

# SPREP-Tok

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

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LATEST NEWS



Mr Kosi Latu, Director General of SPREP.



## Message from the Director General of SPREP

Welcome to the February issue of SPREP-TOK.

I hope you enjoy the new look, designed to make it easier for our readers and more engaging with our audiences so that we can continue to talanoa about the environment, especially our role in preserving and protecting it. Although we are only three months into the New Year, so many different things are happening, as you will see from the different stories showcased here. So I don't want to take up a lot of your time because I want you to read on and be informed.

However, I want to briefly mention the findings of the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which again point to a bleak future for the Pacific people, the ones who have the least to contribute to the causes of climate change. Our message to the world remains the same. When it comes to climate action, we cannot afford any further delay. We must act quickly and decisively, now.

Soifua and God bless!

## Pacific islands continue the call for climate action on journey to COP27

The Pacific islands unpacked the Glasgow Climate Pact in February, continuing their work for a 1.5 Degree world. Reflecting upon the outcomes of COP26, the Pacific Small Islands Developing States are building momentum for change at COP27.

COP26 was hosted by the United Kingdom from 1 to 13 November 2021. Amplifying the Pacific voice at COP26 was a major challenge given there were just 146 Pacific island delegates present due to COVID-19 challenges. Overall, there were close to 40,000 registered participants.

Climate change is the single greatest threat to the security of our Pacific islands people who work collectively to advocate for a 1.5 Degrees world. The Glasgow Climate Pact, a package of climate decisions, was agreed to by over 194 Parties and included the phasing out of coal, recognition of our ocean with an annual dialogue to take place as well as completed the Paris Agreement Rulebook.

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

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## SPREP offers environmental assistance in the aftermath of the Tonga volcano and tsunami

### General News

SPREP is deeply concerned about the impact of the Hunga Tonga – Hunga Ha’apai underwater volcano eruption, and tsunami, on the people of the Kingdom of Tonga. In response, the Director General has assured that SPREP is standing by and ready to work with the Government of Tonga to provide support, especially in dealing with the environmental impact of the natural disaster.

“First and foremost, we express our heartfelt sorrow at the loss of life as a result of the disaster,” Mr Latu said. “As peoples of the Pacific, we are a close-knit community and we share the pain of the loss of lives and the destruction of property.

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## Mapping a way forward for recycling of bulky waste in the Pacific

### Waste Management and Pollution Control

The recycling of vehicles and white goods in the Pacific islands is the focus of a study which is currently taking place, potentially resulting in a Pacific regional recycling plant. This assessment will gauge the feasibility of recycling end-of-life vehicles and white goods, more commonly known as bulky wastes

The study is conducted as part of the Global Environment Facility-funded ISLANDS Pacific project, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme and executed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

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## Training enhances skills of Tongan Protected Areas practitioners

### Island and Ocean Ecosystems

Government stakeholders in Tonga have been equipped with hands-on, practical knowledge of finding relevant, up-to-date data; information resources and technical guidance to assist protected and conserved area management.

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## Our People, our Pacific Environment: Q and A with Semi Qamese

### Staff Q and A Series

Mr Semi Qamese is part of the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience Building (PACRES) programme at SPREP, which works for better regional and national adaptation and mitigation responses to climate change challenges faced by Pacific countries.

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## Pacific high-level champion on ambition reflects on COP26 challenges and successes

### Climate Change Resilience

With the Pacific region being at the frontline to the impacts of climate change, it cannot settle for anything less than the highest possible climate ambition. This is according to Hon. Bruce Bilimon of the Republic of Marshall Islands, who represented the Pacific as the High-Level political champion on Climate Ambition at COP26 in Glasgow.



## SPREP Community spreads Christmas spirit to Mapuifagalele

### General News

The SPREP Community, which consists of SPREP staff and associates as well as their families, spread the spirit of Christmas to the Mapuifagalele Home for the Aged in Vailele, Samoa. Mapuifagalele is run by the Catholic Little Sisters of the Poor and is open to all elderly regardless of their religious affiliations.

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## Pacific's leadership, commitment and amplified voice acknowledged by COP26 Presidency

### Climate Change Resilience

The commitment, leadership and the amplified voice of the Pacific has been acknowledged as having played a key role in the 'success' of the Twenty-Sixth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland.

But while the Pacific and the world unpacks the outcome of COP26 as they prepare for COP27 in Egypt, the President of COP26, Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma, has also cautioned that the 'pulse' of what the Pacific needs for survival, a 1.5 Degree world, "remains weak."

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## Wallis and Futuna Environment Service awarded 2021 Pacific Invasive Species 'Battler of the Year' award

### Island and Ocean Ecosystems

The work completed by the Wallis and Futuna Environment Service to manage invasive species in their country has earned them the 2021 Pacific Invasive Species "Battler of the Year" award.

The accolade, which until 2021 has only been won by individuals since its inception in 2017, recognises Pacific invasive species field-based practitioners who have worked at the grassroots level and achieved an outstanding outcome for biodiversity from the use of minimal resources.

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## Pacific Climate Change Centre builds capacity on climate resilience and tourism

### Climate Change Resilience

A training to strengthen the understanding of risks and impacts of climate change in the tourism sector has been applauded by more than 40 participants from ten Pacific islands and Timor-Leste.

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## Pacific islands prepare for UNEA 5.2, marine and plastic pollution targeted

### Waste Management and Pollution Control

Member states of SPREP continued preparations for the Resumed Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly with a sharp focus on using the global platform to advance the fight against marine and plastic pollution.

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## Our People, our Pacific Environment: Q and A with Susana Telakau

### Staff Q and A Series

Ms Susana Telakau of Tuvalu joined our Pacific environment team at SPREP in late 2021, being the newest member to the Waste Management and Pollution Control programme team. Now the Solid Waste Management Adviser at SPREP, she is the former Assistant Secretary for the Ministry of Public Works, Infrastructure, Environment, Labour, Meteorology and Disaster of the Government of Tuvalu.

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## Roadmap for Access and Benefit Sharing legal framework a step closer for PNG

### Island and Ocean Ecosystems

A workshop to consult key stakeholders on the development of a legal framework for access and benefit sharing in Papua New Guinea saw the biggest Pacific island nation take a step closer to ratifying the Nagoya Protocol.

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## 'Wetlands Action for People and Nature in the Pacific' – World Wetlands Day 2022

### Island and Ocean Ecosystems

Wetlands, the 'kidneys' of our planet owing to their important function in purifying the water that we depend on daily are celebrated across the world on 2 February each year. This year, the theme is 'Wetlands Action for People and Nature' and highlights the importance of ensuring conservation and sustainable use of wetlands for humans and planetary health.

Wetlands include our coral reefs, lagoons, rivers, mangroves, lakes, seagrass beds, rivers, and marshes. They provide the fish and rice that feed millions, yet despite their vital role, nearly 90% of the world's wetlands have been degraded since the 1700s, and wetlands are being lost three times faster than forests.

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## Pacific countries urged to stay alert and remain vigilant as cyclone season continues

### Climate Change Resilience

Pacific populations have been urged to remain vigilant at all times and take heed of the correct information and warnings from their National Meteorological offices as the region trudges through the remaining months of the cyclone season.

The reminder comes from the Pacific Meteorological Desk at SPREP at the beginning of 2022, following some recent extreme weather events in the region. Cyclone Cindy, which hit Fiji; Cyclone Ruby, which affected New Caledonia; and two other cyclones were among nine to twelve tropical cyclones predicted and released in the ninth Pacific Islands Climate Outlook Forum last year for the region.

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## An exciting opportunity for Marine Protected Areas Professionals in the Pacific

### Island and Ocean Ecosystems

An opportunity exists for an early to mid-career professional in the Pacific, working in Marine Protected Areas to attend the 5th International Marine Protected Areas Congress in Vancouver, Canada. The global forum is scheduled for September 2022.

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## Focus moves from discussions to action as CPRT eyes next steps

### Waste Management and Pollution Control

The work to advance the Pacific region's push for a cleaner future does not stop. A week after a very successful Third Clean Pacific Roundtable, SPREP's Waste Management and Pollution Control team already have their eyes fixed on what needs to be done in the next two years as they build towards the 2024 CPRT in Papua New Guinea.

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## Joint effort to deliver Pacific climate finance training

### Climate Change Resilience

The inaugural meeting and onboarding of the first Pacific cohort of climate finance advisers was held online on 1 February 2022. The overall training aimed to ensure that the advisers have a thorough understanding of climate finance, policy, and stakeholders in their respective countries and throughout the region.

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## Pacific Disaster Waste Management Guidelines now available

### Waste Management and Pollution Control

Helping Pacific islands deal with disaster waste during and after disaster events are the newly released Pacific Islands Countries Regional Disaster Waste Management Guidelines.

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## Ensuring a unified Pacific voice on gender equality in the climate change, environment and disaster risk reduction space

### Climate Change Resilience

Women representatives and gender focal points from across the Pacific were granted the opportunity to gain more understanding of the key climate change issues for the Pacific during a preparatory workshop leading up to the 66th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

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## Kiwa Initiative facilitates call for regional projects and technical assistance

### Island and Ocean Ecosystems

The Kiwa Initiative is calling for regional projects implementing nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation in the Pacific.

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## UK continues support for Pacific islands on journey to COP27

### Climate Change Resilience

Three months since the Glasgow Climate Pact came into being at COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland last year, the Pacific has outlined how the UK COP26 Presidency can support our island region on their journey towards COP27. The UK remains as the Presidency until the handover to Egypt at COP27 in Sharm el Sheikh in November this year.

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