

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

### Greetings from Apia,

Pacific sharks and rays rejoiced this month as the first ever Pacific Ministerial Shark Symposium convened in Apia, which saw several leaders from around the Pacific reaffirm their commitment to protecting and conserving Pacific sharks and rays. I would like to extend my congratulations to the government and people of Samoa, who announced that all 128,000 sq. km of its national waters are now designated to be a protected sanctuary for all sharks and rays, bring the total count of Pacific islands who have established sanctuaries within their EEZs to eight.

A new and exciting opportunity arose to help the Pacific address the issue of critical waste management in the region, with the signing of the Moana Taka Partnership between SPREP and the China Navigation Company (CNCo) – SWIRE. For the first time in Pacific history, island nations will now be able to have their recyclable wastes shipped out of their countries pro bono to be taken to recycling ports in Asia Pacific. It is an opportunity which we are very thankful to the CNCo for, for coming on board and recognising the importance of good waste management to sustaining a healthy Pacific environment.

Our SPREP Advance was also held in March, bringing together all the SPREP staff under the theme “One Journey, One Va’a, One Crew.” The Advance was an excellent two days of team building activities, aimed at boosting our SPREP staff morale and strengthening our bonds and linkages as one crew on the SPREP va’a.

We have also made excellent progress with the Pacific Climate Change Centre, with the groundbreaking ceremony to take place in April. This means the Pacific is now one step closer to having its own regional hub of coordination for climate change.

This issue includes a lot more great achievements and accomplishments made across the Pacific region in the month of March, and I hope you enjoy reading through each of these updates in this issue of the SPREP-Tok.

Soifua,



Mr. Kosi Latu, Director General of SPREP.

## SPREP-Tok LATEST NEWS



### SAMOA HOSTS PACIFIC MINISTERIAL SHARK SYMPOSIUM

Pacific history was made with the very first Pacific Ministerial Shark Symposium held in Samoa in March, demonstrating global leadership from the island region in protecting and conserving Pacific sharks and rays.

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← Reef fish and sharks in Solomon Islands. Photo by Stuart Chape.



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

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## CHANGE IN MINDSET FOR VANUATU AS IT BECOMES “CLIMATE SMART”



SPREP’s Meteorology and Climate Officer, Mr Salesa Nihmei, participating in discussions during the inception workshop. Photo: SPREP/P.Malsale

In 2015 Vanuatu was labelled the world’s most “at risk” country to natural hazards in the world. According to the World Risk Report 2015, on average, natural disasters affect over a third of the population each year.

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## SAMOA ESTABLISHES A SANCTUARY FOR SHARKS AND RAYS IN ITS NATIONAL WATERS



Prime Minister of Samoa, Hon. Tuilaepa Dr Sailele Malielegaoi.

Samoa announced a shark sanctuary within its 128,000 sq km Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), making it the eight Pacific island country that has designated its national waters as a protected sanctuary for all sharks and rays.

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## HISTORY MADE BY SPREP AS IT STARTS 2018 WITH GIANT STEPS



Participants of the Vanuatu Climate Information Services for Resilient Development Project inception workshop. Photo: SPREP/P.Malsale

Its history in the making for SPREP and Vanuatu as the island nation embarked on its very first fully funded Green Climate Fund Project, also the very first project for SPREP as an Accredited Implementing Entity to the GCF.

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## INNOVATION, COLLABORATION AND ACTION TO TACKLE MARINE DEBRIS

“It starts with you,” those were the words from Mr Afroz Shah, the UN Environment 2016 Champion of the Earth Award for Inspiration and Action, as he addressed the opening of the Sixth International Marine conference in San Diego this week.



Marine Debris Art Installation by Mark Cunningham

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## DUGONG AND SEAGRASS CONSERVATION ON THE AGENDA FOR PACIFIC ISLAND RANGE STATES

The declining status of seagrass and dugong populations in the region was just one of the reasons delegates from four of the five Pacific island range states for dugong convened in Solomon Islands in March.

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First row (L to R): Ezekiel Leghunau, Ivory Akao, Allan Bero, Duta Kauhiona, Donna Kwan, Jully Kalamana, Laure Luneau, Christina Shaw and Bill Leggat. Second row: Sheridan Rabbitt, Corzzierrah Posala, Delvene Boso, Chelcia Gomesse, Maya Bankova-Todorova, Anja Nicolay-Grosse Hokamp, Agnetha Vave-Karamui, Fabio Siksei and Michelle Devlin. Third row: Len McKenzie, Nicholas Heard, Andrew Halford, Jayven Ham, Michael Donoghue and Gary Jenkins. Photo: Len McKenzie

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA TO ENHANCE MANAGING CLIMATE CHANGE INFORMATION



Group photo of the workshop participants. Photo: Madeleine McGan

The importance of climate change information and knowledge management (IKM) and its critical role in adaptation and resilience planning was at the core of discussions held with delegates from across the Government of Papua New Guinea, SPREP and Griffith University.

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## “MOANA TAKA PARTNERSHIP” UNFOLDS EXCITING RECYCLING POSSIBILITIES FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS



SPREP Director General, Mr Kosi Latu, signing the Moana Taka partnership. Photo: SPREP

The China Navigation Company (CNC) and SPREP signed a Memorandum of Understanding in March to address critical waste management issues in the Pacific islands.

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## LEARNING ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE PACIFIC PERSPECTIVE WITH SPREP



The group of students who visited SPREP under the SIT Study Abroad Programme posing for a group photo with some of the SPREP staff. Photo: SPREP

A group of 17 students from universities all across the United States visited the SPREP campus in March as part of the School of International Training’s “Study Abroad Programme”.

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## TALKING CHEMICAL AND WASTE MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES IN THE PACIFIC



Participants of the GEF 7 Planning and Prioritisation workshop held at the SPREP Campus, Vailima. Photo: SPREP

Participants from across the Pacific region gathered at the SPREP headquarters in Apia in March to discuss and decide on regional priorities to propose for Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding for chemical and waste management in the Pacific.

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