



*H.E. President Tong delivered the opening keynote address at the special post-COP21 Pacific Climate Change Conference in Wellington, New Zealand.*

and it was here that we recognised him for his unwavering commitment and global leadership in defending the Pacific islands region and Small Island developing States against climate change issues that threaten island nations. He also championed the Pacific Oceanscape Framework, the regional mechanism which allows for sustainable multiple uses and management practices, which was adopted in 2012.

In presenting this award we also reflect upon all Pacific island leaders and people who have worked to help our Pacific island communities build resilience to climate change at all levels.

On that note, I'd like to end this brief message paying tribute to our Pacific island women this International Woman's Day as they '**step it up**' with us all, to bring about a sustainable environment for our Pacific communities. You can also read more on our celebration of the **increased participation of women in waste management**.

*Have a good month ahead.*

**Kosi Latu**

Director General, SPREP

## Message from Mr. Kosi Latu, Director General of SPREP

We achieved some great milestones in February, breaking new ground with the signing of an Mou between SPREP and Victoria University of New Zealand as you will read in this issue, as well as working with our Pacific island members this month, joining efforts to strengthen our Pacific environment.

What is most memorable for this month however is the special homage paid to the **former President of Kiribati, President Anote Tong**, as we presented him with a special award acknowledging his role as a Pacific Champion on Climate Change.

He was a featured speaker at the Victoria University "*In the Eye of the Storm: Pacific Climate Change Conference 2016*"

## LATEST NEWS



*L - R H.E Jackie Frizelle, New Zealand High Commissioner to Samoa, Mr. Kosi Latu the Director General of SPREP*

## NEW ZEALAND SIGNS MULTI-YEAR FUNDING ARRANGEMENT WITH SPREP

A three year funding arrangement has been cemented between the Government of New Zealand and SPREP this month. The multi-million dollar arrangement will help strengthen the regional environment organisation to provide support to Pacific island member countries in addressing climate change and other environmental challenges.

[Read more...](#)



Group photo of participants at the Regional Workshop of the London Protocol in Suva, Fiji.

### PACIFIC ISLANDS URGED TO ELIMINATE DISPOSAL OF WASTES AT SEA

Representatives from 10 Pacific island countries have gathered in Fiji to explore two important international instruments that look at the issue of deliberate disposal of waste at sea. The 'Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Waste and Other Matter 1972' or the 'London Convention' for short is one of the first global conventions designed to protect the marine environment from human activities. The London Convention, which has been in force since 1975, was modernised in 1996 through the introduction of the London Protocol which will eventually replace the Convention.

[Read more...](#)



Photo courtesy of Victoria University of Wellington.

### SPREP SIGNS MOU WITH VICTORIA UNIVERSITY IN NEW ZEALAND

The bonds of partnership have been strengthened between SPREP and Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. This is the very first official MoU between SPREP and a New Zealand based University.

The agreement will see the two partners working together to achieve the shared objective of Pacific environment protection and the strengthening of systems, institutions, organisations and individuals to do so.

[Read more...](#)



Ctenophore Comb Jelly: the *Mnemiopsis leidyi* is a species of Comb Jellyfish introduced into the Black Sea through ballast water and is now a marine invasive species. Image: [www.freeimages.co.uk](http://www.freeimages.co.uk)

### “PREVENTION DEFINITELY BETTER THAN THE CURE” – MARINE INVASIVE SPECIES IN THE COOK ISLANDS

The Cook Islands is the third of 14 Pacific island countries working to develop National Ballast Water Strategies to address the spread of marine invasive species through ships. The island nation has also signed the International Ballast Water Management Convention. Statistics show in 2013, close to 100,000 vessels sailed into Pacific island ports as well as through the Pacific island region. It is estimated that 7,000 species are carried around the world in ballast water every day with 10 billion tonnes of ballast water transferred globally each year.

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Students from Years 7 and 8 will present to other classes at Vaiala Beach School about the importance of making smart choices for a cleaner and safer Pacific. Pictured (l-r) are Melody Salesa, Noelani Jessop and Anita Alex. Photo: A.Carvan/SPREP

### FREE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR PACIFIC ISLAND SCHOOLS

A group of lucky students at Vaiala Beach School in Samoa have become the first in the Pacific to receive free copies of a colourful new educational poster, produced through a partnership between the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the European Union.

Called 'Smart choices for a cleaner and safer Pacific' the poster promotes a range of simple actions that contribute to reduced waste and increased resilience.

[Read more...](#)





Nauru MSP training participants at work defining values in their marine environment.  
Photo: R. Wright/SPREP.

### NAURU BETTER EQUIPPED WITH NEW SKILLS TO SUPPORT PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY RESOURCES

Training on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Marine Spatial Planning was held in Nauru. Learning GIS is a key activity of the Nauru GEPAS Integrated Island Biodiversity Project to provide basic GIS skills that would be useful to support planning and sustainable management of biodiversity resources.

Further to that, through understanding MSP, Nauru has taken the first step towards this process that brings multiple users of the ocean together to make informed and coordinated decisions about how best to use marine resources sustainably.

[Read more: GIS training | Marine Spatial Planning](#)



A Lemon Shark, photo courtesy of Jim Abernethy.

### STRATEGY FOR PACIFIC SHARKS

A two day meeting was held in Apia to plan a way forward to develop the strategy that will protect and manage sharks and rays in the Pacific.

With approximately 100 million sharks killed every year, 54 percent of sharks and rays are threatened or near threatened with extinction. The Pacific islands are working to combat this by developing the strategy to protect and manage sharks and rays in the region.

[Read more...](#)



Georgina Lepping of PAOA FM station in the Solomon Islands, reporting back on group work

### MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS TRAINING FOR SOLOMON ISLANDS METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

Learning how to conduct an interview, prepare press releases and building relationships with the media were all part of the training conducted for the Solomon Islands Meteorological Services (SIMS) in Honiara.

"It's very important for the Meteorology staff to be able to talk to the media," said Mr. David Hiba Hiriasia, Director of the Solomon Islands Meteorological Service.

"With increased weather events affecting our islands, we need to work with the media to raise awareness and educate communities."

[Read more...](#)

## HELP US TO KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW



If you live in a Pacific island country or territory and you have three minutes to spare, we would love it if you could answer our very short survey by clicking on the link below. Your answers will help shape an upcoming education and awareness campaign that is taking place across the Pacific region.

When you're finished you can go into a draw to win a SPREP prize pack that includes a t-shirt, hat, USB stick, posters and stickers. And, regardless of whether you win a prize, you'll get a great sense of satisfaction from knowing that you helped us out.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JRZF8XS>





## PACIFIC ISLAND EVENT A SUCCESS AT INTERNATIONAL SHARK CONSERVATION CONFERENCE IN COSTA RICA

SPREP and the Pacific island delegations hosted a special event during the Second Meeting of the Signatories of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Sharks in San Jose, Costa Rica from 15–19 February. The Pacific was represented at this event by delegates from Fiji, Samoa, Palau, Vanuatu and SPREP. This Migratory Sharks MoU is a non-legally binding arrangement of the CMS to improve the conservation status of migratory shark species listed in Appendices I and II of the Convention. The MoU came into effect in March 2010, and has been signed by Australia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Samoa Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

The Pacific Voyage side event held in Costa Rica was well attended, and brought a Pacific flavour to the meeting. The Kava Ceremony that closed the evening was popular with many delegates from around the world, this followed on from an overview of the current shark and ray conservation efforts being carried out within the Pacific islands.

Mr. Dermot Keane shared the history of the establishment of the Palau Marine Sanctuary; Ms. Saras Sharma discussed the Fiji's leadership in shark and ray conservation efforts, in particular proposing the listing of all mobula ray species in the CMS and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES); and Mr. Ian Campbell from WWF Pacific Shark Heritage Programme demonstrated the connectivity of the Pacific people, their cultures and traditions with sharks and rays. He provided a community perspective bringing a cultural dimension to conservation practices.

"We were very pleased that this event was so well attended. It not only gave us an opportunity to share the progress made in shark and ray conservation in our Pacific islands but it also provided us with the platform to share our Pacific culture and strengthen our networks with a range of partners and technical experts," said Ms. Juney Ward, the Shark and Ray Conservation Officer at SPREP.

Migratory shark species listed in Appendix I and II of the Convention on Migratory Species includes the Whale shark, Basking shark, Great white shark, Shortfin mako shark, Longfin mako shark, Porbeagle and the Spiny dogfish.

At the Second Meeting of the Signatories of the Convention on Marine Species (CMS) Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Shark, amendments were made to the Annexes of the MoU to include the addition of 22 species of sharks and rays to Annex 1. This brings the total number of species covered to 29, including the 10 species of mobula rays that was submitted by Fiji during the CMS COP in Quito, Ecuador in 2014.


For more information please contact Ms. Juney Ward at [juneyw@sprep.org](mailto:juneyw@sprep.org)



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**Our vision:** *The Pacific Environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.*

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