



SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

**REPORT OF THE 4th MEETING OF
THE CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**

(Koror, Palau, 18 November 2005)

REPORT OF THE 4TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY
(Koror, Palau, 18 November 2005)

Including:

**REPORT OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING OF
THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(Koror, Palau, 14-17 November 2005)

and:

**SUMMARY OF DECISIONS OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING OF
THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS
HELD IN KOROR, PALAU, 14-17 NOVEMBER 2005**

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Agenda

Report of proceedings

COMPENDIUM OF DECISIONS OF THE 4TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

COMPENDIUM OF DECISIONS OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS (CRGA)

REPORT OF THE 4TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY
(Koror, Palau, 18 November 2005)

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4TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY
(Koror, Palau, 18 November 2005)

AGENDA

1. Conference Opening
2. Report of the 35th meeting of CRGA
 - 2.1 Chairperson's Letter
 - 2.2 Financial Year 2006 Budget
3. SPC Corporate Review
4. Regional policies and inter-agency cooperation
 - 4.1 Influenza pandemic
 - 4.2 HIV/AIDS regional strategy
 - 4.3 Regional Health Fund
 - 4.4 Regional statistics, economic/trade
 - 4.5 Tuna fisheries
 - 4.6 Deep-sea trawling
 - 4.7 Pacific Plan / Hughes Report
5. Thematic discussion
"Youth Empowerment for a Secure, Prosperous and Sustainable Future"
6. Appointment of a new Director-General (Closed session)
7. The Year 2007 Conference
Venue and Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson
8. Other Business
9. Statements by Observers
10. Adoption of the Report

4TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY
(Koror, Palau, 18 November 2005)

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

CONFERENCE OPENING

1. The representative from Guam, the Governor of Guam, gave the opening prayer.
2. The Chairperson expressed appreciation to Conference for allowing him to serve as chair, observing that although he was not a good navigator, he was confident that, with the support of all members, Conference would reach its destination.
3. Conference adopted its agenda and work hours.

AGENDA ITEM 2 - REPORT OF THE 35TH MEETING OF CRGA

2.1 – CHAIRPERSON’S LETTER

4. The Chair of CRGA 35, the High Commissioner of Tuvalu, presented a summary of the deliberations, decisions and recommendations of CRGA 35, and of the decisions made in 2004 by CRGA 34. (The letter of the Chairperson of CRGA 35 to the Conference is appended to this report.)

Conference Decision:

5. Conference:
 - a) commended the Chair of CRGA 35 for his report and CRGA 35 for their excellent work;
 - b) considered the report and noted the decisions of CRGA 34;
 - c) considered the report of CRGA 35 and approved the recommendations put forward to Conference by CRGA 35, with the exception of those recommendations considered separately in the agenda of Conference (regarding approval of the Fiscal Year 2006 budget, the results of the SPC corporate review, and the appointment of the new Director-General.

2.2 - FINANCIAL YEAR 2006 BUDGET

6. The Director-General stated that CRGA had recommended the Fiscal Year 2006 budget to Conference for approval, and provided some broad highlights of the budget, indicating that the 2006 budget had grown significantly as a result of increases in donor funding. She noted that the increased funding reflected the trust that donors had placed in the Secretariat, and said that the consequence of the budget increases is an expansion of, and improvement in, services offered to members. The Director-General noted that a number of programmes were receiving strong donor support (e.g. the Public Health and Statistics and Demography Programmes, and programmes within the LRD), but that the Pacific Women’s Bureau, Pacific Youth Bureau and Cultural Affairs Programme continued to operate with limited support, despite the continuing strong interest in these latter programmes from members, and the call for additional support by CRGA 34. The total budget submitted for approval amounted to 33 601 866 CFP units.

The Director-General noted that the budget was developed in an environment in which exchange rates were very favourable. She highlighted the level of arrears as an area of concern, but noted that significant progress had been made on the issue. She also indicated that in the two months that had elapsed since the budget documents had been prepared (in September 2005), the Secretariat had received commitments of significant

additional funding, and that a funding agreement with the Asian Development Bank would be signed during Conference, which would increase the 2006 budget to USD37 million. The proportion of the budget allocated to administration (8.4%) was well below SPC's target (to keep administrative costs below 10%). She noted that the proposed 2006 budget was balanced, included only those initiatives for which funding had actually been secured, and took into account the expressed priorities of members as well as guidance from Conference. She noted that it demonstrated the fact that administrative costs had been contained, and closed by seeking approval from Conference for SPC's 2006 proposed budget.

7. The representative of the US commended the Director-General and SPC's Executive Team for their continuing record of fiscal responsibility and for delivering a wide range of services with minimal resources. He noted that SPC's ability to hold administrative costs to 8.4% of the organisation's budget while serving such a wide geographic area was a commendable achievement.

8. The representative of Kiribati expressed his country's sincere thanks for the Director General's detailed account of the 2006 budget, and asked for more a detailed accounting of what issues were targeted through non-core funded programmes.

9. The Director-General noted that the draft budget document, which was distributed separately, gave significant detail about the break down of both the core-funded and non-core-funded programmes. She emphasised the significant continuing growth in the non-core budget, which she noted had greatly expanded the Secretariat's ability to respond to island member needs. She expressed her appreciation to both SPC's donor members and donor partners.

10. The representative of Cook Islands registered his country's approval of the proposed FY 2006 budget, while asking that the Secretariat take into account the concerns of Cook Islands regarding increased funding for the Pacific Women's Bureau, Pacific Youth Bureau and Cultural Affairs Programme.

11. The representative of Marshall Islands registered his appreciation to SPC for its work, and for the fact that the Corporate Review team would visit and consult with all members prior to finalisation of the review, noting that such an inclusive approach increased the level of ownership members felt in SPC. He encouraged a continuation of such an inclusive consultative approach in the future on important issues.

12. The representative of Australia noted that his country placed significant trust in SPC as a vehicle for effective programme delivery, and envisioned a future — by the 10th Conference of the Pacific Community and beyond — in which SPC would be a truly mature organisation that had transformed the region. The representative also noted that the review chaired by Senator Caleb Otto had added to Australia's confidence in SPC, and that Australia was seeking to increase its commitment to the organisation, both financially and in other ways. He closed by noting that Australia viewed SPC as one of the premier regional organisations in the Pacific.

13. The representative of New Zealand referred to the 2006 budget, and suggested that, in addition to seeking new resources to address the needs of women, youth and cultural programmes, SPC might consider reprioritising existing funds, in particular programme funds that it receives under MOUs with donor partners.

Conference Decision:

14. Conference adopted the Fiscal Year 2006 budget, as presented by the Director-General and recommended by CRGA 35.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - SPC CORPORATE REVIEW

15. The head of the team that conducted the Corporate Review of SPC, Senator Caleb Otto of Palau, gave a brief summary of the review's findings. He noted that the terms of reference for the review were approved by CRGA 34 in 2004, and that these provided the framework for the evaluation. He noted that the review was especially timely, in light of the corporate planning cycle, the upcoming appointment of the new

Director-General (effective in January 2006), and the many emerging issues in the region, and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to be part of the evaluation. He noted that the review team included representatives from all parts of the region and from both donor and island members. The team conducted staff interviews in both Noumea and Suva, interviewed regional partners, and focused in particular on the views of member states. He noted Tuvalu's request that all member countries be consulted, through actual visits if at all possible, and said that visits would be made to Tuvalu and American Samoa prior to finalising the report. The review team examined various reviews and documents, including the Corporate Plan, SPC's accountability systems, various programme reviews that had been conducted, and two organisational reviews conducted previously. He said a major focus was how SPC had responded to previous programme and organisational reviews. The team found that SPC had moved quickly to implement the findings of these reviews. In consulting with members and partners, the team looked for indications of how SPC was viewed (e.g. the Secretariat's responsiveness, priority setting, transparency, commitment to gender equality, and quality of service). The team made 11 recommendations, and found that SPC was well placed to play a major role in the implementation of the Pacific Plan. They did not consider in detail the recommendations made by the Hughes report. However, the team did recommend that all PICTS should be involved in discussions regarding a 'regional architecture', and observed that regionalism should not be reduced to a discussion of efficiency; the issue of ownership was also very important. The team emphasised that the existing equal status of each member of SPC should not be compromised. He closed by noting he was gratified and humbled by the fact that CRGA had agreed with the team's recommendations in principle, and said the team would take note of the comments that had been made as it finalised the draft. He thanked everyone involved for their generosity in terms of their time and thoughtful comments, and praised SPC staff, particularly the Director of Corporate Planning, for their assistance. He also expressed his appreciation to the executive team and the staff for building an excellent organisation.

16. The representative of France reiterated his country's commitment to SPC, said the organisation continues to play a leading role in regional development, and indicated France would continue to assist SPC, due to its confidence in SPC and in the organisation's ability to adapt to changes in the region. He noted that France would bear in mind the very positive conclusions of the review and said that in addition to its direct contribution, France is responsible for almost 25% of the EU's assistance to SPC. He noted that France would share the conclusions of the Corporate Review with the EU.

17. The representative of Australia expressed appreciation to the outgoing Director-General, noting the Corporate Review confirmed that she was leaving SPC in excellent condition with a very strong organisational culture, which gave donors the confidence to increase their support. She reiterated her country's belief that support was most effective if given at the programme level, rather than as project support, and said that this approach was possible only when donors had full confidence in the culture and management of the organisation.

18. The representative of Kiribati acknowledged the successful work of the review team, congratulated the Director-General on her term of office, and wished her the very best for the future. He noted Kiribati's confidence that SPC would maintain and further enhance its services to members under new leadership, and acknowledged the generous support of SPC's donor members. He expressed the hope that members would have a chance to review the final report to ensure that all members' suggestions had been incorporated, and noted the review would provide clear guidance to SPC as to the organisation's future strategies.

Conference Decision:

19. Conference gave its in-principle approval to the draft Corporate Review and its recommendations, noting that the review team will take on board comments made by CRGA 35, and the views of members, and that the team will visit American Samoa and Tuvalu prior to finalising the review report. Conference noted that the report will guide the Secretariat's future directions, and will provide guidance to the new Director-General and the executive team as they embark on the preparation of the organisation's new Corporate Plan.

Signing ceremony between SPC and ADB

20. The representative of the Asian Development bank (ADB) said that his organisation welcomed the opportunity to deepen its relationship with SPC which was exemplified by the signing of an agreement that would further the fight against HIV in the region. He noted that ADB's paramount mission was to reduce poverty and hardship, which had direct relevance to the fight against HIV/AIDS. Poor people were particularly vulnerable, and those with HIV were especially likely to be driven into deeper poverty. Prevention was more costly than effective treatment, and an effective response to HIV was central to supporting the development process in the region. He noted that there was a window of opportunity to reduce the epidemic in the Pacific, and that it could be the first region to halt the spread of the epidemic. He also noted that the agreement was a groundbreaking one for ADB, as it marked the first regional grant from their concessional resources, and was the first grant to go to a regional organisation. He noted that SPC had gained the confidence of its members, and said that ADB shared that confidence. He closed by thanking Conference for the opportunity to attend the meeting, and welcomed the opportunity to work with everyone present in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

21. The Director-General noted her pleasure at signing the funding agreement with ADB, which would bring USD8 million over five years to the fight against HIV, and welcomed ADB to SPC's growing list of partners.

AGENDA ITEM 4 - REGIONAL POLICIES AND INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

22. The Senior Deputy Director-General of SPC and the Forum representative presented an overview of the Pacific Plan. The first principle of the Plan is to promote national development through cooperation and integration. The Plan also seeks to provide opportunities for regional organisations to coordinate support for member countries. There is no question of the need for greater ownership and control of regional programmes to ensure their effectiveness, and for decentralized and country-specific engagement. For SPC, progress has been made in this area with the establishment of a regional office in Pohnpei, which will help ensure that regional programmes can be tailored to suit the needs of particular sections of the region. The Forum Secretariat is to set up a Small Island States (SIS) unit to enhance the benefits these countries receive from the organisation. The Forum and EU are looking at cooperating on joint activities directed at subregional clusters. There are subregional projects in energy, e.g. for Palau and Niue, being funded through the Forum by the EU. SIS have made a decision to seek regional bulk purchases of petroleum to maximise efficiency and minimise costs.

The Pacific Plan includes the notion of 'club theory', i.e. that members will belong to a club depending on the cost benefits. The most important strategy for the Pacific Plan is based on engagement at the national level. Engagement by countries cannot simply be assumed. Member countries need to develop their national policies, clarifying the benefits they expect, and the level of these benefits. The regional level can only be effective to a certain point. Under the Paris Declaration, ownership must be determined at the national level through national policies.

The Pacific Plan provides opportunities for cooperation between regional organisations; USD100 million per annum is channelled through these organisations. Efficiency gains through collaboration and amalgamation of administrative services could make a big difference to effective delivery of programmes. Many of the Pacific Plan's initiatives share similarities with existing SPC programme strategies and these frameworks will help guide the implementation of the plan.

In the long term:

- Regional organisations will develop rights and obligations, especially in regard to the labour market and upskilling of the workforce.
- In regard to a regional institutional framework for regional cooperation, the Hughes report contained only one contentious recommendation, i.e. the amalgamation of five organisations into

one. The recommendations of the report will be further discussed by a Working Group (to be convened by the Pacific Plan Task Force). Non-Forum members of the SPC should take part in that Working Group

- Efforts are being made at the national level, e.g. by Samoa, to develop policies for national engagement.
- There is the possibility of ‘observership’ categories by countries, and by organisations such as the ADB.

23. The Chair thanked the presenters for the report and invited comments from delegates.

24. The representative from France said his delegation was impressed by the level of regional cooperation in areas such as health, fisheries, oceans, work towards MDGs and forestry, and were very pleased that regionalism was ‘on the move’. In relation to fisheries, France was happy for SPC to investigate deep-sea bottom trawling. In regard to the Hughes report and its comments on a regional architecture, France felt strongly that a simple methodology should be followed. Any debate should involve equal status for all states and territories. No reform of SPC could be contemplated without the full participation of all members. His delegation would like to hear more of the Forum’s views on the Hughes report and considered that it might have been better to consult more widely in the preparation of the report. The legal implications of any amalgamation were huge and it was only possible to look at this question tentatively at the moment. However, many of the recommendations were practical, e.g. bulk purchase of petroleum could be extended to other products. There might also be opportunities to streamline the administrative procedures of organisations. The amalgamation of five well-established organisations into a new organisation under one supervisory body entailed huge legal issues. His delegation wondered if there was potential for a two-tier system based on symmetry between members. In regard to the implementation of the Pacific Plan, his delegation subscribed to the view that its success would rest on a vision for the region that rose above institutional cleavages. SPC was successful because it gathered together all members and was apolitical. Care should be taken to avoid weakening a robust structure. The representative cautioned against being too innovative and suggested making the most of existing mechanisms. France was interested in taking part in any Working Group set up to discuss regional cooperation.

25. The representative from Samoa expressed thanks to the Chair and to the host, Palau, and thanked the Senior Deputy Director-General and the Forum for their useful presentation, noting that there were a number of topics to comment on. The representative from France had referred to the Hughes report and its proposal for an amalgamation of several organisations. At present, this could be considered an exploratory proposition. He agreed with the previous speaker that the focus should be on making use of existing mechanisms to implement the Pacific Plan, work towards the MDGs and oversee maritime issues. Rather than considering amalgamation of five agencies, the emphasis should be on looking at work programmes to ensure there was no duplication of effort. In regards to oceans policy, Samoa would like to see some development of this longstanding issue; tourism and fisheries were leading issues for Samoa.

26. The representative from Marshall Islands congratulated the Senior Deputy Director-General and the Forum on their presentation. He noted the regional importance of tuna stocks, especially yellow fin and big eye and said this issue was particularly pertinent because Indonesian and Philippine vessels were taking juveniles. SPC had been asked to work with the Forum Secretariat, the Tuna Commission and with Indonesia and the Philippines on this issue.

27. The representative from New Zealand thanked the presenters and said that New Zealand endorsed the concept of a Pacific Health Fund, but that this would require a regional strategic plan to guide the use of the fund. She said that New Zealand would consider support for the PNG tuna tagging programme. In relation to the Hughes report, she commented that there were some significant flaws including inadequate consultation, the inclusion of opinions that were not substantiated by sound data, and the potential complexity involved in the proposition to amalgamate five organisations with different mandates and responsibilities. However, the report did examine the important issue of regional cooperation; there was a need for more thorough analysis of this issue.

28. The representative from USA thanked the presenters for their substantive presentation. He commented that the establishment of a regional office in Pohnpei was an important milestone for SPC in its efforts to serve the whole region. He commended the work being done to improve statistical programmes in Pacific Island countries and encouraged strengthening these efforts, noting that good statistical programmes were an essential component of accountability for donors and recipients. In spite of high per capita donation levels, human indicators were lagging. There was a need for a clear picture of progress reflected in good statistics and data collection. He said the US was willing to work together with agencies and countries to achieve this. In relation to a regional institutional framework, he endorsed previous comments and said that the US would like to participate in the Working Group set up to review any changes, noting that the presenters had mentioned that non-Forum members would be invited to take part. He commented that the challenges that existed in areas such as health and fisheries did not depend on political status and that what set SPC apart from other organisations was that it focused directly on practical problems. The political context was often important for other agencies but not for SPC. The importance of SPC for non-Forum members was illustrated by the level of participation at the meeting, e.g. all US territories were represented by governors or lieutenant governors. He also noted that the retiring Director-General, who had done a tremendous job, hailed from Guam. In relation to the Hughes report he emphasised that it was important to protect what was valuable about SPC and what it stood for.

29. The representative from Papua New Guinea thanked the presenters. He noted the importance of the tuna tagging programme and the value of this resource for all members. He encouraged SPC members to take part in the programme and asked donors for their support. In relation to proposals for greater regional integration, he shared similar views to previous speakers and considered that more analysis of the report was required. He was mindful of the consequences of cost efficiencies but stressed that it was important not to overlook the value of an organisation such as SPC.

30. The representative from Kiribati thanked the presenters and expressed appreciation for efforts to protect the livelihood of the Pacific region. In relation to health, the representative expressed total agreement with the comments of the US representative on delivery of health and other services to people who needed them, regardless of political status. There were people suffering severe illnesses, e.g. in Kiribati, HIV/AIDS and TB were serious problems, but there were difficulties delivering services to some areas. It would be helpful if SPC could look at the cost of these services as some governments were carrying a heavy burden in providing medical services. In regard to fisheries, tuna resources were very important to Kiribati, which was keen to see more emphasis on value adding.

31. The representative from Tuvalu congratulated the presenters on the clarity of their presentation and said that a clear platform had been established for the implementation of regional initiatives. The representative agreed with previous comments that the recommendations of the Hughes report needed further analysis and ended by expressing appreciation to donors for their contribution to the region.

32. The representative from Australia acknowledged the efforts of SPC in coordinating regional health initiatives, especially in relation to the ADB's contribution to support the regional strategy on HIV/AIDS. Implementation of such strategies required strong support at regional and national levels. In relation to the Hughes report, Australia largely supported the views of previous speakers on its recommendations to examine amalgamating some functions of the five agencies. However, it was early days yet and there was the potential for eventual benefits to come from further examination of the recommendations. The representative noted that the Pacific region was under a double burden from the impact of communicable and non-communicable diseases and that there did not seem to be a strategic regional approach to this issue. It was important to attract more funding, and in relation to access to the Global Fund, Australia would use its influence to ensure that the needs of the Pacific region were recognised.

33. The representative from American Samoa thanked the Chair and the presenters, and expressed appreciation to Palau for its hospitality. The representative noted that the countries of the region faced similar problems and American Samoa embraced the concept of consolidation where feasible. As a small island state (SIS) American Samoa lacked the resources of many other islands and, politics aside, needed to take advantage of the opportunities offered by closer cooperation. Although suggestions made for closer

cooperation were in their infant stages, these plans should be explored further. In relation to the assessment of fish stocks, the representative noted that Indonesia and the Philippines were fishing for small tuna and said that contributions were needed from all bodies involved in assessment of tuna numbers. American Samoa supported the tuna tagging programme but said that it sometimes took a long time for such research to reach any conclusions.

34. The representative from Solomon Islands thanked the Chair and thanked the hosts, Palau. He also thanked the presenters and commended SPC for its involvement in advancing the Pacific Plan. In relation to its implementation at the national level, Solomon Islands would work with SPC and the Forum Secretariat. The representative concurred with the comments made by previous speakers on the recommendations of the Hughes report and said further study was needed to move the process of greater regional cooperation forward.

35. In response, the Senior Deputy Director-General of SPC thanked delegates for their comprehensive comments and noted the following specific issues:

- The conference had expressed concern about aspects of the tuna tagging programme but was keen to proceed.
- The request from Marshall Islands asking SPC and FFA to seek discussions with Indonesia and the Philippines on taking juvenile fish had been noted.
- In relation to high-seas bottom trawling, members were happy for SPC to take this issue further.
- Regarding the Hughes report, the comments of members had been noted. Their guidance was appreciated as was their support for the inclusion of non-Forum members in the Working Group.
- In relation to health, comments from members on the regional HIV/AIDS strategy and the Pacific Health Fund were noted.

Conference Decision

36. Conference noted and commended the Secretariat for the work SPC is doing in collaboration with other CROP agencies on the following regional policies and initiatives:

- a) Technical and Vocational Education and Training;
- b) Millennium Development Goals;
- c) Illegal ocean fishing in the Pacific Islands;
- d) 2005 International Health Regulations;
- e) Threat of an influenza pandemic, especially from avian influenza;
- f) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control;
- g) National Alcohol Plans;
- h) Regional collaboration on agriculture and forestry;
- i) Digital Strategy; and
- j) Pacific Plan to strengthen Regional Cooperation and Integration.

Conference endorsed:

- a) the HIV/AIDS Pacific Regional Strategy Implementation Plan (2004-2008), highlighting the need to cover all PICTs, and to strengthen national implementation performance;
- b) the Pacific Health Fund, noting that it needs to be linked to a broader health strategy for the region; and
- c) the Secretariat's initiative to both rationalise and expand information and statistical services, including trade statistics.

Conference agreed:

- a) with respect to deep sea bottom trawling and high seas seamounts, that SPC should work with FFA and other partners to develop an appropriate management framework regime or legal framework for consideration by CRGA 36;
- b) with respect to tuna fisheries:
 - (i) on the urgency of conducting a tuna tagging study to help verify current status of tuna stocks, and welcomed the New Zealand government's offer to support the tagging programme;
 - (ii) that SPC and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) take up the concerns of members regarding possible juvenile tuna fishing by the Philippines and Indonesia, through the post-Forum dialogue process; and
- c) with respect to the Hughes report, that non-Forum members of SPC need to be included in the taskforce set up by the Pacific Plan Task Force to further analyse the Hughes report, and welcomed the agreement from PIFS that SPC non-Forum members be included in the task force.

AGENDA ITEM 5 - THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON YOUTH STRATEGY

37. The Deputy Director-General of SPC said that the best way to introduce the theme of youth issues in the Pacific was to reflect on the President's opening speech and his statement that 'youth are our future'. The relevance of the theme was clearly illustrated by graphs of the demography of the region showing the high proportion of youth in Pacific Island populations. In future, this would place increasing pressure on regional resources including coastal fisheries, and greater demands for urban infrastructure, health and education services, and employment opportunities. This would, in turn, have impacts on island ecology. Existing and emerging problems for young people included leaving school early, low self esteem, lack of suitable employment, mental health, and increasing rates of teenage pregnancy and suicide. The Pacific Plan included initiatives to improve the outlook for youth. Strong regional and national partnerships with strong leadership would contribute to developing solutions, as would work towards achieving the MDGs, which were all relevant to young people. He stressed the need to ensure that education services prepared young people to contribute to sustainable development, noting that in many countries in the region there was a gap between the delivery of formal education and the actual labour market. Technical education needed greater focus and commitment. There were also opportunities to give incentives to small business to provide employment.

38. The Deputy Director-General's introduction of the issues was followed by a presentation of the report, 'The state of Pacific youth', by a representative from UNICEF, and presentations by youth representatives from Marshall Islands, Palau, PNG, and Samoa.

39. The Chair thanked the Deputy Director-General for his insightful overview of the issues and the youth representatives for the quality of their presentations.

40. The representative of the US noted that youth in the Pacific were caught between traditional and modern settings, and said that it was important to both reach out to youth and sensitise parents. The latter are not only involved in teaching and perpetuating cultural traditions, but can also be viewed as imposing demands and burdens on youth that may make it difficult for youth to focus on education in the way they need to do in order to do well in the modern world. Recommendations to advance the cause of youth will not succeed unless parents are supportive, especially on topics such as reproductive health. Progress will not occur unless parents are sensitised and educated.

41. The representative of Wallis and Futuna expressed congratulations to the Deputy Director-General and the various youth presenters, noting that the presentations were very informative. He noted the point made by the youth from Marshall Islands, who observed that they were present to be "watchmen". He said it was their role to prepare for the future in the areas of health, education, and fulfilment. He noted that he was a teacher and decision maker, and that he felt humble in addressing the issue of youth. He said that to navigate

successfully one had to “distinguish fish from coral heads”, and that today it was necessary to foresee the future, and decide what must be done for youth and the future. In his community there have been many failures in the education field because the educational system had focused on preparing youth for white collar jobs and to become civil servants. It was impossible to provide employment for all youth in the civil service, so some were naturally disappointed. In addition, the educational system actually had negative results in that educated youth were no longer well integrated when they returned to the community. He noted the suggestions that had been made regarding the development of technical professional training, and welcomed new solutions in this field, saying that vocational training was a solution for the future. He spoke of the difficulties faced by small communities in providing vocational training, and remarked that while someone had said employment was the solution, if he was to be candid, he would say to youth that they must look elsewhere, as politicians are not able to create jobs and opportunities for all. He noted that expectations should not be too lofty, and that strategies should be effective and realistic.

42. The representative of New Zealand noted the need to move away from a deficit model of analysing the youth issue, and toward a positive model.

43. The representative of FSM expressed appreciation to previous speakers, and youth representatives on the panel who had made presentations. He was pleased to note the importance and timeliness of the theme of the conference which he said addressed an issue that had long been neglected. He said that close to 25% of FSM's population of 107,000 (as of the year 2000) were youth, and that while that figure might not be as high as that of other PICTs, it was enough to put pressure on their limited resources. The problems that had been presented by the panel (e.g. youth leaving school early, not having appropriate education, not being able to find jobs) all had to do with the ideas put forth by the representative of Wallis and Futuna: that youth are raised in two separate worlds, and are being pushed into the modern world while simultaneously being pulled back into traditional culture. He noted the need to make a commitment to helping youth, but also the need to ensure that the two worlds are brought together, and that they mesh, as otherwise youth will remain disoriented. He noted the problem faced by small outer islands with populations of perhaps 500 people: when youth are given a basic education, and perhaps go to college, what will they find to keep them on the island for life? They will have lost all the skills that are needed on the island (regarding navigation, fishing, house building). He noted that FSM attached great importance to its membership in the Pacific Community, and was grateful the youth issue was being discussed, as the problems were shared across the region. He praised the outgoing Director-General, who he said had been a trailblazer for Micronesia's people, and who will leave behind an organisation highly recognised for its strength in delivering services to members. She had also left a professional staff that was motivated and dedicated, and would ensure SPC remained a true guardian of regional resources for the people of the Pacific. He closed by noting that the relevance of the Pacific Community increased as the region faced a less certain future.

44. The representative of Kiribati noted the need to empower youth and put in place a legal framework for issues such as underage drinking and sexual abuse, and the need to agree on an age range for youth issues.

45. The representative of Pitcairn said that his island had problems with youth that leave and did not return, and said that if the standard of living were increased and communications improved, this might change.

46. The representative of French Polynesia thanked and congratulated the panel of speakers, especially the youth presenters.

47. The representative of PNG said that the kinds of choices that youth make will very much depend on their early childhood, churches, family values, etc. and suggested that churches could be involved in building early childhood foundations. He said there was a need to develop linkages between strategies concerning youth issues and problems and those addressing childhood development.

48. The representative of Samoa noted the need for culture to have a positive role in nurturing youth. He said that modern cultures are in fact lifestyles, and not really cultures in the Pacific sense, and this issue was addressed in the youth strategy for 2010.

Conference Decision

49. Conference adopted the Koror Statement on Youth Empowerment for a Secure, Prosperous and Sustainable Future.

AGENDA ITEM 6 — APPOINTMENT OF A NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL

50. Conference, after consideration of the recommendation of CRGA 35, appointed Dr. Jimmie Rodgers to the post of Director-General, effective January 2006.

AGENDA ITEM 7 — VENUE AND CHAIR FOR 2007 CONFERENCE

51. It was agreed that Samoa would be the host country for the 5th SPC conference in 2007.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – OTHER BUSINESS

52. None.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – STATEMENTS BY OBSERVERS

53. Statements were made by representatives from WHO, Korea, and Taiwan/ROC (attached to this report).

CLOSING STATEMENTS

54. Conference commended the outgoing Director-General for her service to the Pacific Community, noting that her contribution would not be lost to SPC as it would carry on through the new Director-General's work. Representatives expressed their congratulations to the Senior Deputy Director-General on his appointment to the position of Director-General, thanked SPC's executive and staff for their hard work and expressed appreciation to SPC's development partners and donors.

55. The Director-General expressed her appreciation to the Pacific Community's members, and thanked SPC's staff, including in particular her executive colleagues, for their dedicated service to the region. She said she had gained much, and made many friends. She noted that she welcomed the opportunity to face new challenges, and would leave knowing SPC would continue in the capable hands of the Dr Jimmie Rodgers, the incoming Director-General.

56. The Senior Deputy Director-General gave the closing prayer.

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<p style="text-align: center;">PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY</p>
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Director-General	Ms Lourdes Pangelinan
Senior Deputy Director-General (Suva)	Dr Jimmie Rodgers
Deputy Director-General (Nouméa)	M. Yves Corbel

**REPORT OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING OF
THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(Koror, Palau, 14-17 November 2005)

Chairperson His Excellency Mr Taukelina Finikaso
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AGENDA

- 1. Director General's Report**
- 2. SPC's sectoral programmes**
 - 2.1 Land Resources Division
 - 2.2 Marine Resources Division
 - 2.3 Social Resources Division
- 3. SPC Corporate review**
- 4. Coporate reports**
 - 4.1 Staffing issues/CROP remuneration
 - 4.2 SPC Suva space requirements
 - 4.3 Audit reports financial year 2004
 - 4.4 Selection of Auditors; financial years 2005-2007
 - 4.5 Financial year 2005 Budget Revision
- 5. Financial year 2006 budget**
- 6. Appointment of a new Director-General (Closed session)**
- 7. CRGA meeting venue and chair**
- 8. Other Business**
- 9. Statement by Observers**
- 10. Adoption of the Report**

**REPORT OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING OF
THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(Koror, Palau, 14-17 November 2005)

OFFICIAL OPENING/ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. The Chairperson, the representative from Tuvalu, opened the meeting.
2. The representative from American Samoa said the opening prayer.
3. The CRGA adopted its agenda, as attached to this report.
4. The Chairperson said that according to the CRGA Rules of Procedure, Vanuatu, as Vice-Chairperson of the meeting, should chair the Drafting Committee. In the absence of a representative from Vanuatu, the Committee appointed the representative of Wallis and Futuna as chairperson of the Drafting Committee. The Drafting Committee consists of representatives from Australia, Fiji Islands, France, French Polynesia, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tuvalu and the United States of America.
5. The CRGA adopted its hours of work.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – DIRECTOR-GENERAL’S REPORT

6. The Director-General, Ms Lourdes Pangelinan, noted that this was the first time that SPC members had met in Palau. On behalf of all the members, she extended the CRGA’s thanks to the Government and people of Palau for the excellent arrangements and the warmth of their hospitality. She said that it had been a busy and productive year for SPC and that SPC was now at a crossroads with the appointment of a new Director-General and the outcomes of the independent corporate review. She presented a summary of the major highlights for the Secretariat in 2005, noting that her written report provides a comprehensive picture of achievements and future challenges. With respect to the independent corporate review conducted at the initiative of the Conference, she said that the CRGA would hear later from the Chairperson of the review team and that she looked forward to obtaining feedback from members. The review states that SPC provides relevant, high-quality services, productivity and staff output are excellent, and SPC enjoys the confidence of members, donors and development partners. Nevertheless, the Secretariat welcomes the opportunity to make the improvements recommended, which will make it an even more effective and efficient organisation. She said that the process for appointing a new Director-General, a truly merit-based appointment as approved by Conference, had been comprehensive and had gone very smoothly. The Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration, which has been approved by Forum leaders, will have an impact on all SPC members. She stated that the next phase will be its implementation, in which SPC will play an important role. This should be a straightforward process for SPC. A related issue is the study on regional architecture by Tony Hughes, which calls for the merger of five regional institutions including SPC. Although it will be considered further through other regional mechanisms in 2006, the Secretariat was seeking SPC members’ views and guidance at this meeting. The Director-General was pleased that SPC’s financial resources had continued to increase in 2005. This increase is primarily in the non-core budget. The increase had enabled SPC to expand its programme activities in the region and demonstrated the continued confidence and trust of donor partners in the organisation. In fact, SPC now enjoys greater security and flexibility since donors have moved from project funding to programme funding. She paid special tribute to SPC donor members such as Australia, France and New Zealand. She also welcomed the new collaboration with the ADB, which has joined other valued and significant donors such as the European Commission, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Taiwan/ROC. The production of ‘triennial progress reports’, which review the progress made by programmes over the current strategic plan period, was a new initiative that had assisted greatly in the development of new strategic programme plans. These will guide the work of SPC’s sectoral programmes from 2006 on. She welcomed the progress in implementing quality assurance systems. The external review of the Cultural Affairs Programme completed the cycle of independent programme reviews. SPC was helping member countries

achieve the Millennium Development Goals through its sectoral programmes and the work of a dedicated task force that assisted Tuvalu this year. She emphasized that SPC would continue to help the region meet its international commitments. She looked forward to SPC taking a more active role in policy development as recommended in the review and noted, for example, SPC's role in developing the regional HIV/AIDS strategy. She thanked SPC staff for their excellent work. The percentage of Pacific Islanders in professional positions at SPC has continued to increase and is now around 48%. However, the percentage of women in professional positions has dropped slightly in recent years. She stressed the current difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff and asked the Committee to approve SPC's request to increase CROP salary scales. SPREP, SOPAC and PIFS have already done this. She also mentioned the problems of providing sufficient housing in Noumea and the current lack of office space for SPC staff in Suva and said that the Committee might wish to seek an update from Fiji Islands on the Pacific Village. The level of arrears of members' contributions are still a major concern for SPC, but there has been significant progress in collecting outstanding debt, with some members recently paying their arrears in full. In conclusion, she stated that she felt honoured and privileged to have been a part of this great organisation and thanked the SPC members for their confidence and for the opportunity to have served the region that she loves.

7. On behalf of all the members, the representatives of Samoa, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia and New Zealand congratulated the chairperson of the CRGA on his appointment, and thanked the host country, Palau, for its warm hospitality and excellent arrangements for the meeting. They also thanked the Director-General for her comprehensive and interesting report, and noted that the members would have the opportunity to comment on specific points during the meeting.

8. The representative of Samoa asked for a breakdown of the number of professional Pacific Island staff located at SPC's Noumea headquarters and at the Suva Office. The Director-General replied that the Secretariat would provide the exact percentages to the CRGA during the meeting.

9. The representative of Kiribati looked forward to SPC's new corporate plan. She stressed that SPC was a valued and relevant organisation and that a periodic review of its operations was a useful process. Kiribati looked forward to taking part in this process.

10. The representative of the Federated States of Micronesia stated that his country was committed to working with SPC and looked forward to strengthening the existing collaboration through the establishment of SPC's field office in the Federated States of Micronesia. He noted with satisfaction the progress made in paying arrears and thanked the countries that had made this effort.

11. The representative of New Zealand placed on record her country's special thanks to Lou Pangelinan as she leaves SPC, stressing that under her leadership SPC and New Zealand had developed a close and fruitful relationship. She praised the outgoing Director-General for her warmth, vision and integrity, as well as for her amazing contribution to the organisation and to the prosperity of the Pacific region.

CRGA decision

12. The CRGA noted the Director-General's report and congratulated her on this overview and on SPC's achievements.

AGENDA ITEM 2 - SPC'S SECTORAL PROGRAMMES

2.1 – LAND RESOURCES DIVISION

13. The Director of the Land Resources Division (LRD) expressed his appreciation to Palau for hosting the meeting. He opened by highlighting some major challenges that had faced his division in 2005. These had been discussed at CRGA 34 in 2004 and included:

- the development of an integrated strategic plan for 2005–2008, with consultation of stakeholders;
- the establishment of a new management structure for the division; and
- the development of work plans and budgets, in line with the new thematic area teams.

The full text of his presentation is available on request from the Secretariat.

14. The Director then outlined the LRD's major achievements for 2005, stressing that the nature of the integration of the division's work programmes — which alters the way that people work — means that these changes would take time to implement. He indicated that LRD had achieved significant integration between thematic areas, which served to broaden and deepen the scope of what LRD does. He noted the need for continued decentralisation, and indicated that 2005 had been a year for mobilising resources.

15. The Director observed that people make the organisation, not simply in terms of numbers, but also with respect to their quality. There are currently 94 staff in total, with 12 vacancies to be filled by the end of 2005. Of those positions, 31 are located outside of LRD's Suva headquarters. He stated that he was confident that existing staffing levels would be maintained, in part through new funding sources.

16. The Director outlined LRD's two objectives and the eight thematic area teams that work together to realise those objectives. Staff belong to multiple teams, and move between these teams as required by a project or issue. The Division also includes two support groups, including a new group for policy support. He then outlined a number of significant outcomes that had been achieved by LRD. Collectively, these contribute to sustainable farming methods, increased productivity and trade, and improved food security. The specific outcomes are included in the paper accompanying his presentation (Paper Series 2.1).

17. The Director briefly highlighted the activities that will be the focus of LRD's work in 2006. These include:

- establishing a strong policy support group, composed of two senior staff members, one with experience in land use policy and planning and the other with experience in the development of policy relating to agriculture and forestry systems;
- working with other organisations to build a strong network in the region;
- continuing efforts to decentralise field operations and establish a field office in Pohnpei. (He noted that New Caledonia was now hosting an LRD staff member, and indicated that this made a significant difference in better communicating the needs of the French territories to SPC.)
- strengthening LRD's work in the North Pacific in particular. He stated that there was a need for an animal health and production specialist in this area.

18. He also indicated that LRD will continue to explore ways of decentralising its agricultural extension functions. He referred to an upcoming participatory extension summit to be held in Tonga, which will be attended by over 120 people. He said that at the summit, LRD planned to build on the methodology developed for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture Project (DSAP) and to broaden its role to include other thematic areas of the division. He said that this was part of a larger effort to widen the interface between LRD and PICTs. He closed by noting that funding for one component of the new initiatives being pursued by LRD was already in place, and that other sources were being pursued.

19. The representatives of Tonga, Kiribati, Marshall Islands and Cook Islands spoke on behalf of all members, thanking the Director for his presentation. They expressed their appreciation for the work done by the Division on behalf of SPC's members, and the support shown by the donors for the ongoing work of the Division. Echoing earlier comments, they thanked Palau for hosting the meeting of the CRGA and Conference, and thanked the Director-General for her efforts in guiding SPC over the last six years.

20. The representatives of New Zealand, France, and Australia all asked about an upcoming donor meeting that the Director had referred to in his presentation, and requested clarification of the purpose, timing, and objectives of the meeting. New Zealand and Australia both noted that they look first to SPC management to provide priorities with respect to funding needs. The Representative of Australia further noted that Australia, New Zealand and France had adopted a programme approach to funding and that Australia's review of this programme approach had concluded that SPC was a very competent organisation. She acknowledged that SPC still had to juggle project and programme funding approaches. Donors, including Australia, had not yet fully developed processes that would allow greater flexibility in how funds were used.

21. The Director of LRD indicated that the timing of the proposed meeting had not yet been firmed up, and that he would communicate with donor partners once that had been done. Regarding long-term financing, he stated that after the LRD strategic plan was approved, the Division was looking to the long term (2012). He noted that LRD wishes to see if it can get more resources; he noted that the situation was not desperate, but said that LRD wanted to chart its way in terms of financing specific areas, and said that one component of the Strategic Plan was already funded. Regarding prioritisation of donor funding, he said that such decisions would always be made by donors in conjunction with SPC management. His interest was in informing donors about the needs of a particular sector.

22. The representative of France welcomed the broadening of LRD activities to all the countries and territories in the region. He noted that all SPC's members are benefiting, and expressed his country's support for the ongoing decentralisation being undertaken by the Division. He also noted the success registered by DSAP, and highlighted the positive halfway review report that was referred to by the Director in his written presentation. He indicated that he was struck by the importance given to invasive species control throughout the Pacific, with respect to both identification and fighting of threats, and mentioned the cooperation between LRD and SPREP in combating invasive species, which had included conducting a joint training workshop in PNG. He offered congratulations to both organisations for this, and encouraged them to undertake additional work of this kind. He inquired about how LRD intended to help increase the range and volume of agricultural products exported by Pacific Island countries.

23. The Director of LRD noted that SPC was working very closely with both SPREP and USP, and during 2005 the three organisations had assembled resources to fund a joint position. The employee is employed by SPC, but based at USP. He noted that this position would be important in coordinating the work done by SPC in both invasive species control and biodiversity.

24. The representative of Tonga stated her appreciation to SPC, especially LRD, for technical assistance and training from which Tonga benefits, and requested further training opportunities, such as graduate research assistantships, and assistance for youth in agriculture. She also made mention of the need for assistance in the areas of water harvesting and irrigation techniques, and new techniques such as animal feeds and breeding.

25. The Director of LRD noted that the response to the DSAP project had been very positive, and that some participating countries had extended the project's activities to other islands not directly served by the DSAP itself.

26. The representative of Kiribati noted the impact of DSAP, saying it had touched many lives in rural communities. She expressed the hope that such direct community participation, which increases the sense of ownership felt by communities, would be continued through SPC. She also noted that, like other atoll countries, Kiribati experiences special problems relating to soil, and encouraged greater assistance regarding the cultivation of crops that grow in atoll soils. She raised the issue of tissue culture, and expressed the hope that Kiribati could also benefit from this technique, which might serve to ensure that Kiribati would have a consistent supply of breadfruit, which is an important agricultural product and a mainstay of the local diet. She noted the low success in Kiribati with plant propagation, despite the fact that it has worked well elsewhere in the region. She suggested that an in-country training session in Kiribati, which made use of the experience of countries that have succeeded with this approach, would be beneficial. She requested a status update regarding the pig waste management project. She also indicated that she was encouraged to hear of the success experienced with the use of coconut as timber, which Kiribati is considering with the assistance of FAO. She concluded that Kiribati has many needs, especially in terms of plant health, and looked forward to working closely with LRD in the future.

27. The Director noted that DSAP is the result of a number of projects that had operated for some time, and thus is building on the successes of those earlier projects. Planning and implementation are undertaken by countries, which is very important in building ownership and understanding. He stated that the ability to share information between countries was very useful, and approaches such as that suggested by Kiribati could be very worthwhile. He indicated that the Regional Germplasm Centre (RGC) could provide tissue

culture material. With regard to pig waste management, he noted that the project had been a cooperative effort with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), and stated that while the implementation period was officially over, ACIAR's view regarding continuation of the project was not yet known, and SPC was awaiting a discussion with ACIAR. The Director indicated LRD would inform the countries involved once a determination was made. He stated that SPC would be happy to assist Kiribati with respect to coconut timber utilisation, and highlighted the need to look first at the extent of the resource (number of trees, their age, the nature of the market, etc.). He said that strong plant protection services were very important, that a number of PICTs lacked the capacity to provide such services internally, and that he could foresee an ongoing need for such services at the regional level.

28. The representative of Australia inquired whether any re-prioritization had been undertaken in light of the risks posed to the region by avian influenza.

29. The Director noted that zoonotic diseases had long been viewed as a priority, and that this was also true for avian influenza. He stated that the ongoing integration across LRD's services also needed to be carried out from the perspective of both animal and human health. He expressed the hope that resources would be available when SPC undertook to work in this area.

30. The representative of the USA made reference to the Director General's very interesting presentation, and said he was struck by the comment from the Corporate Review that indicated that the relevance of SPC programmes for members is very high. He stated that his country was encouraged by the opening of an SPC office in FSM. He said the new office would create a sense of ownership, while at the same time reducing costs and difficulties. He said that his country believed that SPC was indeed strengthened by such arrangements, which also served to increase the organisation's relevance.

31. The representative of Marshall Islands noted that all SPC members had not necessarily benefited equally from LRD activities, and made reference to a request, made several years before, for assistance with atoll agriculture. He expressed optimism that more would be done on this issue in the future.

32. The Director assured the representative of the Marshall Islands that when the northern Pacific is mentioned, his country was included. He noted that unfortunately the northern Pacific was a late addition to DSAP, due to the funding mechanism, and that progress was consequently not as advanced in these territories as in other DSAP countries. He stated that SPC works very closely with FAO on agricultural projects and that in the end, atoll countries benefit equally with other island countries.

33. The representative of FSM noted the particular relevance of LRD to FSM and the northern Pacific region, and stated that his country wished to improve and strengthen the relationship with SPC. He stated that a small number of SPC staff currently worked in FSM, and expressed the hope that the forestry position that was vacant could again be filled. He indicated FSM's interest in having a veterinarian as part of the SPC contingent in FSM, noting that FSM needed help in enforcing quarantine regulations, but lacked scientific expertise. He supported the idea of a pest list, and suggested an invasive species list might also be worthwhile. With respect to zoonotic diseases, he concurred that avian influenza was a major concern, and stated that the issue had been given prominence by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). He closed by noting that atolls do require special assistance with agriculture, as they have a small genetic base and poor soil, and are susceptible to global warming. He noted that FSM would appreciate assistance with the development of salt-resistant plants, (e.g. taro and breadfruit, which are primary crops).

34. The Director of LRD noted that SPC was hoping to establish a subregional germplasm centre, which would mirror the collection at the existing RGC in Suva. This would streamline provision of material to countries in the northern Pacific. He stated that the RGC advisor was examining the issue and the possibility of establishing a subregional center in FSM, where there is existing expertise.

35. The representative of Tokelau acknowledged the fact that the number of LRD activities in Tokelau was limited, but stated that this was partially the fault of Tokelau, noting that no person in the Tokelauan government was specifically responsible for agriculture. She noted that although Tokelau was not eligible for some projects due to its political status, SPC should not forget that it is a regional organisation, and look for

other funding sources if need be to assist Tokelau. She acknowledged the work done by LRD, and noted that Tokelau would be seeking additional assistance from LRD in new areas.

36. The Director of LRD stated that at the end of the sectoral Ministers meeting in 2004, it was very clear that the region does not want to segregate countries (i.e. by political status) when specific problems arise. He noted that there are funding difficulties at times, but stated that SPC tried to adopt a practical approach, combining visits to countries when possible. He thanked the representative for the suggestions regarding specific areas in which to collaborate.

37. The representative of Tuvalu expressed her country's special thanks to the Director-General for her specific efforts on Tuvalu's behalf. She said that it is known that the soil in Tuvalu is very poor, and she requested additional assistance from SPC and LRD, in the form of technical assistance and funding, to determine what can be done to increase soil fertility in Tuvalu. She also inquired about progress with mealy bug control.

38. The Director noted that when biological control methods are used, the results are not constant, and may be affected by capacity and expertise in-country. He noted that breeding and release of pest controls must be repeated periodically.

39. The representative of Wallis and Futuna expressed appreciation to the Director for the welcome received by his delegation on a previous visit to Suva, and stated that members of the delegation were very impressed by the quality and breadth of the work performed by SPC. He noted that French senators went home very proud of the organisation. He made reference to the importance of preserving genetic resources in case of natural disasters such as cyclones, and spoke of DSAP, of which his country is a beneficiary. He noted that at the halfway review they were impressed by the concrete outcomes that were registered in his territory. He also expressed the hope that the outcomes of DSAP could be broadened to other areas. He inquired about the type of cooperation that occurs between LRD and authorities in the various Pacific territories, noting that there are valuable resources at the territorial level, and sometimes within governing countries. He also inquired about the potential for creating a veterinary position in Fiji. He closed by noting surprise at the number of vacant positions at SPC, both in LRD and other divisions, and asked for clarification regarding the cause.

40. The Director noted that SPC was increasing its outreach into the territories, and that it was important to have people in place, in various countries, rather than working from a regional centre. He noted that hiring delays were often caused by establishment of necessary structures and agreements (such as national steering committees and MOUs). He observed that establishing positions and professional networks was time consuming, but said that once these contacts exist, the real work can get done.

41. The representative of Samoa noted that the elimination of poverty and hunger was a main MDG goal. He observed that in reading the LRD overview, he didn't get a feeling of how the region fares in terms of food security, and asked whether the Director could give an assessment of this. He also noted that a number of PICTs are not FAO members, and inquired whether they are able to provide input into FAO programmes.

42. The Director indicated that discussions on how LRD can contribute to achievement of the MDGs had been ongoing on for some time, and stated that because it is a broad, overarching goal, almost all of what LRD does contributes to food security. He noted that trade was a major contributor. He suggested that, despite years of effort, the region was not doing too well in terms of ensuring food security. He observed that the need had been clearly spelled out by ADB, and said that additional funds were needed, but these had been declining for some time.

43. The representative of Fiji stated that her country was particularly happy that their research on sheep would benefit other PICTs through the efforts of SPC and FAO. She said Fiji supported continued research activities and a biological control approach. She noted that she was very impressed by the RGC, and suggested that perhaps a similar collection could be considered for animals, and inquired if more funds could be directed to such an effort.

44. The Director noted that SPC had collaborated closely with FAO in the area of animal genetics, with FAO taking the lead.

CRGA decision

45. CRGA:

- a. noted the presentation on the Land Resources Division,
- b. commended the Director of the Land Resources Division for his excellent presentation, for the informative discussion and for the excellent work carried out by the division.

2.2 MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION

46. The Director of the Marine Resources Division provided an overview of the structure of the division and highlights of each of its three programmes – the coastal fisheries, oceanic fisheries and maritime programmes. The full text of the Marine Resources Division presentation is available from the Secretariat on request.

47. Starting with the **Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP)**, he stressed that the programme continues to expand coverage of tuna fisheries in the region and that the logsheet now covers 91% tuna fishing in the Pacific's EEZ, with increased data from observer, port sampling, tagging and other scientific data. The programme has boosted activities of members in monitoring services and port sampling. The advent of electronic tagging is helping to provide a greater understanding of the ecosystem that supports tuna fisheries. A new spatial ecosystem and population dynamics model is being set up. National tuna fisheries status reports are a key vehicle for delivery of scientific advice, and the statistical stock assessment model developed by the OFP is now in routine use for assessing stocks of skipjack, yellowfin, bigeye and albacore. The main outcome of the work carried out by OFP in the last triennial period is that OFP now knows a lot more about tuna, and in particular about the interaction of the ecosystem with fisheries. Explaining this relationship to countries, and particularly the fact that catches relate more to the ecology of tunas than to stocks, is now OFP's main challenge.

48. The Director then presented the new **OFP strategic plan for 2006–2008**, including its goal and objectives. This plan is a continuation of the previous one but incorporates a number of new activities. OFP hopes to get a new tagging programme under way. This is particularly useful as tagging helps to improve the accuracy of assessments by providing information on the fisheries independently of the fishermen themselves. The Government of Papua New Guinea has pledged USD100,000 to this programme and other donors are currently interested; the tagging programme is therefore ready to be launched. OFP will also strengthen its support for national fisheries, in concert with FFA. The plan also clarifies OFP's role in relation to the new Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

49. The Director then presented the work of the **Coastal Fisheries Programme (CFP)** and highlighted some of the activities of this programme, which is more oriented to individual countries than OFP. CFP's work in aquaculture, although started in the last triennial period, is now firmly established and will only increase in importance, given the growth in this sector. The world's largest reef fisheries assessment is now well under way, with EU funding. The Pacific's small-scale tuna fishing fleet now represents 25% of the total Pacific longline fleet and, although CFP cannot claim full credit for this, its work contributed to this achievement. A set of regional coastal fisheries management strategies has been established and these strategies are now being implemented to facilitate stakeholder participation in fisheries management and decision-making. CFP has also produced much information and provided vocational and on-the-job training and mentoring.

50. The presentation continued with the new **CFP Strategic Plan for 2006–2009** and an overview of programme operations. Its goal is to assist members to apply the ecosystems approach to the management of coastal fisheries. Other highlights include:

- building various ongoing initiatives, for instance in the aquaculture sector to develop national capacity in aquatic biosecurity;
- expanding economic, social and environmental feasibility assessment and expert mentoring capacity in small-scale sustainable fisheries development;
- establishing the reef fisheries information repository; and
- coordinating coastal vocational training with regional TVET initiatives.

51. The Maritime Training Adviser then presented the Regional Maritime Programme, focusing on recent work in helping members comply with new international maritime standards. He pointed out that regional collaboration is required to keep abreast of rapid changes in security regimes, that all island ports serving international ships now comply with the ISPS Code, that 56 Pacific officers have been trained and that training is ongoing, that a port security regime has been set up in various ports and that auditing of these is well under way. Auditing is an important component and follow-up audits continue to check on action to correct non-conformity. There are now 65 qualified and trained lead auditors in the region. The programme has concluded audits to ensure ongoing code compliance of marine administrations and maritime training institutions, and developed high audit standards based on ISO 9000 international audit criteria. These high standards contribute to the economic, trade and employment security of the region. The programme also provided assistance to Nauru and its port is now code compliant. Future plans include the organisation of a meeting of transport ministers in 2006, the expansion of the audit system, the institution of a system of maritime rules, new emphasis on search and rescue and on security issues, and addressing the possible spread of an influenza pandemic on ships and fishing vessels, particularly those coming from Asian fishing countries.

52. The representative from the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) then provided an overview of FFA activities over the previous year. FFA's planning framework has been a major focus for the organisation over this period and FFA is now carrying out ongoing reviews of its efficiency and effectiveness. FFA's new strategic plan for 2005-2020 includes a three-year rolling business plan, in addition to annual work plans and budgets. The plan has two programmes: fisheries management and development. He referred to funding and staffing arrangements, the new organisation structure, governance, the Forum Fisheries Committee Majuro outcomes, and FFA's new corporate image and logo.

53. The Representative of France thanked the speakers for their very informative presentations. He stressed the growing importance of sustainable management of fisheries. He echoed the concerns expressed at the recent WCPFC meeting and in the report of the Director of the Marine Resources Division on the status of yellowfin and bigeye tuna. There is currently strong pressure on these stocks from Asian countries' fishing fleets. In addition, Pacific countries wish to exert their legitimate rights to these resources and the pressure is likely to continue to increase dangerously. He also alluded to the interesting new initiative of Australia, Chile and New Zealand to create a new fisheries management organisation for the South Pacific. He wondered how the OFP would take into account these new dimensions and deal with global fisheries issues such as deep-bottom trawling. He asked what would be the main contents of the agreement for the supply of services to be negotiated between SPC and the WCPFC. He suggested that reflection should take place on a broader basis and that SPC should become a driving force for the region in all discussions on fisheries, particularly in the context of this proposed new fisheries management organisation for the South Pacific. The representative was interested to hear about current developments in aquaculture, as the French territories play a leading role in aquaculture, e.g. in French Polynesia with black pearls and in New Caledonia with sea cucumber hatcheries and prawn farming. He urged SPC to consider recruiting an economist for the Marine Resources Division to focus on economic prospects in aquaculture and commercial outlets.

54. The MRD Director replied that the service agreement between SPC and the WCPFC ties down the various understandings developed over the years and that SPC's technical advice to the Commission is on an incremental basis of paying for services. This incremental service will involve the equivalent of two full-time

staff, to be paid for by the Commission, if this additional work is to be done. As membership in the Commission increases with Asian nations coming on board, other SPC services may be provided on the same basis. This arrangement is to the advantage of SPC and its membership. With respect to the proposed fisheries management organisation for the South Pacific, SPC and FFA have just held a colloquium and this was one of the items on the agenda. SPC and FFA will take part in the New Zealand conference and, once a clearer picture of this new organisation emerges, will be in a better position to advise the SPC membership on the Pacific arrangement. On the question of how SPC would react to broadening its fisheries mandate to include deep-bottom trawling, the MRD will be guided by the membership. The Director stressed, however, that there was currently no commercial deep-bottom trawling in the region. He agreed that the recruitment of an economist would be very desirable to assist the MRD with its development activities and that this could be included in the new development plan. Sources of funding would need to be identified.

55. The Pitcairn representative said it was an honour for Pitcairn to take its place alongside other Pacific Island countries. He said Pitcairn appreciated information from SPC on ways in which it could benefit from its economic zone and looked forward to working with the MRD in examining these opportunities.

56. The Nauru representative acknowledged the valuable assistance of SPC's Coastal Fisheries group in relation to the sustainability of its coastal fisheries and that of the MRD in helping Nauru meet international maritime standards.

57. The Marshall Islands representative expressed appreciation to the MRD, particularly for its assistance in helping the Marshall Islands implement the changes required by international authorities in response to the threat of terrorism. He also mentioned the Marshall Islands' keen interest in OFP's report at last year's CRGA on the unhealthy status of some tuna stocks, particularly the juvenile fish being caught by non-SPC members, and asked what SPC was doing to address the problem. The Director of the OFP replied that the harvesting of juvenile fish in the far west of the WCPO was a critical aspect of the problem and the WCPFC provided a route to the solution. However, the OFP could only point out the problem. The FFA representative said the WCPFC is keen to address the issue, particularly in relation to conserving yellowfin and bigeye. While the FFA advised members to control purse seine catches in their EEZs, there had to be parallel efforts by Indonesia, the Philippines, etc. Otherwise member countries would be disadvantaged to no purpose.

58. The Kiribati representative acknowledged the work of the MRD, especially in relation to fish monitoring and scientific assessment of tuna stocks. Kiribati depends on its marine resources for both economic development and daily sustenance and she encouraged greater efforts by SPC on reef fishery assessments. She would like to see SPC expand the scope of its activities in relation to the sustainability of coastal fisheries, particularly for the Line Group and Fanning Island where cruise ship visits could result in unsustainable exploitation of these fisheries. Aquaculture could provide an alternative source of protein and also economic opportunities, e.g. pearl oysters and seaweed. As SPC is coordinating aquaculture activities in the region, she suggested that it could take advantage of Kiribati's expertise in this area, i.e. Kiribati people could act as consultants to other countries. The representative also acknowledged the importance of the MRD to Kiribati's seafarers and noted that Kiribati has 'white list' status thanks to the assistance of the division. However, help is still needed in implementing some of the requirements. Kiribati lacks the required expertise and so must rely on SPC's expertise and also looks forward to further donor support. Kiribati is currently negotiating EPA and counts on the support of SPC and FFA in promoting sustainable development of its fisheries.

59. The MRD Director replied that the use of local consultants is one of the driving principles of SPC's Aquaculture Programme, which emphasises the complementary capabilities of countries. Although the fisheries programmes rarely used consultants, SPC would be happy to help governments extend assistance to other governments by providing travel assistance.

60. The representative from Papua New Guinea echoed the sentiments of previous speakers in congratulating the chairperson and extending thanks to the host country for its excellent hospitality as well as to the outgoing Director-General for her work over the past six years and the direction she set for SPC. He thanked the presenters and expressed appreciation for the marine programmes and projects undertaken by

MRD. He made particular reference to the tuna tagging project to be undertaken in Papua New Guinea and hoped that SPC would continue to provide the technical information and assistance required. Although Papua New Guinea has limited aquaculture, successful trials in barramundi farming have taken place, and some limited trout farming in the Highlands. He hoped that SPC would be able to provide timely advice and assistance for these projects. He also thanked the Maritime Programme for its assistance in helping Papua New Guinea's national ports authority comply with the ISPS code.

61. The representative from Palau thanked the members for visiting his country's shores. Referring to the declining stocks of bigeye and yellowfin tuna, he welcomed the news that SPC was embarking on a new tagging programme that would provide valuable information on the resource and the migration of stocks. The timing was good as the current data from fishing vessels contained discrepancies. He hoped that SPC would broaden and expand its aquaculture services to provide more comprehensive assistance to members as well as financial support to help them develop their aquaculture potential.

62. The representative from Guam thanked the host country for the warm hospitality and meeting arrangements. He stated that Guam was proud of the excellent work carried out by Lourdes Pangelinan at the helm of SPC and thanked her for being such a strong voice for the region in these times of change. Pointing out that Guam's coastal fisheries had been largely depleted of fish in the past and marine life was only now starting to recover, he stressed the importance of first considering the supply, as demand is always there. It was therefore very encouraging to note that SPC was at the forefront in monitoring the sustainability of marine resources, particularly tuna.

63. The representative of New Zealand expressed appreciation for the presentation by the Director and his team, and posed several questions and concerns. She inquired about the different timeframes used for the Division's various strategic plans. She noted that New Zealand would be concerned if the work OFP will perform for the WCPFC has the potential to affect ongoing monitoring and research activities conducted by OFP on behalf of SPC members. She also inquired how SPC coordinates and aligns its work with that of other agencies, other than FFA. She noted that bilateral fisheries assistance has been sought by some SPC member countries, indicating that there is potential for duplication of effort, which was not ideal. She suggested that more dialogue with partner organisations might be needed.

64. The Director of Marine Resources responded by noting that the planning cycles of the MRD's various programmes are timed to meet the individual needs of the programmes. He indicated that the 3-year planning cycle chosen for OFP was in response to the rapid changes being experienced in that sector, which would require reassessment of activities and objectives after 3 years, whilst the 4-year period of the CFP plan was designed to fit with the timetable set by members for achieving the WSSD goal of implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries by 2010. He noted that avoiding any negative affects to PICTs from the provision of services to the WCPFC was always at the forefront of the MRD's thinking. He said that the Division expected that the paid work it will be doing for the WCPFC will improve SPC's ability to service PICTs, but agreed that it was very important that SPC ensure that this is indeed the case. With respect to alignment of the MRD's work with that of other donors and members, he noted that there could be bilateral arrangements that MRD is not aware of. When such work involved two member countries, CRGA should function to help provide oversight and facilitate communication. In contrast, when such work is between members and non-members, then indeed MRD staff may not always be aware of it. He agreed that it would be useful to develop a mechanism that would allow all fisheries proposals and plans to go through a clearing house process, but indicated that politics and competition (for funding) were complicating issues, and that previous attempts to address this longstanding problem had not worked well. He agreed that SPC should be more active in seeking dialogue with bilateral donors working with countries on fisheries issues.

65. The representative of Tonga echoed the comments made by Palau and PNG, and reaffirmed her country's support for a large-scale tuna tagging program. She also requested technical support from SPC or FFA in regard to meeting the reporting requirements associated with monitoring reports for the WCPFC. She re-emphasized Tonga's position regarding the importance of adopting an ecosystems approach to tuna fisheries management, and indicated that Tonga would also like to see this applied to inshore fisheries. She asked whether the upcoming maritime transport ministerial meeting was a first, or had it been held before.

66. The Director indicated that the CFP strategic plan envisaged assisting members in adopting an ecosystems approach to coastal fisheries management. The regional Maritime Adviser indicated that the last maritime transport ministerial meeting was held in 1995 or 1996.

67. The representative of Tonga noted that the meeting should be held much more frequently.

68. CRGA noted a request from Marshall Islands: in light of the previous discussion regarding how to work effectively with the Philippines and Indonesia on harvest of juvenile tuna, that FFA and SPC should work with PIFS to also address the issue through the Post-Forum Dialogue.

69. CRGA noted the comments from the representative of FSM, who thanked MRD, and RMP in particular, for their efforts in the areas of maritime and port security, fish data management, and training and port audits. The representative expressed interest as well in supporting the large-scale tagging program. He noted with appreciation that a service agreement exists between SPC and WCPFC, and encouraged SPC to also work with other agencies and institutes. He also requested assistance with FSM's fisheries maritime training institute. He closed by noting the occasional tri-nation surveillance exercise undertaken by FSM in cooperation with RMI and Palau. This involved patrolling the EEZ to investigate illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. He suggested that other countries might look at this exercise, which is currently being supported by the Australian government, as a model for similar operations in other areas.

70. The representative of Samoa asked for clarification regarding the outlook on tuna stocks, and, referring to SPC Fisheries Policy Brief No. 1, asked if the model that produced Figure 6 could be run keeping 2002 levels of fishing effort constant into the future, to see what the result of a cap on fishing effort might be. He noted that information provided by SPC was sometimes in conflict with that provided by other regional experts. He also inquired why the 2006 budget indicators for the CFP did not include some of the priorities expressed by members, such as the strengthening of fisheries economic advisory capability.

71. The Director of MRD indicated that future stock levels are difficult to estimate, as even with steady fishing pressure, environmental fluctuations (which may significantly affect tuna stocks) still occur, but the OFP would certainly make some projections. He also stated that the economic issue was being examined, including the possibility of involving other service providers (e.g. FFA and/or PIFS). He emphasized that SPC relied upon CRGA for guidance, and noted the importance placed on the economic value of coastal fisheries by SPC members.

CRGA Decision

72. CRGA:

- a. Thanked the various presenters for their presentations and for the ensuing informative and lively discussion;
- b. Noted the MRD and FFA presentations;
- c. Adopted the three strategic plans for RMP, OFP, and CFP; and
- d. Welcomed PNG's assistance for the proposed tuna tagging programme.

2.3 SOCIAL RESOURCES DIVISION

73. The Deputy Director-General presented an overview of the activities of the Social Resources Division (SRD), stressed two major initiatives undertaken by the Division and referred to structural changes that had taken place. He noted that there would soon be 100 staff in SRD, split between the Noumea and Suva offices. The first of the major initiatives involved providing support to SPC members for implementation of the MDGs. He spoke briefly of the MDGs, which are built around 8 goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators. SPC had assisted PICs in producing national reports and had also drafted a regional MDG report with UNDP. He

noted that MDG implementation meant adapting the goals to country needs and incorporating them into national development plans. This process had already started in some PICs. He also said that SPC's MDG task force had made a first visit (to Tuvalu) in 2005. Tuvalu was now drafting a National Development Plan and the task force, with its Tuvalu partners, was adapting the MDG targets and indicators so as to include them in that plan. Regional cooperation in relation to the MDGs was being maintained through a UN/CROP MDG working group. In the course of the 2005 regional meeting of Heads of Planning and Heads of Statistics, SPC was asked to prepare an MDG report addressing the MDGs in the territories for consideration at the next CRGA. The Division had also worked extensively to improve the available data on which to base sectoral policy advice. The Deputy Director-General noted that SPC now has a youth database, has developed indicators to measure progress on the Pacific Platform for Action (developed by Pacific Women following the Beijing Conference) and is in the process of developing indicators for various communicable diseases, including tuberculosis. Unfortunately, data remains of poor quality. However, progress may be made in improving data quality during the next census cycle and series of demographic and health surveys, with technical support from SPC's Statistics and Demography Programme and funding from AusAID and ADB. The potential for improvement in statistics does not currently extend to economic statistics, the state of which is worsening. SPC would be the most appropriate host for the Regional Statistics Bureau, which was discussed during the priority-setting exercise for the Pacific Plan. He also noted that in addition to its work in helping PICTs in MDG-related planning, SPC was undertaking considerable work on issues directly related to achievement of the MDGs, with both LRD and MRD contributing to food security (MDG 1), and PYB helping with MDG 3. With regard to MDG 6, he observed that HIV/AIDS had been the subject of strong mobilization, and reviewed a number of the organisation's activities with respect to HIV/AIDS control. He also spoke about funding, noting that the generous funding from the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis was unlikely to continue. With regard to malaria, resources from the fifth funding round would make it possible to pursue activities initially funded under round two. Significant progress had been achieved, with a clear decrease in the number of cases recorded. HIV/AIDS had been the subject of the strongest mobilisation, and progress achieved to date, thanks to the project funded by Australia and France, was significant. There was, however, a need for increased mobilisation and coordination at the country and regional level. The regional response is currently through the Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Strategy (the development of the strategy was led by SPC). He noted that the idea of a public health fund for the Pacific, launched by SPC, had been well received. It could be based on the operational concept of the Global Fund. The ADB had confirmed its USD 8 million contribution and New Zealand a NZD 5.7 million contribution for carrying out the plan. He also mentioned a number of structural changes that had taken place at SRD, noting that the wide diversity of programmes at SPC was an asset. All these developments helped promote intersectoral collaboration and more rational resource management and thus better services for members. The Deputy Director-General thanked the traditional partners for their unfailing support and stressed the major contribution of ADB to the division's activities, especially in demography and health.

74. The Deputy Director-General informed the committee that during the Fourth Conference of the Pacific Community in Palau, SPC and ADB would be signing a formal agreement on the implementation of the HIV/AIDS Strategy, with ADB contributing a total of USD 8 million. He thanked ADB on behalf of the membership for this collaboration. He also expressed thanks to New Zealand, which had agreed to contribute NZD 5.7 million towards the implementation phase of the strategy.

75. The Tuberculosis Specialist highlighted the key achievements and 2005 highlights of the Public Health Programme (PHP). She mentioned specifically the development of the HIV/AIDS Strategy, its implementation plan, the implementation of the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the achievement of 100% DOTS Strategy coverage for tuberculosis in PICTs, the strengthening of the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN) with LabNet and EpiNet, the extension of the Reproductive Health Programme, and the ratification of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in many PICTs, to which SPC has greatly contributed. She then provided an overview of the new proposed PHP Strategic Plan for 2006–2009, which was presented for adoption. The plan focuses on the prevention, control and management of communicable diseases and NCDs, and on enhancing public health systems, in particular their management and infrastructure. Most PICTs now face a double burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and this is a key feature in determining SPC's response to the priorities of the new plan. These include emergency preparedness and response, the deadly combination of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB), NCD prevention (through the establishment of a new NCD team), and information

and evidence for decision-making through reporting, monitoring and evaluation. She added that the next review of the PHP will take place in 2006.

76. The Epidemiologist made a presentation on the emerging issue of preparedness for the threat of an influenza pandemic in PICTs. He first provided an overview of what influenza is and how it can be transmitted. Migratory aquatic birds, which are the natural reservoir of influenza, can transmit it to other animals such as poultry and pigs, which can then transmit it to humans. There is a risk of a pandemic only if the virus then mutated in a way that allowed transmission from human to human, as people would have little or no immunity to this mutated virus. Currently, concerns centre on the dangerous H5N1 strain of avian flu located in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia, which has had a 50% mortality rate. Although it has affected a small number of individuals to date, the more frequently this virus affects humans and pigs, the greater the chance that it could mutate and become a pandemic virus. The Epidemiologist then reviewed the history of past pandemics in the region and their cost in human lives. Available weapons in the case of a pandemic include non-pharmaceutical public health measures such as masks, pharmaceutical measures such as vaccines (which would, however, only become available six to eight months after the circulation of the virus), and anti-viral drugs, which are being stockpiled by some countries. A PPHSN Influenza Specialist Group was created at SPC in 2003 following the SARS threat. National awareness raising and planning took place in 2004. In 2005, the meeting of PICT Ministers of Health affirmed, through the Samoa Commitment, the need to proceed with preparedness planning. PPHSN influenza preparedness guidelines were produced and circulated in 2005, and support for pandemic influenza preparedness continues, with work and collaboration on existing projects by SPC and WHO. A new influenza electronic discussion list has been created at SPC. A WHO workshop on pandemic influenza preparedness in the Pacific was held in November 2005. This work needs to be linked with the new international health regulations. There is currently growing interest on the part of aid donors and international stakeholders in this emerging issue. New Zealand has agreed to fund a two-year full-time support expert position at SPC and Australia has pledged AUD 8 million over the next four years, to assist with pandemic preparedness. The Epidemiologist closed by noting that this concrete support was very encouraging, and stated that although progress is being made and results are becoming available, much yet remains to be done.

77. The representative of Pitcairn noted the isolation of his country, and the consequent vulnerability of Pitcairn Islanders to all types of influenza. He indicated that, following consultation with the Foreign Office Health Department in London, Pitcairn had acquired stocks of antiviral drugs for the entire population. He noted that they hope never to have to use these.

78. The representative of American Samoa noted that the Tuberculosis Specialist had focussed on issues such as "achievement, implementation, strengthening, and expansion" in describing the achievements of the program over the previous three years. He inquired if any data were available that indicates how effective these health programmes have been, and asked if it was known how many people were in fact affected by the diseases in question, and whether the number was increasing or decreasing. He noted that such data was a major component of future planning, and that it was necessary to see what the impact of the activities of the previous three years had been. He also asked if further data were available regarding the prevalence of poverty and hardship in the Pacific, noting that while hardship was present in American Samoa, poverty was not really an issue.

79. The representative of Samoa asked about the progress being made in Kiribati to address the high TB incidence, and the constraints to resolving the issue.

80. The Deputy Director-General noted that the necessary brevity of the presentations prevented SPC from sharing all the information that was available, but also stressed the difficulty of acquiring reliable data. He noted that SPC was working hard to improve the quality of data available in the Pacific, and that addressing poverty is a central goal, one shared by all SPC divisions and programmes. He indicated that SPC's Poverty Analysis Programme was developing a better definition of poverty and working to identify poverty thresholds, and that these activities would contribute to a better determination of the situation in all PICTs. He noted that this work was complex, involving field work and in-depth analysis. A report on poverty in Fiji, and an appraisal carried out in Kiribati, will soon be available. He also mentioned that some positive results

were being achieved with regard to HIV/AIDS, which was borne out by data on, for example, the number of people being treated with retroviral drugs.

81. The Tuberculosis Specialist noted that SPC's PHP programs were at different stages of implementation, and that in some instances implementation of the programmes was in itself an achievement. The DOTS strategy for TB was introduced in the region in 1998, and SPC has now achieved 100% implementation coverage, which sets the stage for making a real impact on this disease. It is now possible to address TB in a much more systematic and controlled manner, and to measure the impact of SPC's efforts. Most significantly, the TB cure rate through the DOTS strategy is 90%. She observed that Kiribati has the highest rate of new TB cases, with two new cases per day, while Tonga in contrast has 30 cases per year. Eleven PICTs have significant TB problems, and four have an incidence of TB that is higher than that found in SE Asian countries, where TB incidence is considered the highest in the world. She noted that it is not entirely clear why the incidence in Kiribati is as high as it is, and noted that while general risk factors (e.g. overcrowding and poverty) were known, a study was under way to help identify the specific factors that were responsible in Kiribati. The disease burden has historically been high in Kiribati, due in part to poor TB control programmes in the past, and this is a contributing factor. It is also probable that an increase in HIV/AIDS is a contributing factor. Molecular epidemiological studies will assist in determining the TB transmission dynamics in Kiribati, which will in turn help in targeting interventions. She noted that some data had been presented to CRGA regarding HIV, and that some data were also available for malaria, but that time constraints prevented a full discussion. She closed by stating that reaching and implementing agreements and policies — such as the ratification of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control — are themselves a major achievement for the Pacific, as these lay the foundation for ultimate resolution of these health issues.

82. The representative of Solomon Islands inquired about the establishment and effectiveness of border controls to address pandemics, noting that some PICTs have people arriving on a daily or weekly basis from SE Asia. The representative of Cook Islands noted that disinfectant mats were in use in the airport in Manilla, and asked if these were effective. He also inquired whether border closures were needed or effective if people were already infected, how the virus spread to humans (via food, air, etc.), and whether poultry imports from Asia increased the risks.

83. The representative of Nauru inquired if SPC was considering a programme for the development of a management regime in the event of a pandemic, in terms of educating health care workers and preparing health care systems.

84. The Epidemiologist noted that the issue of border controls was addressed at the November (2005) workshop on pandemic influenza preparedness in the Pacific, and said that the Pacific's isolation was both a weakness and a strength. He said that the quarantine that was put in place by some countries during the 1918 pandemic proved effective for some countries. He said that health experts were looking at the efficacy of various measures, such as the screening of passengers. Some countries (e.g. New Zealand) will be ready to close their borders in the case of a bad pandemic. He also indicated the need for coordination among countries, which might also allow for movement between countries within the region. He stated that closing borders makes sense before a virus spreads, and said that WHO's goal was to detect clusters of cases, which would be indicative of the start of a pandemic. He noted the need for improved surveillance systems, so that such clusters can be identified. If such a cluster is detected, the strategy is to prevent the spread of the disease. WHO has stockpiled antiviral drugs, and plans to stop a pandemic at the outset through the intensive use of these drugs in the area where a cluster of cases has been detected. If the virus has started to spread, then border closures are probably no longer worthwhile. He noted that there would be economic losses associated with border closures, and said that the issue was being studied by the influenza specialist group. He observed that disinfectants were useful if avian influenza was present, and that these were being used in poultry farms, but said that the effectiveness of the approach at airports was not clear. The transmission of the influenza virus from poultry can be either through direct contact or air. If the virus is present in faeces, it may also be present in any chicken product. Consequently, the importation of cooked poultry is safe, but importation of raw poultry or other products from an infected area is a risk. Transmission of the virus to humans via uncooked poultry or feathers has not been proven, but a theoretical risk does exist, and such a risk is best avoided. The transmission route from pigs to humans is via coughing and air. Planning activities

are under way to address the response in PICTs should a virus become established. This is being carried out in conjunction with WHO. PICTs have voiced the need for support in this area. The strategy is to first share existing materials; if the need for additional support is identified, SPC will be able to work with PICTs on preparedness, thanks to funds provided by New Zealand.

85. The representative of Tonga inquired about the fact that her country had not been included in the list of countries that had prepared or were developing nutrition plans of action, and expressed interest in being included.

86. The Deputy Director-General welcomed a proposal from Tonga on this issue, and noted the very significant progress that Tonga had made in the area of NCD control and prevention. He indicated that SPC's new NCD control team had just been formed, and that they would be assessing needs with respect to NCDs in all 22 PICTs.

87. The representative of Australia acknowledged the significant contribution made by Tony Lower as manager of Public Health, and looked forward to the appointment of the new manager. She also congratulated SPC on receiving support from ADB for HIV/AIDS, and praised ADB for making a change in its plans, which she noted reflected a more flexible response by ADB. She stated that this would enhance the outcomes of the HIV/AIDS program, and noted the significance of this change in approach.

88. The Deputy Director-General recognised the former Team Leader's excellent work as head of the PHP, and also noted the excellent work he had done on developing an NCD strategy for SPC. He stated that the project had previously been extended through bilateral aid, but that no further extension of the team leader's contract was possible without additional funding support. He noted that SPC would welcome the opportunity to extend this exemplary project to further countries if support was available, as it had demonstrated excellent results. He confirmed that a new manager, Dr Thierry Jubeau of New Caledonia, has taken up the post.

89. The manager of the **newly combined Demography and Statistics Programmes** outlined the primary achievements in these areas during 2005, and highlighted the major elements of the programme's Strategic Plan, which was being submitted for adoption. He noted that the focus of the programme was on improving the quality and utilisation of economic, social and population information, and on improving PICT capabilities in the areas of data collection, compilation and utilisation. Key past achievements included completion of the 2000 round of censuses, completion of demographic analyses and population profiles, expansion of *popGIS* (Population Geographic Information System) to additional PICTs, and collaboration with UNFPA in the areas of policy development and planning. He noted that a major upcoming activity would be supporting the 2010 round of censuses, with SPC assisting PICTs on all census-related activities. Significant progress has been achieved in improving the dissemination of national statistics data via the PRISM website database, which is updated by staff from National Statistics Offices; the PRISM project is coordinated by SPC. He noted that the Poverty Programme was making progress in defining and developing a better understanding of the concept of poverty in the Pacific, and referred to linkages that exist between the programme and other SPC projects and partnerships. He indicated that SPC, with support from NZAID and AusAID, are reviving the Solomon Islands Statistics Office. He observed that major assistance was being provided for carrying out a household income and economic survey, which will be linked to health and demographic surveys in 2006. He then briefly reviewed the major objectives and outputs of the programme's new strategic plan for the period 2006–2008.

90. SPC's Women's Development Adviser, who manages the **Pacific Women's Bureau (PWB)**, expressed her appreciation to conference participants and then summarized the achievements of the PWB over the last triennial period. The previous strategic plan for the PWB focused on assisting PICTs to improve the status of women by implementing and monitoring the Pacific Platform for Action (PPA), Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and MDGs; stronger collaboration with regional and international development partners and national women's machineries to advocate for women's rights; and effective use of the media to promote gender issues. Achievements for the period included revision of the PPA culminating in the 9th Pacific Women's Triennial Conference and Ministerial Meeting; development of media partnerships and

skills in working with the media to advocate women's issues through internships and regional workshops; gender training of trainers; and continued progress on implementing CEDAW, particularly in French territories with recent workshops in French Polynesia. Challenges for the PWB for the next period include translating policies into action, gathering accurate data on the status of Pacific women, strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, and improving regional cooperation. The PWB will take a longer-term approach to issues such as mainstreaming gender issues in policy development and also build its technical and knowledge base to increase its effectiveness.

91. The Head of the **Community Education Training Centre (CETC)** paid tribute to the work of her predecessor, Nuufou Petaia. She presented the work of CETC in training grassroots women, alluding to crosscutting issues for women such as gender inequality in the distribution of responsibilities and the existing skills gap in the Pacific that CETC is trying to address. She provided a brief overview of CETC's activities in delivering training, providing post-training support to graduates and exploring the viability of expanding courses. The success of CETC is shown in the growing number of requests that the Centre cannot accommodate and in the proportion of graduates (90%) who take up community work or paid employment on their return home. Highlights of 2005 were the conduct of the first summer module on enterprise development, successful completion of the seven-month annual course, key upgrades of infrastructure/facilities and the securing of new funding partners, including the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNIFEM, ACWW (Associated Country Women of the World) and Taiwan/ROC. New directions in the proposed 2006-2008 strategic plan focus on responsiveness to changing labour market demands, greater collaboration with other SPC programmes, greater support to graduates to enhance use of their skills, and addressing the needs of Northern Pacific women and the reasons for their declining attendance. Future challenges for CETC include increasing its capacity to respond strategically and in a timely manner to the different and evolving needs of grassroots women, and to identify funding support for the summer courses.

92. SPC's Cultural Affairs Adviser said she was pleased that the conference was being held in the Ngara Amayong Cultural Center, which represented the vision of the women of Palau in preserving their culture and traditions. She began by discussing the Triennial Report, which assessed the progress made by the **Cultural Affairs Programme** in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of Pacific countries. The programme had two priority activities for this period: the legal protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture and the 9th Festival of Pacific Arts, which was held Palau in 2004. In partnership with Palau, the programme managed two of the first income-generating activities from the Festival: a film and book, funded by Taiwan/ROC and France, respectively. Highlights of the last reporting period included the support provided to Palau and delegations for the 9th Festival; a review of the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA); and progress made on a methodology to value the contribution of culture to the GDP of a country or territory. The Model Law for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture was endorsed by WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation) and the region and countries are at various stages of enacting the law. New Zealand provided assistance by assigning a Senior Policy Analyst from the Ministry of Economic Development to the programme for five months. The outcome will be a 'toolkit' covering issues that policy makers need to consider when developing a national *sui generis* system based on the Model Law. The Programme was independently reviewed in 2004. The Review suggested new initiatives, including a regional cultural policy and strategy and national cultural policies; projects that specifically target youth; and cultural mapping. The objectives of the 2006-2008 Strategic Plan for the programme are the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage; its priorities build on those of the previous plan. The Adviser ended by saying that because of the cross-sectoral nature of culture, the programme collaborates with international organisations, regional agencies, and other SPC programmes. Its work has been supported by many donors and she thanked them for their support.

93. The Senior Support Engineer of the **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)** Section gave a brief overview of the section. The primary purpose of the section is to provide support to SPC but the section also provides valuable services to PICTs and other stakeholders. Highlights of assistance to the organisation in 2005 were the set up and maintenance of numerous email and electronic discussion lists, training and capacity building of staff, maintenance of the integrated Noumea/Suva network, new initiatives such as video conferencing, and support provided to meetings such as CRGA. Country support provided in 2005 included networking help given to the Majuro Hospital in the Marshall Islands. He alluded to the success of the Pacific Island Network Associate scheme funded by New Zealand and praised the work of the

last associate who completed her attachment at SPC, Nettie Smith of Vanuatu. He pointed out that the ICT Section had managed to maintain the same world-class services to SPC in spite of a 20% increase in SPC staff and that the integrated helpdesk between SPC Noumea and Suva had helped to cut down service costs. In conclusion, he praised the vision and commitment of Director-General Lourdes Pangelinan, who has been a driving force in putting SPC at the forefront of modern technologies and thanked her for her support of ICT.

94. The new coordinator of the **Regional Media Centre (RMC)** referred to the outcomes of the 2002 review of RMC that clarified its operations into two distinct areas of training and production. He stressed that RMC intends to invigorate its training programme, particularly in the area of television, and that a needs assessment will be conducted in member countries. Production services will continue to be provided to both SPC and member countries. He alluded to plans for the future expansion and development of the well-known RMC “Pacific Way” TV programme. He also said that RMC was engaged in archiving and cataloguing its materials, starting with film footage, and was going to develop its capacity to act as a repository of footage on the Pacific. RMC was exploring the possibility of establishing training courses aimed at working journalists and media practitioners, which would be accredited with the University of the South Pacific (USP). RMC was also collaborating with the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) to create a more accountable media industry. RMC will continue to publicise its work in the region.

95. The Youth Adviser presented the activities conducted by the **Pacific Youth Bureau (PYB)** in 2005, starting with assistance to members in developing their national youth policies. PYB also provided relevant training to Ministry of Youth staff in the region and helped build the capacity of youth organisations by providing support and training for youth leaders. It conducted skills development for youth in the region – the number of graduates from these courses has now reached 664. It held ‘train the trainer’ activities in Vanuatu and Kiribati and hoped to extend this service to other countries in the coming year. The Small Island States programme was a success and additional funding would be welcome to continue this much-requested small grants assistance to youth projects. The bureau also focused on raising awareness of its activities and of what young people do in the region through well-targeted information materials. The proposed strategic plan for 2006–2009 focuses on assisting PICTs to develop strategic plans for national youth policies, and on training the trainers and other skilled young people. PYB will continue its work in strengthening national youth councils and in reinforcing its partnerships with other SPC programmes. A new objective is the development of a youth communication strategy and information network.

96. The full texts of these presentations are available on request from the Secretariat.

97. The representative of Nauru requested clarification regarding what is entailed in cultural mapping.

98. The Cultural Affairs Adviser said that the proposal had not been fully developed, and indicated that she envisaged something based on a Geographic Information System. It could include information on heritage sites, legislation, museums and cult sites, and the heritage of different groups. She stressed that the idea was new and needed more development.

99. The representative of Palau remarked that Fiji had undertaken mapping of intangible heritage, illustrating that both tangible and intangible heritage could be mapped.

100. The representative of Pitcairn noted the comments by the Cultural Affairs Adviser with interest, and stated that Pitcairn has recently completed building a museum. He suggested that with the expected onset of regular shipping services between French Polynesia and Pitcairn, the long-anticipated visit to Pitcairn by an SPC delegation might become a reality.

101. The representative of Australia asked for an update on SPC’s role as Secretariat to PATVET.

102. The Deputy Director-General indicated that the role of the Secretariat was to first gain information on initiatives relating to technical and vocational training, and to find ways that SPC could help develop these types of education, which are not well supported in region. He noted that SPC wanted to make the services of CETC available to the PATVET organisation; additional initiatives that were currently being explored

through the PYB would go further. He noted that SPC is active in the area of vocational and technical training through CETC and wanted to explore options to strengthen this area, but did not as yet have a complete strategy.

103. The representative of Cook Islands inquired whether it was possible for SPC's ICT section to vary the length of the training attachments it offers to PICT IT staff, which currently involve one person for one year.

104. The Senior Support Engineer indicated that moving to a system of four 3-month attachments was under consideration, as PICTs often did not want to lose staff for 12 months, and noted that ICT was very open to direction from the meeting on the issue.

105. The representative of Solomon Islands acknowledged the assistance given to the Solomon Islands statistics office, and noted that a statistics adviser from SPC was working with the Solomon Islands finance office. He indicated that there were some outstanding issues regarding the mandate and role of the adviser, suggesting that a better understanding might need to be reached between SPC and the Department of Finance, but emphasised the fact that Solomon Islands was very appreciative of the assistance. He noted that Solomon Islands would be hosting the 2012 Festival of Pacific Arts, and that they would need assistance from SPC in preparing, indicating a planning committee would soon be established. He asked for clarification regarding the presence of a CETC Alumni Association in Solomon Islands. He also noted the absence of an SPC delegate at an MDG meeting held in Jakarta in August, at which the Pacific was represented only by UNDP, PIFS and three PICT delegates, and asked SPC to clarify how it was assisting PICTs at regional MDG meetings.

106. The Deputy Director-General noted that SPC was not represented at the regional MDG meeting, but indicated that this was the only instance in which that had happened. SPC did take part in an MDG meeting recently convened in Manila. The Head of CETC provided contact details to the representative regarding the CETC Alumni Association. The manager of the Demography and Statistics Programmes noted he had discussed the issues raised by the representative with SPC's Statistics Adviser, and would address the issues with the Solomon Islands finance office.

107. The representative of France stated that he was once again very impressed by the diversity of activities pursued by SRD, noting that youth, culture and gender issues lie at the heart of our society. There will be no economic development unless health issues are resolved, women are empowered, the needs of youth expressed, and Pacific Island cultures enabled to blossom, which is why France was always advocating strongly for these issues, and which made it all the more interesting to see that SRD has trouble in obtaining funding and qualified staff in these areas. Significant progress had been made in the area of health, with significant financial support from New Zealand and ADB. SPC is working very hard at addressing NCDs and communicable diseases, and he noted that these efforts were important and should continue. With respect to the PWB, he noted the strong efforts that had been made in awareness training regarding CEDAW. He was very happy to note that the PWB was always promoting coordination and takes care to work with other organisations that are involved, stating that France could only encourage the PWB to persevere in its awareness training activities. He said that the Cultural Affairs Programme continued to display astonishing dynamism, and noted that it manages to do pioneering work, such as mapping of cultural heritage, despite a small staff and limited budget. He urged that efforts in the area of the preservation of cultural knowledge be maintained, which he said was very complex, both legally and politically. He noted that the SPC Corporate Review had suggested that the three programmes (PWB, PYB and Cultural Affairs) could be merged, and that staff should be bolstered. The Review also suggested that SRD should try to deal with pressing social issues, (e.g. suicide, divorce, unrest, and family troubles). He noted that these were of course linked, and that these themes could be usefully addressed by the SRD. He asked SPC to remark on these dual suggestions, which would – if implemented – both bring together these three sections and broaden their focus.

108. The Deputy Director-General indicated that a full discussion of the Corporate Review was upcoming, but did note that the move toward integration had affected all components of the SRD. He explained that there were some specific difficulties with regard to integration of the three programmes, which would be discussed later with the Review. As of 2004, SPC initiated rapprochement of the themes that could be dealt with in a coordinated way by the three programmes. He noted that a staff member now supported all three

sections in the area of information, and that the upcoming youth conference would also involve all three sections. He said that this demonstrated the manner in which SPC was seeking a synergy of the sections, one that will ultimately lead to a merger, the terms of which will depend on how SPC can integrate the three approaches. There is no question that this is an approach that SPC is pursuing, and SPC was very pleased that the review presented this recommendation.

109. The representative of Tonga commended all the presenters, and noted that although the percentage of women at SPC was declining (and would decline further with the departure of the Director-General), the appointment of women as the new heads of CETC and PWB was a positive development. She noted the assistance PWB provides to Francophone countries, as well as to PICs that have ratified CEDAW. She said that Tonga had not been included in technical assistance relating to CEDAW by SPC as Tonga is one of only three PICTs that have not yet ratified CEDAW. She requested that PWB assist Tonga to pave the way for government consideration of CEDAW ratification. She said that Tonga also supported CETC, which is the only service of its kind in the region, one that focused on grass roots development. She asked whether Tonga could use the places of countries that might opt not to attend in a particular year. She asked that more assistance be directed to national CETC Alumni Associations. Regarding the PYB adviser, she said that she was looking forward to capacity building and strengthening of focal points in Tonga. She closed by asking SPC's ICT to consult further with Tonga regarding technical assistance for activation of a transponder in Tonga.

110. The head of CETC noted that with respect to filling vacant places, Tonga had always been very fortunate. Normally each country gets two places, while last year Tonga and PNG received four. Regarding support for alumni at the national level, this is a key activity that is addressed in the CETC strategic plan.

111. The representative of Samoa congratulated the SRD programmes for their accomplishments despite a lack of resources. He inquired whether data collection was hampered by problems in data availability, or if the problem was one of human resource capacity at the national level. Regarding the weakness in economic statistics, he noted that the problem was not only one of gathering economic data, and encouraged SPC to consider enhancement of data collection in additional areas (not only in NSOs, but in other departments). He observed that the PYB had worked extensively with Samoa and inquired regarding the status of CEDAW ratification by PICTs.

112. The head of the Statistics and Demography Programme said that his goal was to improve human capacity in PICTs, rather than having SPC produce information. He noted that some would need special technical help (e.g. for censuses) but stressed the need to build capacity in PICTs. He said that he had focused on economic statistics in particular, as while many social statistics can be gathered through censuses, economic statistics require very specialized expertise to produce. He agreed there is a dearth of information across the spectrum. Generalised training is provided to all elements of the government when SPC carries out training in PICTs. He said that a wealth of information is available on how to collect and utilise statistics in PICTs, and suggested that with relatively few resources SPC should be able to help significantly. He noted that the Solomon Islands project would produce national accounts, and would also look at taxation records as a source of information, rather than going out to collect new data. He said the same approach could be used in other areas.

113. The Women's Development Adviser noted that the provision of assistance to PICTs that have not yet ratified CEDAW was emphasised in the PWB Strategic plan, and that support for CEDAW would focus on PICs that have not yet ratified. She said that over the last triennial period, two more countries had ratified, for a total of 13.

114. The representative of PNG inquired regarding the degree to which Statistics and Demography are involved in national censuses, and asked whether this was provided on a request basis, or via contacts at the national level. He said that PNG's last census was in 2000, and the next would be in 2010. Some factors that PNG is looking at include the size of the country and the number of personnel needed. PNG's population is highly mobile internally. He wondered how reliable the results were the last time the census was done. He also noted that PNG is very diverse culturally, and that to preserve culture is difficult. Language is tied to culture, and folklore and songs are usually in the original language. As people migrate, intermarriage

complicates the maintenance of cultures. He inquired whether there was any consideration of language by the Cultural Affairs Programme.

115. The head of the Statistics and Demography Programme said that SPC responds to requests as well as dealing directly with SPC's national counterparts. Because PNG is so large and diverse, it may make more sense if assistance is provided through a larger statistics agency (e.g. the Australian Bureau of Statistics), which assisted with the 2000 census. He said that SPC would work with them as partners. In all cases the focus is on supplementing national resources, and censuses can serve as excellent training tools for country staff.

116. The Cultural Affairs Adviser noted that language strengthening was being addressed through the PYB Strategic Plan, and would be addressed at the upcoming youth meeting.

117. The Palau delegate thanked CRGA delegates for their participation and SPC for its work. She said that as the Chair of the Festival of Pacific Arts in 2004 in Palau she knew the challenges involved in running the festival. A particular challenge was to find the balance between the traditional arts and modernity. The economic value of culture was important, and this was relevant to the question of funding the festival, which was a difficult task. She invited countries to seriously consider membership of PIMA (Pacific Islands Museums Association). This would allow the region to share knowledge and resources. She referred to plans by the Cultural Affairs Programme for cultural mapping. This has not been done in the Pacific and would enable the identification of tangible and intangible aspects of culture. She noted that it was a decade since the 1995 Conference on Women in Beijing and asked if there had been follow-up subregional conferences since then. She commended SPC's Media Centre for its work during last year's festival, saying it was pleasing to see Pacific Island staff recording the festival and spearheading training in the north Pacific. She would like to see the Centre carry out more training activities.

118. The delegate from French Polynesia commended the work of all three SPC divisions and said 2005 had been a very active year for French Polynesia. Achievements included training in plant quarantine inspection, agriculture and pearl farming. He thanked the PWB for running the recent CEDAW implementation workshop in French Polynesia. He also paid tribute to the outgoing Director-General for all her work for the region.

119. The New Caledonia delegate said that New Caledonia wished to take part in MDG activities and believed the French Pacific territories would be very interested. He said New Caledonia supports the work of the PWB, Youth Bureau and cultural programme through participation and funding. He asked if the Paris 21 Initiative might be relevant for programme funding, e.g. to support SPC's effort to increase statistical capacity in the region.

120. The delegate from Samoa said that the process of ratifying CEDAW needed to be completed as it had been on the agenda of CRGA for several years. He asked if there were clauses in the Convention that countries had difficulty with or were there other problems such as legal drafting. He referred to the Tuna Convention that was signed in 2000 and noted that all the countries have ratified.

121. The PWB Adviser, replying to the delegates from Samoa and Palau, said that ratification was a country responsibility. The PWB could only raise awareness and stress the benefits of incorporating CEDAW in national strategies and plans. SPC's efforts have resulted in good progress given the problems with some clauses of CEDAW; 12 years ago only one country had ratified and now 13 had with only three countries yet to decide on ratification. One of the PWB's focuses for the next period is to achieve ratification in these countries. Since the Beijing Meeting, three subregional meetings have been held.

122. The Deputy Director General, using the MDG process as an example, said that ratification of a convention is only the first step and implementation is often a complex process. SPC is active in various implementation processes.

123. The FSM delegate thanked the Deputy Director-General and presenters and also donors for enabling programmes such as those on reproductive health, immunization, CETC, etc. He asked why there was a

decline in attendance at CETC on the part of FSM students. He also acknowledged the great work done by Wendy Snowden in putting together an NCD plan for FSM (seven out of 10 deaths in FSM are attributable to NCDs). He noted that FSM has insufficient resources for all its states and thanked SPC for its assistance in providing pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical measures to combat disease. Because FSM is so close to SE Asia it would like to see an emphasis on the prevention of a possible pandemic rather than curative measures.

124. The Nauru delegate asked if training in statistical and demographic techniques could include practical attachments in other countries. This would allow SPC to increase regional cooperation and capacity.

125. The head of SPC's Statistics and Demography Programme said that this had been a recommendation of the programme review and SPC would identify people in the region who could provide such assistance.

126. The Cook Islands delegate recognized the importance of activities to help youth, which he said was also reflected in the Pacific Plan and the theme of the conference. He noted, however, that the Youth Bureau lacked funding and had only one professional staff member — could management explain the reason for this?

127. The Deputy Director-General replied that he did not want to evade the question, but that it should be recognized that other programmes such as health also contributed to the well-being of youth. SPC has struggled to obtain sufficient funding for social issues. There has been some progress with the cultural programme now funded from the core budget. SPC finds it more difficult to obtain external funding from institutional donors for these programmes in contrast to health and marine programmes. He said that SPC may need to present more ambitious and attractive projects to donors. Bringing the three programmes together may help to improve the availability of resources.

128. The Guam delegate thanked presenters for the information they provided and mentioned that he had attended a conference in New Caledonia on SPC's PopGIS programs. He said these systems had been a great help in developing data systems for Guam. He also said that if Guam is not a member of PIMA it would like to join (through the GVB). He considered that issues of language preservation cannot be left only to schools and referred to the promotion of language in Hawaii where the indigenous language can be seen on street signs, etc. He asked if SPC could host a think tank on language. He then said that Guam's hospital (GMH) is a regional one because of geography and resources. Guam has nursing education programmes at two levels and other countries might like to take advantage of these facilities. Improving the availability of nursing skills in other countries might prevent seriously ill people having to travel to Guam unnecessarily. He said the youth programme was impressive despite funding problems. He suggested that Pacific countries have tools that could be applied to other areas, e.g. Guam has a film produced by children on environmental issues. SPC could distribute these tools. There is also a new vocational training programme that will provide skilled labor. Other countries may want to participate in this training. He ended by commending SPC's services.

129. The delegate from Samoa endorsed the suggestion by the Cook Islands delegate to re-energise the Youth Bureau and noted the huge imbalance between staff numbers in the social division and marine and land divisions. He commented that in relation to ratifying and implementing conventions that are important to the region, the first step of ratification should take only five years, not ten as in the case of CEDAW.

130. The Solomon Islands representative noted that the theme of the conference was youth. He alluded to vacancies in SPC and noted how stretched the staffing resources were for the Youth Bureau, PWB and cultural programme. This issue could be discussed during the discussion of the corporate review.

131. The Palau representative recommended the 'Organizers guide to the festival' to American Samoa and Solomon Islands, who will host the next two festivals. She said Palau had found it useful.

132. In response to the FSM representative's mention of his country's declining participation, the CETC head mentioned that the high cost of airfares was a factor for potential students from the North Pacific, e.g. Palau is unable to fund a representative to CETC for next year.

CRGA Decision

133. CRGA:

- thanked the presenters for their presentations and subsequent discussion of issues;
- noted the presentations;
- adopted the six strategic plans for CETC, the Cultural Affairs Programme, Pacific Women's Bureau, Pacific Youth Bureau, and the Statistics and Demography Programme.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – SPC CORPORATE REVIEW

134. The draft report on the 2005 Corporate Review of SPC was presented by the leader of the review team, Senator Caleb Otto of Palau. Team members were Bernadette Papilio Halagahau (Wallis and Futuna), Margaret Renault (Australia), Jean Sese (Vanuatu), and Epa Tuioti (KVA Consult, Samoa). He began by congratulating the CRGA Chair on his excellent work and welcomed delegates to Palau. He also thanked SPC staff for their assistance. He thanked individual countries for nominating team members and SPC for assisting the team in carrying out the review process. He said SPC was now at a crossroads in its development with the new corporate plan and appointment of a new Director-General. The review process was therefore timely. Senator Otto then summarized the methodology used for the review, its findings and 11 key recommendations. The review team found SPC to be in good health and soundly managed with efficient and strong policies and systems, and that it provided highly relevant services to its stakeholders. Further improvements could be made, however, and these were outlined in the recommendations presented in the draft report.

135. On behalf of the committee, the chairperson of CRGA thanked Senator Otto for a very clear and comprehensive presentation. All the representatives who spoke echoed these sentiments and paid tribute to the work of the review team. They all thanked the team and Senator Otto for a very thorough and comprehensive report.

136. The representative from Tuvalu welcomed the report but regretted that the review team had twice been unable to make it to her country, even though Tuvalu had issues to raise with the team and appointments had been scheduled with the Prime Minister.

137. The team's leader regretted that the planned visit to Tuvalu had been cancelled twice due to unforeseen circumstances. The team had also been unable to visit American Samoa and would try to visit these two countries before finalising its report. Because of the geographic difficulties, the team had not attempted to visit Tokelau and Pitcairn but had nevertheless been able to hold discussions with their missions abroad.

138. The representative of French Polynesia noted that the review was comprehensive, insightful and balanced in its recommendations, and addressed not just practical matters and efficiency, but also political issues. He agreed with the recommendation regarding the Pacific Plan and regional integration, and said that in the course of implementing the various strategies aimed at strengthening regional integration, it was important not to compromise the equal status of each Pacific Island state and territory.

139. The representative of Pitcairn expressed understanding over the inability of the review team to visit Pitcairn, and expressed his country's approval regarding the consultation that had taken place.

140. The representative of the US expressed support for the key recommendations, and commended SPC for supporting the recommendations and work of the review team. He noted that the results reflected the strength of the management team and the relevance of SPC's work for the region. He noted the leadership SPC had shown in the area of transboundary functions and issues, and made special mention of the leadership shown in such specialised areas as the development of model legislation, which had been

undertaken by various sections including LRD, RMP and Cultural Affairs. He noted that the communicable disease surveillance system has been commended as being unique, and said that it will serve as a very important model as countries prepare to address a possible influenza pandemic. He also commended the review team for highlighting other recommendations for follow up, in addition to the 11 primary recommendations. He encouraged SPC to implement the recommendation on arrears, and said he looked forward to hearing an initial reaction from SPC to the recommendations.

141. The representative of Fiji noted the recommendation on shifting programmes from Noumea to Suva as a means of cutting costs, and inquired whether the review team had considered the cost implications of such a move, especially in light of existing space restrictions in Fiji.

142. The review team leader noted that they had been mindful of the lack of space at SPC Suva, and said that the recommendation had been made primarily with a view to enhancing collaboration with other organisations. He noted that the team believed strongly in the value of decentralisation.

143. The representative of France noted the very positive comments made in the review regarding SPC and its services. He said that the emphasis of the organisation was on quality, openness and transparency, and welcomed the remarks regarding pragmatic services and the organisation's ability to tackle the real issues. He found the various comments of members very satisfying, and stated that he was confident SPC was on track. He agreed with the need for better dialogue between the SPC executive and national officials and representatives. He also agreed that there should be more frequent visits made to PICTs as these would allow SPC to ensure that its work is in line with national concerns. He noted that he understood the sentiments voiced by Tuvalu and Pitcairn, and noted the difficulties of reaching Pitcairn in particular. Regarding the leadership role played by SPC in the region, he agreed that SPC could adopt an enhanced role in the sectors that coincide with its activities, while leaving policy issues to PIFS. With respect to decentralisation, he stated that it would not really be worthwhile to fuel a new debate on the location of SPC, but suggested the idea of decentralising was very relevant, and if well managed would allow SPC to be closer to its partners and members. Regarding the Pacific Plan, he agreed with the representative from French Polynesia, who observed that all PICTs should take part in all the debates regarding a new regional structure, as emphasised by the corporate reviewers. He observed it was not helpful to make distinctions between states and territories, and that the focus should be on the development of all members of the Pacific community. He suggested that rather than focusing on institutional and political criteria, it was important to remember that all PICTs are members of one culture and community. He suggested that one possible reason for SPC's success is its holistic approach, and the ability to bring together all people of the Pacific. He agreed with the recommendation on the merger of the PYB, PWB and Cultural Affairs, and a broadening of the scope of these sections.

144. The representative of New Zealand said that SPC could be rightly proud of such a positive review and noted broad agreement with the recommendations. She did note that there was little focus in the review on the relative importance of SPC's various sectoral priorities. She said that the review largely confirmed the relevance of existing priorities, but said that this was done largely without explanation, and suggested this might be further clarified in the final version. Regarding monitoring and evaluation, she noted the suggested move to outcomes and impact reporting, and inquired how this would be realised, given that the draft strategic plans that had been earlier approved by CRGA — and which are valid for several years — were largely outcome based.

145. The representative of Palau noted that while his country was generally supportive, he wished to comment on capacity building. For small island states (SIS) this is a real challenge, due to their population size and isolation, and he suggested it will always be a problem. He said it was important to look at how SIS can be assisted. He suggested that, after several years of addressing the issue, the best solution was to locate some experts in SIS. He suggested the idea of decentralisation might be strengthened.

146. The representative of American Samoa congratulated the Director-General on her performance over the past six years, and wished her the best of luck with whatever she pursued in the future. In regard to decentralisation, he asked whether the question arose due to efforts to reduce the cost of operations, or in a bid to strengthen programmes within the community.

147. The representative of Solomon Islands noted that the review raised some important issues regarding improving communication and collaboration. He noted that dialogue with both national decision makers and programme officers was very important. He inquired if decentralisation would lead to increased costs, and if members would bear these costs. He also noted the comments from France regarding the strength of the Cultural Affairs Section, and asked if a merging of sections would lead to more effective work, or would mean a lack of focus. He suggested that mergers should not occur at the expense of coverage of any issues.

148. The representative of Australia expressed agreement with the recommendations, and encouraged SPC to think outside the box somewhat regarding the issue of decentralising, suggesting that work might be undertaken through partnerships with other players. She asked what the next steps would be with respect to the review, and suggested a short report might be made at the next CRGA on how SPC was acting on the recommendations.

149. The representative of PNG expressed general agreement with the recommendations of the draft review report that had been presented and acknowledged that PNG leaned towards the observations made by the report on the issue of regional cooperation and the consultant report prepared by Tony Hughes.

150. The representative of FSM noted that the review was very timely and would inform the Corporate Plan that would guide SPC over the next several years. He noted that many of the points that FSM had raised were included, and encouraged the team to visit the countries that were missed.

151. The representative of Kiribati expressed general agreement with the recommendations in the report and noted that that the programmes and work of SPC were very useful and relevant. She said that she was hopeful that areas that needed to be strengthened would be addressed.

152. The representative of Wallis and Futuna noted the very thorough and complex review exercise. He said that one item seems to summarize the report: SPC does address the needs of its membership. SPC strives to improve its services to better meet the needs of its members. He noted the great variety of areas SPC works in and the wide variety of skills that are mustered, and wondered why the important role of the organisation was not better understood. He suggested it could be because members do not know how to talk about the accomplishments of SPC. He noted the high quality of the organisation, and expressed confidence it could continue its work in the future. He thanked the Director-General and wished her and her successor the best.

153. The representative of Samoa stated general agreement with most of what was contained in the Review. He suggested that some programmes might be under- and some over-resourced. He suggested the focus of any merger should be on cost savings and efficiency, and inquired how great the savings would be given that the three programmes have a total of only seven staff. He also inquired how current heads of programmes would be affected by a merger. He noted the need for additional assistance with forestry, and observed that travel by management around the region was costly, and collaboration with stakeholders could be more effectively done through conferencing by telephone. He agreed with comments regarding SPC's leadership role, and the need for country-specific engagement, suggesting it might be useful for SPC to produce country project profiles as is done by other organisations. Regarding decentralisation, he noted the issue was mainly one of cost savings. He noted the need to address staff recruitment issues, and to document the impact and outcomes of SPC activities, including at the national level.

154. The representative of Guam stated that the decentralisation process might involve efficiency more than cost savings, and suggested that in the case of short-term or temporary programmes there could be a need to contract out services. He agreed that as an SPC presence is established in FSM, Guam would like to see more remote islands also get attention through funding or programmes. Members need to promote the good things SPC does, and promote the image of SPC. He said SPC has been very supportive of Guam, and that the activities were appreciated. He said Guam would continue to work with all islands, and hoped to develop greater recognition of what SPC actually does.

155. With respect to the issue of decentralisation, the representative from New Caledonia stated that he did not wish to go back to the same difficult situation of 14 or 15 years ago when there had been discussion on transferring SPC headquarters to another location outside of New Caledonia. He emphasised that the facilities in New Caledonia were as good as, if not better than, facilities available elsewhere in the region. New Caledonia, with the financial collaboration of France and Australia, had made modern and efficient buildings and the very best work environment available to SPC. As the draft review had not been made available to his delegation before he left New Caledonia, he would inform his government of the contents of this document as soon as he returned home.

156. The representative of Tonga expressed general agreement with the findings, but echoed the concern expressed by Samoa regarding the suggested merger of the three SRD programmes if this was undertaken for reasons of cost savings, and stated that then consideration would need to be given to maintaining equal priority in the three programmes as there could be competition for resources, with some issues or programmes marginalised. She also supported the suggestion that the team should report back to PICTs when it completes its consultation.

157. The representative of Cook Islands supported the recommendations contained in the report.

158. The review team's leader thanked AusAid and NZAID for the assistance they provided, and the members for the very constructive comments made by their countries during the review. He noted that members largely agreed with the recommendations, and hoped that they would serve to improve SPC. He thanked the representative of New Zealand for the question regarding the relevance and allocation of programme elements, and noted that the issue of privatisation of some services would no doubt be considered by SPC when considering the implications of the recommendations. He noted that the initial consideration when making the recommendation about the merger of three SRD Sections was not cost savings, but rather the ability of the sections to better address emerging issues (e.g. youth in distress, the divorce rate, and dysfunctional families). Thus the focus was on getting better results. How this should be done – to allow them to work independently but together – would be a real challenge and there was a need to look outside the box. He again thanked all SPC staff for their assistance.

159. The Director-General thanked CRGA for the opportunity to say a few words. She commended the work of the review team and the draft report. She said that the Secretariat was very pleased to have heard the views of members on this draft report. The Secretariat welcomed the independent review as it served as a reality check on whether SPC's work was of good quality and its services to clients relevant. The review also presented a good opportunity to make necessary changes and provided the necessary guidance to the Secretariat to make SPC a stronger and more effective organisation. She noted that it was a balanced review that provided positive views of SPC's performance in recent years and that its comments on emerging issues should assist the Secretariat to improve its operations further. The Secretariat had no difficulty overall with the findings of the review and its recommendations and would take it forward for implementation next year. She noted that the review team had not prescribed the details of how to implement its recommendations because it felt that the Secretariat had sufficient management expertise to develop action plans from these broad recommendations. She said that, while this was flattering, it would have been more beneficial and helpful to the Secretariat if the team had been more prescriptive on some of the more difficult issues, such as cross-sectoral prioritisation. She felt that it would be important at this stage for the Secretariat to provide its initial reaction to each of the key recommendations.

- Recommendation 1: The Secretariat agrees that it is quite important to regularly review its allocation to existing programmes to enable it to meet changing priorities. This is never a straightforward process as it involves cross-sectoral priority judgments. The real challenge is to ensure that there is a balance of SPC's work programme across the sectors that respond to the changing needs of members. Though there are existing mechanisms that provide guidance to the Secretariat, the role of the SPC Executive in fine tuning this balance is fundamental. The Secretariat takes this recommendation on board.
- Recommendation 2: This is already under way and is one of the priorities during the current corporate plan period. The Secretariat welcomes the encouragement to strengthen this commitment.

The Secretariat accepts the point that SPC should have a clear strategy outlining its role and that of other players in technical and vocational education training (TVET). This opportunity exists in the development of the new SPC corporate plan. The Director-General emphasised the critical importance of TVET to the overall socio-economic development of the region, the current real void in leadership among regional institutions on this, and the importance for stakeholders to address this need as a priority.

- Recommendation 3: The merger of these three programmes, with a view to strengthening and attracting additional resources, is a process that has already started. The Secretariat will pursue this further to fully integrate these programmes, with a view to enabling an even greater focus on the important social development challenges facing the region. Internal discussions involving other programmes are already taking place to see how this merger could result in an integrated work programme that would achieve the objective of the merger.
- Recommendation 4: The Secretariat welcomes this recommendation and recently reallocated programme funds for a second professional position to support the programme's focal point, the regional Forests and Trees Adviser, which is core funded. Additional resources will be sought to strengthen SPC's capacity in this area.
- Recommendation 5: The Secretariat takes on board the need for more frequent visits to PICTs and official contacts by senior management and Programme Heads, and for more visibility.
- Recommendation 6: This is one of the strategies in the current corporate plan, but the Secretariat welcomes the recommendation to increase this role.
- Recommendation 7: Country-specific engagement strategies are already being pursued in several ways by the Secretariat. This recommendation, however, goes one step further in ensuring not only greater visibility, communication and collaboration with members, but also that SPC's work is in line with national development plans. This will enable more efficient planning and allocation of resources.
- Recommendation 8: The Secretariat fully supports this recommendation on decentralization as it would bring its services closer to the clients that it serves. The opening of the new SPC office in the Federated States of Micronesia is a lead-up to a more permanent presence in the Northern Pacific.
- Recommendation 9: The Director-General stressed that the Secretariat needs a corporate-wide system, not just to document HRD work, but also to pull out country-specific data from this central location in order to report on its services individually to each country. It is currently modifying its financial information system to that effect.
- Recommendation 10: This recommendation calls for the Secretariat to approach its human resources function in a more strategic manner. The Secretariat has already recognised this need but needs to place greater emphasis on it.
- Recommendation 11: The Secretariat sees this as a logical next step in refining its current robust planning and reporting processes. This will impact on the new corporate plan.

160. The Director-General clarified that the review team's report is still very much a draft report and that it was presented to obtain feedback from the membership. Before the report is finalised, the team will attempt to visit the remaining countries and will take on board comments from members. The team will communicate with members before disseminating its final report to members. For the Secretariat, the value of tabling this report was to obtain valuable feedback and hear the current consensus from members on the draft report and its key recommendations. The Secretariat will be guided by this consensus as it develops its new corporate plan next year for tabling at the next CRGA meeting.

CRGA Decision

161. CRGA:

- a. commended the review team on its excellent work,
- b. endorsed in principle the draft report and its recommendations,
- c. looked forward to finalisation and dissemination of the report by the review team, taking on board comments by members and the views of member countries, and
- d. noted that the report will form the basis for SPC's future directions in the new corporate plan that will be developed and submitted to CRGA next year.

Agenda Item 4.1 – Staffing issues / Crop remuneration

162. The Senior Deputy Director-General summarised the findings of CRGA Paper 4.1, dealing with CROP staffing and remuneration arrangements. He recalled that CRGA 34 had approved harmonisation of housing and education allowances across all CROP agencies, and that the CROP Harmonisation Working Group had commissioned a report by the Mercer consultancy to comprehensively address the issue. The main question that was posed was whether or not allowances should be treated as benefits. The Working Group Report contained 19 recommendations, all of which were endorsed except for two. SPC proposed maintaining its existing practice regarding housing allowances in Fiji, which he noted had contributed to significant savings to SPC, as it provided an incentive for staff to look for housing at the lower end of the market. He noted the proposed change in how education allowances would be arranged, moving from a 100% contribution by SPC to a 25% contribution by staff, and 75% by SPC. He also addressed the annual tracking of movements in comparative employment markets, referring to the significant spread between the CROP salary scale, and the New Zealand, Australian and Fiji markets, and noted that the average movements in the three markets ranged from 5.13% to 10.62%. CROP Heads have found both recruitment and retention of qualified staff to be difficult; in 2004 about 30% of the positions advertised by CROP organisations attracted fewer than 10 candidates. The worrying issue is not only the low number of applicants, but also that many applicants were not even qualified. A major reason for the difficulty in recruitment is a lack of competitiveness. Because the problem extends across CROP agencies, CROP Heads agreed to recommend to their governing bodies an increase in professional staff salaries based on the movements in the reference markets. The important issue is how the increase can be funded. He noted that the total cost to SPC (of approximately 790,000 CFP units) could be funded for 2006 with no increase in Member's assessed contributions. A total of 236,000 CFP units in the Core budget, and 560,000 CFP units in the non-core budget would be funded through efficiency savings; a positive SDR exchange rate also helped in paying for this increase. Other recommendations being made by SPC to CRGA included a permanent 2% increase in support staff salaries. In addition, SPC proposed to look at an additional one-time 5% increase for support staff, based on movement in the Suva reference market. At the FOC meeting, PIFS endorsed a one-time 5% increase, as did SOPAC.

163. The representative of the US said that the US could not support a formula for education allowances at SPC that was not in line with precedents set in other international government agencies. He also expressed concerns regarding Recommendation 15 (re tax-free status in Fiji) and asked for clarification of the current practice, and whether the proposal was supported by the Government of Fiji.

164. The representative of France requested clarification regarding the financial impact of the increase on the ceiling for the housing allocation in Suva.

165. The representative of Samoa inquired regarding educational allowances and the idea of equity, and asked whether the Working Group had examined how CARACORM and the Commonwealth handle education allowances.

166. The representative of Solomon Islands inquired how SPC could pay for the proposed salary increases in 2007 and 2008.

167. The representative of Cook Islands asked how the 2% increase in local salaries would impact on the 2007 and 2008 assessed contributions.

168. The representative of Australia asked what would be the total impact of all the proposed increases on the core budget.

169. The representative of Guam inquired about the number of existing vacancies, and asked for examples of positions for which recruitment was difficult and their relationship to SPC core-funded programmes.

170. The Senior Deputy Director-General noted that the guiding principle for SPC with respect to whether educational allowances should be a benefit or linked to relocation was equality. When people were recruited to posts, they were recruited in competition with international applicants, regardless of their place of origin. CRGA 34 noted SPC's equal treatment of all staff regardless of their origin or place of recruitment. The CROP Working Group produced a guiding principle – of harmonisation and flexibility – that enabled each CEO to implement the best course of action for that organisation. He noted that education allowances also helped offset the lack of competitiveness with reference markets; morale was important, and team spirit, performance and morale would suffer if the education allowance was cut. The 2% increase for staff was recommended by CROP Heads, and SOPAC and PIFS had approved a one-off payment of 5% as a bonus. He predicted that SPC would likely do the same. He explained that the proposed increase in the maximum housing allowance affected SPC's Fiji staff only, and that just three professionals were now receiving more than the minimum. He noted that SPC had not done a full analysis of the impact of the salary changes on the 2007 budget, but that the organisation had not requested any increase in assessed contributions since 1999. He also indicated that SPC's positive financial picture was due in part to the value of the SDR. He said that the CROP Working Group did explore other arrangements, and said that was why the Mercer consultancy was engaged.

171. A discussion was held on the issue of taxation and the taxation status of Fiji nationals. The Deputy Secretary General of PIFS reiterated that the purpose behind the Mercer report was to achieve harmony between all CROP agencies. He noted that both Fiji and the US had been members of the Working Group that had considered the issue of taxation, and said that the issues tabled during CRGA had not come up during deliberations. The Working Group decided to adopt what was considered best practice. Fiji, through the Working Group, had recognised that some organisations did have special arrangements in place, which in effect meant that people working in those organisations were not taxed. He closed by supporting the manner in which SPC had presented the issue for CRGA's consideration.

172. SPC's Senior Deputy Director-General noted that other CROP governing councils (including the representative of Fiji) had approved the Mercer recommendation regarding tax-free status. He said that SPC's Fiji nationals receive their salaries "net of tax"; he noted that if they were taxed (totalling some FJD 700,000) that a contribution would be made by Fiji. He noted that SOPAC and the UN had special taxation arrangements, and said that SPC staff salaries for both professional and support staff in New Caledonia were also tax free. He noted that the recommendation actually applied to other CROP agencies that did not enjoy the kind of arrangement with Fiji that SPC does.

CRGA decision

173. CRGA:

- a. Noted with appreciation the work undertaken by the CROP Harmonisation Working Group.
- b. Considered and approved all the recommendations as per the Working Group report, including the slight variation in the application of the 75% housing allowance rule as it relates to eligible staff in SPC, Fiji.

- c. Considered and approved the recommendation by CROP Heads to increase CROP professional staff salary scales in line with the average movements in the three reference markets, to take effect from 1 January 2006.
- d. Approved a 2% salary increase for support staff, as approved by CROP Heads.
- e. Noted that SPC's policy with respect to support staff salaries continues to be to adjust salaries according to movements in the relevant local market (Suva and Noumea).
- f. Noted that the Secretariat will be able to absorb the increases within its proposed 2006 budget.
- g. Noted that the USA disassociates itself from the consensus on the recommendations referring to staff housing allowances, while Fiji disassociates itself with respect to the recommendation regarding tax-free status for CROP employees in Fiji.

AGENDA ITEM 4.2 — SPC SUVA SPACE REQUIREMENTS

174. The Senior Deputy Director-General addressed the issue of office space in Suva, noting that the Suva office had grown substantially over the last 9–10 yrs, from 46 staff in 1996 to 102 in 2005. He said that there were also 43 posts in 12 other countries and territories. He explained that Suva offices were currently in four different locations. He spoke about the history of the Pacific Village proposal, which was to provide space for SPC, SOPAC and SPTO, and which had been delayed for some years due to politics, lack of funds, and lack of donor support. He also noted that a cost-benefit study that had been conducted saw the Pacific Village as bringing significant benefits. He summarised by saying that SPC had an immediate need for additional office accommodation (to be supported by the Fiji government) and a longer term need for new offices that could be addressed through the Pacific Village.

175. The representative of Fiji said that Fiji was committed to meeting its obligations to build the Pacific Village and the Fiji government was negotiating with a local funder for the required funds. Funding issues have been the reason for the deferral of the project. An area of land near the sea has been allocated for the project and a design and plans have been drawn up. It is hoped that funds will be available by February 2006. She acknowledged the problems for SPC at its current location in Nabua and said that the government had discussed ways of housing SPC in one location. Possible options included finding a whole floor of a suitable existing building. SOPAC had been allocated one floor of a government building and a similar arrangement could be sought for SPC.

176. The representative of Cook Islands inquired whether there was a fallback position if the Pacific Village funds did not become available. He said he was disappointed that no real progress had been made, and noted that Cook Islands was willing to make other arrangements, and was of course willing to host a regional organisation. He was encouraged by the fact that Fiji was willing to address short-term office space requirements, but noted there were still no assurances regarding the future of the Pacific Village.

177. The representative of French Polynesia inquired if there was additional space at SPC Noumea, and if certain programmes could benefit from being relocated.

178. The representative of Samoa thanked the representative of Fiji for the update on the Pacific Village and noted that there was space available in Apia. He suggested placing a freeze on staff recruitment if current space was so limited. He commented on the composition of the CRGA subcommittee on this issue and said that because other agencies were involved, the subcommittee would have to be broader. He also commented that the Senior Deputy Director-General should be the point of contact for the Fiji Government on this issue.

179. The Senior Deputy Director-General noted that Fiji's Ministry of Foreign Affairs had indicated a preference for the existing committee arrangements, which did not include member countries, but was now willing to consider this. He said that the location of some programmes was historical (e.g. RMP was initially

part of PIFS, and was then transferred to SPC) and said that transferring SPC programmes from Suva to Noumea would require either an increase in the budget allotment or a cut in services, due to the higher service costs in Noumea. He noted that Noumea was also struggling with office space.

180. The Director-General said that both Suva and Noumea programmes were expanding, with Noumea reaching maximum capacity (in terms of office space) in the near future, and noted that Noumea was already examining how to utilise existing storage space as additional office space.

181. The representative of Fiji emphasised her minister's commitment to securing funds before he leaves office (in early 2006). She said that member countries were always welcome to attend meetings regarding the Pacific Village, and noted that the issue of whether the Fiji government should be responsible for paying for office space needed by expanding SPC programmes had been debated by the Fiji government. She stated that PIFS had taken it upon themselves to build their own facilities.

182. The representative of Palau suggested that additional decentralisation might provide a solution to the need for additional office space resulting from expanding SPC programmes.

183. The representative of Guam suggested that increases in staff numbers should be carefully considered, and mentioned the option of municipal leasing programmes as a means of addressing the office space issue.

CRGA Decision

184. CRGA:

a. Noted and welcomed confirmation by the Government of Fiji that:

- (i) Fiji is committed to the Pacific Village Project and will aim to confirm funding arrangements in early 2006; and
- (ii) Fiji will provide additional office space to cater for the immediate short-term space problems faced by SPC's Fiji Regional Office, pending the completion of the Pacific Village.

b. Further noted:

- (i) The concern raised by members on the slow progress of the Pacific Village project; and
- (ii) The offer by some members to host SPC programmes should the Pacific Village project not materialise.

AGENDA ITEM 4.3 — AUDIT REPORTS FINANCIAL YEAR 2004

185. The Director of Corporate Services presented two sets of financial statements: SPC's overall financial statement for 2004, and a provident fund financial statement. He also presented the auditors' review, noting that 2005 marked the eighth consecutive year that SPC's audit had been without qualification. On the question of arrears in payments by member states, he noted that 74% of arrears had now been paid, indicating that SPC was active in pursuing arrears.

186. The Chairman accepted the financial statement and noted that the auditor's report had been provided to the meeting.

187. The representative of the USA expressed his country's pleasure at the fact that SPC had again received a clean audit report. The USA noted that SPC had not mentioned the mechanisms used by the organisation in addressing members' arrears; he encouraged the use of payment plans and similar approaches. He stated his country's agreement with the approach taken by SPC regarding the treatment of arrears.

188. The representative of Australia said she would appreciate an update from those members with outstanding arrears regarding the status of arrears and projected payments.

189. The representative of Cook Islands supported the idea of having an update from members with arrears.

190. The Director-General indicated that SPC used various methods in resolving arrears, and had in at least one case made an agreement with a head of government which enabled payment of the arrears in full. She noted that approach was successful. She said that SPC continuously reminded members of the arrears situation.

191. The Director of Corporate Services discussed the status of members' assessed contributions and arrears.

192. The representative of Pitcairn stated that his country would pay its assessed contribution for 2005 immediately on his return to Auckland. He asked if SPC sent reminders as he had not seen a bill or reminder in 2005.

193. The representative of Tonga confirmed that Tonga's payment for 2005 would be mailed upon the representative's return.

194. The representative of Fiji indicated that the 2005 balance would be cleared upon her return to Fiji.

195. The representative of Palau hoped that the 2005 contribution could be paid by the end of 2005.

196. The representative of FSM noted the outstanding arrears and said he was hopeful that they would be paid shortly.

197. The representative of Solomon Islands indicated that he would address the issue with his government upon his return and work toward payment being made in January.

198. The representative of PNG stated that PNG was making attempts to address its arrears, noting that the finance ministry had competing priorities, and assured members that attempts were being made to get the ministry's assistance in addressing the issue.

199. The representative of French Polynesia requested further information regarding arrears: are these written off if not paid in a timely fashion?

200. The Director of Corporate Services indicated that CRGA 33 (2003) had determined that arrears should not be written off.

CRGA Decision

201. CRGA:

- a. considered and accepted the SPC and Provident Fund Financial Statements and Auditors' Reports for the year 2004, the Management Report on control-related accounting issues, and the Secretariat's response to the Management Report.
- b. Welcomed statements by members reiterating their commitment to paying their assessed contributions, with FSM, PNG and Solomon Islands indicating their particular commitment to paying their arrears.

AGENDA ITEM 4.4 – SELECTION OF AUDITORS, FINANCIAL YEARS 2005–2007

202. The Director of Corporate Services described the process used to call for tenders for the appointment of the SPC auditor.

CRGA Decision

203. CRGA considered and approved the Secretariat's recommendation to appoint the firm of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu of PNG to audit SPC's accounts for the financial years 2005 to 2007.

AGENDA ITEM 4.5 – FINANCIAL YEAR 2005 BUDGET REVISION

204. The Director General presented the mid-year revisions to the FY 2005 budget.

205. The representative of Samoa asked how SPC treated assessed arrears that were received.

206. The Director-General stated that income is booked according to the financial year in which contributions are assessed. Thus, arrears have already been booked as received in previous years.

207. The representative of USA expressed his country's concern about organisations that do excessive mid-year budget revisions. He noted that where transfers are substantial (as they were in 2005), the USA believes CRGA should have a role in decision-making. He noted a 14% increase in the administrative budget, and asked the Secretariat to refrain from making such extensive revisions to future approved budgets, except in extreme circumstances.

208. The representative of Samoa asked if further revisions were likely if arrears continued.

209. The Director-General noted that SPC was very fortunate in that many of SPC's donor members (e.g. Australia and New Zealand) make advance payments on their contributions, and provide substantial payments for non-core budgetary items. This enables SPC to avoid cash-flow problems, even when members are in arrears.

210. The representative of Fiji asked about a recommendation made by CRGA 34 to look at innovative ways to make up the shortfall that resulted from the withdrawal of the UK from the organisation.

211. The Director-General stated that member countries recognised that the shortfall resulting from the UK withdrawal had a potential to impact on the work of the organisation, and that island members joined with donors in accepting a small increase in assessed contributions in order to meet the shortfall. She noted that SPC constantly looked for efficiency gains, whether through technological means, such as video conferences, or in other ways.

212. The representative of Fiji asked if SPC would again rely on advance contributions if there was a shortfall next year.

213. The Director-General responded that she had been heartened by the promises of members that arrears would be paid.

CRGA Decision

214. CRGA noted the report on the mid-year revision of the 2005 Core Budget.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – FINANCIAL YEAR 2006 BUDGET

215. The Director-General indicated that the proposed budget was prepared under the assumption that CRGA would approve the salary increase considered earlier by CRGA. The proposed budget was prepared in the context of an organisation in very good financial health, and with a view to keeping costs low. She noted the favourable impact of exchange rates (the SDR had been relatively stable and favourable to the organisation over the previous two years), and said that the strength of the Australian and New Zealand dollars over the previous two years had had a positive effect, as had the weakening of the FJD against the CFP. She said that staff salaries accounted for 57% of the SPC budget. The projected cost of the proposed salary increases was 790,000 CFP units. The proposed 2% increase for support staff that was included in the budget would cost 61,400 CFP units in total; both salary increases were budgeted from existing resources, which is an approach SPC has followed for some years when facing new funding requirements. The bulk of the core part of the 2006 budget came from assessed contributions. The budget also reflected a transfer (amounting to about 150,000 CFP units) to help Division Heads meet emergency and unforeseen needs; this facility had been extremely useful in recent years. It was used in 2004 when SPC assisted a country with FADs to address serious food security issues. The 2006 non-core budget would be about three times the size of the core budget. Most non-core funds came from donor members; programme funding was guided by multi-year agreements. SPC also received significant project funding from other sources, including the European Commission, the Global Fund, and Taiwan/ROC. Since the budget was prepared, SPC had received additional funding from ADB; an agreement would be signed during the Conference. She also presented a summary of key budgetary features of SPC programmes. The initial proposed budget for SPC for 2006 addressed key funding requirements, given the financial parameters of the organisation. She assured members that their suggestions regarding those programmes that were under-resourced had been taken on board, and said that the budget total — 33, 601,866 CFP units — was the highest ever.

216. The representative of the USA thanked the Secretariat for its work in preparing the 2006 budget. He noted that SPC had achieved distinction in having a transparent budget process, as was noted in the Corporate Review. He also commended SPC for holding administrative costs to well below 10%. He asked for clarification of the statement that the core and non-core salary increases would be absorbed by those respective budgets, and asked if any positions had been moved from the core to the non-core budget to fund the proposed salary increase.

217. The representative of Samoa thanked the Director-General for her very clear budget presentation. He agreed with the comments made by the representative of the USA, and noted that it would be very helpful if country-specific project/budget profiles could be prepared.

218. The representative of Cook Islands thanked the Secretariat for the budget presentation, and expressed his country's concern that the Youth Bureau maintain its existing funding and attract additional funding.

219. The Director General assured the representative of the USA that the salary increases from the core-funded positions would come from that budget, and that increases for non-core positions would be funded from the non-core budget. She stated that there had been no transfers from the core to the non-core budget in preparing the 2006 budget.

CRGA Decision

220. CRGA considered and approved SPC's budget for the year 2006.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – CRGA MEETING VENUE AND CHAIR

CRGA Decision

221. CRGA noted:

- a. The venue for the year 2006 meeting of CRGA 36 will be SPC headquarters in Noumea; members will be advised in due time of exact meeting dates.
- b. The Chairperson for CRGA 36 will be provided by Vanuatu, and the Vice-Chair by Wallis and Futuna.

**THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF
REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(Koror, Palau, 14-17 November 2005)

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Director-General

Ms Lourdes Pangelinan

Senior Deputy Director-General (Suva)

Dr Jimmie Rodgers

Deputy Director-General (Nouméa)

M. Yves Corbel

SPC BUDGET - YEAR 2006

(amounts shown in CFP units: 1 unit = 100 CFP Francs)

	Budget 2006		
	Core	Non-Core	Total
<u>INCOME</u>	8 855 214	24 712 900	33 568 114
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			
CHAPTER I - ADMINISTRATION			
Director-General	333 500	-	333 500
Corporate Services	2 503 769	-	2 503 769
Administration	2 837 269	-	2 837 269
CHAPTER II - PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT / SUPPORT			
Senior Deputy Director General	180 500		180 500
Deputy Director General	299 497		299 497
Director of Marine Resources	262 100		262 100
Director of Land Resources	225 500	71 600	297 100
Planning Unit	149 000	355 800	504 800
Publications Section	815 300		815 300
Information Communication Technology	653 400	113 500	766 900
Translation & Interpretation Section	1 075 400	-	1 075 400
Library	280 300	-	280 300
Programme Management / Support	3 940 997	540 900	4 481 897
CHAPTER III - SOCIAL RESOURCES			
Public Health	268 900	5 714 800	5 983 700
Statistics - Demography	256 400	2 306 200	2 562 600
Pacific Women's Bureau	115 000	350 000	465 000
Pacific Youth Bureau	136 500	155 100	291 600
Cultural Affairs	157 700	164 500	322 200
Community Education Training Centre	117 600	254 600	372 200
Regional Media Centre	321 000	130 600	451 600
Social Resources	1 373 100	9 075 800	10 448 900
CHAPTER IV - MARINE RESOURCES			
Coastal Fisheries	126 600	4 324 900	4 451 500
Oceanic Fisheries	133 500	2 828 100	2 961 600
Maritime	107 900	1 255 800	1 363 700
I Marine Resources	368 000	8 408 800	8 776 800
CHAPTER V - LAND RESOURCES	334 800	6 722 200	7 057 000
COMBINED TOTAL	8 854 166	24 747 700	33 601 866

SUMMARY RECORD OF DECISIONS OF THE FOURTH CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

(Koror, Palau, 18 November 2005)

AGENDA ITEM 2 - REPORT OF THE 35TH MEETING OF CRGA

2.1 – CHAIRPERSON’S LETTER

Conference:

- d) commended the Chair of CRGA 35 for his report and CRGA 35 for their excellent work;
- e) considered the report and noted the decisions of CRGA 34;
- f) considered the report of CRGA 35 and approved the recommendations put forth to Conference by CRGA 35, with the exception of those recommendations considered separately in the agenda of Conference (regarding approval of the Fiscal Year 2006 budget, the results of the SPC corporate review, and the appointment of the new Director-General).

2.2 - FINANCIAL YEAR 2006 BUDGET

Conference adopted the Fiscal Year 2006 budget, as presented by the Director-General and recommended by CRGA 35.

AGENDA ITEM 3 - SPC CORPORATE REVIEW

Conference gave its in-principle approval to the draft Corporate Review and its recommendations, noting that the review team will take on board comments made by CRGA 35, and the views of members, and that the team will visit American Samoa and Tuvalu prior to finalising the review report. Conference noted that the report will guide the Secretariat’s future directions, and will provide guidance to the new Director-General and the executive team as they embark upon the preparation of the organisation’s new Corporate Plan.

AGENDA ITEM 4 - REGIONAL POLICIES AND INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

Conference noted and commended the Secretariat for the work SPC is doing in collaboration with other CROP agencies on the following regional policies and initiatives:

- k) Technical and Vocational Education and Training;
- l) the Millennium Development Goals;
- m) Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy;
- n) the 2005 International Health Regulations;
- o) the threat of an influenza pandemic, especially from avian influenza;
- p) the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control;
- q) National Alcohol Plans;
- r) regional collaboration on agriculture and forestry;
- s) the Digital Strategy; and
- t) the Pacific Plan to strengthen regional cooperation and integration.

Conference endorsed:

- d) the HIV/AIDS Pacific Regional Strategy Implementation Plan (2004-2008), highlighting the

- need to cover all PICTs, and to strengthen national implementation programmes;
- e) the Pacific Health Fund, noting that it needs to be linked to a broader health strategy for the region; and
- f) the Secretariat's initiative to both rationalise and expand information and statistical services, including trade statistics.

Conference agreed:

- d) with respect to deep sea bottom trawling and high seas seamounts, that SPC should work with FFA (Forum Fisheries Agency) and other partners to develop an appropriate management framework regime for consideration by members;
- e) with respect to tuna fisheries:
 - (i) on the urgency of conducting a tuna tagging study to help verify the current status of tuna stocks, and welcomed the New Zealand Government's offer to consider support for the tagging programme, in conjunction with support provided by Papua New Guinea;
 - (ii) that SPC and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) take up the concerns of members regarding possible juvenile tuna fishing in the far west of the Western Central Pacific Ocean, through the post-Forum dialogue process;
- f) with respect to the Hughes report, that non-Forum members of SPC need to be included in the taskforce set up by the Pacific Plan Task Force to further analyse the Hughes report, and welcomed the agreement from PIFS that SPC non-Forum members be included in the task force.

AGENDA ITEM 5 - THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON YOUTH STATEMENT

Conference adopted the Koror Statement on Youth Empowerment for a Secure, Prosperous and Sustainable Future. (The Statement was distributed as a separate document and is appended to this report.)

AGENDA ITEM 6 – APPOINTMENT OF NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Conference, after consideration of the recommendation of CRGA 35, appointed Dr Jimmie Rodgers to the post of Director-General.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – YEAR 2007 CONFERENCE

Conference accepted the offer by Samoa to host the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Pacific Community in Apia, Samoa.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – STATEMENTS BY OBSERVERS

The Conference heard statements by the World Health Organization, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan/ROC. The statements were handed to the Secretariat and are attached to the Conference report.

CLOSING

Conference commended the outgoing Director-General for her service to the Pacific Community and congratulated the Senior Deputy Director-General on his appointment to the position of Director-General.

**SUMMARY OF DECISIONS OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING OF
THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS
HELD IN KOROR, PALAU, 14-17 NOVEMBER 2005**

AGENDA ITEM 1 – DIRECTOR-GENERAL’S REPORT

The CRGA noted the Director-General’s report and congratulated her on this overview and on SPC’s achievements.

AGENDA ITEM 2 - SPC’S SECTORAL PROGRAMMES

2.1 - LAND RESOURCES

CRGA:

- a. noted the presentation on the Land Resources Division;
- b. commended the Director of the Land Resources Division for his excellent presentation, for the informative discussion and for the excellent work carried out by the division; and
- c. noted a request from atoll countries for an increased focus on atoll agriculture.

2.2 - MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION

CRGA:

- a. noted the Marine Resources Division and Forum Fisheries Agency presentations;
- b. thanked the various presenters for their excellent presentations and for the ensuing informative and lively discussion;
- c. adopted the three strategic plans for the Regional Maritime Programme, Ocean Fisheries Programme, and Coastal Fisheries Programme;
- d. welcomed Papua New Guinea’s assistance for the proposed tuna tagging programme; and
- e. encouraged other development partners to join Papua New Guinea in funding the tuna tagging programme.

2.3 - SOCIAL RESOURCES DIVISION

CRGA:

- a. noted the presentations;
- b. thanked the presenters for their presentations and subsequent informative discussion of issues;
- c. adopted the seven strategic plans for the programmes of the Community Education and Training Centre, Cultural Affairs Programme, Information and Communication Technology Section, Pacific Women’s Bureau, Pacific Youth Bureau, Public Health Programme, and Statistics and Demography Programme.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – SPC CORPORATE REVIEW

CRGA:

- a. commended the review team on its excellent work;
- b. endorsed in principle the draft report and its recommendations;
- c. looked forward to finalisation and dissemination of the report by the review team, taking on board comments by members and the views of member countries, including the team's visits to Tuvalu and American Samoa;
- d. noted that the report will form the basis for SPC's future directions in the new corporate plan that will be developed and submitted to CRGA next year.

4.1 - STAFFING ISSUES / CROP REMUNERATION

CRGA:

- a. noted with appreciation the work undertaken by the CROP (Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific) Harmonisation Working Group;
- b. considered and approved all the recommendations as per the Working Group report, including the slight variation in the application of the 75% housing allowance rule as it relates to eligible staff based in SPC, Fiji;
- c. considered and approved the recommendation by CROP Heads to increase CROP professional staff salary scales in line with the average movements in the three reference markets, to take effect from 1 January 2006;
- d. approved a 2% salary increase for support staff, as approved by CROP Heads;
- e. noted that SPC's policy with respect to support staff salaries continues to be to adjust salaries according to movements in the relevant local market (Suva and Noumea);
- f. noted that the Secretariat will be able to absorb the increases within its proposed 2006 budget; and
- g. noted that the United States disassociates itself from the consensus on recommendations 2, 3, 5 and 14 of the Working Group report regarding education allowances, while Fiji and the United States disassociate themselves from the consensus with respect to the recommendation regarding tax-free status for CROP employees in Fiji.

4.2 - SPC SUVA – SPACE REQUIREMENTS

CRGA:

- a. noted and welcomed the confirmation by the Government of Fiji that:
 - (iii) Fiji is committed to the Pacific Village Project and will aim to confirm funding arrangements in early 2006; and
 - (iv) Fiji will provide additional office space to cater for the immediate short-term space problems faced by SPC's Fiji Regional Office, pending the completion of the Pacific Village;

b. and further noted:

- (iii) the concern raised by members on the slow progress of the Pacific Village Project; and
- (iv) the offer by some members to host SPC programmes should the Pacific Village Project not materialise.

4.3 – AUDIT REPORTS – FINANCIAL YEAR 2004

CRGA:

- a. considered and accepted the SPC and Provident Fund Financial Statements and Auditors' Reports for the year 2004, the Management Report on control related accounting issues, and the Secretariat's response to the Management Report; and
- b. welcomed statements by members in further reiterating their commitment to pay their assessed contributions, with Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands indicating their particular commitment to paying their arrears.

4.4 - SELECTION OF AUDITORS – FINANCIAL YEAR 2005-2007

CRGA considered and approved the Secretariat's recommendation to appoint the firm of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu of Papua New Guinea to audit SPC's accounts for the financial years 2005 to 2007.

4.5 - FINANCIAL YEAR 2005 BUDGET REVISION

CRGA noted the report on the mid-year revision of the 2005 Core Budget.

AGENDA ITEM 5 — FINANCIAL YEAR 2006 BUDGET

CRGA agreed to recommend to the 4th Conference of the Pacific Community that it consider and adopt SPC's budget for the year 2006.¹

AGENDA ITEM 6 – APPOINTMENT OF A NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL

This item was discussed *in camera* and the Chairperson of CRGA will report separately on this to the 4th Conference of the Pacific Community.

AGENDA ITEM 7 — CRGA 36 – 2006 (VENUE AND MEETING CHAIRPERSON)

CRGA noted:

- a. the venue for the Year 2006 meeting of CRGA 36 at SPC headquarters in Noumea. Members will be advised in due time of exact meeting dates; and
- b. the Chair for CRGA 36 will be provided by Vanuatu, and the Vice-Chair by Wallis and Futuna.

¹ The budget approved for recommendation by CRGA35 was distributed as a separate document.

AGENDA ITEM 8 — OTHER BUSINESS
(CRGA RESOLUTION ON THE OUTGOING DIRECTOR-GENERAL)

CRGA expressed its deep appreciation to the outgoing Director-General of SPC, Ms Lourdes Pangelinan, for her outstanding vision, leadership and wisdom in guiding the organisation during the six years of her tenure. CRGA noted that under her guidance the organisation has grown both in size and scope as determined by emerging priorities of the SPC membership. CRGA wishes the Director-General every success and happiness in her future endeavours. In addition, CRGA also commends the excellent performance by members of her executive team whose tenure would come to end before the next CRGA.