ensuring they have the best results for Pacific communities.

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### NEED FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC TERRESTRIAL PROTECTED AREAS HIGHLIGHTED AT 10TH CONFERENCE



Our Pacific islands are biodiversity hotspots with local communities having strong cultural connections to nature. Our Pacific communities rely heavily on natural resources to sustain their economies, livelihoods and overall wellbeing.

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### NIUEAN WINS PACIFIC INVASIVE SPECIES “BATTLER OF THE YEAR” AWARD



Mr Huggard Tongatule of Niue is the recipient of the 2020 Pacific Invasive Species Battler of the Year award. The award was announced during the Launch of the Pacific Battler Lounge side event at the 10th Pacific Nature Conference.

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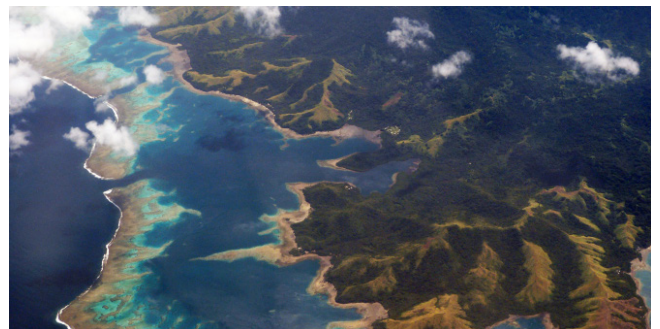
### PAPUA NEW GUINEA WORKS TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS



PNG’s government pre-approved a 2019 report on the State of the environment of the country, which analyses data on, and makes recommendations on how to improve protected area conservation and management.

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### PACIFIC MINISTERS AND ORGANISATIONS TO PUSH FOR CONSERVATION ACTION AT HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT



Commitment from Pacific island governments to protecting our Pacific biodiversity will ring loud and clear at a virtual High-level Segment of the 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas.

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### GREEN CLIMATE FUND PROJECTS NOW APPROVED FOR ALL PACIFIC ISLANDS



Fourteen Pacific islands have now been able to access funding for Green Climate Fund projects to address climate change, following the most recent GCF board meeting in November.

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## TRAINING ON STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT IN THE EIA AND SIA PROCESSES UNDERWAY



SPREP and the World Bank have jointly launched the 'Regional Training on Environment Impact Assessment, Stakeholder Engagement and Social Impact Assessment in the Pacific.'

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## COMMUNITY BASED EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS INTRODUCED THROUGH CREWS PROJECT



Representatives of the Government of Samoa, private sector, non-governmental organisations, and the community were introduced to Community-based Early Warning Systems, a component of the CREWS project during a two-day inception workshop held in Tuana'imato this week.

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## TELLING OUR STORIES WITH THE CLIMATE CHANGE STORY GRANTS ENVIRONMENT



Pacific news stories on climate change told by Pacific islands media are being given a boost with the opportunity to apply for story grants. The Climate Change Story Grants support the development of engaging media content that tells emerging Pacific stories of climate change.

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## CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN SAMOA



A one-day conference aiming to raise awareness on the importance and power of Geographic Information Systems, open data, open source software, spatial data sharing, and data standards was held in November in Samoa.

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## ENHANCING COMMUNICATIONS CAPACITY IN THE COOK ISLANDS



The Development Coordination Division is taking action to help build a more informed community and people through awareness raising of their role in the Cook Islands.

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## SWITZERLAND AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS REGION COOPERATE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION



The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and SPREP are pleased to announce Switzerland is contributing USD 100,000 to build capacity on climate change and disaster related migration, displacement and planned relocation for resilient development in the Pacific.

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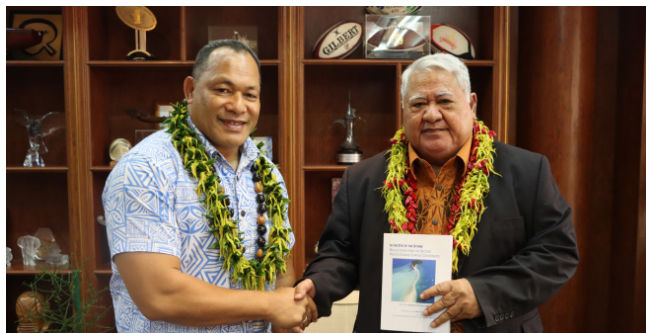
### BATTLING INVASIVE SPECIES A PRIORITY IN THE PACIFIC



A session titled “Battling Invasive Species” provided a unique opportunity for participants of the 10th Pacific Island Nature Conference to hear directly from those working within their communities to combat invasive species about some of the impacts and challenges they face each day.

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### PRIME MINISTER OF SAMOA PRESENTED WITH NEW CLIMATE CHANGE BOOK



The Honourable Prime Minister of Samoa, Tuilaepa Lufesoli'ai Sailele Malielegaoi was presented with his very own copy of the 'In the Eye of the Storm – Reflections from the Second Pacific Climate Change Conference

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### YOUTH RECOGNISED AT CONFERENCE AS THE “CUSTODIANS OF THE FUTURE”



Approximately half of the world’s population is under 30 years old, adding greater meaning to the popular notion, “Youth are the custodians of the future.” Any decision made today will have a direct effect on the future lives of our youth and highlights the important role young people can play as key future decision makers.

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### THE STATE OF OUR PACIFIC ISLANDS CONSERVATION IN BLACK AND WHITE



Of the 11,158 species listed for the Pacific one the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN 2020) present in Pacific island countries and territories, 1,891 species (16.9%) are listed as threatened.

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### ENVIRONMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLS VITAL FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



Sustainable tourism development, as defined by the World Tourism Organization, is tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

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TRIBUTE TO DR NETATUA PELESIKOTI



We are deeply saddened to know our Pacific islands region has lost a true Pacific Warrior. Dr Netatua Pelesikoti was visionary, inspirational and dedicated to building the resilience of all Pacific countries. She was proud to serve our region and her dedication to that calling came with a bottom line - that our Pacific islands came first, all Pacific island countries.

Dr Netatua was with SPREP from 30 November 2009 to 31 May 2017, initially as Programme Manager, Pacific Futures then as Director, Climate Change from 1 January 2012.

Over that period, she initiated several new climate change projects and initiatives which continue her vision and dedication to building Pacific resilience. We are proud of her accomplishments.

She was the first Pacific Island Woman to be a Lead Contributing Author to Chapter 29 on Small Islands in the 5th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

More recently and not surprisingly, Dr Netatua was admitted to the Scientific Advisory Panel of the World Meteorological Organisation, an elite group of 15 scientists worldwide who are experts on weather, climate and water. This achievement is no small feat for our region.

In 2019, the Pacific Meteorological Council awarded her “The PMC Lifetime Award” in recognition of her key role in the establishment of the Pacific Met Council, the Pacific Meteorological Desk Partnership, Pacific Island Climate Outlook Forum and the Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Meteorology that had its inaugural meeting in Tonga in 2015.

We cannot talk of the enhanced visibility of the meteorological issues in the region without attributing credit to her.

Dr Netatua leaves behind a vast regional and global network of climate change professionals, who also mourn her loss.

We were all blessed to have worked with her. She was a respected colleague, a trailblazer, a leader and a loyal friend.

We have all lost an amazing Pacific Island Woman, a leader in her field.

On behalf of all of SPREP may I convey our deepest condolences to Pita, children, and all of her family at this most difficult time.

Toka ā Netatua ‘ihe nonga ‘a e ‘Eiki”

TRIBUTE TO MAKERETA KAURASI-MANUELI



We are saddened by the passing of our dear friend and former colleague, Ms Makereta Kaurasi-Manueli and are grateful that she was a part of our SPREP family, gifting us with a legacy of friendship and many memories.

We reflect upon our time with Miss Makereta Kaurasi-Manueli with great fondness.

Makereta started with SPREP in 2006 as the project accountant and was then the financial account from 2012 to the completion of her contract in 2016. Makereta often acted as the Head of the Finance and Administration Department of SPREP from time to time. She was part of many SPREP achievements over these years.

Makereta was a crucial member of our SPREP finance unit, working with many staff across our organisation to fulfil and meet financial obligations, often playing a key role in the finances of our SPREP projects. She is remembered by many as a true professional in our organisation working for a better Pacific island region and people.

Within our SPREP family, Makereta, along with her husband Etika, are remembered for their generosity, strong support, kindness and sense of humour. They formed many close friendships during their time with us in Samoa.

Makereta was very active on the health and fitness front, joining many of our SPREP family at the gym and taking part in local SPREP health and fitness challenges. The camaraderie and support shared amongst our SPREP family is always strong, demonstrated when it comes to encouraging and inspiring each other to persevere with healthy lifestyles. Makereta was a supportive cheerleader for many.

We are deeply saddened to know that Makereta has passed on and are extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to work with her. While our Pacific islands family has lost a dear sister, she was our loved colleague and friend.

As with many that are part of our SPREP family, while you may officially leave, you are always a part of us. With this value at our core, many of our staff members met up with Makereta and Etika over the years after she left our shores – she was loved by many. We mourn the passing of dear Makereta with you all.

On behalf of SPREP our deepest condolences go out to Etika, and all of her family at this challenging time. We are thinking of you all.

Hanis ‘e Makereta, la ia la a’u’ua sio ‘e ‘on noa, with love to Makereta, may you rest from your labour.”