

Press Release



MSG and SPREP seal partnership

During the 9th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas being held today in Suva, Fiji, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat today signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to provide a framework of co-operation between the two partner organizations. Within this framework, the Parties will consult each other to improve coordination and foster collaboration on the focal areas they have agreed to under the MOU.

The MOU serves to formalize and strengthen a partnership to foster regional cooperation to address the varied issues faced by the SPREP and MSG membership. The agreed focal areas of partnership under this MOU are:

- Environment Conservation and Protection
- Biodiversity and ecosystem management
- Climate Change adaptation and mitigation
- environmental monitoring and governance

- trade
- economic development; and
- sustainable development

The MOU provides both Organizations with direction as they work together to ensure Environmental Sustainability in the Pacific. They aim to do this by enhancing and complementing each other's efforts while building on their individual natural strengths and areas of primary expertise underpinning the principles of the 'one team' approach for the Pacific; sharing relevant information to assist each other to achieve the objectives of this MOU; developing the needs and priorities of the mutual Member countries; the work of both organizations will be as mandated by their respective governing bodies and at relevant meetings of their Ministers and Leaders; when both organisations are involved in the same priority area of work, a joint approach will be defined through a collaborative process that respects the core functions of each organisation and the strategies or approaches that have been defined by their respective governing bodies.

MSG Director General, Mr Peter Forau said, 'the MSG welcomes the MOU and we look forward to collaborating more with SPREP on the implementation of global and regional priorities, and in particular the terrestrial commitment and blue carbon initiatives under the MSG Leaders Declaration on Environment and Climate Change and the MSG Green Growth Goals relating specifically to environment and climate change issues.'

He added, 'the people of the Melanesia region which live in the most densely populated areas of the Pacific depend on land and the surrounding waters and we have a responsibility to ensure we conserve our biodiversity and ecosystems for our current and future generations. Humankind and our planet faces unprecedented challenges, fast depleting natural resources, increasing population growth, pollution, a rapidly changing climate and other threats that requires all of us to strengthen our partnership to reach common solutions. However, we must act fast, because we can no longer delay defining actions to conserve nature. We need to find innovative ways to ensure that nature can continue to support human needs, such as continuous food supplies from the land and sea, clean air and water, sustainable energy and other services the growing populations depend upon for survival.

He emphasized, 'the MOU is an opportunity for both our organizations to develop joint approaches and work plans when supporting our member countries, and to undertake joint consultation with countries during the planning and implementation phases.'

SPREP Secretariat Director General David Sheppard also welcomed the signing and added, 'this MOU will enable both organizations to work closer and undertake activities that will support members, particularly in the areas where SPREP has the technical expertise and the information that can assist in developing appropriate policies, and strategies. SPREP has made a commitment to continue to strengthen delivery of its Strategic Plan programmes to its members. We are strengthening our sub-regional arrangements through these sorts of partnerships as well as to seek opportunities for establishing a sub-regional presence as we are currently doing in Micronesia. This will provide a collaborative and focused modality for our support to our MSG members to implement their Leaders Commitment in environment, climate change and sustainable development. This also supports Samoa as the hosts of the 2014 SIDS Conference to highlight "Partnerships" as the theme for the conference.

The MOU is for a period of three years.

For more information about the media release, please contact Mr Barbara Age, Director, Governance & Sustainable Development Division via email at: b.agelavu@msg.int ; Mr Stanley Wapot, Environment & Climate Change Analyst via email at: sj.wapot@msg.int and Mr Sefanaia Nawadra, Director Environmental Monitoring and Governance Division (SPREP) via email at: sefanaian@sprep.org

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***Jointly Authorized for release by
Director General MSG Secretariat and Director General SPREP***