

Message from the Director General of SPREP

Bula!

On 2 June 2023 in Paris, the global community took one step closer towards a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, with the second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-2) delivering a mandate for the INC Chair to prepare a zero draft of the agreement. This is great news for the Pacific. The sobering reality is that despite contributing less than 1.3% of the 14 million tonnes of global plastic pollution, our Pacific communities are amongst the worst affected by the plastic pollution crisis.

SPREP welcomes the development. The zero draft is not the end goal but it is the latest tangible outcome in a journey to protect our environment and our ocean which have been contaminated by exorbitant amounts of plastic imported and the ones that into our waters from other regions.

The INC-2 outcome is just one of many highlights from the work of your Secretariat highlighted in this edition of SPREP-TOK, as we continue to commemorate our 30th Anniversary. Vinaka!

Sefanaia Nawadra



Sefanaia Nawadra, Director General of SPREP.

SPREP-Tok LATEST NEWS



Paris delivers mandate for zero draft as momentum builds towards plastic treaty

The global community is one step closer towards a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, with the second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-2) in the romantic city of Paris concluding with a mandate for the INC Chair to prepare a zero draft of the agreement.

A zero draft is referred to as the first attempt to assemble thoughts or ideas related to a proposed agreement, or a research topic. The mandate was announced by the Chair of the INC, Mr Gustavo Adolfo Meza-Cuadra Velasquez, to thunderous applause from close to 2,000 delegates from more than 190 countries who attended INC-2, hosted by France at the UNESCO Headquarters from 29 May to 2 June 2023.

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Lui Bell Memorial Scholarship supports study on the impacts of traditional hunting on Solomon Islands dolphin populations

Island and Ocean Ecosystems

The Lui Bell Memorial Post-Graduate Scholarship for Marine Species Conservation is supporting research through the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) to build understanding on the cultural aspects of dolphin use and the impact of drive hunts on the populations of these animals in the Solomon Islands.

Scholarship recipient, Mr Kabini Fa'ari Afia, will pursue a Master of Science research project with the grant. The first recipient of the scholarship in the Solomon Islands, Kabini has served in the Solomon Islands government for almost 15 years.

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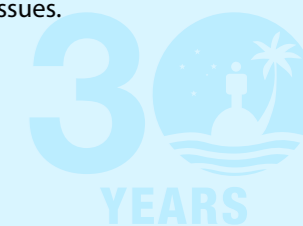
Climate Watch App developed for Vanuatu a first for the Pacific

Climate Change Resilience

Vanuatu is currently testing a ground-breaking application that looks to provide a solution to data collection challenges faced by Pacific Island countries, particularly on species and how they interact with climate and act as traditional knowledge indicators for climate.

The Pacific Island nation is comprised of 80 islands stretched out over 1,300 kilometres across the central Pacific ocean. Travel to some of the outer islands to collect data is a challenge, and because the country's current observation and monitoring systems is in paper form, postage costs and return time delays are also pressing issues.

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Pacific countries call for sound management of chemicals and waste at 2023 BRS COPs

Waste Management and Pollution Control

Pacific islands have added their voice to the call on parties to the Rotterdam Convention to adopt an amendment that would list hazardous chemicals and strengthen the international treaty designed to facilitate informed decision-making by countries, with regards to trade in dangerous chemicals.

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Pacific Climate Change Centre continues to strengthen capacity of Pacific island countries to access climate finance

Climate Change Resilience

Tonga and PNG stand to benefit from a three day training to build technical capacity on how to mobilise climate finance in the region, such as the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund.

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Gender and social inclusion critical to manage invasive species in the Pacific

Island and Ocean Ecosystems

The values of gender and social inclusion in managing invasive species are crucial to achieving better outcomes for the environment in the Pacific. This was emphasised during a Talanoa at the Battler Lounge hosted by SPREP's Invasive Species Team with the theme: "Invasive Species or Community Resilience: Why is gender and social inclusion crucial for managing invasive species?"

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Cook Islands calls for ambitious targets to reverse and end plastic pollution

Waste Management and Pollution Control

"Saying No to single-use plastics" is not enough, much more must be done by our global community to address the plastic crisis we now face. Recognising this, the UN Environment Assembly passed a resolution in February 2022 to develop a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution including that within our marine environment.

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Pacific delegates amplify their voice at International Association for Impact Assessment Conference

Environmental Monitoring and Governance

Delegates from Pacific countries have left the 42nd Annual Conference of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) with a renewed appreciation of the need to build national capacity for environmental assessments and planning, and collaboration at the international level.

The conference hosted in Kuching, Malaysia from 8th to 12th May 2023, brought together over 600 environmental assessment practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to discuss how impact assessment and leadership can accelerate transformation and sustain resilience in a world marred by pressing adversities that require immediate and impactful solutions.

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Pacific SIDS state their case for a robust and ambitious treaty to address plastic pollution

Waste Management and Pollution Control

The Pacific region is world-renowned for its pristine beaches, turquoise waters, vibrant forests and colourful reefs.

While this postcard image remains, its environment has been contaminated by exorbitant amounts of plastic floating into our waters from other regions, washing up on to our shores, placing Pacific communities at the forefront of the impacts of the plastic pollution crisis.

In addition to the impact on our environment, scientists are reporting concerning amounts of microplastics in fish and human exposure to certain harmful plastic additives. These chemicals result in serious health impacts on humans in many areas, including fertility and development.

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Tonga launches National Invasive Species Strategy and Action plan

Island and Ocean Ecosystems

The Kingdom of Tonga's fight to manage invasive species has taken a massive leap forward with the Prime Minister, Honourable Hu'akavameilikiu Siaosi Sovaleni, launching their National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan (NISSAP) 2021 – 2027.

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Protecting Mauke's groundwater resource for enhanced climate resilience

Climate Change Resilience

"Heavenly" or "the best under the sun" are phrases commonly used to describe the drinking water on Mauke. Also known as Akatokamanava, Mauke is part of the Cook Islands archipelago and home to approximately 250 people.

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Noumea Convention supports significant strides in protecting our shared environment

Environmental Monitoring and Governance

Our very own Pacific Convention to protect our natural resources and environment known as the Noumea Convention was recognised as a cornerstone of our regional collective efforts in addressing the environmental challenges facing our region.

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Solomon Islands' Green Climate Fund country programme strengthens response to climate change impacts

Climate Change Resilience

Solomon Islands' capacity to access more funds from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to strengthen the country's response to climate change impacts, has been enhanced thanks to support from SPREP through the Pacific Climate Change Centre.

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Our People, Our Pacific Environment

"I encourage young Pacific people to be persistent in protecting our environment. You are not only doing this for yourself, but for the good of humanity and our future generations."



30 Years of SPREP! Our Pacific People, Our Pacific Environment

Mr Rodrick Holness of the Solomon Islands is the Treasurer for the Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change (PISFCC) and Deputy Chairperson for the Solomon Islands Climate Action Network. His work through both organisations has seen Mr Holness immersed in the climate change and environment spaces to advocate for Pacific resilience.

In 2022, he attended the 27th UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Sharm El-Shiekh, Egypt, as a representative of young Pacific people to advocate for the #EndorseTheAO campaign. A campaign supporting a proposal for an Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice on the issue of climate change and human rights, a proposal spearheaded by the Government of Vanuatu, partnering countries and civil society.

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Knowledge sharing – unveiling remarkable achievements, valuable lessons, and opportunities for the Inform project

The Inform Project Regional Meeting provided a platform to highlight notable achievements and valuable lessons learned throughout its implementation period.

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First drought training for Nauru Hydrology and Meteorology Services

Extreme rainfall causes problems for communities in Nauru. 'Too little' rain can cause widespread water shortages, while 'too much' rain can lead to flooding.

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