



**Report of the
Fifth Oceania Regional Meeting for
COP11 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
Koror, Palau
26-30 March 2012.**



**A preparatory meeting for the 11th Meeting of the Conference of
the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands,
Bucharest, Romania, July 2012.**

1. Introduction

The 5th Oceania Regional Meeting was held at the Pacific International Coral Reef Centre in Koror, Palau from 26th to 30th March 2012. The meeting was co-organized by SPREP and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat and hosted by the Government of Palau. Funding assistance for the meeting was provided by the Governments of Australia and France with additional support provided through the UNEP-SPREP MEA project.

The final agenda for the meeting is presented in Annex 1 and the final list of participants in Annex 2.

1.2 Representation

Contracting Parties represented included Australia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia (France), New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea and Samoa, while Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu attended as non-party observers. The Ramsar Convention's International Organization Partners were represented by the IUCN Oceania Regional Office and BirdLife Pacific. Observers from The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Micronesia Challenge, JICA Palau Office/PICRC, Palau Conservation Society, Lake Ngardok Nature Reserve Board, and the Palau Protected Areas Network (Palau PAN) participated in the meeting. Secretarial support was provided by the Palau Bureau of Agriculture, Vainuupo Jungblut, Ramsar Oceania Officer and Dr Lew Young, Senior Regional Advisor for Asia and Oceania.

1.3 Background

The meeting built upon progress made in the region related to wetlands conservation and wise use since the last regional meeting and COP10 in 2008. The most notable advancement is the adoption of the *Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands 2011-2013* (RWAP), which seeks to address some of the fundamental issues, challenges and emerging threats to Pacific wetlands. There has also been good progress made with regard to the accession process for non-parties in the region, many of which are nearly complete.

This report reflects key outcomes of the meeting and is provided for the information of interested organizations and stakeholders, including the participants of the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, to be held in Bucharest, Romania from 6th to 13th July 2012.

1.4 Meeting Objectives

The objectives of the 5th Oceania Regional Meeting were:

- To discuss and share experiences on issues, priorities and challenges currently faced by the Ramsar Contracting Parties in Oceania concerning the conservation of their wetlands.
- To gauge the progress of the national, regional and global implementation of the Ramsar Convention since the last COP (COP10) in 2008.
- To take stock of current progress of implementation of the Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands (2011-2013) and prioritise actions for further implementation.
- To consider the draft resolutions that will be presented at Ramsar COP11 and build regional positions on these.
- To enable Oceania Ramsar Contracting Parties to participate meaningfully at the Ramsar COP and ensure that their issues are voiced.

- To identify new Oceania representatives to the Ramsar STRP and Ramsar Standing Committee.

2. Meeting Record

Day 1, Monday 26th March 2012

2.1 Official Opening

The Fifth Oceania Regional Meeting for COP11 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was officially opened with a prayer by the delegate from Samoa (Suemalo Talie Foliga) and welcoming remarks by the government of Palau, the Ramsar Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

2.1.1 Government of Palau

The Hon. Kerai Mariur, Vice President of the Republic of Palau graced the official opening of the meeting. He noted the importance of wetlands as a source of food and livelihood for the people of Palau, and as a tourism and recreation destination for tourists and residents. He stressed the need to ensure that Palau's wetlands are conserved and used in a sustainable manner, for the benefit of future generations.

2.1.2 Ramsar Convention Secretariat

Prof. Nick Davidson, Deputy Secretary General, Ramsar Convention Secretariat welcomed the opportunity of the meeting for discussion and exchange of experience. He noted that while we depend on wetlands for the services and benefits that they provide especially for people, we continue to let them degrade. He concluded by urging the Parties in the Oceania region to come to a common view on some of the draft resolutions to be discussed at the COP.

2.1.3 SPREP

David Sheppard, Director-General, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) thanked the Hon. Vice President of the Republic of Palau for his wise words on the importance of wetlands for water and people. He reported that SPREP was working on identifying new priorities for wetlands in the region and to develop better partnerships, e.g. with the Ramsar Convention. He welcomed participants' views on the MoU between Ramsar and SPREP. He touched on the increasing challenges related to water management in the Pacific Island countries, notably the water shortages in Tokelau and Tuvalu. With less rainfall predicted in the future, he stressed the need to better value wetlands and water resources. He spoke about the need to improve the management of Ramsar Sites; to protect wetlands for the water and other services that they provide for people; and to better manage tourism in natural areas.

He welcomed the participation of Kiribati, Tonga and Vanuatu in the meeting and urged them to expedite their efforts to join the Ramsar Convention. He urged participants to deliberate on the usefulness of Pacific Regional Wetlands Action Plan, to prioritize actions and to discuss practical responses for each. On the issue of financing for wetland conservation he encouraged participants to review existing mechanisms, e.g. Palau's Green Fund and the Micronesia Challenge, to determine what would best serve their needs.

3. Session 1: Status of wetlands and Ramsar Site in Palau

Uelbil Pua Michael presented an overview of the wetlands in Palau, and spoke about the services provided by wetlands e.g. timber from mangroves for the construction of traditional houses. She went on to explain the management structure at Lake Ngardok, Palau's first and only Ramsar Site.

Kashgar Rengulbai spoke about the value of Lake Ngardok as a critical water source for the state capital (Melekeok), and presented an overview of the site's biodiversity values and projects which have been conducted to assess and document these values. He went on to explain that a fee of USD\$5 per visitor was charged to provide a source of sustainable financing for the implementation of the site management plan, and suggested that the 'Rock Islands' could be considered as a candidate for Palau's second Ramsar Site.

In the discussion that followed, participants learned that the publicly-owned site was previously used solely as a source of water; that while there was no real zoning plan for the area, the management plan stipulated where different facilities were to be built; that the community was aware of the importance of the site as a source of water; and that the US Natural Resources Conservation Service would assist with the development of a tourism plan for the area.

4. Session 2: Country updates

4.1 Australia: **Georgina Usher** made a presentation on the bioremediation measures taken at the Lakes Albert and Alexandrina Ramsar Sites, and the Rolling Review of Ramsar Sites (a questionnaire-based review of the ecological character description of each site and management issues) which was conducted every 3 years. She highlighted the challenge of getting systematic site information on the 64 Ramsar Sites in Australia. In the discussion that followed, participants were informed that the Murray-Darling River Authority was set up by the Water Act (2007) and that a basin plan was established recently which took into account the ecological character of the Ramsar Sites. They also learned that Ramsar Sites were managed by state governments, and that each had its own systems to communicate and work with local communities, e.g. the Kakadu Ramsar Site has a committee comprising local community members while other state government may have forums to bring together site managers and other stakeholders. It was revealed that Australia also had legislation which provided for communities to raise their environmental concerns.

4.2 Fiji: **Saverio Baleikanacea** outlined the wetlands of national significance in Fiji, the status of their wetlands and Ramsar Site, management arrangements and jurisdiction issues of their Ramsar Site. He explained that their government had identified 17 other candidate Ramsar Sites. He also explained about the Taukei Land Trust Board (TLTB) which included 'Taukei' native landowners of the land under the Upper Navua Ramsar Site. Some of the challenges included uncontrolled and illegal logging, unsustainable harvesting and land use practices, inadequate legislation, lack of technical and scientific data and knowledge. In the discussion that followed participants learned about the procedure for selecting sites for the Ramsar list, and that the issue of benefit sharing with the local community would be considered in the discussions relating to the renewal of the contract with Rivers Fiji Limited.

4.3 Marshall Islands: **Lowell Alik** spoke about the history of the Marshall Islands in the Ramsar Convention, national wetlands and Ramsar Sites, Conservation in the Marshall

Islands. He highlighted the implementation of the national strategy for conservation or 'Reimaanlok' (Looking to the Future) and the establishment of the Conservation and Changwon Office at the RMI Environmental Protection Authority, he outlined the challenges that they faced, including the lack of manpower to deal with conservation issues and the lack of feedback on ongoing activities. He touched on some of the solutions that have been identified to address these challenges including the formulation of a tourism development plan. In the discussion that followed, participants were informed that the Changwon Declaration was being used to promote wetlands and the Ramsar Convention in the Marshall Islands and that the 'Conservation and Changwon Office' had been established to raise awareness of water and conservation.

4.4 New Caledonia: **Christine Poellabauer** noted the challenges of getting the government, provincial authorities and communities to work together on water/wetlands and the lack of funds to support water/wetland management. She noted in particular the threats posed by invasive species to the native aquatic diversity. She expressed their intention to enhance cooperation at the regional level and to designate a Ramsar Site by 2013. In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that some effort be made to document examples of sustainable financing e.g. the Palau 'Green Fund', and to explore opportunities for the corporate sector to finance wetland management. There was also discussion about the process to designate a Ramsar Site in a territory of a member state.

4.5 New Zealand: **Nicola Scott** explained that they have put together a full analysis of Ramsar COP10 decisions and their implications for New Zealand. She mentioned that they have around 6 potential designation applications at various stages of completion, but that further development and consideration had been put on hold while they reviewed the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for selecting Ramsar Sites to ensure that the sites selected were bio-geographically representative. The SOP would also be used to clarify, in a transparent manner, pre- and post-designation requirements. She further mentioned the Natural Heritage Monitoring System (NHMS) and its importance as a source of consistent and comprehensive information on New Zealand biodiversity, outlined the good work related to wetlands CEPA that has been ongoing at the national level, national level funding programmes that covered wetlands and also highlighted some of the issues faced during the last triennium, including the recent Rena oil spill disaster, the Christchurch earthquake and land-use intensification.

4.6 Papua New Guinea: **Rose Kualke Singadan** explained that since 1980, the government has proposed over 33 candidate Ramsar Sites, but that these have not been realized because of issues arising from development proposals and projects in the area e.g. in the Kikori/Purari River Basins and the Sepik River Basin, and customary ownership regulations. The main institutional challenges relate to the way government institutions were organized, however, steps were underway to redefine their priorities, roles and responsibilities. The government was currently undertaking a review of national policies for biodiversity conservation to ensure that they were in line with international agreements, and to ensure that the proper legislative frameworks and mechanisms were in place to facilitate the implementation of those agreements. She noted the challenges faced in financing biodiversity conservation, and that the government was drafting a plan for a Biodiversity Endowment Fund that would help address this.

4.7 *Samoa*: **Su'emalo Tumutalie Foliga** outlined the types of wetlands in Samoa and what has already been carried out at the national level, such as the outputs from the Ramsar SGF project and the freshwater fish survey carried out in 2009 for the Lake Lanotoo Ramsar site, as well as reports and documents which had been produced to guide policy and planning and to raise awareness. He also talked about the functions and values of the Lake Lanotoo Ramsar Site – being important for recreation, education, scientific research, conservation and important source of the water supply for the township of Apia (Samoa's capital city). Challenges faced included natural disasters (cyclones), land ownership issues, the lack of financial support, technical know-how (related to hydrology) and the lack of a specific policy on wetlands conservation.

4.8 *Kiribati*: **Taina Temakei** showcased the Nooto Village, Tarawa (in the Gilbert Group), which is nominated the first Ramsar Site for Kiribati. She explained that the challenges faced in joining the Convention and getting the site designation include limited human resources, high staff turnover, the isolation of the Ramsar Site and the lack of political will. She suggested that more effort should be made to (a) showcase the Convention in the region, e.g. through the media, and to explain how it links to the island environment; b) establish a learning network; and c) enhance site management. She also suggested that a survey of site designation benefits in the Oceania region could help increase the number of listed sites. In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that one way to showcase the Convention would be to use Ramsar Sites as demonstration sites, and that this could potentially provide increased access to funding.

4.9 *Tonga*: **Seini Fotu** explained the challenges faced by Tonga in joining the Convention and designating a Ramsar Site - the lack of manpower and high turnaround of staff; and proposed development plans which hampered the decision about the proposed Ramsar site - Fanga'uta Lagoon, which was proposed for designation 4-5 years ago. They were now considering some alternative sites: Mui Sopu, on Tongatapu; Niuafu'ou; and Nomuka, on Ha'apai. She revealed that they faced a number of issues regarding wetland management, the primary one being that the government was more focused on economic development than conservation. She noted that they have already implemented some of the actions in the Rwap through the IUCN-MESCAL project.

4.10 *Vanuatu*: **Rolenas Baereleo** outlined the status of wetlands in Vanuatu and their progress towards becoming a Ramsar Contracting Party. She revealed the challenges faced by Vanuatu – threats to wetlands such as foreshore development, poorly planned tourism initiatives, inadequate legislation and lack of its enforcement, limited human and financial resources. She further pointed out that the land tenure system in Vanuatu can also be a challenge to wetland conservation. She explained that the Amal Crab Bay Taboo Area on Malekula is their proposed Ramsar site. It was an IUCN-MESCAL project site and before that, it was the project site for the GEF-UNDP-SPREP International Waters Project (IWP).

5. **Session 3: Perspective of Ramsar's regional partners and IOPs relating to the conservation and wise use of wetlands in Oceania.**

5.1 *Relevant regional projects under SPREP*: **Stuart Chape** explained that SPREP worked with 21 Pacific Island countries and territories, which had very diverse ecosystems, with rare and threatened biodiversity, and which provided a range of ecosystem services. He

explained that SPREP had 4 strategic priorities a) climate change; b) waste management and pollution control (high link between waste, pollution and wetlands in the Pacific because wetlands were used as informal waste removal systems); c) environmental monitoring and governance; and d) biodiversity and ecosystem management (which dealt with wetlands). He explained that SPREP was recently restructured with 4 technical divisions to lead on each of these priorities. He further explained the new *SPREP Strategic Plan 2011-2015* and mentioned that Ramsar and wetland issues were firmly entrenched in this Plan. He further explained that under this new strategic plan, the target by 2015 was to have two new Pacific Island join Ramsar, but noted that the implementation of the RWAP was likely to be a challenge. He proposed that the Solomon Islands 'Ridge to Reef' project could include Ramsar.

5.2 Wetlands and waterbirds in Oceania – potential new Ramsar Sites in the region based on recent IBA work: **Mark O'Brien** drew attention to the Aichi Target 11 adopted at the CBD COP10 in Nagoya, which spoke to increasing the number of protected areas, and noted that this provided an opportunity to increase the coverage of wetland protected areas in the Pacific. He went on to explain about the Important Bird Area (IBA) network in the region and that there were 180 IBAs in the Pacific (excl. Australia, New Zealand and PNG due to lack of funds) of which 42 were triggered by water bird species. He pointed out that 26 of these fulfilled Criterion 5 of the Ramsar Criteria, 4 sites that fulfilled Criterion 6 (1% criteria) for the Bristle-thighed Curlew and 38 sites that fulfilled Criterion 6 for terns and noddies. The main threats to waterbirds were invasive species, followed by over-exploitation. He also noted that some of the site-based data on waterbirds was very outdated.

6. Session 4: Update on the implementation of the Ramsar Convention since COP10

6.1 Global implementation perspective: **Nick Davidson** presented the history of the Convention since the 1960s. He drew attention to the fact that the Convention text, drafted in 1971, emphasized the vital link between wetlands, water and people. On the question of whether the Convention has been effective, he noted that the health of wetlands designated as Ramsar Sites were in better than those that were not, as long as the site was managed. He further noted that countries that had effective national wetland policies tended to have wetlands that were in better condition.

6.2 Regional implementation perspective - Oceania: **Vainuupo Jungblut** presented on his work over the last three years since the last regional meeting in 2008. He presented some brief statistics on how Ramsar was doing in Oceania through the current number of Contracting Parties and Ramsar Sites in the region, specifically, that there were 7 Oceania Parties, 4 non-parties in the process of joining, a total of 76 Ramsar Sites, most of which were in Australia. He further pointed out that only 5 national reports to COP11 have been received by the Ramsar Secretariat. He touched also on the assistance he has been providing to a number of non-party Island countries to join the Ramsar Convention. He highlighted the development of the new *Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands 2011-2013* as one of the notable advancements since COP10 and also drew attention to a number of regional wetland-related trainings that he had organised and carried out together with the Ramsar Secretariat and regional partners. Some challenges he has faced with his work included high staff turnover, limited budget for travel/operations and communication difficulties with some countries.

6.3 *STRP implementation perspective*: **Rebecca D’Cruz** explained the construct and role of the STRP, and the process for nominating and selecting its members. She noted that the STRP’s Work Plan for each triennium was endorsed by Contracting Parties through a resolution at the COP. She drew attention to the fact that the work of the STRP was funded largely through voluntary contributions by member countries, and suggested that the quantum of funding was likely to decline in the future because of global economic challenges. She mentioned therefore, that the Convention as a whole needed to start thinking ‘outside-the-box’ to find ways to deal with this challenge.

7. Session 5: Impending issues for wetland conservation and Ramsar implementation

7.1 *Need for increased collaboration among biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)*: **Vainuupo Jungblut** explained about the Ramsar Convention’s links with other MEAs e.g. through Memoranda of Understanding/Cooperation and Joint Work Plans, and the *Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies of the Biodiversity-related Conventions (CSAB)*. He noted that opportunities exist to enhance collaboration through CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and delivery of the Aichi Targets, and that this could be done by integrating wetlands into the review of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Areas of possible cooperation raised were: the harmonization of national reporting, and indicators of effectiveness.

In the discussion, participants noted the following:

- That increased collaboration should be country-driven and implemented through a practical process.
- That real synergy can only be achieved if the collaboration was based on identified needs.
- That no single convention/organization could address the challenges that lie ahead.
- That it was important to involve NGOs in discussions about increasing collaboration among MEAs because they had a lot of practical experience in implementing projects.
- That basic resources were needed to enable increased collaboration between MEAs at the national level. Need to look at new models to ensure the ‘sustainability’ of this collaboration.
- COP11 DR XI.3: Adjustments to the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009-2015 for the 2013-2015 triennium had mapped the Aichi Targets against the Plan components.
- That there had been a lot of effort at the Ramsar Secretariat level to enhance collaboration with other MEAs; however, more effort was needed at the national level. Input was needed from Parties on how to strengthen collaboration at the national level.
- That there was a need to look at opportunities to enhance collaboration between MEAs at the regional level, e.g. through regional organizations such as SPREP or other similar organizations.

Day 2, Tuesday 27th March 2012

8. Session 6: Identification of regional representatives on the Ramsar Standing Committee and Ramsar STRP (2013-2015)

8.1 Vainuupo Jungblut explained the composition, role and responsibilities of the regional representatives on the Ramsar Standing Committee and the STRP. Nick Davidson further expanded on the roles and composition of the Standing Committee and on the STRP.

Standing Committee

- One representative from the Oceania region, to serve from 2012 to 2015
- This would be finalised during the meeting of the existing Standing Committee on 4th July 2012 (before the start of COP11). Marshall Islands was the current Oceania representative; past representatives were Australia and Samoa.
- During the COP, the new Standing Committee would meet to appoint the Chair and Vice-Chairs, and decide on the date of their next meeting.

STRP Members/Regional Network Member

Nick Davidson explained that under the proposed amendments to the Draft Resolution XI.18 *Adjustments to the modus operandi of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) for the 2013-2015 triennium*, the STRP would have 14 members (15 in total, including the Chair). He further explained that this would comprise one CEPA expert, one socio-economic expert and at least (ideally 2) experts from each of the six Ramsar regions. The call for nominations would go out after COP12. Nominations could be made by Contracting Parties, STRP National Focal Points, and current STRP members and observers. The Ramsar Secretariat would work with Chair and Vice-Chair to review the nominations and prepare a recommendation for the STRP Oversight Panel to consider and approve. Participants of this meeting were encouraged to nominate as many qualified people as possible from within their networks.

9. Session 7: Introduction to the COP11 Draft Resolutions

9.1

1. Draft Resolution XI.1: Institutional hosting of the Ramsar Secretariat Administrative Reform

Nick Davidson explained the evolution of DR XI.1 and touched on its main elements. The resolution contained two draft options for Parties to consider at COP11. He explained that it would take 2/3 of all Parties to approve the move away from IUCN.

In the discussion that followed, participants noted the following:

- That the Rio+20 meeting in May 2012 would discuss the future of UNEP. Ramsar Parties should consider the outcomes of this discussion in their deliberations during the Ramsar COP11.
- That the former Minister of Environment of France is scheduled to report back on the Rio+20 meeting at the COP11 plenary.

2. Draft Resolution XI.8: Streamlining procedures for describing Ramsar Sites at the time of designation and subsequently (Annex 1 – Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) – 2012 revision)

Monica Zavagli explained that the RIS was first adopted in 1991, and was important because it established the criteria under which the site was designated, the ecological importance of

the site, threats to the site, management structures, etc. She mentioned that the new RIS template would be simpler to complete and that it consists of drop down menus. She further mentioned that there was future plans for the development of an online facility (in collaboration with UNEP-WCMC) through which RISs could be updated and completed.

In the discussion that followed, participants noted the following:

- The current method for collecting and managing Ramsar Site data was outdated.
- The current Ramsar Sites Information Service (RSIS) needs a complete overhaul.
- Participants were advised to test the RIS 2012 template at: <http://ris-2012.wikispaces.com/> and to direct questions or feedback to Monica at: zavagli@ramsar.org
- Access to the template:
 - Username: testuser39
 - Password = ris2011

10. Session 8: Future scientific priorities for the Ramsar Convention

10.1 Rebecca D’Cruz, STRP Vice-Chair presented DR XI.8 *Future implementation of scientific & technical aspects of the Convention for 2013-2015*. She reported on the results of the prioritization exercise by the Pacific Contracting Parties, who were asked to indicate their four ‘double-top’ priorities from the list of 22 top priority tasks in Annex I. The ‘double-top’ priority tasks in descending order were: the economics of ecosystem services; CEPA - assessing supporting capacity building needs of CPs in applying Ramsar Guidance; Detecting, reporting and responding to changes in the ecological character of wetlands; and RIS implementation. Rebecca encouraged participants to review the outputs and outcomes for each of the four tasks to ensure that they adequately serve their needs.

Pacific Contracting Parties also identified lower priority tasks which they would like to see elevated to the ‘top priority’ list, as follows:

- Online Convention reporting mechanisms
- Implementing harmonized MEA information systems at national level
- Ecosystem services in the context of Ramsar Site selection criteria
- Invasive species and wetlands
- Reporting on the state of the world’s wetlands and their services to people, and Convention effectiveness
- Detecting, reporting & responding to change in ecological character – further guidance
- The implications of REDD+ for forested wetlands
- Opportunities for, and constraints on, carbon sequestration in wetlands
- Ramsar, water and wetlands: review and development of a strategy for engaging in the global water debate
- Wetlands & poverty eradication – tools and case studies
- Advice on adaptation to climate change

In the discussion that followed, participants noted the following:

- That the key issue was not necessarily about the final product, but how the product was actually prepared, its process and the capacity of a Party to implement and understand it.
- John Foster noted the strong need to test the guidance before it was presented to Parties for adoption at the COP, on the basis of Australia's direct experience with the implementation of the Ramsar guidance on Limits of Acceptable Change (LACs) in the preparation of the ecological descriptions of their Ramsar Sites.
- That the format of the final product was important, i.e. it should be presented in a form that was appropriate for the target audience. Linked to this was the need to prioritize the type of advice provided to Parties and to identify gaps, where they exist, so the Convention could respond appropriately.

Nick Davidson explained that in future trienniums there would be a more transparent and streamlined process in place to ensure proper scoping reviews of issues, and possibly, face-to-face meetings involving a much broader group of contributors to scope the task, the sequence of flow etc. This would help ensure that the final outputs responded better to the user's needs. Lew Young, SRA for Asia Oceania encouraged the Ramsar International Organization Partners (IOPs) to assist Parties to compile or update wetland inventories in the Pacific Islands.

11. Session 9: Case studies of best practice

11.1 Addressing wetlands conservation issues in Oceania through the Pacific Mangrove Initiative and the Water and Nature Initiative: **Milika Sobey** explained that the Water and Nature Initiative (WANI), which ended last year, had been focused on supporting community-based management of water catchment areas in project sites in Fiji and Samoa. The MESCAL project under the Pacific Mangrove Initiative was aimed at promoting co-management of mangroves in several sites in the region.

11.2 Micronesia Challenge case study: **Surech Hideyos** presented an overview of the Micronesia Challenge (MC) and its target of ensuring the effective conservation of 30% of near-shore marine resources and 20% of terrestrial resources by 2020. She further explained the MC's organizational structure, its long-term plan for financing and some of the challenges faced such as collecting MC regional office membership dues, awareness, fundraising and measuring progress on 'effective conservation'. More information at: www.micronesiachallenge.org

11.3 Local communities in wetland conservation: **Nicola Scott** spoke about projects and activities that have been implemented to get local communities and NGOs in New Zealand involved in wetland conservation. Examples include Conservation Week, World Wetlands Day, talks, and a bi-annual National Wetland Symposium targeting academic institutions, community groups and wetland management agencies. She mentioned that the government has set aside funds to support the conservation of biodiversity on private land with the aim to improve or maintain the condition of indigenous vegetation, species and habitats on private land. She further mentioned that government had established a fund called the 'Maturanga Kura Taio' targeting the retention and promotion of traditional Maori knowledge and its use in biodiversity management. Finally, she provided some examples of government engagement with indigenous local communities in the management of key wetlands sites, and

the use of traditional knowledge, coupled with conventional science to monitor the health of wetland sites traditionally used by indigenous communities as a food source.

11.4 National Ramsar Committees – a global overview: **Monica Zavagli** presented a summary of the best practices in establishing and managing NRCs drawn from case studies around the world: have a plan; adopt a cross-sectoral approach; work within the institutional/regulatory framework at national level; have sufficient financial and human resources available; develop a clear work plan; secure funds; define the roles of members; have an active Chair (good leadership); hold regular face-to-face meetings; establish procedures to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the committee; and communicate regularly with Ramsar Secretariat. She drew attention to the information available on the Ramsar web site about NRCs and urged participants to assist in collecting additional information using the template provided on the web site. Participants noted the need for ‘continuity’ in terms of members of the NRC, and that there must be a link between the NRC and the Ramsar Administrative Authority in each country.

11.5 National Wetlands and Waterbirds taskforce, other mechanisms, legislation: **John Foster** explained that the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, which gave effect to international agreements and was based on principles of ecologically sustainable development, regulated the designation, management and protection of Ramsar Sites in Australia. It also empowered the government to take action, including legal action. He pointed out that the Wetlands and Waterbirds Taskforce was Australia’s NRC and that it sat within the Council of Australian Governments (CoAG). The recent focus of work has been to compile ecological character descriptions for all the Ramsar Sites. He spoke about the challenges they faced in trying to describe and maintain the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, and especially with regards determining the ‘Limits of Acceptable Change’; He revealed that it was difficult to determine this because of large variations in floods and droughts, and because change happened over a long timeframe, e.g. 40 yr/100 yr cycles. He also noted the challenge of managing expectations.

He mentioned that the following national guidelines have been developed/were being developed to facilitate the improved management of Ramsar Sites and that the finished documents were available on their web site: Describing Ecological Character; Assessing and notifying adverse change in ecological character; Mapping specifications for Ramsar Sites; National standards for wetland mapping (in preparation); Site nomination guidelines (in preparation) – sets out roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders; and Management toolkits (in preparation); and fact sheets e.g. on ‘obligations under the Convention’ and ‘what is ecological character description’. He also explained about the “Caring for our Country” initiative, an AUD\$2 billion programme which focused on 6 priority areas. He further explained that Ramsar Sites fell under the ‘Coastal environments and Critical Aquatic Habitats’ priority area and that the focus of work was on addressing threats to the ecological character of Ramsar Sites.

In the discussion that followed, participants noted the following:

- That many Pacific Island states were grappling with the challenge of managing groundwater resources.
- That the most appropriate ‘place’ for the ecological character description (in the Ramsar framework) would be in the site description, but that the ‘Limits of Acceptable Change’ be addressed in the site management plan (suggestion made by

John Foster of Australia). Nick Davidson (Ramsar Secretariat) suggested that the Ramsar Information Sheet (RIS) – 2012 revision be reviewed to see if it could capture the ‘variability’ aspects of the ecological character description.

11.6 Fiji National Wetlands Steering Committee: **Tavenisa Luisa** explained that the Steering Committee was formalised in 2005, upon Fiji’s Cabinet endorsing Ramsar accession, however, has been operating since 1999. She explained that the Committee comprised representatives from government, NGOs, statutory bodies, academia, business, landowners, Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP. She explained that the committee had broad functions - policy, reporting, monitoring, awareness, research, information sharing, and action planning including oversight of the implementation of the Regional Wetlands Action Plan for Fiji. She pointed out that the establishment and work of the committee was funded by the government, with initial start up support provided through the Ramsar Small Grants Fund (SGF).

11.7 Processes for coordinating and implementing wetlands conservation/Ramsar work in New Zealand: **Nicola Scott** provided an overview of the institutional processes which have been set up to support the implementation of the Convention in New Zealand:

- COP10 decision analyses: She explained that immediately after each COP, a report was prepared which provided a summary of all the decisions adopted their implications in the New Zealand context, and actions which would be taken in response.
- Review of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Ramsar Site listing: She explained that, the Department of Conservation (DOC) was developing a system to help rank the biodiversity value of all wetlands sites nationally to determine the package of sites for possible Ramsar designation that would be bio-geographically representative, using the Ramsar guidance as starting point. She further explained that the revised SOP would benefit the Ramsar Administrative Authority and those working on site nominations by putting in place a clear, transparent process for reviewing each nomination; and a stepped process for applicants that would allow for early notification if a site was not likely to be successfully nominated according to established criteria. She mentioned that the revised SOP, once finalised, would be available on the DOC web site.

In the discussion that followed, participants noted the following:

- That it was important that scientific and technical guidance that was put forward to the COP for adoption should be trial-tested first; an example being the guidance on ‘Limits for Acceptable Change’ (LAC). It was suggested that a wiki web platform could be set up to share information and experience on the LAC, and that this could possibly be linked to current revision of the STRP Support Service.
- That it was important to ensure that sufficient resources were provided / allocated to support management activities post-designation and that traditional knowledge was incorporated, where appropriate, into the management plan.

11.8 How mine planning for environmental protection can help in developing wetland conservation projects: **Christine Poellabauer**, in her presentation explained that New Caledonia had a history of nickel mining which began from 1875 and that it peaked at 8 million tonnes in 1971. She mentioned that new legislation for pollution abatement was

developed in the last 10-15 years, that there were 300 ancient mining sites and 276 river basins in total. She explained that 74% of the 3350 plant species were endemic and that New Caledonia was a remnant of Gondwanaland.

She pointed out that new demand for mining products brought with it a new challenge for environmental management provisions to respond effectively and adequately and that they had been working with the mining company to designate a Ramsar Site under a Framework Agreement (between the Southern Province government and Mining Company).

She explained that there were 3 focal areas under this agreement: 1) monitoring, 2) action plan for ecological restoration and 3) compensation. She mentioned that Annual meetings were held to agree to priorities for each coming year.

Lastly, she pointed out that the boundary demarcation of the proposed Ramsar Site and that it has a total area of 38,000 ha containing some forested areas and protected areas.

In the discussion that followed, the participants noted the following:

- That the elections pending in France and the outcome may affect future efforts at designating Ramsar Sites in New Caledonia.
- That the southern province government managed to get 6 million from the mining company for a big project focused on the Environment and that this process took almost 10 years.
- That EIA was carried out progressively for the mine but according to available capacity – started with birds, plants, aquatic, reptile, etc. then moved to the ecosystem approach.

11.9 Tools for wetland management: Georgina Usher, in her case study talked about the Australian Wetland decision support system to assist natural resource managers to prioritise investment in wetlands. She outlined the criteria: values, threats & community capacity and the process, where a pre-workshop was carried out and covered wetland mapping/delineation etc (baseline), then the workshop proper where weighting was done to help prioritise investments.

Once available would be posted on their department website: www.environment.gov.au/wetlands

In the discussion that followed, the participants noted the following:

- That the decision support tool looked complicated but was not, and was very useful.
- That such decision support systems like this were commonly used and could be used in many applications.

Local scale wetland management in Palau: Lukes Isechal presented a case study on the Lake Ngardok Nature Reserve. She explained that Ngardok came from *ngar* (living) and *dok* (a spring), so translation is 'living spring'. In terms of threats to the site, human intrusion and disturbance, fires and water extraction geological events, invasive species and severe weather were mentioned. She outlined some of the nature reserve's management objectives such as

high quality water supply, enjoyment and education, ecological integrity, protection of native flora and fauna, research opportunities and effective natural resource management, management actions to be taken: develop an enforcement plan to reduce unauthorized entry and illegal hunting, develop a monitoring plan for monitoring trends abs status if ecosystem targets, water resources and to encourage scientific research in the reserve. Some institutional gaps include the absence of a research programme to inform policy and management, an agency responsible for land and water conservation and the Forestry Bureau.

In the discussion that followed, the participants noted the following:

- That local networks need to be better organized to be more efficient and effective.
- That efforts were underway towards a sustainable financing mechanism for funding Protected Areas in Palau.

11.10 PICRC/JICA Capacity Enhancement Project for Coral Reef Monitoring (CEPCRM): **Dr. Seiji Nakaya** mentioned that the purpose of his project was to build capacity at the PICRC to monitor coral reefs in Marine Protected Areas. He had developed a MPA monitoring protocol, which will be officially adopted the following week. He further mentioned that he hoped this would become the standard protocol used for all PAN sites in Palau and that it would eventually be expanded to other Micronesia Challenge countries.

In the discussion that followed, the participants noted the following:

- It was very important to have long-term monitoring for coral reefs.
- The protocol developed under this project could be shared with other countries in the Pacific region, on request.
- Analysis of data collected was in the pipeline and that it would be used to produce reports for policy and decision-makers.

11.11 Case studies of best practice - Wetlands and Tourism: **Monica Zavagli** mentioned that this was the theme of the COP11 and that there were 2 products on tourism: DR7 tourism and publication on wetlands and sustainable tourism practices. She further mentioned that wetlands related tourism was worth around USD\$925 billion every year and that tourism activities were carried out in at least 35% of Ramsar Sites worldwide.

In the discussion that followed, the participants noted the following:

- That there was a Programme in Australia called Natural Landscapes Programme to promote the tourism experience and that this programme was currently focused on World Heritage sites.
- That the Australian authorities were looking at how to include wetlands but have had to differentiate between sensitive areas that were off limits to tourists from those where tourists were allowed to visit.
- That there has been some branding of Ramsar Sites as destinations for sustainable tourism.
- That there would soon be a dedicated Ramsar Webpage with links to tools and guidance for sustainable tourism in wetlands.

Day 4, Thursday 29th March 2012

12. Session 10: Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands 2011-2013

The morning of day 4 was allocated for discussions on the implementation of the current Regional Wetlands Action Plan (RWAP).

The participants split into two breakout groups to discuss project ideas for progressing priorities under the RWAP. The breakout group discussions resulted in two project concepts focusing on the following, which were each presented to the plenary:

1. Capacity Building (Project management, compliance and enforcement and local communities)
2. Updating the Oceania Wetlands Directory.

For the first project concept, Palau and Fiji had volunteered to take the lead in developing it into a full project proposal. For the second project concept, the Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea volunteered to lead its development. In addition, Australia and New Zealand offered to provide assistance for reviewing the project proposals once drafts have been completed. New Zealand made the point that the project proposal development should be driven by the Pacific Island Contracting Parties.

(For further details on the two project concepts, see Annex 3)

13. Session 11: Wrap up & next steps

13.1 Pacific Voyage to Romania, Ramsar COP11: Nanette Woonton

Session 11 began with the a session on the Pacific voyage to Romania, COP11, which covered 2 issues, 1) a media skills training session for participants and 2) to discuss with participants a possible side event at COP11 to showcase Oceania wetlands and the unique context and challenges within which they occur. The main point of success for the proposed side event was that it had to be driven by the Pacific Island Contracting Parties.

For the discussions on a possible side event, participants broke into groups to discuss potential topics, the aim(s), key points to convey, guest speakers, materials needed, lead countries, budget, costs and ideas.

(For the summary of these discussions, see Annex 4).

13.2 ORM-5 Meeting report: Vainuupo Jungblut mentioned the expected time schedule for preparation and finalisation of the meeting report:

- Draft report to be sent to participants by April 13
- Final report to be sent to Contracting Parties by 30 April – dependent on how quick comments are received back.

In addition, he added that the COP11 brief for Contracting Parties would be developed by SPREP and was expected to be circulated to Contracting Parties by the first week of June.

13.3 ORM-5 Meeting Statement: **Rebecca D’Cruz** presented the draft meeting statement, which attempted to capture and amalgamate the key issues, discussed over the course of the meeting and would serve to convey the main outcomes of the meeting.

In the discussion that followed, the participants noted the following:

- That tourism should be portrayed in a more positive light within the meeting statement given its importance as a key sector in the economies of most Pacific Islands.
- That mention should be made in the meeting statement on collaboration in between meetings – a mechanism for ongoing interaction between Contracting Parties in between COPs.
- That a reference to presenting the 2 project proposals at COP11 be made in the meeting statement.
- That the meeting statement be renamed the ‘meeting summary’ following concerns from the New Zealand and Australian delegates over endorsing a statement without prior consent of their superiors.

(For the final meeting summary, see Annex 5)

13.4 COP11 arrangements: **Nick Davidson/Lew Young** provided an overview of arrangements for the upcoming COP including arrangements for regional meetings and the need for Contracting Parties to have correct credentials at the COP.

In the discussion that followed, the participants noted the following:

- There was some disagreement on Oceania having meetings together with the Asia region.
- That there would be opportunity for early morning meetings before plenary during the COP. Lew Young mentioned that he would look into arranging a room for these meetings.
- That there would be insufficient time to hold regional meetings in between meetings of the Standing Committee and the start of daily plenary sessions.
- That Contracting Party credentials must be signed by a country’s Head of State or Minister for Foreign Affairs.
- That the Credentials Committee needs a representative from Oceania, this needs to be decided at the regional meetings during the COP.
- That the COP Committee needs a representative from Oceania, currently it was the Marshall Islands but there may be a need for an alternate representative.

- That the coordinator of the Ramsar Culture working group (Thymio Papayannis) was requesting case studies from the Oceania region for an upcoming side event at COP11 on culture and wetlands.

14. Session 12: Meeting Closure

14.1 SPREP

The **Director-General of SPREP, David Sheppard**, in his closing remarks mentioned that a list serve should be developed to keep up the sharing of views and experiences as this was important. He pointed out that these meetings were great mechanisms for sharing experiences; however, there was a need to keep the communication and sharing going after the meeting.

He mentioned that at COPs, it was often very hard for the Pacific to have an impact, that we need to have more distinctive events and that the 'Pacific voyage to Romania' was an excellent suggestion which Nanette, Vai and Lew would take away and work on as we approach COP11.

He pointed out that whether or not the participants at the meeting would be going to COP11, that it was important for them to adequately brief their delegations who will be going. He thanked the Deputy Secretary General, Nick Davidson, for the elaboration of the COP arrangements. He mentioned that it was often confusing for Pacific Island delegates to work through these and that a Pacific roadmap simplifying it for our delegates would be helpful.

He pointed out that there was very useful material coming from this meeting, such as the promotion of the three Rs – Reuse, Reduce and Recycling throughout the meeting week, especially in light of 2012 being declared as the Clean Pacific campaign. In terms of input to the Regional Wetlands Action Plan and the SPREP-Ramsar Memorandum of Cooperation, he further pointed out that some excellent ideas have come out through all the sessions.

He mentioned that increasing partnerships within countries was important, including improving cooperation between the various conventions. He drew attention to the importance of regional partnerships – key partners like Birdlife International, IUCN, governments, SPREP and NGOs and that there was ample opportunity for closer collaboration on wetlands conservation and wise use.

He reminded participants of the importance of clear, well thought out proposals that could help action activities on Ramsar.

Lastly, he made a commitment as Director-General that SPREP took all meeting outcomes seriously, full support would be given and everything would be done to support a strong and effective regional presence at COP11. He concluded that all key points from the meeting would be taken on board and he would see how these could be included in work within SPREP.

14.2 Ramsar Convention Secretariat

The **Deputy Secretary-General of the Ramsar Secretariat, Nick Davidson**, pointed out to participants that they have not only met the objectives of the meeting, not just looked

backward or at COP, but have paved a way forward for wetlands in the region and he mentioned that he really would like to see those come into fruition. He further mentioned that the Ramsar Secretariat would provide support to see the meeting outcomes implemented.

He informed that the main COP documents would be online in the following week or so and urged all participants to read and familiarize with them. He explained that some of the documents explained the COP process, how it worked, the dos and don'ts and who could speak.

Lastly, he mentioned that he hoped the Oceania participants would make their voices and issues really heard at the COP. He pointed out that quality was what counted and that high quality attention would be provided at Ramsar COPs. He urged participants to make that work.

14.3 Government of Palau

Mr. **Fred Sengebau, the Director of the Palau Bureau of Agriculture** congratulated all the participants for their hard work which culminated in a successful meeting week; he further thanked the Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP for their hard work as co-organizers of the meeting. Lastly, he invited all the participants to a closing function organized by the government of Palau in honor of the meeting participants.

MEETING CLOSED AT 6.30PM

Koror, March 2012

Meeting report and photos prepared by the Ramsar Secretariat and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

List of Annexes:

Annex	Title
Annex 1	Final Meeting Agenda
Annex 2	Final List of Participants
Annex 3	Two project concepts discussed and agreed to by participants (session 10, Day 4)
Annex 4	Summary of discussions on the <i>Pacific Voyage to Romania, Ramsar COP11</i> (session 11, Day 4)
Annex 5	Final Meeting Summary



**5th Oceania Regional Preparatory Meeting
for the 11th Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran 1971)**

**Koror, Palau
26-30 March 2012**

FINAL AGENDA

Day 1 – Monday 26 March 2012	
8.30 – 9:00am	Registration (SPREP/Ramsar)
9.00 – 10:10am	<p>Official Opening Emcee – Vainuupo Jungblut (SPREP/Ramsar Secretariat)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Prayer: Delegate from Samoa (Tumutalie Foliga) • Group photograph • Opening Remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hon. Kerai Mariur, Vice-President, Republic of Palau. - Prof. Nick Davidson, Deputy Secretary-General, Ramsar Convention Secretariat. - David Sheppard, Director-General, SPREP. • brief participant introductions & expectations (Vainuupo Jungblut)
10.10 - 10.35am	MORNING TEA
10.35 - 11.10am	<p>Session 1: Status of wetlands and Ramsar Site in Palau (Chair - Marshall Islands. 15 mins per presentation) <i>Rapporteur – Lew Young</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General overview of wetlands in Palau and their conservation (<i>Uelbil P. Michael, Palau Bureau of Agriculture</i>) • Conservation and management of Lake Ngardok nature reserve (<i>Kashgar Rengulbai, Palau Bureau of Agriculture</i>) • Discussions (10 mins at end of presentations)
11.10 12.30am	<p>Session 2: Country updates (Chair – Palau. 15 mins per presentation) <i>Rapporteur – Vainuupo Jungblut</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia (<i>Georgina Usher</i>)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiji (<i>Saverio Baleikanacea</i>) • Marshall Islands (<i>Lowell Alik</i>) • New Caledonia (<i>Christine Poellabauer</i>) • New Zealand (<i>Nicola Scott</i>) • Discussions (20 mins at end of presentations)
12.30 - 13.30pm	LUNCH BREAK
1.30 – 3.00pm	<p>Session 2: Country updates continued (Chair – Palau. 15 mins per presentation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papua New Guinea (<i>Rose Kualke Singadan</i>) • Samoa (<i>Talie Foliga</i>) • Kiribati (<i>Taina Temakei</i>) • Tonga (<i>Seini Fotu</i>) • Vanuatu (<i>Rolenas Baereleo</i>) • Discussions (15 mins at end of presentations)
3.00 – 3.30pm	AFTERNOON TEA
3.30 – 4.10pm	<p>Session 3: Perspective of Ramsar’s regional partners and IOPs relating to the conservation and wise use of wetlands in Oceania (Chair – Samoa. 15 mins per presentation) <i>Rapporteur – Monica Zavagli</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant regional projects under SPREP (<i>Stuart Chape, SPREP</i>) • Wetlands and waterbirds in Oceania – potential new Ramsar Sites in the region based on recent IBA work (<i>Mark O’Brien, Birdlife Pacific</i>). • Discussions (10 mins at end of presentations)
4.10 – 5.10pm	<p>Session 4: Update on the implementation of the Ramsar Convention since COP10 (Chair – Australia. 15 mins per presentation) <i>Rapporteur – Lew Young</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global implementation perspective (<i>Prof. Nick Davidson, Ramsar Secretariat</i>) • Regional implementation perspective - Oceania (<i>Vainuupo Jungblut, SPREP/Ramsar Secretariat</i>) • STRP implementation perspective (<i>Rebecca D’Cruz, Ramsar STRP vice-chair</i>) • Discussions (15 mins at end of presentations)
5.10 – 5:30pm	<p>Session 5: Impending issues for wetland conservation and Ramsar implementation (Chair – Australia) <i>Rapporteur – Rebecca D’Cruz</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for Increased Collaboration among Biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) (<i>Vainuupo Jungblut SPREP/Ramsar Secretariat</i>) • Discussions (5 mins at end of presentations)
5.30 – 6.00pm	Break
6.00pm onwards	Welcome cocktail reception for participants (held at meeting venue)
Day 2 – Tuesday 27 March 2012	
8.40 –	Session 6: Identification of regional representatives on the Ramsar Standing

9.35am	Committee and Ramsar STRP (2013-2015) (Chair - Papua New Guinea) Announce need for nomination to Ramsar Standing Committee and Regional STRP Representative (<i>Vainuupo Jungblut</i>).
9:35 – 10.00am	Session 7: Introduction to COP11 Draft Resolutions (Chair – Papua New Guinea. 15 mins per presentation.) <i>Rapporteur – Vainuupo Jungblut</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative reform (<i>Prof. Nick Davidson</i>) • Proposed changes to the Ramsar Information sheet (RIS) template (<i>Monica Zavagli, Ramsar Secretariat</i>) • Integrated Framework for linking wetland conservation and wise use with poverty eradication (<i>Rebecca D’Cruz</i>) • Integrated Framework and guidelines for avoiding, mitigating and compensating for wetland losses (<i>Prof. Nick Davidson</i>) • Discussions (20 mins at end of presentations)
10.00 - 10.30am	MORNING TEA
10.30 - 11.15am	Session 8: Future scientific priorities for the Ramsar Convention (Chair - Marshall Islands. 15 mins for presentation) <i>Rapporteur – Monica Zavagli</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to future scientific and technical priorities 2013-2015 for the Convention (<i>Rebecca D’Cruz</i>) • Discussions (30 mins at end of presentation)
11.15 – 12.30pm	Session 9: Case Studies of best practice (Chair - New Zealand . 15 mins per presentation) <i>Rapporteur – Nick Davidson</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing wetlands conservation issues in Oceania through the Pacific Mangrove Initiative and the Water and Nature Initiative. (<i>Milika Sobey, IUCN Oceania Regional Office</i>) • Micronesia Challenge case study (<i>Surech Hideyos</i>) • Local communities in wetland conservation (<i>Nicola Scott, New Zealand</i>) • National Ramsar Committees – a global overview (<i>Monica Zavagli</i>) • National Wetlands and Waterbirds Taskforce, other mechanisms, legislation (<i>John Foster, Australia</i>) • Discussions (30 mins at end of presentation)
12:30 - 1:30pm	LUNCH BREAK
1:30 – 3:00pm	Session 9 (con’t): National case studies <i>Rapporteur – Rebecca D’Cruz</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiji National Wetlands Steering Committee (<i>Tavenisa Luisa, Fiji</i>) • Processes for coordinating and implementing wetlands conservation/Ramsar work in New Zealand (<i>Nicola Scott, New Zealand</i>) • How mine planning for environmental protection can help in developing wetland conservation projects (<i>Christine Poellabauer, New Caledonia</i>) • Discussions (15 mins at end of presentations)
3:00 - 3:30pm	AFTERNOON TEA
3:30 –	Session 9 (con’t): Site-based case studies <i>Rapporteur – Rebecca D’Cruz</i>

5:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical tools for wetland management (<i>Georgina Usher, Australia</i>) • Local scale wetland management in Palau (<i>Lukes Isechal, Lake Ngardok Reserve Board Member/ PICRC Researcher</i>) • PICRC/JICA Capacity Enhancement Project for Coral Reef Monitoring (CEPCRM) (<i>Dr. Seiji Nakaya, JICA Palau Office/PICRC</i>) • Case studies of best practice: Wetlands and Tourism (<i>Monica Zavagli</i>) • Discussions (15 mins at end of presentations)
5.30pm	End of Day 2
Day 3 - Wednesday 28 March 2012	
9.00am – 5.00pm	Field visit to the Lake Ngardok Nature Reserve/Ramsar Site. (Packed lunches and water provided)
5.00pm	End of Day 3

Day 4 – Thursday 29 March 2012	
8.30 – 10.00am	Session 10: Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands Breakout groups to review implementation of the RWAP and prioritising of future actions - site issues
10.00 - 10.15am	MORNING TEA
10.15 - 11.45am	Breakout groups to review implementation of the RWAP and prioritising of future actions (con't) – site issues
11.45 - 12.30pm	Breakout groups to review implementation of the RWAP and prioritising of future actions (con't) – national issues
12.30 - 1.15pm	LUNCH BREAK
1.15 - 3.00pm	Breakout groups to review implementation of the RWAP and prioritising of future actions (con't) – regional issues Report back on group discussions to plenary and further discussions
3.00 – 3.15pm	AFTERNOON TEA
Session 11: Wrap up & next steps (Chair - Fiji) <i>Rapporteur – Monica Zavagli</i>	
3.15 - 5.15pm	Pacific voyage to Romania, Ramsar COP11 (Nanette Woonton, SPREP)
5.15 – 6.00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ORM-5 meeting report (<i>Vainuupo Jungblut</i>) • Finalisation of ORM-5 meeting statement (Plenary) • Arrangements for regional meetings, PIC sponsorship, side events and other useful information/ issues for participants to be aware of during COP11 (<i>Prof. Nick Davidson</i>)
Session 12: Meeting Closure (Chair – Marshall Islands) <i>Rapporteur – Vainuupo Jungblut</i>	
6.00- 6.25pm	Closing Statements (Ramsar Secretariat, SPREP, Chair, contracting party representatives, non-party observers, regional partners, others?)
6.25pm	Closing Prayer

6.30pm	CLOSE
Day 5 – Friday 30 March	
9.00am	Training sessions on operational aspects of the Ramsar Convention (half-day) Topics included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing outstanding Ramsar Information Sheets for Ramsar Sites in the PICs • Completing the National Reports for COP11 • Process for accession to the Ramsar Convention (for non-Contracting Parties)
12.30pm	LUNCH & end of Oceania Regional Meeting



**5th Oceania Regional preparatory Meeting for Ramsar COP11 (ORM-5)
26 – 30 March 2012**

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Project concept 1: UPDATE OCEANIA WETLANDS DIRECTORY

- Regional project coordinator (SPREP?) and working group
- National/local project coordinator and working group
- Partners: In-country organizations, institutions and agencies; BirdLife, Bishop Museum, ICRI, IUCN (MESCAL), Pacific Invasive, Ramsar, SPC (SOPAC), SPREP, TNC, USP, UNEP-WCMC, WCS, WI, WWF
- 1 year given for each country to update their data
- Project proposal need to be matched to targets under RWAP, Ramsar Strategic Plan, Aichi Targets

Do we need to identify the ‘health’ of each of the wetlands?

Project concept 2: CAPACITY BUILDING

a. Project management

- Site Specific Management Training
- Training at National Government, Regional Managers level
- Site Managers Capacity Building in-country i.e. investing in the managers themselves
- Enhancing Collaborations amongst and between stakeholders i.e. communities, NGO’s, Industries, and others

b. Compliance and enforcement training:

- Raise awareness of relevant regulations
- Development of legislation/management plans for natural resources
- Law enforcement training

c. Local communities

- Traditional ways of conserving natural resources

Pacific Voyage to Romania, Ramsar COP 11

Pacific side-event

Topics:

- Pacific - My home, My Land and My Water
- Empowering Oceania Wetland Conservation
- Ecotourism – Project management highlight successful case study

Aim:

- Sustainable financing for wetland conservation
- Identify and secure donor commitment to support Project Management

Key Points:

1. Wetland and ecosystem service, e.g. for livelihood, tourism
2. Unsustainable tourism,
3. Lack of baseline data on wetlands in the Pacific
4. Lack of capacity
5. Lack of sustainable finances
6. Our suggestions a) Update Oceania Wetland Inventory b), Capacity building
7. Promote and showcase Oceania Wetlands values
8. Sharing best practices from wetland sites management
9. Showcase regional wetland management action plan and its implementation so far
10. Illustrate current issues and way forward
11. Promote good governance
12. Promote local traditional knowledge
13. Multi-sectoral awareness raising
14. Training on data collection, inventory, stock taking of wetland directory
15. Training on monitoring and reporting
16. Development of sustainable financing mechanism

Guest speakers:

- Samoa, RMI, PNG, Palau
- Oprah Winfrey, Michelle Obama, President Toribong, Ms. South Pacific

Materials:

(1) RWAP, (2) Draft project proposals, (3) Posters (1-2 per country),
Posters, RWAP, National awareness materials, NGO materials
Posters, Video clips, local natural products

Nominate:

Kiribati, PNG, Vanuatu, IUCN Oceania (Milika)

Budget, costs and ideas:

Need to raise \$1,000USD, \$5,000USD, \$16,000 USD

**5th Oceania Regional Preparatory Meeting
for the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran 1971)**

Koror, Palau, 26-30 March 2012

Meeting Summary

1. Wetlands in the Oceania region are extremely diverse, with high biodiversity conservation values, and they play a critical role in sustaining people's livelihoods and national economies.
2. Tourism is a major contributor to most Pacific Island economies. The planning and management of tourism activities in wetlands should seek to minimise damage to the habitats and maintain the ecosystem services provided by the wetlands, especially to local and downstream communities.
3. The major drivers of change in wetlands in the region are unsustainable development, invasive species and increasingly, climate change. Concrete actions have to be identified at the national and regional level to effectively mitigate these threats.
4. With growing evidence across the Pacific that climate change is resulting in reduced fresh water quality and quantity, the need to protect and manage our inland wetlands and their catchment areas as a natural water infrastructure is perhaps more urgent now than ever.
5. Coastal wetlands, such as mangroves, seagrass and coral reefs provide key services to address the effects of climate change by protecting coasts from erosion, adapting to sea-level rise through sediment accretion, acting as buffer zones to reduce impacts from storms and floods and providing important nursery and rearing habitats for fish. Their wise use is vital.
6. Sustainable financing for wetland conservation is a major challenge in the region. Efforts will be made to document examples of sustainable financing mechanisms, e.g. the Palau 'Green Fund', and to explore new and innovative financing mechanisms. Other common challenges across the region include the lack of manpower and high turnover of staff, lack of expertise and experience, and the lack of institutional and legislative frameworks to support wetland conservation action.
7. Oceania delegates recognize the critical partnership role that the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands provides in achieving the Aichi Targets of the Conventions of Biological Diversity - specifically Targets 11 and 14, and the goals of other Conventions, in particular the United Nations Framework on Climate Change Convention and the Convention on Migratory Species. Wetlands are critical actors in combating and mitigating impacts from Climate Change, and critical habitats to ensure the survivability of important global species; the Ramsar Secretariat, the secretariats of the CBD, UNFCCC, CMS and other key conventions are encouraged to strengthen

dialogues to leverage or scale up additional resources to further advance wetlands' wise use in Oceania through robust partnerships.

8. Efforts need to be stepped-up at the national and regional levels to better link the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs); actions should be based on national priorities, guided by a practical process and should as far as possible, involve all key stakeholders. A suitable mechanism should be identified to facilitate synergies at the regional level.
9. A mechanism should be developed to facilitate communication and collaboration between Ramsar Parties in the Pacific between the triennial Pre-COP meetings to ensure sustained implementation of the priorities and actions agreed.
10. The 'Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands 2011-2013' provides a framework for strategic and targeted action for wetlands, and an opportunity for all stakeholders to work together for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.
11. Participants agreed on the following priority projects, to be undertaken in the next 1-2 years under the RWAP (a proposal on each will be available at COP11):
 - a. Update the Oceania Wetlands Directory (1993) to include among others, information on economic valuation, and traditional knowledge. Activities will include training and capacity building in database development and design, monitoring protocols, and ecological surveys.
 - b. Plan and implement capacity building actions, focusing on project management, compliance and enforcement training, and local communities. Resources will be needed to facilitate the training, and for follow-up work.
12. The role of communications at all levels - nationally, regionally and internationally is very important to ensure that successful implementation of wetlands conservation is fully understood by participants. There is also a commitment to continue strengthened communications on wetlands conservation at all levels. This has led to the agreement for a "Pacific Voyage to Romania" campaign to raise the Pacific voice at the international stage specifically the COP through a range of communications activities.
13. The meeting recommends that this summary be transmitted to all the Oceania Ramsar Contracting Parties and National Focal Points (STRP and CEPA) to advise their preparations for the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, 6th to 13th July 2012, Bucharest, Romania. To ensure continuity and facilitate effective follow-up, we recommend that the participants at this meeting be included in their COP11 national delegations.
14. The participants extend their heartfelt thanks to the government of the Republic of Palau through the Bureau of Agriculture for hosting this meeting, and for the warm hospitality and fellowship that we have enjoyed throughout our stay. We also acknowledge the generous funding assistance of the governments of Australia and France, the additional support provided through the SPREP-UNEP-EC MEAs Project "Capacity building related to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries" and the support of SPREP and the Ramsar Secretariat.