

REPORT OF THE

**FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS
(CRGA 48)**

(Noumea, New Caledonia, 26–28 June 2018)

© Pacific Community (SPC) 2018

All rights for commercial/for profit reproduction or translation, in any form, reserved. SPC authorises the partial reproduction or translation of this material for scientific, educational or research purposes, provided that SPC and the source document are properly acknowledged. Permission to reproduce the document and/or translate in whole, in any form, whether for commercial/for profit or non-profit purposes, must be requested in writing. Original SPC artwork may not be altered or separately published without permission.

Original text: English

Pacific Community Cataloguing-in-publication data

Report of the Forty-Eighth Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations [CRGA 48], (Noumea, New Caledonia, 26–28 June 2018) / Pacific Community

(Report of SPC Conference / Pacific Community)

ISSN: 1017-9283

1. Pacific Community. Conference — Congresses.
2. Pacific Community. Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations — Congresses.

I. Title. II. Pacific Community. III. Series.

341.246

AACR2

ISBN: 978-982-00-1143-4

ISSN: 1017-9283

Published by The Pacific Community (SPC) and printed at SPC headquarters

Noumea, New Caledonia, 2018

Contents

Report of the Forty-Eighth Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations

Report of proceedings

Decisions of the Forty-Eighth Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations

Annexes

1. List of participants
2. Statements of observers

European Union [*not provided*]

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit

Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)

The International Organisation of la Francophonie

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

University of the South Pacific

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

The notes for each agenda item consist of the summary paragraph, as approved by CRGA 48, the key discussion points raised by delegates, and the decisions made by the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – OPENING

Summary

1. The 48th meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA 48) opened on 27 June 2018, at the headquarters of the Pacific Community (SPC) in Noumea, New Caledonia. The meeting was chaired by Niue, with Palau as Vice-Chair, and was attended by representatives of the following SPC members – Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America (USA) and Vanuatu – and by observers and partners, including Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the European Union (EU), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), the International Organisation of la Francophonie (OIF), Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), South Pacific Tourism Office (SPTO), and University of the South Pacific (USP).

Opening formalities

2. The Chair, Niue, opened the meeting. Tuvalu gave the opening prayer.
3. Chair: The Chair indicated that the meeting was important for SPC, as the decisions would influence the future of the organisation and its governance. The Chair noted that there would be an emphasis and focus on Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) cohesion and financial matters. The Chair reminded delegates that the meeting would be ‘paper-smart’.

Pacific Community Director-General (D-G) summary (welcome)

4. D-G: The D-G welcomed all delegates to Noumea, and noted with appreciation that all member states were represented. The D-G observed that with CRGA and Conference, in addition to other interactions with member states throughout the year, such as ministerial and heads of sector meetings, SPC’s engagement with members has been quite robust.

Adoption of agenda and nomination of Drafting Committee

5. DG: The D-G provided an overview of the agenda, and announced his nomination by Pacific Ministers of Health as a candidate for the Regional Director for the Western Pacific Office of the World Health Organization (WHO). The D-G explained that the agenda would therefore include a closed discussion on the D-G recruitment process.
6. Chair: The Chair asked members giving statements to be mindful of RMI’s request for members to provide a report on activities they have underway with SPC.
7. The Chair proposed the adoption of the agenda, which was moved by Fiji. The Chair called for the establishment of the Drafting Committee, which would be chaired by Palau (CRGA Vice-Chair). The

following countries and territories formed the Committee: Australia, Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, France, RMI, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, United States and Vanuatu.

Record for the CRGA meeting

8. It was proposed that the Drafting Committee would focus on decisions and outcomes, rather than on the full record of proceedings. The meeting report, which would be a synthesis of the main discussion, would be sent to all delegations after the meeting for member comment.

Adoption of working hours

9. The Chair set out the hours for the meeting. The working languages of SPC are French and English and this meeting would be conducted in both French and English, and would be chaired in English.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – DIRECTOR-GENERAL’S REPORT

Presentation

Summary

10. The Director-General (D-G) placed the D-G’s report in the context of reflection on the D-G coming towards end of term, and the ongoing challenges around SPC’s financial sustainability. Delivering relevant and efficient services to members remains SPC’s priority. The concept of universal availability is increasingly difficult to sustain, which makes it important for SPC to look at where it can most efficiently provide support to members. The D-G acknowledged members’ requests that the Secretariat clarify areas for de-prioritisation as part of the ongoing prioritisation process. The D-G observed that prioritisation of SPC’s work is only part of the review process around appropriate delivery of services to members. The D-G placed the ongoing prioritisation process in the context of changing development contexts, and the fact that SPC’s configuration had remained largely unchanged for many years. The D-G affirmed the ongoing importance of SPC’s engagement with agencies of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP). Divisional and organisational structure is under ongoing review, under a change and transformation agenda, and a proposal to analyse the costs and benefits of any potential decentralisation was put forward. The D-G summarised highlights across divisions and programmes, and affirmed that the Secretariat aims to make integrated programming and cross-divisional work the norm across SPC. The CRGA Subcommittee on Strategic Plan Implementation (Subcommittee) has been working hard in the areas under its mandate, and provides a very important support role to the Secretariat. The Pacific Community Results Report is a concise report on SPC’s achievements, and the Subcommittee has indicated its overall support for the latest report produced by the Secretariat, as well as for the abbreviated highlights format. The Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020 is ambitious, and financial and resource restraints have constrained some achievements. Engagement with members remains critical to SPC’s purpose, and SPC’s presence and engagement with members has been affected by those constraints. Members’ arrears remains an issue for SPC, and has substantially impacted SPC’s financial position. The Secretariat has implemented the policy on members’ arrears that was approved by members in 2017, and the D-G brought to members’ attention that this has been disruptive, and he shared examples with members. Country Programming remains a priority for the Secretariat – the former joint country strategies have been replaced, as agreed with members, and alternative models have been tested and will be discussed further with members.
11. The D-G discussed the current roadmap for the Strategic Plan 2016–2020. The D-G noted that as the Plan is ambitious, and due to the financial challenges of recent years, SPC has struggled in a few areas. He noted that one of the consequences of limited resources is that SPC has not had adequate visibility

and engagement with members, and needs to improve in this area. The D-G noted that at the time the Strategic Plan was adopted, members agreed to the establishment of the CRGA Subcommittee on Strategic Plan Implementation (Subcommittee), to guide and monitor implementation. He also explained that with the change of the timing of the CRGA meeting, from November to June, the Subcommittee has played an important role in the approval process for the budget. The D-G also acknowledged the contributions of the Subcommittee in improvements made to the annual Pacific Community Results Report.

12. The last few years have been dedicated to repositioning SPC, and the D-G noted that a number of changes have been made within the organisation. There is a new culture emerging in which divisions and programmes reflect on and plan according to what SPC should be doing. Considerable time has been spent on setting fewer priorities for SPC. However, this has been a challenge, as members have different needs and perspectives. The Subcommittee has been instrumental in guiding this work.
13. There has been a chronic fragile financial situation at SPC. The D-G commended the work of the Director of Finance (Martin van Weerdenburg) in working to improve the organisation's financial position. The D-G also mentioned the challenge of member arrears, and the material impact this situation has on SPC's financial position. He acknowledged the efforts of those members who have cleared their arrears, and shared with the meeting the challenges of implementing the arrears policy approved by CRGA in 2017. He urged all members to honour their commitments, which would have a significant impact on SPC's financial position.
14. SPC is increasingly moving towards integrated programming. In the annual Results Report, there is a greater focus on impact and results, in terms of what has been accomplished with the money entrusted to SPC. The D-G discussed his commitment over the years to a more coordinated approach to professional development in the organisation, as he considers it the responsibility of employers to ensure staff gain skills during their tenure. He noted that this is not currently available to all employees.
15. A key consideration is reviewing divisions to ensure they are fit for purpose and align with the Strategic Plan. All divisions, with the exception of the Public Health Division (PHD), have been through a review process.
16. The Communications function did not exist when the current D-G began at SPC. The D-G noted that SPC currently has a dedicated Communications function, which is particularly successful from a social media perspective, but there is a need to improve public awareness of SPC and what it does. The D-G noted that the Director of Communications would provide an update on the new SPC website.
17. Chair: The Chair thanked the D-G for his report, noting that it has been a challenging period, including the fragile financial situation. The Chair encouraged members to consider cost-sharing when requesting support from the Secretariat, and invited members to comment on the D-G's presentation.
18. Australia: With regard to SPC's financial position, the delegate noted the importance of the consistent application of project management (PM) fees, sufficient host country grants, and resource mobilisation. The delegate inquired about the training and support staff receive for discussing full cost recovery (FCR) with partners. On the topic of the change agenda, Australia commended the work of SPC, and of the Subcommittee for the assistance and direction it has provided to the Secretariat. In the context of SPC's financial constraints, the delegate emphasised the need for SPC's 10 priority areas to be rigorously embedded across divisions, and the importance of investing in fewer areas of work and giving further consideration to areas where SPC should divest. The delegate expressed an interest in knowing about processes and systems that will ensure new projects are tailored to SPC priorities and that divisions do not accept low priority projects – i.e. project review boards and senior leadership

oversight of new projects. The delegate also encouraged SPC to continue to invest in its staffing to ensure prioritisation is truly embedded within the organisation.

19. Members requested that the D-G continue his presentation before providing further comments.

Change agenda

20. D-G: The Secretariat has agreed on 10 priority areas where it is believed further investment and development would make a difference, but the Secretariat has been less successful in identifying areas where it wants to do less. The intention is that the 10 priority areas will guide investment; however it does not mean that SPC stops working in areas that are not included on this list. In deciding on priorities, what needs to be asked is whether it is an area where SPC is best positioned to carry out the work, and, if so, how it can improve in that area.
21. The Deputy Director-General (DDG) Suva is leading the implementation of cross-divisional, cross-team programming, and the progress is encouraging. There is also a process underway to replace the previous joint country strategies with improved country programming.

Financial position and outlook

22. With regard to SPC's financial situation, significant work has been done to improve systems, implement FCR, and improve project execution. A key risk for SPC is the expected deficit in the 2019 budget. The D-G noted that, while SPC has so far been able to continue to provide the same range and level of services, this will no longer be possible. For example, SPC may need to review and scale back one or more of its programmes. The D-G noted that SPC has not approached members for an increase in their contribution, but that this may need to be raised as a discussion topic, in addition to the issue of arrears.

Divisional structures and strategy

23. The D-G commended the work of the Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) and its Director (Michelle Belisle), noting that EQAP has been able to secure necessary resources to run an effective assessment programme. The merger of the Geoscience Division (GSD) and the Economic Development Division (EDD) is almost complete, and a new business plan is in place for the new division: Gesocience, Energy and Maritime (GEM) Division. The Land Resources Division (LRD) is making good progress, and a business plan has been agreed by Heads of Agriculture. The D-G noted that he made a deliberate decision to make changes from the previous leadership of LRD, as there were concerns that LRD was not providing what countries needed. SPC is now focusing on areas that members have identified as important, including food security. The D-G was happy to announce that the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) has received support from a number of development partners as a result of the Team's fundraising efforts. The Social Development Programme (SDP) is currently refining its core purpose, with a focus on mainstreaming its areas of focus – gender, youth and culture – across SPC. The Statistics for Development Division (SDD) underwent a review last year, which determined that the division's focus ought to be on analysis and dissemination of information. The Public Health Division (PHD) has made good progress on mobilising resources for its work; PHD received a substantial contribution from the French government towards surveillance work in the region. The Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability (CCES) Team has made good progress in the implementation of its business plan. An extension of funding for CCES was confirmed during the visit of the French President, H.E. Emmanuel Macron, to Noumea in May 2018. The Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division underwent an independent evaluation last year, and is in the process of implementing changes from that review.

24. The D-G reported on various SPC partnerships. Regarding some members' concerns about SPC's relationships with other CROP agencies, the D-G assured delegates that these relationships continue to improve, and said that meetings with CROP deputies and heads are held regularly. It was noted that the annual high-level meetings with New Zealand and Australia are very valuable in terms of anticipating and agreeing on issues of importance to SPC and respective governments. SPC has made good progress on resolving ineligible expenses related to EU funding; the quantum of ineligible funding continues to be reduced as the teams work out the basis of those claims.

Looking to the future

25. Considerable thought has been given to where SPC is heading, and there are ongoing efforts to improve its systems. It is important for the region to have a scientific and technical organisation that is sustainably financed and performing optimally. The D-G discussed the importance of reviewing SPC's structure and infrastructure. He noted that the logistics of having headquarters in Noumea and the Suva regional office generally works well. With regard to the regional offices, the D-G explained that the investment of core resources is meant to be leveraged by those offices to generate additional revenue. Raising money in the north, for the Pohnpei office, has been particularly difficult. The D-G also noted that SPC is currently in discussions with the Government of Solomon Islands about discontinuing the current arrangement and rethinking SPC's presence there. The Melanesian office in Port Vila has been somewhat more successful in mobilising resources. The D-G noted the importance of reflecting on whether SPC is organised in the best way possible. He asked what opportunities might exist to strengthen SPC's presence in member states, develop new partnerships, and improve engagement with other members of SPC. One idea put forth was relocating LRD to Apia, Samoa, where other key institutions are located. The D-G invited comments on exploring this and other possibilities. He said such considerations must factor in a cost-benefit analysis, and the impact of further decentralisation.

26. SPC has become clearer on its priorities, and is reasonably well positioned to meet the challenges of the future. However, despite best efforts, SPC's financial situation remains a risk area. There has been a change of behaviour internally, and people are thinking carefully about new programmes. There has been considerable investment in improving the organisation's systems.

27. Chair: The Chair introduced a comment from Kiribati, whose delegate was not yet in attendance, regarding the importance of developing country programming through a cost-effective, consultative approach.

Plenary discussion

28. USA: The delegate acknowledged the wide range of efforts made by SPC, from ICT improvements to implementing FCR to the culture change around learning and results. SPC is on a promising path towards modernising operations and improving delivery, and positioning itself as the premier scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific. USA noted appreciation of the candid and frank assessment of the financial situation, and that SPC has not asked members to increase their contributions, recognising that additional options may need to be explored. The delegate requested further information about the impact of the new arrears policy. USA expressed interest in the de-prioritisation process, and in learning who will be filling these gaps. USA also asked for more information about potential decentralisation plans.

29. France: France expressed support for establishing priority areas, and of continuing to apply a cross-cutting approach to divisional work. The delegate noted support of GEM and the establishment of the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean (PCCOS). France thanked SPREP representatives for their attendance, and emphasised the importance of CROP agencies coordinating efforts and avoiding

duplication. The delegate confirmed the partnership agreement between France and SPC, to be signed in 2019, and thanked SPC for organising the High-level Dialogue on Climate Change and Biodiversity, held in May 2018. France commended SPC's communication efforts, and the introduction of a data portal. The delegate discussed the importance of regional statistics, in order to better define public policies. France emphasised the importance of conducting a cost-benefit analysis for any potential decentralisation initiatives. The delegate told the meeting that FCR should not operate to restrict or impede treaty obligations, such as providing bilingual services.

30. Cook Islands: The delegate commended the Secretariat on managing a challenging financial situation, and for the progress made under the Strategic Plan, with the valuable guidance of the Subcommittee. Cook Islands echoed the USA's request for additional information on the process of de-prioritising, and asked how members can be better engaged, as well as clarification on the role of ministerial decisions, citing a recent decision at the Pacific Ministers of Culture meeting for SPC to prioritise culture. The delegate acknowledged the complexity of balancing recommendations from ministers and resource requirements and limitations.
31. D-G: Responding to comments from members, the D-G explained that the consequences of the arrears policy include members being unable to fund their attendance at meetings, such as CRGA, and also no longer being able to participate in certain activities and programmes. The D-G provided one example of de-prioritisation, in which PHD decided to no longer provide services in the area of sexual and reproductive health; however conversations were held with UNFPA and WHO to ensure any gaps were filled. On decentralisation, the D-G noted that the aim is to seek endorsement to explore opportunities – not necessarily for whole divisions, but perhaps components of divisions – and that cost-benefit analysis will be central to this process. Addressing the question from Cook Islands regarding prioritisation and the input of ministers, the D-G affirmed that culture is important in the region and in SPC's work in social inclusion, and that ministerial-level outcomes do form a critical part of planning, but that resource implications cannot be ignored. He noted that current capacity in the area of culture is limited to one person.
32. DDG (Suva): In line with the Strategic Plan, SPC is committed to strengthening engagement and collaboration with members. SPC is also committed to multidisciplinary approaches and ensuring we are delivering more sustainable integrated outcomes for member states. SPC is making continuous improvements in developing a multi-sectoral approach and identifying cross-divisional synergies. SPC is also committed to ensuring gender, youth and culture, and the application of a rights-based approach, is embedded in all of its programming. Country programming is a high priority for SPC, and will reflect the internal work that the Secretariat has done to strengthen integrated programming.
33. Samoa: The delegate discussed the importance of consultation between CROP agencies and countries regarding the prioritisation process for the region. On the topic of decentralisation, the delegate noted that the infrastructure exists in Apia for organisations that wish to consider this option. Samoa suggested that members must be prepared to co-finance/cost-share, given SPC's financial position. The delegate urged SPC to insist that member countries be represented at the highest level at CRGA.
34. New Caledonia: The delegate joined France in noting that FCR should not operate in a way which impedes the provision of bilingual services. On decentralisation, New Caledonia noted that it would be useful for SPC to consult with SPREP, which undertook a cost-benefit study some years ago. It would be interesting to have outlined the contributions of divisions to the various priority areas under the Strategic Plan. The delegate asked for an update on the admission of Timor-Leste as a member. The delegate thanked the D-G for including the joint Staff Representative Committee (SRC) report, which provided a view of internal operations, and also thanked the staff for setting out their concerns and proposed solutions. New Caledonia noted that it would like to discuss the specific recommendations put forward by staff.

35. Vanuatu: The delegate acknowledge Vanuatu's responsibility as host government to support the work of SPC. The Government is committed to ensuring work is done to support national priorities and regional priorities. The delegate wished to place on record Vanuatu's appreciation to CRGA, for the services provided by SPC through the Suva and Melanesia offices. The Melanesia Office has greatly assisted in enhancing SPC's visibility nationally and sub-regionally, especially with regard to scientific and technical capabilities. The delegate noted members' comments on the need for prioritisation to include a consultative but cost-effective approach. Vanuatu said that it welcomes further discussions on decentralisation that factor in costs. Acknowledging the 2019 deficit, the Government of Vanuatu is grateful for the assistance provided by SPC, particularly LRD, which provided support for the Pacific Week of Agriculture.
36. New Zealand: The delegate echoed Samoa's suggestion that SPC and other CROP agencies leverage existing opportunities to strengthen cohesion and gather information for prioritisation, by taking advantage of, and sending representatives to, existing regional consultations and meetings. New Zealand welcomes further work on identifying and moving out of lower priority areas, which are covered by other agencies. On decentralisation, the delegate suggested that the Secretariat come back to members with specific proposals, including cost-benefit analysis. The delegate requested further details on the challenges arising from the arrears policy. New Zealand also noted the SRC report, and requested high-level reactions to it. The delegate noted the reduction in liability in the EU audit process, and sought clarity on whether further reductions are expected. The delegate raised the issue of the referendum in New Caledonia, and requested an update on discussions between SPC and the Government.
37. Australia: The delegate requested further information on the process and criteria for conducting a cost-benefit analysis for decentralisation. Australia asked how prioritisation and FCR are being embedded in the work of staff, and what support and training they have received. Australia would like ongoing updates on how the new Social and Environmental Responsibility Policy will be used, and asked how social inclusion, gender, youth and disability will be integrated into SPC's work. Echoing Kiribati, Australia requested that the Secretariat continue to engage with Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) on country programming.
38. Fiji: The delegate requested that the Secretariat undertake close discussions and engagement with member countries and territories on the issue of decentralisation, especially with those hosting SPC divisions and teams.
39. FSM: The delegate emphasised that FSM continues to depend and rely on SPC expertise, and thanked SPC for accommodating its request to reduce its host grant contribution.
40. DG: The D-G thanked Samoa for its intervention on CROP cohesion. The D-G encouraged all members to send the appropriate representatives to forums such as CRGA. The D-G acknowledged appreciation for the suggestion around cost-sharing between the countries and SPC. It was noted that the question of Timor-Leste's membership is no longer an active issue for SPC. On the joint SRC report, the D-G noted that a number of the recommendations from the paper are currently being pursued – e.g. occupational health and safety. On the consequences of the arrears policy, the D-G explained that he wished to draw the membership's attention to the implications of its implementation, but was not suggesting changes to the policy. The recommendation to better articulate the de-prioritisation process was noted. It is expected that the EU ineligible expenses will continue to decline. Regarding the referendum, SPC does not involve itself in political issues, and the engagement with French and New Caledonian officials on the upcoming referendum has been based on issues of safety and security for staff. The D-G assured members that they will be engaged, and provided with detailed information on any decentralisation proposals.

41. RMI: The delegate echoed the points raised by Samoa, that CROP agencies ought to coordinate country visits and consultations, to strengthen regional prioritisation and cohesion and to avoid duplication. RMI asked whether professional development opportunities at SPC require any conditions – e.g. being tied to the organisation for a specified period – in terms of return on investment. RMI echoed previous member comments about the importance of appropriate member representation at CRGA and Conference, and proposed that the Secretariat send a circular to member states to reiterate the level of representation expected at such forums. The delegate also encouraged better pooling of resources between CROP agencies for maximum results.
42. France: The delegate acknowledged the question regarding discussions around the referendum in New Caledonia, and assured members that France will do everything possible to ensure the safety of SPC staff.
43. D-G: The D-G shared his view that SPC does not subscribe to the concept of bonding with regard to professional development, and is committed to investing in SPC staff and Pacific people. The D-G thanked RMI for the suggestion to send a reminder regarding expectations of high-level representation at forums, such as CRGA and Conference.
44. CRGA:
 - i. noted the progress being made in the SPC change and transformation agenda;
 - ii. noted the continuing weak financial situation of SPC;
 - iii. approved the exploration of further decentralisation of selected SPC teams, including analysis of the costs and benefits of various options for CRGA consideration, and consultation with members over decentralisation proposals;
 - iv. directed the Secretariat to develop country programmes with each Pacific Island country and territory (PICT) member, through a cost-effective, consultative approach;
 - v. recognising the outcomes from the Fourth Ministers for Culture Meeting in Nadi, Fiji, in May 2018, directed the Secretariat to add culture to priority 8, alongside human rights, gender equality and youth.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

AGENDA ITEM 3A – PACIFIC COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR OCEAN SCIENCE (PCCOS)

Summary

45. The Secretariat updated CRGA on its activities to develop the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS), following the approval by the Tenth Conference of the Pacific Community in 2017 for the establishment of the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science, to be hosted by SPC. The first phase of PCCOS is the establishment of a virtual centre that brings together all of SPC's internal scientific and technical expertise in ocean science. PCCOS's scope includes partnerships with CROP agencies, international organisations engaged in ocean science and key ocean research institutions. SPC's 'One SPC' data IT project team is working on a PCCOS e-portal project, to develop the PCCOS knowledge portal as an important thematic area within the data and knowledge hub that is under development – the Pacific Data Hub. Mobilisation of resources for PCCOS as part of a larger, integrated SPC project is being explored with potential donor partners. Initial steps towards establishing PCCOS partnership agreements have been discussed with CROP agencies and key international ocean

research institutions, including the French Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD). A consultant has been engaged to develop a ten-year PCCOS strategy, with guidance from the PCCOS Project Board. The process will include consultation with SPC members on their needs for ocean information and science and their potential contribution. A sub-regional needs analysis will be undertaken, and the needs assessment will be expanded if additional funding is identified.

46. Director – FAME (Moses Amos): PCCOS will become a flagship for scientific excellence, and a dedicated knowledge hub. The Centre brings together international expertise, and will ensure data across ocean science disciplines is available and accessible to SPC member countries and territories and to partners, to ensure evidence-based policies for conservation of ocean resources. In March 2018, funding was provided under the SPC Innovation Fund. A project board will oversee the establishment of the Centre. A PCCOS consultant (Andrew Wright) will undertake consultations with members to prepare a ten-year strategy. The Secretariat is currently investigating potential partnerships. The FAME Director thanked France for the support it has provided to PCCOS.

Plenary discussion

47. Pitcairn: The delegate discussed the plastics problem in Pitcairn, and the efforts underway to raise awareness of plastic pollution in oceans, and to track accumulation rates of plastic as well as to identify its source. The delegate noted Pitcairn’s interest in sharing results through PCCOS.
48. Australia: The delegate acknowledged the value and importance of PCCOS and suggested that the portal include appropriate links to other data portals in the region, including those managed by other CROP agencies. Australia expressed an interest in hearing about SPC’s long-term plans for data management, and how it plans to ensure the sustainability of PCCOS, and the participation of member countries. Australia said it would be happy to provide advice and support to the PCCOS consultant.
49. Director – FAME: The purpose of PCCOS is to harness oceans-related information and apply a strong, coordinated approach to communicating ocean science in order to support evidence-based decision-making and policymaking. The FAME Director provided a hypothetical ‘good-news story’ from the future, in which, because of PCCOS, local fishers are aware of fair prices for sea cucumber, and communities and women benefit economically. The success of the project will depend on countries’ willingness to share data. PCCOS will encourage Pacific-based innovation, and provide increased visibility to funders.
50. New Caledonia: The delegate congratulated SPC on its collaboration with CROP agencies in laying the foundation for PCCOS. New Caledonia said it is important to benefit from the experience of initiatives taking place in other countries and territories, such as the plastics initiative shared by Pitcairn, and New Caledonia’s Natural Park of the Coral Sea.
51. France: The delegate affirmed France’s support for PCCOS, and noted the need for more efficiency and cooperation in resource management.
52. Fiji: The delegate asked about whether partnerships had been established with research institutions and countries.
53. Cook Islands: The delegate asked about the application of the PCCOS model across SPC’s work programmes, and what work has been done with CROP agencies and other partners to establish the Centre as a regional hub, and what the resourcing is for the Centre.
54. Director – FAME: The next phase of the project will include the PCCOS consultant travelling to the countries and meeting with CROP agencies. The next phase will include an exploration of partnerships with CROP agencies and key research agencies.

55. CRGA:

- i. noted the progress made by the Secretariat in establishing the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS);
- ii. requested that the Secretariat provide an update to CRGA 49 on further progress made in establishing PCCOS.

AGENDA ITEM 3B – PACIFIC HUB FOR LEARNING AND INNOVATION

Summary

56. The Secretariat presented an update to CRGA on the Secretariat's exploration of the feasibility of developing a multi-stakeholder Pacific Hub for Learning and Innovation, as directed by the Tenth Conference of the Pacific Community in 2017. The Pacific Learning and Innovation Hub (Hub) was envisaged as a potential collaborative platform, designed by Pacific Island countries and territories, CROP agencies and other stakeholders, including the private sector, to advance novel ideas and solutions to Pacific development challenges. The Secretariat updated CRGA on its research into the need for innovation and documentation, and sharing of learning in the Pacific, the level of CROP interest in a regional Hub concept, and the innovation capability in the Secretariat to support the Hub. The Secretariat requested member input in relation to whether the Secretariat should continue exploring alternative models of partnership and opportunities to support innovation in the region.
57. Strategy, Performance and Learning (SPL) Acting Director (Emily Sharp): The Conference tasked the Secretariat to assess the feasibility of a multi-stakeholder learning hub. The Secretariat met with Deputy CROP leaders at a recent meeting and engaged with them on the collective need for such a platform. There was no agreement as to what such a platform should look like.
58. Chair: Based on the presentation by SPL's Acting Director, there appeared to be little interest in exploring the idea of a learning hub further. Based on SPC's current priorities, further pursuit of the hub may be something CRGA wished to halt.

Plenary discussion

59. D-G: As explained by the Acting Director of SPL, the reaction from colleagues was less than enthusiastic. Additionally, the current funding arrangements for CROP agencies and for SPC are inflexible, and do not allow for creativity and innovation. SPC will continue to do this work internally, within the resources currently available. The region is devoid of mechanisms and capabilities to foster cross-agency innovation.
60. New Caledonia: The region should consider other partnership models for supporting innovation in the Pacific region. It is important to develop a strong link between the person responsible for resource mobilisation, and innovation policy; one cannot happen without the other.
61. Cook Islands: Cook Islands supported a focus on internal mechanisms on innovation, such as an innovation fund.
62. Vanuatu: The delegate echoed sentiments calling for further exploration of alternative models for fostering innovation. Vanuatu extended its support for PCCOS, noting that it was encouraged by the Centre's aim to provide a coordinated approach to managing ocean-related data.

63. Australia: The delegate noted Australia would like to hear feedback from CROP agencies as their thinking develops on where the hub should sit. A dedicated innovation function requires a lot of resources and expertise. The delegate encouraged the Secretariat to think about resource issues, and to continue to explore opportunities for innovation across the full spectrum of its work.
64. DDG (Suva): The DDG (Suva) noted that a number of CROP agencies were undertaking their own initiatives; these agencies want more time to think about the utility of what SPC is proposing. The DDG (Suva) noted that the agencies did not say they want to discard the idea of the learning hub altogether, but that they wish to reflect on their own work at this time.
65. CRGA:
- i. noted the early research and assessment work conducted by the Secretariat on the need for a Pacific Hub for Learning and Innovation (Hub), and innovation capabilities within the Secretariat to meet that need;
 - ii. noted the CROP Deputies' discussion of the Hub and their wish to further consider the utility of a regional platform against their agencies' individual plans and priorities for learning and innovation;
 - iii. requested the Secretariat to continue to explore opportunities for fostering innovation within SPC.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

AGENDA ITEM – 4.1A: REPORT FROM THE PACIFIC BOARD FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY (PBEQ) – A CRGA SUB-COMMITTEE – THE PBEQ REPORT TO CRGA

Summary

66. CRGA received the outcomes of the third (3rd) annual meeting of the Pacific Board for Educational Quality (PBEQ) subcommittee (PBEQ Subcommittee), as agreed by the members of the PBEQ Subcommittee on 23 March 2018. The Secretariat presented the key decisions from the board meeting, including direction from the PBEQ Subcommittee that: SPC's Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) will further investigate achievement levels and develop actions to improve capacity, resources and confidence in the qualification across participating countries; EQAP will do further work to identify the mechanics of mutual recognition and provide further information on how mutual recognition could work in the Pacific region, taking into consideration the implications and obligations of the Tokyo Convention and PACER Plus; and EQAP will coordinate the data collection for the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) second Catalogue of Learning Assessments and support countries in verifying and updating data already collected in the first Catalogue of Learning Assessments. A terms of reference for EQAP was developed and endorsed by the PBEQ at its March 2016 meeting, and was endorsed by CRGA out of session in late 2017.
67. DDG (Suva): This was the first time presenting the PBEQ as a standing item at CRGA. The PBEQ Subcommittee provides advice to SPC on national and regional developments in educational assessment. The PBEQ Subcommittee's discussions this year addressed the low achievement of the seventh form certificate, regional qualifications and issues of mutual recognition across the region, and the collection of national education data. The DDG noted that, after a long period of financial vulnerability, EQAP has established formal partnerships with the Australian Department of Foreign

Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). The current director of EQAP has implemented a new way of working with members and a new methodology to address country requests. Countries should now be able to align their requests with their own national processes. Due to new software, this year EQAP has managed to deliver seventh form certificate results to countries in a timely manner. EQAP has also accredited eight regional qualifications – a global first in the areas of climate change and resilience.

68. CRGA:

- i. noted the report of the PBEQ Subcommittee.

AGENDA ITEM 4.1B – UPDATE ON YOUTH HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE OUTCOMES – PACIFIC YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Summary

69. The Secretariat presented a summary of SPC’s contribution to the implementation of the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) 2014–2023, which was identified as a standing CRGA agenda item at CRGA 45. Priority areas of work are: integrated programming; youth indicators; youth employment; youth engagement; and youth policy. CRGA affirmed support for the Secretariat’s work on youth issues in the Pacific. The Secretariat identified the lack of resources, regionally, committed to support for youth in the Pacific, and noted the need for further investment in youth in the Pacific.
70. D-G: Despite rhetoric about young people being the future, funding support for youth and youth development has been lacking. The PYDF has been included as a standing item on the agenda, however there has not been any particularly notable developments in the last year. SPC’s Social Development Programme has continued to do what it can with the limited resources it has available. SPC is looking to mainstream youth issues across SPC programmes. The D-G asked the development partners in attendance to think about whether youth is an area that might fit their own development objectives. There is a need to improve data collection and analysis pertaining to young people.

Plenary discussion

71. New Zealand: The delegate echoed the D-G’s call for partners to get behind youth work in the Pacific.

72. CRGA:

- i. noted the progress of members in increasing their focus on the youth sector, and related capacity and investment;
- ii. considered the readiness of members and development partners to promote opportunities for youth, in particular by addressing youth unemployment;
- iii. endorsed the focus on strengthening national systems for youth statistics, including increasing SPC’s capacity to monitor the status of youth through data and analysis;
- iv. recognised the need for additional dedicated resources from all stakeholders to support efforts to address youth priorities.

**AGENDA ITEM 5 – STRATEGIC PLAN MONITORING AND RESULTS REPORTING FOR THE PACIFIC
COMMUNITY –
REPORT FROM THE CRGA SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

Summary

73. The Chair of the CRGA Subcommittee on Strategic Plan Implementation (the Subcommittee) thanked outgoing members of the Subcommittee, and welcomed incoming members. The Chair of the Subcommittee updated CRGA on the Subcommittee’s meeting on 29 and 30 May 2018, at which the Subcommittee considered the following matters: the draft Pacific Community Results Report 2017 (Results Report) and self-assessment of progress; the Pacific Community Results Report 2017 – Results Highlights; SPC prioritisation; the mid-term review (Review) of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020 (Strategic Plan) and partnership survey; Country results summaries; and SPC’s budget for the financial year ending 31 December 2019. The Secretariat has provided a new set of reports this year – Country Results Summaries – to report on activities in member states, and the Subcommittee assessed the report formats. Members were supportive of the comprehensive Results Report produced by the Secretariat. The Subcommittee asked the Secretariat to provide a deeper explanation about how it conducts the self-assessment of progress in the Results Report.

Plenary discussion

74. Samoa: The delegate commented that while there were many references in the Results Report on how SPC’s work supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there had been little, if any, mention of the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (S.A.M.O.A.) Pathway. The delegate suggested that the Results Report should not only highlight achievements, but also highlight the challenges SPC has faced.

75. New Caledonia: Referring to the Director-General’s report, the delegate requested further details on the recruitment of a senior person responsible for integrated programming.

76. D-G: The D-G acknowledged that the focus has been on SDGs, and that there is a need for greater attention to the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway. SPC is currently reviewing the registered partnerships for the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway in terms of activity and benefit, and will provide these findings and results to all members out of session. The D-G agreed with Samoa about the need for SPC to explore challenges in its self-assessment. The person responsible for integrated programming has been engaged and is based in Suva.

77. Acting Director – SPL: SPC had engaged Charles Darwin University to assess how SPC is progressing in implementing the Strategic Plan. The Acting Director guided the members on the session to follow – break-out groups that would engage in self-assessment at the divisional level against development and organisational objectives in the Strategic Plan, and discuss learning to improve work and outcomes for members.

78. CRGA:

- i. noted the immediate, mid-term and long-term recommendations made by the Subcommittee, to assist CRGA in its annual consideration of the Secretariat’s progress in the implementation of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020;
- ii. endorsed the Pacific Community Results Report 2017, noting that the Secretariat has incorporated the improvements suggested by the Subcommittee;

- iii. directed the Secretariat to continue pursuing prioritisation as part of SPC's ongoing business model and provide updates to the CRGA Subcommittee as needed;
- iv. noted the Subcommittee's comments to the Secretariat regarding the mid-term review of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan and partnership survey; country results summaries for 2017; and SPC's budget for the financial year ending 31 December 2019.

Update on the SPC corporate website

79. Director – Communications: The Director Communications presented an update on the 'refresh' of the SPC corporate website. Efforts have been made to make SPC branding more consistent across the organisation, for example through signage. The subscriber base for the SPC Newsletter has doubled; social media engagement has increased in some areas by 200%. Communications is focusing on emphasising outputs over process: what are we achieving? What value is SPC bringing to the Pacific, on every communication platform? The new website will be launched in the next two weeks and feedback is welcome.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM (FPR)

AGENDA ITEM 6.1 – CROP COHESION AND COORDINATION, INCLUDING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

Summary

80. The Director-General affirmed that the Framework for Pacific Regionalism remains an important policy instrument for all CROP agencies – it is a fundamental blueprint and roadmap that all CROP agencies refer to. CROP agencies are making progress in achieving the goals of the FPR, but there remains work to do in the areas of CROP cohesion and coordination, and on regional governance and financing. CROP executives met in April 2018, and committed to the following actions: holding an annual meeting of CROP heads and Governing Council chairs, to progress a CROP strategic work programme; PIFS representation at annual CROP Governing Council meetings to strengthen understandings of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and regional priorities; establishing a CROP Deputies Group, to support the implementation of regional priorities as directed by CROP executives; and developing a CROP communications strategy. A review of the CROP charter was undertaken and endorsed by CROP heads, who renewed their mutual commitment, as heads of agencies, to do better and provide consistent and coherent advice. The D-G provided an update to CRGA on current initiatives to strengthen CROP cohesion and coordination, in response to the 2017 Analysis of Regional Governance and Financing and subsequent 2017 Forum Leaders' decisions for the Leaders' agenda to be embedded across CROP and its member agencies. The CROP deputy-level meeting deals with CROP issues in more detail than can be achieved at the CROP heads level, and operationalises decisions of CROP heads. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat updated CRGA on the governance and financing review that will be considered by CROP heads later in 2018.

81. D-G: FPR is an important policy instrument for all CROP agencies, and a key roadmap policy element. CROP agencies are making progress in FPR implementation, but clearly could do better. All CROP agencies take a collective view to their work, honour the decisions of their Leaders, and spend a lot of time talking about how to do better. Last year saw the establishment of deputy-level meetings, in which colleagues at the deputy level are charged with addressing issues that cannot be dealt with by CROP heads in the same detail. CROP heads agreed to supplement capacity – for example, if PIFS is under pressure, other agencies would do their best to help. CROP heads reviewed working groups and

determined that they generally work well. The Director of Communications is connecting with other agencies on a shared CROP communication plan. Analysis of Leaders' decisions and implications for SPC will be shared at a later date. PIFS Secretary-General, Dame Meg Taylor, created space in Leaders' meetings for CROP heads to interact directly with Leaders. This is an example of improvements in CROP collaboration. As part of this work, the idea was to have Chairs – CROP governing councils – meet as a group. A meeting of this group has taken place.

82. PIFS – on behalf of the Secretary-General (PIFS): A report of findings from a review of regional governance and financing went to Forum Leaders last year. The recommendations that came out of that included how to strengthen governance and financing, and a plan was underway to take that forward.

Plenary discussion

83. USA: The delegate acknowledged the importance of CROP cohesion, and emphasised the need for SPC to retain its role as an apolitical scientific and technical organisation.
84. New Caledonia: The delegate asked whether there is a need for a CROP communication strategy, and if instead it was about promoting priorities at the regional level.
85. RMI: The delegate asked where the opportunities are for cohesion among CROP agencies that could reduce costs for SPC.
86. France: The delegate commended SPC on its efforts to improve CROP cohesion, and requested information on what other agencies had done to this end. France echoed the comments by USA, that SPC must retain its political neutrality.
87. D-G: The decisions of Leaders are an important part of SPC's planning. Regarding the CROP communications strategy, the D-G provided the example of Tropical Cyclone Pam, in which SPC communicated its own set of interventions, supplemented by a shared CROP release. Sometimes a release by a single agency is all that is needed, but sometimes all agencies are involved and it is more efficient to have shared communication. The Secretariat had been meeting regularly with CROP heads, and while there are projects in which CROP agencies are involved, SPC and other CROP agencies do not undertake joint planning. The Smaller Island States (SIS) Regional Strategy (2016-2020) and the decisions of Leaders are discussed at all governing bodies of all CROP agencies, which is one way that agencies demonstrate commitment to cohesion.
88. DDG Noumea: Deputy directors/secretaries general meet after the meetings of directors general (DGs) or secretaries general (SGs) to discuss current issues, which helps contribute to CROP cohesion and to the operationalisation of decisions taken by DGs and SGs. This allows heads/leaders to come back to put forward solutions. The DDG (Noumea) provided an example of greater cohesion, citing the strategic planning meeting held last year – a joint initiative with SPREP – in which each agency discussed what they were doing in the climate change and environmental biodiversity space. The agencies mapped everything they were doing individually to contribute to resilience in the Pacific, and identified overlaps and areas of complementarity.
89. CRGA:
 - i. noted the update on current initiatives to strengthen CROP cohesion and coordination;
 - ii. noted the call from Pacific Leaders to embed the Forum agenda across CROP and its member agencies, and directed the Secretariat to continue to give priority consideration to the Pacific

Leaders' decisions in developing its work programme, and to work proactively to support CROP cohesion and coordination in pursuit of effective regionalism;

- iii. requested that the Secretariat provide out-of-session analysis and updates on the Pacific Leaders' agenda and its impact on the work programme of SPC;
- iv. commended the Secretariat for its engagement with the CROP mechanism and urged it to continue to further enhance these processes.

AGENDA ITEM 6.2 – SOFT REVIEW OF FPR AND IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY PRIORITIES

Summary

90. The Director-General updated CRGA on the Secretariat's implementation of key FPR priorities, in particular in the areas of fisheries, climate change and disaster risk management, and cervical cancer. PIFS updated CRGA on the current review of the FPR. The review will focus on the processes that have been established under the Framework to ensure that they deliver on its underlying principles and intent. PIFS noted that the review report and its recommendations would be considered by the Forum Officials Committee (FOC) in November 2018.
91. D-G: The Secretariat pays close attention to the decisions of Leaders and looks to respond to those within its work programmes. SPC has led the work on coastal fisheries in the region, including sustainable management of coastal fisheries and stock assessment, and has undertaken important scientific work on tuna. SPC is engaged in a large programme of work on climate change, including mitigation and adaptation, and is also the lead on issues of disaster risk management (DRM) and disaster risk reduction (DSR). A third area where SPC is involved – cervical cancer – also emanated from a Leaders' decision. SPC chairs a working group on the issue, and has been involved in the development of regional policy guidelines for management of cervical cancer in the region.
92. PIFS: The FPR was adopted by Leaders in 2014. SPC has supported the implementation of priorities under the region-wide framework. The purpose of the FPR was to ensure that all agencies strengthened how they work collectively and how they prioritise issues in the region. A number of processes and reviews have been put in place, including the establishment of a subcommittee on regionalism, a review of the CROP charter, a review of Forum regional meetings, and a review of regional governance and finance. This year, policy consultations were held, providing an opportunity to look at recalibrating the arrangements in place with regard to the identification, implementation and monitoring of priorities requiring collective action. PIFS apologised for the delay in the review and noted it would be delivered following the Leaders' meeting. Consultations would be held face-to-face, via teleconference, and through written feedback.
93. CRGA:
- i. noted the update on the review of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, and related joint work addressing priorities in fisheries, climate change and disaster risk management, and cervical cancer.

AGENDA ITEM 6.3 – IMPLEMENTATION OF SIS LEADERS' STRATEGY

Summary

94. PIFS provided CRGA with a status report on progress in implementing the Smaller Island States (SIS) Regional Strategy 2016–2020 – which was endorsed by SIS Leaders in Koror, Palau, in June 2016, and by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in Pohnpei, FSM, in September 2016 – as well as the Strategy's companion Implementation Plan. The purpose of the strategy is to advocate, and build resilience and partnerships, for the development of Smaller Island States. PIFS acknowledged the important role of SPC in pursuing SIS priorities. The Forum Secretariat has progressed work in the Strategy's priority areas of air and sea transportation, particularly regarding the negotiation of fair and equitable air services agreements and the development of a model for joint tendering of air services on selected intra-regional routes between the SIS and with neighbouring countries. Work has also progressed on labour mobility with regard to skilled migration, employment creation and immigration facilitation, including legislative drafting of immigration laws in partnership with the Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC). Climate change work under the Strategy includes a joint SIS proposal to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), agreeing on: (i) infrastructure resilience; (ii) sustainable transport; and (iii) a climate change insurance facility, as the three thematic areas that SIS wish to pursue under joint proposals. The SIS Regional Strategy will undergo a mid-term review in late 2018 as part of the overall effort to keep it relevant and responsive to the expectations of SIS members and stakeholders. The Joint CROP-SIS Attachment Programme will commence in 2018, and will run for a minimum of three years, involving the placement of SIS representatives across all nine participating CROP agencies in fields consistent with the five priority areas under the SIS Strategy and Implementation Plan. The D-G indicated that SPC provides services in most of these areas, except air services, and has a role in all of the other areas identified in the SIS Regional Strategy.
95. PIFS: The SIS Regional Strategy was endorsed in 2016. The purpose of the Regional Strategy is to advocate, build resilience and strengthen partnerships. PIFS will put a proposal to SIS officials to consider whether the mid-term review of the Strategy can be delayed until 2019, to allow more time for implementation prior to review. SPC plays a vital role as a partner, delivering on SIS focal areas, such as climate change, labour mobility and marine work. Another initiative is the SIS attachment programme, which involves short-term placements, in which SIS representatives are embedded within CROP agencies to work around five priority areas. Attachments would be underway later this year. While some progress has been made, there is space for greater collaboration, and quicker and stronger progress around the SIS Strategy.
96. DG: SPC plays a vital role in all priority areas in the SIS Strategy. According to an independent external review (IER), the Smaller Islands States value the services of SPC, more so than larger states. SPC understands this, and puts an emphasis on working with SIS.

Plenary discussion

97. Samoa: The delegate noted that Samoa made a conscious decision, in light of SPC's financial situation, to shift away from country planning and programming, and to give up resources to ensure that those most in need could benefit. This is the same position that Samoa takes in its membership across all CROP agencies.
98. New Caledonia: The delegate asked whether the attachment programme would be open to non-SIS members, and what the process would be for choosing representatives.
99. DDG (Noumea): The attachment programme is being coordinated by PIFS. Placements will depend on areas of interest expressed by the countries and individuals, and the mandates of the organisations concerned. The programme is trying to avoid 'photocopying' attachments, and to ensure participants

acquire valuable professional experience. For the process, SPC will work with PIFS to gather expressions of interest and determine which profiles fit best with which organisation.

100. France: The delegate encouraged PIFS to coordinate its activities with SPC regarding implementation of the Strategy.

101. RMI: The delegate noted that the SIS Strategy contributes to the country's sustainable economic development.

102. Chair: The Chair brought forward an intervention from Kiribati regarding the addition of a recommendation encouraging SPC to work closely with PIFS to implement actions that are relative to its comparative strengths.

103. DDG (Noumea): The DDG invited members to think about their carbon footprints and to consider participating in the Secretariat's voluntary offsetting exercise being conducted at this CRGA for the second year running. The DDG reminded members of the cocktail reception being hosted by Australia, marking the International Day of the Tropics.

104. CRGA:

- i. reaffirmed the SIS Regional Strategy and Implementation Plan as the basis for articulating its support for SIS regional priorities;
- ii. noted the updates on air services, labour mobility, and climate change work under the SIS Strategy;
- iii. agreed on activities within the SIS Implementation Plan where PIFS and SPC can build stronger partnerships in order to access the technical and financial assistance needed;
- iv. endorsed SPC's participation in the Joint CROP-SIS Attachment Programme;
- v. noted the investment of the Secretariat in implementing the SIS programme, and directed the Secretariat to continue to work closely with the SIS programme, identifying and implementing actions of the SIS Strategy that are relevant to SPC's comparative strengths.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE REPORT

AGENDA ITEM 7.1 – 2017 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Summary

105. The Secretariat presented SPC's 2017 audited financial statements, for consideration by CRGA, in accordance with SPC's Financial Regulations. The annual financial statements for both the Pacific Community and the Pacific Community Provident Fund received unqualified audit opinions for the financial year 2017. The Secretariat noted that the organisation had moved to a single company structure, which has allowed the Secretariat to prepare financial documentation more clearly and efficiently. The Secretariat continues to evolve the detail contained in the financial reports, and a significant change in the current set is the detail, contained in Appendix A, of development partner contributions by project, including funding movements – this is important, given that around 80 per cent of SPC's activity is project-based. SPC's surplus in 2017 was income-driven, while the Secretariat has maintained a sharp focus on improving project execution rates (which have improved), with flow-

on effects for higher levels of project management fee recoveries, offsetting administrative costs. SPC incurred an exchange rate loss of EUR 1.7 million in 2017, effectively offsetting a favourable exchange movement in the previous period; volatility in global currencies remains a challenge for SPC. While overall expenditure has increased, the Secretariat reduced staff expenditure as a result of organisational restructuring in 2016, noting that around 40 per cent of SPC's expenditure is staff or staff-related. SPC has liabilities of around EUR 17 million. SPC runs a highly leveraged business, especially because of the large proportion of project activities, which impacts the organisation's liquidity. Reserves were EUR 19.5 million, but these are matched or tied directly to illiquid property assets. Member contributions and host country grants decreased during the year, and the Secretariat talks regularly to members around ensuring they pay their assessed contributions and host country grants. SPC reported total current/non-current provisions of EUR 12.6 million, a significant part of which related to current project audit liabilities for ineligible expenses. At year-end, provision for ineligible expenses was EUR 7.5 million. The Secretariat is working directly with the EU on this issue, and in the last several weeks, that provision has decreased to EUR 3.7 million.

106. Director of Finance: The Director noted that after nine years with the company PricewaterhouseCoopers Noumea, SPC's 2017 audit was conducted by KPMG in Suva. For the twenty-second consecutive year, SPC received an unqualified audit report.

107. SPC operated with a surplus in 2017 of 1.26 million. The main driver for the surplus was an increased level of income and a clearer focus on project execution. Increasing the level of execution has flow-on benefits, such as a higher level of PM fees, which help offset administrative costs. In 2017 there was a decrease of half a million euro in member contributions and host country grants, which the Secretariat was able to overcome by increasing its level of project execution. Two of SPC's major development partners – the EU and DFAT – fund 60 per cent of its total activities, which is appreciated by the organisation, but is also a risk factor. While the overall expenditure was higher in 2017, the Secretariat was able to reduce staff expenditure because of restructuring efforts undertaken in 2016. In 2017, SPC suffered an exchange loss of EUR 1.7 million – a reversal of exchange gains made in 2016. Exchange volatility is major concern for SPC. The organisation is running a highly leveraged business, particularly due to the large amount of project activities. The Director provided an update on the EU project audit, noting that the provision had been reduced by EUR 3.7 million in the past three weeks alone. The final amount owing will not be zero, but the Secretariat will continue to work with the EU to reduce the figure to the lowest possible level. The picture will be clearer in September. SPC's reserves of EUR 19.5 million might seem robust, however they are matched or tied directly to property assets, which are illiquid – that is, they are not available to help the organisation deal with cash needs to manage day-to-day operations.

108. CRGA:

- i. adopted the 2017 audited financial statements for the Pacific Community and the Pacific Community Provident Fund;
- ii. noted that the 2017 audited financial statements for the Pacific Community and the Pacific Community Provident Fund were unqualified and presented a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of these entities in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

AGENDA ITEM 7.2 – BUDGETS: 2018 REVISED BUDGET; 2019 PROPOSED BUDGET; ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS AND HOST COUNTRY GRANTS

Summary

109. The Secretariat presented SPC's revised 2018 budget to CRGA for noting, in accordance with SPC's Financial Regulations, which require the Director-General to inform CRGA of budget revisions. The Secretariat also presented the draft 2019 budget for consideration by CRGA. The revised 2018 budget was adopted out of session by CRGA in December 2017, based on a detailed review and recommendation by both the Audit and Risk Committee and the CRGA Subcommittee on Strategic Plan Implementation. The revised 2018 budget was restated in euro, following the out-of-session decision of CRGA in December 2016 to change the organisation's operating currency from January 1 2017. This change has allowed the Secretariat to improve the quality of treasury management. The Secretariat presented a balanced budget for 2018, with expenditure and income both running at approximately EUR 82 million. The 2019 draft budget shows a deficit of EUR 2 million, but the shift of the timing of CRGA to mid-year means that there is a degree of uncertainty around the levels of funding available for the subsequent year, particularly given the organisation's heavy dependence on project funding. SPC has a large suite of projects that are ending this year, and the Secretariat is working hard to replace project funding for the next period to reduce the projected deficit. The Secretariat requested that members work with the Secretariat to ensure that new projects address priorities, and informed members that the Secretariat is in the process of finalising new projects relating to EDF 11. The Secretariat is engaging in discussions with the EU, which aim to increase flexibility in the way that the EU funds SPC. The organisation's reliance on project funding is highlighted by the squeeze in other income sources. SPC's core income is predicted to decline in 2019 by EUR 1 million, while assessed contributions are constant, and voluntary contributions are expected to decline. Adverse currency movements are impacting the predicted level of core income.
110. Director of Finance: The Director presented the 2018 budget as a matter of formality, in order for it to be formally acknowledged, as it was approved out of session in December 2017. The Director presented the 2019 draft budget, and explained that due to the timing of CRGA being in June, the budget now reflect a deficit, as there is a certain amount of uncertainty in terms of what the funding will be for the subsequent year. The Director noted that SPC is heavily dependent on project funding, and that much work remains to be done to replace project funding, as many current projects are coming to an end. The predominance of project funding creates a set of management challenges for SPC, which are not as prevalent in other CROP agencies. The organisation is facing a reduction in voluntary contributions, and will also be affected by adverse currency movements. Unrestricted programme funding is incredibly valuable to SPC, but is declining. For the 2019 budget, expiring project funding that needs to be replaced before 1 January 2019 is currently EUR 15 million. There are high expectations for the 11th European Development Fund (EDF 11). SPC has raised the average percentage of PM fees, from 5.3 per cent in 2015 to 8.5 per cent in 2018; this helps offset administrative costs, which helps free up funding for programmes.
111. Full cost recovery has made it possible to upgrade facilities to better meet the needs of divisions and staff. In 2018 the Secretariat undertook explorations and tests around developing FCR for Publishing, and for Translation and Interpretation. Responding to concerns raised by members, the Director emphasised that the shift to FCR is meant to ensure the organisation has long-term sustainable funding for these services.
112. Regarding member contributions, at the time of CRGA, Fiji paid its outstanding contribution in full, and Niue and Solomon Islands made significant efforts and had reduced amounts owing by 50 per cent. RMI notified the Secretariat of the country's pending payment, and that it would clear all outstanding dues. The Director noted that despite the recent payments, 46 per cent of members had still not met their commitments. Given SPC's liquidity challenges, it is essential that member

commitments are met. The Director noted that host country grant targets established at the Eighth Conference of the Pacific Community were reduced in recognition that the targets were unachievable; however even the significantly reduced figures were not achieved. Every year there is a further reduction, and outstanding contributions need to be addressed.

113. The Director noted that, with core funding at only 20 per cent of total funding, the speed at which SPC can shift resources to priorities is quite limited. Degrees of freedom come from core funding, which comprise the smallest portion of SPC's funding envelope. Core funding is comprised of 60 per cent assessed contributions, and 40 per cent voluntary contributions, which is another risk for the organisation. Entering 2019, there has been six years of stagnation on assessed contributions, and the Secretariat would like to open a discussion on a review of current assessed contributions. The Director also noted that 50 per cent of funding comes from members, and 50 per cent from non-members, which raises issues of governance, with a potential impact on SPC's ability to target priorities. Currently, the bulk of SPC's core funding is required to cover administrative costs. This is a fundamental reason for why the organisation is trying to improve PM fee recoveries and implement FCR, which would liberate funds to apply to programmes. It is a challenge to determine how to shift core funding into priority areas without creating short- or long-term damage to key divisions. This is a challenge management addresses on a daily basis; the reality is there are constraints in trying to quickly push ahead with priorities.

Plenary discussion

114. New Zealand: The delegate asked whether SPC is in discussions with the EU aimed at trying to influence a change in the way the EU funds SPC – where a greater proportion of funding would not be project-based but rather programmatic. The delegate also acknowledged the good work SPC and the EU have done to reduce ineligible expenses. On the topic of members directly funding their own travel, New Zealand noted that this seems to be consistent with how the Forum approaches these issues, but that there should be a provision to provide funding in exceptional circumstances. New Zealand is comfortable with the proposal for a detailed review of assessed contributions and host country grants.
115. New Caledonia: The delegate congratulated SPC for its good financial management and on the content and quality of its financial statements. New Caledonia expressed gratitude that the organisation was able to reduce EU ineligible expenses, and improve project execution rates. The delegate asked for further details on plans for the innovation fund for 2018–2019, and about the decision made at the previous CRGA on salary increases, and the impact of those measures. New Caledonia also asked if analysis had been conducted on the transition to a new reference currency. New Caledonia emphasised its support for FCR, but echoed comments by France that its implementation must not impact the bilingual nature of the organisation. New Caledonia noted that it is one of the main contributors among host countries, and invited other countries to meet their commitments. New Caledonia supported the proposal to review assessed contributions and host country grants, and the suggestion that countries cover their own travel costs from January 2019, in line with other CROP agencies. The delegate asked whether the budget forecast for 2019 had taken into account decentralisation plans, such as the plan mentioned the previous day to move LRD to Samoa.
116. D-G: The D-G noted that SPC had extended an invitation to the EU to become a Permanent Observer, to improve how the two organisations relate to one another. Several meetings have been held, at many different levels, between the SPC Executive and the head of delegation, to discuss the nature of the funding relationship. However, there are rules upon which the EU operates that impact this possibility. The D-G assured the meeting that the conversations would continue, to try and improve the way SPC and the EU work with one another.

117. On the proposal for members to pay their own way to meetings, the D-G noted that this was a conversation to be had with members at this meeting.
118. The D-G explained that SPC is committed to strategic partnerships, and noted the value of holding high-level conversations with partners once or twice a year that cover a range of issues, not just financing.
119. The D-G explained that SPC's ability to include an allocation in the budget for innovation funds is limited due to previously mentioned challenges pertaining to inflexible funding.
120. The D-G explained that potential decentralisation impacts are not reflected in the budget, as there first needs to be an analysis of costs, benefits and implications.
121. Director of Finance: The Director reiterated the D-G's comments, noting that currently, with regard to EU funding, there is no mechanism in place to shift to programme-based funding, but that there is an open channel of discussion with the EU. On the EDF 11, SPC is in discussions with the EU on how to improve the quality of projects, particularly with respect to cost recovery.
122. On the Innovation Fund, the Director noted that allocation for this in the draft 2019 budget is not currently possible; however if the Secretariat can replace project funding, efforts will be made to create a similar fund, even if it is not as large as the amount allocated in 2018.
123. On the question of the impact of the salary increase approved in the 2018 budget, this has been put in place and is being covered. The reduced staffing costs in the 2017 budget that resulted from the restructure allowed some space for salary increments. The Director noted that there are many things to be addressed before the budget is finalised, but that the Secretariat is requesting the increase, cognizant of its material impact.
124. Regarding the impact of the shift to a single reference currency, the Director explained that this has allowed the Secretariat to move towards central management of treasury functions, and to better manage currency volatility, and that overall, the organisation has seen many benefits from this decision.
125. The Director reiterated the D-G's point that there is nothing in the current budget on decentralisation, and that there will not be until analyses of costs and benefits are undertaken and it is clear there would be no negative impact on the organisation.
126. On FCR, the Director assured members that the Secretariat will do its best to manage the impact on services.
127. Chair: The Chair asked to hear from members, particularly on the issue of self-funded travel.
128. Niue: The delegate disagreed with the self-funded travel proposal, noting that Niue is only able to attend meetings on the basis of fully funded travel, and could not otherwise guarantee attendance.
129. Fiji: The delegate acknowledged that it is one of the countries that has not been able to meet its host country grant commitments, and noted the need for understanding regarding what these obligations mean to a country like Fiji, which hosts 22 regional and international organisations. The delegate informed CRGA that Fiji is in the process of trying to fully meet its financial obligations to SPC. The issue of the host country grant is attached to discussions on the host country agreement, and Fiji noted that it was hoping to sign the latter the following week, if the Secretariat was agreeable. Discussions on the host country grant are contingent on discussions around the host country agreement. The delegate emphasised that Fiji is fully committed to its host country role.

130. On self-funding, Fiji echoed New Zealand's comment that there would need to be some flexibility with such a rule. The delegate also raised the issue of engagement and governance, emphasising the importance of having appropriate levels of representation at CRGA. Regarding the proposal of a review of assessed contributions and host country grants, the delegate requested that the Secretariat consult host countries before determining a formula. The delegate requested further information on the implications of the policy implemented the year prior relating to members in arrears.
131. Samoa: The delegate supported the proposal on self-funding, but recommended that the Secretariat communicate to all member countries on the key meetings they should plan to attend each year, to assist countries with their own planning and budgeting. The delegate also addressed the question of the nature of EU funding, and suggested that this issue be considered not only by member countries, but with regional institutions, in order to unify as a region in discussions with the EU.
132. France: The delegate echoed comments by New Caledonia, Fiji and New Zealand, that it would be desirable for member states and territories to self-fund attendance at meetings, but that there should be some flexibility, based on countries' ability to do so. The delegate also suggested looking at how other Pacific organisations are addressing this issue.
133. Regarding arrears, France explained that it was able to identify the bottleneck that had caused the delay in payment, and noted that France had resolved its arrears for 2018. The delegate assured the Secretariat that France's 2019 contribution would be paid very soon.
134. Australia: The delegate noted Australia's concern that SPC is operating under a constrained free-cash position, and that Australia would be keen to support the Secretariat in identifying measures to address this issue. Regarding the proposal of a review of assessed contributions, the delegate requested the criteria the Secretariat would apply in assessing and making changes to current figures. Australia indicated that it would like to hear about the Secretariat's plans regarding seeking funding from new donors.
135. D-G: The D-G clarified that, with regard to the arrears policy, he was not seeking a change in the policy, but rather wishing to share some of the implications of its implementation. In time, it might need to be amended, but that was not the intention at this meeting. In response to Samoa's intervention, The D-G affirmed that the Secretariat would prepare an outline of critical meetings, to be shared with members.
136. Cook Islands: On self-funding, Cook Islands noted that it is committed to core meetings, but that such a policy would mean the country may not be able to participate in non-core meetings, such as the Subcommittee. Cooks Islands affirmed its support of a review of assessed contributions.
137. D-G: Responding to Australia's enquiry about new donors, the D-G noted that the Secretariat recognises the importance of broadening the donor base, but explained that pursuing new donors is not an easy exercise. SPC has recruited a resource mobilisation person. Potential donors were approached in Asia and the Middle East, but SPC has found it is more productive to place more reliance on supporters closer to home. The D-G did mention some success stories, including new funding from the Government of Sweden for gender and human rights work, as well as coastal fisheries. The D-G noted that the Secretariat will continue to pursue possibilities – for example, Gates Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies. The D-G noted that SPC is going through the accreditation process for the Green Climate Fund, and that there is funding potential there.
138. RMI: The delegate echoed Niue's concerns that it would be difficult for RMI to self-fund travel; CRGA and Conference might be possible, but non-core meetings would not.

139. Kiribati: The delegate supported scaling-up SPC's advocacy efforts in the context of acquiring new donors. They echoed comments by Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue and RMI, regarding the recommendation on self-funded travel.
140. Palau: The delegate aligned with Cook Islands, Niue and RMI on the issue of self-funding, noting that Palau would not be able to attend some of these very important meetings if the proposal became reality.
141. Chair: The Chair summarised the views on the self-funding proposal, noting that if it were to pass, some countries' ability to attend all meetings would be drastically reduced. The Chair recognised other members' views that self-funding was a natural progression seen in other CROP agencies. The Chair proposed considering that funding be provided for CRGA and Conference only, leaving members to self-fund attendance at other meetings, such as Subcommittee, ministerial meetings and heads of sector meetings.
142. D-G: The D-G committed to the Secretariat sharing with all members what is meant by core meetings. The D-G also proposed amending the recommendation to allow for flexibility.
143. Chair: The Chair noted that the Secretariat could explore different options supporting flexibility, and look at what other CROP agencies are doing.
144. D-G: The D-G noted that the Secretariat needed to consult members on the approval of the budget, and suggested that at this time, the Secretariat could also present recommendations on the self-funding policy.
145. CRGA:
- i. endorsed the 'out-of-session' adoption of the revised 2018 budget;
 - ii. noted the draft budget for financial year 2019, subject to:
 - a. the Secretariat presenting a revised 2019 budget that substantively addresses the current forecast deficit;
 - b. review by the Audit and Risk Committee;
 - c. review and endorsement by the CRGA Subcommittee on Strategic Plan Implementation by December 2018;
 - d. out-of-session adoption by all members of CRGA before 31 December 2018;
 - iii. noted the ongoing budgetary challenges for future years that stem from SPC's high reliance on cyclical project financing;
 - iv. requested that:
 - a. the Secretariat publish and share with all members the core-funded SPC governance meetings (whether CRGA, Conference, subcommittees, ministerial or heads of sector meetings) that the Secretariat considers to be critical for member attendance;
 - b. the Secretariat engage in discussions with members – and consider practices of other CROP agencies – to explore ways for members to directly fund their own travel and

accommodation costs for participating in critical, core-funded SPC governance meetings, and present proposals as part of the out-of-session budget approval process in December 2018;

- c. a detailed review of assessed contributions be undertaken, in consultation with members, with recommendations to be submitted to CRGA 49;
- d. a detailed review of host country grants be undertaken, in consultation with host countries, on feasible and appropriate levels of host country grant, with recommendations to be submitted to CRGA 49;
- v. requested members to scale up their advocacy efforts in support of the Secretariat, utilising bilateralism to support multilateralism.

AGENDA ITEM 7.3 – AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE REPORT

Summary

146. The Chair of the SPC Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) presented the report prepared by the ARC to update CRGA on the Committee's work over the past 12 months.
147. ARC Chair: ARC monitors key risk areas for SPC. Concerning internal audit work, the committee found no instances of fraud or inappropriate activity. ARC noted increasing consistency across divisions with regard to compliance with approved policies and in implementing policies. Over the last two years, considerable efforts have been made to strengthen the policy framework of the organisation in financial areas, such as travel and procurement.
148. The ARC Chair explained how the committee carries out its work. Each meeting comprises a two-part agenda: in the first part the committee evaluates current issues or issues raised since the last meeting. When internal auditors present reports to ARC, the first thing the committee looks at is the management's response to those reports. The second part of the ARC agenda is standing agenda items. This is to ensure that those areas determined to constitute the greatest risk to the organisation are regularly and constantly monitored – for example, non-competitive tender register. The ARC Chair emphasised that SPC's financial vulnerability is seen as a serious risk to the organisation.
149. The ARC Chair noted that the committee thinks it is time to review charters for the committee and the internal audit. One or two members raised issues with proposed changes to the charters. The ARC Chair suggested that these not be negotiated at the current meeting, noting that ARC can function well under the existing charter. The ARC Chair suggested that the proposed changes be returned to CRGA.

Plenary discussion

150. USA: The delegate endorsed the idea of having the ARC Charter conversation outside this meeting, with a working group, and noted that the proposed changes should be ready to be presented before the next ARC meeting.
151. Australia: The delegate noted Australia is happy to take the ARC Charter conversation outside of this meeting, and that Australia does have comments to share. On the ARC's endorsement of the appointment of Ms Rangi as an incoming member of the committee during the last period, Australia noted that, with no reflection on the suitability of Ms Rangi in the role, the fact that her committee

memberships was endorsed prior to this forum was not best practice. The delegate noted, for future reference, that out-of-session endorsement by CRGA might have been a better approach.

152. D-G: The D-G acknowledged Australia's comments, and noted that there was consultation with the troika on Ms Rangi's ARC appointment, which is standard practice when the endorsement of CRGA is required but the full CRGA is not available. The D-G explained that, given certain pressures, this approach was taken as proxy. The D-G noted Australia's comment, in particular the particularly pivotal role of ARC. The D-G noted that, perhaps in the future, members of the ARC do not commence membership of the committee unless the full CRGA is consulted; however the D-G added that he did not regard this as bad practice, rather short of ideal.
153. New Zealand: The delegate noted that, while New Zealand is a member of the troika, and is comfortable with the appointment, New Zealand associated itself with Australia's comments.
154. Cook Islands: The delegate supported comments by New Zealand and Australia, but noted that Cook Islands would be remiss not to support the substantive appointment of Ms Rangi to the ARC.
155. France: The delegate joined colleagues in congratulating Ms Rangi on her appointment to the ARC. France supported the suggestion by the USA to establish a separate working group to review the ARC Charter.
156. CRGA:
- i. noted the report from the Chair of the SPC Audit and Risk Committee;
 - ii. approved the establishment of a small working group with interested members to consider proposed amendments to the ARC Charter and Internal Audit Charter, and the circulation of these documents to the Audit and Risk Committee and to all members for out-of-session adoption before November 2018;
 - iii. endorsed the appointment of Ms Caren Rangi as an ARC member for a term of three years.

AGENDA ITEM 7.4 – REPORT ON HUMAN RESOURCES

Summary

157. The Secretariat updated CRGA on key initiatives being undertaken by the Secretariat's Human Resources Department (HR Department) from 2017 to 2018 to ensure its professional services meet the requirements of the Operations and Management Directorate's (OMD's) business plan, the needs of programmes and divisions, and the objectives of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020. The HR Department has implemented, or is implementing, several projects to enhance the efficiency of its systems and processes. System development initiatives include a new online HR information system and a redesigned (automated) performance development system. Training programmes on policies, including child protection and domestic violence, have been implemented across the organisation, the latter of which goes towards fulfilling SPC's gender mainstreaming strategy. The current Staff Regulations (2014) are being reviewed, and a full suite of HR policies are being drafted, with consultations with staff currently occurring. The Secretariat proposed that any recommended changes to the Staff Regulations be submitted for approval out of session in December 2018. Members proposed that the Secretariat convene a working group, comprised of members, to be tasked with considering any recommended changes to the SPC Staff Regulations. The HR Department is also actively engaged in enhancing SPC's competitiveness in the job market and its capacity to

attract and retain talented people. Members commended the Secretariat for its work to ensure that SPC's HR policies are updated and modernised. Members affirmed support for SPC's bilingualism policy, and its nature as a multi-lingual organisation representing the entire Pacific region.

158. Director of Human Resources: The Director of Human Resources noted that staff regulations will be reviewed out of session with members in December 2018, following consultation with staff. The focus of the HR work programme is on high-level areas, such as gender mainstreaming. HR is currently developing and delivering domestic violence and child protection training. HR is looking to strengthen the recruitment process – examining the requirements for applicants, and seeking to better understand and analyse demographic data. HR is also looking to implement HR information sessions over the coming months, and to improve systems and processes – for example, the Performance Development System (PDS). HR is also looking to make improvements in training and professional development opportunities over the next 12 to 18 months.

Plenary discussion

159. France: The delegate discussed the importance of language skills in terms of staff recruitment, noting that a command of several foreign languages and Pacific Island languages is an asset to the organisation.

160. New Caledonia: The delegate raised the issue of short-term contracts for local staff members in New Caledonia, noting the need to comply with national labour laws. New Caledonia noted support for the recommendation to undertake a study on remuneration, as well as the status and condition of contracts at SPC.

161. USA: USA noted its support of an out-of-session working group to review the updated staff regulations.

162. Director HR: The Director recognised the importance of language issues, and noted that all SPC HR training is carried out bilingually – for example the recent training sessions for the new domestic violence and child protection policies was conducted in English and French. The issue of contract length has been raised and discussed with Staff Representative Committees, and HR will continue to work with the Executive and SRCs on this issue.

163. DDG (Noumea): The DDG noted that the Secretariat will make efforts to highlight the importance of language skills in its recruitment criteria. Regarding contract length, the DDG explained that, similar to other regional organisations, SPC applies the labour regulations that it develops itself; staff rules and regulations are the instrument used to manage working contract, for locally or internationally recruited staff. The focus is on ensuring internal rules are robust, and that safety and security of staff are paramount.

164. CRGA:

- i. noted progress in implementing the human resources work programme and key initiatives in alignment with the Operations and Management Directorate's business plan;
- ii. directed that the Secretariat convene a working group, comprised of interested members, to be tasked with considering any recommended changes to the SPC Staff Regulations and referring proposed changes to CRGA members for final review and approval out of session in December 2018.

AGENDA ITEM 7.5 – REMUNERATION UPDATE AND SALARY SCALES FOR 2019

Summary

165. The Secretariat presented the 2019 SPC salary scales for positions advertised internationally and for those advertised locally in each of SPC's five host countries. The scales proposed are in accordance with the recommendations of the 2015 CROP Strategic Triennial Remuneration Review (2015 Triennial Review), and address the weakening position of the Secretariat's salary scales compared with those of other CROP agencies and the need to ensure SPC is a competitive employer, while balancing operational budgets. In addition, inflation in SPC's main host countries means that SPC salaries in local markets have depreciated. A review of the SPC salary and benefits system is in progress, and accordingly the Secretariat proposed only interim adjustments to the SPC salary scales, taking into account the movement of the salary scales of other CROP agencies. Members requested clarifications around the methodology used to calculate the proposed change in the mid-point of SPC's salary scales. Members indicated reservation around the proposed salary increases in the context of the organisation's projected budget position. The Secretariat emphasised the cost-neutral nature of the initial proposed increase, and the critical importance of SPC maintaining its ability to attract and retain appropriately qualified and skilled staff, bearing in mind that competing employers for SPC staff are not limited to CROP agencies.
166. Director HR: The Director noted the importance of competitive salaries to attract and retain staff, and to maintain a level of engagement. This is particularly important with technical people.
167. With regard to remuneration and the reference currency, work is ongoing, and updates and outcomes will be presented in 2019. This is also a good opportunity to carry out an overall review of salaries and benefits, which has not been done for some time. There is a need to assess whether the salary and benefits reflect where SPC is at as an organisation. The Director noted that, working in HR, he is very conscious of working within an affordability framework.

Plenary discussion

168. New Zealand: The delegate requested further information about the methodology behind the proposed two per cent increase, and suggested that perhaps increases should correspond to specific salary bands to better align with other CROP agencies.
169. RMI: The delegate offered support for the salary increase proposal, but noted that the perception is that SPC staff receive among the best salary packages within the CROP agencies. The delegate also asked about the feasibility of the increase with respect to the shortfalls in the draft budget.
170. Australia: The delegate expressed discomfort with approving salary increases, given the uncertainty around the 2019 budget, and proposed that the issue be deferred and dealt with out of session when there is a fuller picture of the 2019 budget.
171. France: The delegate agreed that the decision to approve a salary increase ought to be deferred until more information is available.
172. Kiribati: The delegate supported Australia's proposal to defer the recommendation until the budget is presented in December 2018.
173. Cook Islands: The delegate asked for an update on the CROP coordination group that had been set up to evaluate remuneration.

174. D-G: The D-G indicated surprise in respect of the RMI delegate's statement, as SPC has been at the tail end of salary scales among CROP agencies during his tenure. The D-G also appealed to members to assist with implementing consistency in conditions across CROP agencies, as there is little SPC can do as a single agency other than work through the harmonisation process.
175. Director HR: The Director explained that the methodology behind the salary increase related to cost of living and CROP alignment. The Director noted that heads of HR from CROP agencies met in March 2018 to discuss harmonisation. The Director noted the challenges SPC faces as a large organisation, operating in different parts of the region. SPC needs to operate independently, but there are many areas in which it can align with CROP agencies.
176. DDG (Noumea): The DDG noted the importance of SPC being regarded as an attractive employer to current and future employees. SPC competes with other organisations for staff – mainly international organisations and major NGOs, and to a lesser extent CROP agencies. The DDG asked members to bear in mind the human impact, not only the financial impact, of the proposed increase.
177. Chair: The Chair summarised the views of members, proposing that the recommendation of the salary increase be deferred and considered at the same time as the 2019 budget.
178. New Zealand: The delegate clarified that New Zealand's issue with the proposed salary increase concerned the methodology and justification, and supported the proposal that the Secretariat return to CRGA out of session to more clearly articulate the basis for the increase.
179. Cook Islands: The delegate supported New Zealand's comments.
180. France: The delegate noted that the forum and timing for reviewing the recommendation should be outlined.
181. D-G: The D-G noted that the Secretariat will circulate a refined proposal to CRGA outside of this meeting, at the same time as the 2019 budget, during the first or second week of December.
182. CRGA:
- i. directed the Secretariat to prepare further analysis and justification of the change to salary scale and proposed salary increase, and to present these to CRGA for adoption as part of the out-of-session budget approval process in December 2018;
 - ii. noted the update on the review of (a) the SPC reference currency for the salaries of positions advertised internationally, and (b) CROP harmonisation on human resources processes and remuneration.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – PROCESS FOR RECRUITMENT OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Process for recruitment of Director-General

183. CRGA:
- i. agreed to a timetable for the recruitment of the next Pacific Community Director-General, while noting the importance for flexibility, given the uncertainty surrounding the timing of the departure of the incumbent Director-General;

- ii. affirmed its preference, if circumstances allow, for an in-person discussion of the new Director-General proposed by the Selection Advisory Committee at CRGA 49 and the Eleventh Conference in 2019;
- iii. appointed the members of the Selection Advisory Committee, in accordance with the Pacific Community Governance Arrangement.

The Director-General's performance assessment

184. CRGA:

- i. endorsed the Troika's assessment that the Director-General has, over the past year, been performing in the 'adding value zone' – that is, his performance has repeatedly exceeded the requirements of the position;
- ii. noted the areas of strength and areas of development identified in the Director-General's performance assessment;
- iii. noted that the Director-General has, for the second consecutive year, opted to forego any increase in his remuneration, in light of SPC's financial challenges;
- iv. endorsed the enhancements the Troika has made to the Director-General's performance assessment process – that is:
 - a. setting out, in an annual Letter of Expectations, the Director-General's priorities for the year ahead;
 - b. having ongoing performance discussions with the Director-General through the performance year; and
 - c. utilising an online feedback process to improve the transparency and efficiency of the feedback collected as part of the Director-General's performance assessment;
- v. noted that the Troika will relay the outcome of this performance assessment to the Director-General following CRGA.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – CRGA 49 AND CONFERENCE – VENUE, CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Summary

185. CRGA was advised that the venue for the meeting of CRGA 49 in 2019 will be the same as the venue for the 11th Conference, which shall be chaired by the Cook Islands, and that the Secretariat will advise members of the proposed dates for CRGA 49 and the 11th Pacific Community Conference in due course.

186. CRGA agreed that the Chair for CRGA 49 will be provided by Palau, and the Vice-Chair by Pitcairn Islands.

Plenary discussion

187. Cook Islands: The delegate noted that Cook Islands is keen to host in Noumea if it is not possible to do so in Rarotonga.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – EVALUATION OF CRGA 48

188. CRGA responded to questions evaluating the conduct and content of the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 11 – OTHER BUSINESS

189. Kiribati raised a range of protocol-related issues, and requested that its statement be entered into the record of the meeting, which the Secretariat undertook to do. The Secretariat acknowledged that, at high-level meetings involving members, it would continue to endeavour to exercise its best efforts to ensure that members' expectations were met, where these matters were within its control.

190. RMI raised the question of meeting procedures around remote submissions to meetings, and requested that the CRGA meeting procedures be clarified around this issue. The Secretariat indicated its position of encouraging direct and full participation in meetings, and generally discouraging remote submissions. The Chair indicated that, in the specific case of allowing remote submission to this meeting on behalf of one member, this was allowed on an exceptional basis. The Secretariat confirmed that the CRGA rules of procedure permit the Chair of CRGA to exercise discretion of this nature.

191. Kiribati: The delegate wished to clarify the misperception that the current government is a climate change denier. The delegate explained that Kiribati is no longer entertaining a relocation policy, and noted that Kiribati recognises the impact of climate change and is focused on building resilience.

192. The delegate made a statement to CRGA. Kiribati acknowledged and applauded SPC for its excellent work in providing scientific and technical assistance to members. Kiribati also wished to identify some shortfalls, with particular reference to the Secretariat's failure to provide proper protocol arrangements to Forum Leaders and high-level dignitaries at the previous year's Conference and at the recently held High Level Dialogue. Specifically, the delegate noted that the Secretariat should have: advised members to have ministers attend the High Level Dialogue, and for leaders to attend the dinner; provided leaders with diplomatic vehicles; and planned for speeches to be delivered before dinner was served.

193. New Zealand: On the topic of protocol, the delegate noted that New Zealand had ministers present at both events mentioned, and they had good experiences. However, it was noted that for the sake of avoiding confusion, in the future there should be assigned seating for leaders and high-level dignitaries.

AGENDA ITEM 12 – OBSERVER STATEMENTS

194. CRGA heard, with appreciation, in order of presentation, statements from the European Union, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG). The following observers tabled their statements, to be appended, with all observer statements made available to the Secretariat, to the meeting report: the International Organisation of la Francophonie, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and University of the South Pacific.

195. D-G: The D-G thanked the organisations that made statements, and noted that one organisation cannot achieve all of the things it wishes to without the support of partners. The D-G also acknowledged and thanked retiring GIZ Program Director and Senior Advisor, Dr Wulf Killman, for his substantial contribution to the people of the Pacific and the region as a whole. The D-G acknowledged

with appreciation the long, productive and enjoyable working relationship that SPC, and the D-G personally, had enjoyed with Dr Killman.

AGENDA ITEM 13 – ADOPTION OF CRGA 48 DECISIONS

196. CRGA adopted its decisions.

CLOSING REMARKS

197. Samoa: The delegate, noting that this CRGA may be the final CRGA for the D-G, on behalf of member countries, extended sincere appreciation of the D-G's leadership and stewardship of SPC during his tenure.

198. New Zealand: The delegate echoed Samoa's remarks, and wished the D-G success in his candidature for the Regional Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Western Pacific Regional Office.

199. France: The delegate noted this would be their last CRGA, and thanked the Secretariat and the interpreters for their services. France thanked the D-G for the quality of his management and leadership and wished him success in future endeavours.

200. USA: The delegate noted their appreciation for the seamless conduct of the meeting and acknowledged the work of all Secretariat staff involved in making the event a success.

201. D-G: The D-G thanked Palau for its able guidance and stewardship of the Drafting Committee, and thanked the meeting Chair for the superb job. The D-G also thanked the staff behind the scenes who were responsible for making the event a success. The D-G acknowledged and expressed gratitude for the work of the departing Director of Finance, noting that he had vastly improved SPC's financial management during his tenure. The D-G noted that the Secretariat was seeking to secure a replacement ahead of his departure, so as not to lose momentum or continuity in the important work in the finance area.

202. The meeting closed with a prayer by Fiji.

**DECISIONS OF THE FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(26–28 June 2018, Noumea, New Caledonia)

AGENDA ITEM No. 1: OPENING

1. The 48th meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA 48) opened on 27 June 2018, at the headquarters of the Pacific Community (SPC) in Noumea, New Caledonia. The meeting was chaired by Niue, with Palau as Vice-Chair, and was attended by representatives of the following SPC members – Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America and Vanuatu – and by observers and partners, including Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the European Union (EU), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG), the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF), Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO), Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), South Pacific Tourism Office (SPTO), and University of the South Pacific (USP).

AGENDA ITEM No. 2: DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

2. The Director-General (D-G) placed the D-G's report in the context of reflection on the D-G coming towards end of term, and the ongoing challenges around SPC's financial sustainability. Delivering relevant and efficient services to members remains SPC's priority. The concept of universal availability is increasingly difficult to sustain, which makes it important for SPC to look at where it can most efficiently provide support to members. The D-G acknowledged members' requests that the Secretariat clarify areas for de-prioritisation as part of the ongoing prioritisation process. The D-G observed that prioritisation of SPC's work is only part of the review process around appropriate delivery of services to members. The D-G placed the ongoing prioritisation process in the context of changing development contexts, and the fact that SPC's configuration had remained largely unchanged for many years. The D-G affirmed the ongoing importance of SPC's engagement with agencies of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP). Divisional and organisational structure is under ongoing review, under a change and transformation agenda, and a proposal to analyse the costs and benefits of any potential decentralisation was put forward. The D-G summarised highlights across divisions and programmes, and affirmed that the Secretariat aims to make integrated programming and cross-divisional work the norm across SPC. The CRGA Subcommittee on Strategic Plan Implementation (Subcommittee) has been working hard in the areas under its mandate, and provides a very important support role to the Secretariat. The Pacific Community Results Report is a concise report on SPC's achievements, and the Subcommittee has indicated its overall support for the latest report produced by the Secretariat, as well as for the abbreviated highlights format. The Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020 is ambitious, and financial and resource restraints have constrained some achievements. Engagement with members remains critical to SPC's purpose, and

SPC's presence and engagement with members has been affected by those constraints. Members' arrears remains an issue for SPC, and has substantially impacted SPC's financial position. The Secretariat has implemented the policy on members' arrears that was approved by members in 2017, and the D-G brought to members' attention that this has been disruptive, and he shared examples with members. Country Programming remains a priority for the Secretariat – the former joint country strategies have been replaced, as agreed with members, and alternative models have been tested and will be discussed further with members.

3. CRGA:

- i. noted the progress being made in the SPC change and transformation agenda;
- ii. noted the continuing weak financial situation of SPC;
- iii. approved the exploration of further decentralisation of selected SPC teams, including analysis of the costs and benefits of various options for CRGA consideration, and consultation with members over decentralisation proposals;
- iv. directed the Secretariat to develop country programmes with each Pacific Island country and territory (PICT) member, through a cost-effective, consultative approach;
- v. recognising the outcomes from the Fourth Ministers for Culture Meeting in Nadi, Fiji, in May 2018, directed the Secretariat to add culture to priority 8, alongside human rights, gender equality and youth.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3A: PACIFIC COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR OCEAN SCIENCE (PCCOS)

4. The Secretariat updated CRGA on its activities to develop the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS), following the approval by the Tenth Conference of the Pacific Community in 2017 for the establishment of the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science, to be hosted by SPC. The first phase of PCCOS is the establishment of a virtual centre that brings together all of SPC's internal scientific and technical expertise in ocean science. PCCOS's scope includes partnerships with CROP agencies, international organisations engaged in ocean science and key ocean research institutions. SPC's 'One SPC' data IT project team is working on a PCCOS e-portal project, to develop the PCCOS knowledge portal as an important thematic area within the data and knowledge hub that is under development – the Pacific Data Hub. Mobilisation of resources for PCCOS as part of a larger, integrated SPC project is being explored with potential donor partners. Initial steps towards establishing PCCOS partnership agreements have been discussed with CROP agencies and key international ocean research institutions, including the French Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD). A consultant has been engaged to develop a ten-year PCCOS strategy, with guidance from the PCCOS Project Board. The process will include consultation with SPC members on their needs for ocean information and science and their potential contribution. A sub-regional needs analysis will be undertaken, and the needs assessment will be expanded if additional funding is identified.

5. CRGA:

- i. noted the progress made by the Secretariat in establishing the Pacific Community Centre for Ocean Science (PCCOS);
- ii. requested that the Secretariat provide an update to CRGA 49 on further progress made in establishing PCCOS.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3B: PACIFIC HUB FOR LEARNING AND INNOVATION

6. The Secretariat presented an update to CRGA on the Secretariat's exploration of the feasibility of developing a multi-stakeholder Pacific Hub for Learning and Innovation, as directed by the Tenth Conference of the Pacific Community in 2017. The Pacific Learning and Innovation Hub (Hub) was envisaged as a potential collaborative platform, designed by Pacific Island countries and territories, CROP agencies and other stakeholders, including the private sector, to advance novel ideas and solutions to Pacific development challenges. The Secretariat updated CRGA on its research into the need for innovation and documentation, and sharing of learning in the Pacific, the level of CROP interest in a regional Hub concept, and the innovation capability in the Secretariat to support the Hub. The Secretariat requested member input in relation to whether the Secretariat should continue exploring alternative models of partnership and opportunities to support innovation in the region.

7. CRGA:

- i. noted the early research and assessment work conducted by the Secretariat on the need for a Pacific Hub for Learning and Innovation (Hub), and innovation capabilities within the Secretariat to meet that need;
- ii. noted the CROP Deputies' discussion of the Hub and their wish to further consider the utility of a regional platform against their agencies' individual plans and priorities for learning and innovation;
- iii. requested the Secretariat to continue to explore opportunities for fostering innovation within SPC.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.1A: REPORT FROM THE PACIFIC BOARD FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY (PBEQ) –
A CRGA SUB-COMMITTEE – THE PBEQ REPORT TO CRGA**

8. CRGA received the outcomes of the third (3rd) annual meeting of the Pacific Board for Educational Quality (PBEQ) subcommittee (PBEQ Subcommittee), as agreed by the members of the PBEQ Subcommittee on 23 March 2018. The Secretariat presented the key decisions from the board meeting, including direction from the PBEQ Subcommittee that: SPC's Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP) will further investigate achievement levels and develop actions to improve capacity, resources and confidence in the qualification across participating countries; EQAP will do further work to identify the mechanics of mutual recognition and provide further information on how mutual recognition could work in the Pacific region, taking into consideration the implications

and obligations of the Tokyo Convention and PACER Plus; and EQAP will coordinate the data collection for the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) second Catalogue of Learning Assessments and support countries in verifying and updating data already collected in the first Catalogue of Learning Assessments. A terms of reference for EQAP was developed and endorsed by the PBEQ at its March 2016 meeting, and was endorsed by CRGA out of session in late 2017.

9. CRGA noted the report of the PBEQ Subcommittee.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.1B: UPDATE ON YOUTH HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE OUTCOMES –
PACIFIC YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

10. The Secretariat presented a summary of SPC's contribution to the implementation of the Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF) 2014–2023, which was identified as a standing CRGA agenda item at CRGA 45. Priority areas of work are: integrated programming; youth indicators; youth employment; youth engagement; and youth policy. CRGA affirmed support for the Secretariat's work on youth issues in the Pacific. The Secretariat identified the lack of resources, regionally, committed to support for youth in the Pacific, and noted the need for further investment in youth in the Pacific.

11. CRGA:

- i. noted the progress of members in increasing their focus on the youth sector, and related capacity and investment;
- ii. considered the readiness of members and development partners to promote opportunities for youth, in particular by addressing youth unemployment;
- iii. endorsed the focus on strengthening national systems for youth statistics, including increasing SPC's capacity to monitor the status of youth through data and analysis;
- iv. recognised the need for additional dedicated resources from all stakeholders to support efforts to address youth priorities.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: STRATEGIC PLAN MONITORING AND RESULTS REPORTING FOR
THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY –
REPORT FROM THE CRGA SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

12. The Chair of the CRGA Subcommittee on Strategic Plan Implementation (the Subcommittee) thanked outgoing members of the Subcommittee, and welcomed incoming members. The Chair of the Subcommittee updated CRGA on the Subcommittee's meeting on 29 and 30 May 2018, at which the Subcommittee considered the following matters: the draft Pacific Community Results Report 2017 (Results Report) and self-assessment of progress; the Pacific Community Results Report 2017 – Results Highlights; SPC prioritisation; the mid-term review (Review) of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020 (Strategic Plan) and partnership survey; Country results summaries; and SPC's budget for the financial year ending 31 December 2019. The Secretariat has provided a new set of reports this year – Country Results Summaries – to report on activities in member states, and the Subcommittee assessed the report formats. Members were supportive of the comprehensive Results Report produced by the Secretariat. The Subcommittee asked the Secretariat to provide a deeper explanation about how it conducts the self-assessment of progress in the Results Report.

13. CRGA:

- i. noted the immediate, mid-term and long-term recommendations made by the Subcommittee, to assist CRGA in its annual consideration of the Secretariat's progress in the implementation of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020;
- ii. endorsed the Pacific Community Results Report 2017, noting that the Secretariat has incorporated the improvements suggested by the Subcommittee;
- iii. directed the Secretariat to continue pursuing prioritisation as part of SPC's ongoing business model and provide updates to the CRGA Subcommittee as needed;
- iv. noted the Subcommittee's comments to the Secretariat regarding the mid-term review of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan and partnership survey; country results summaries for 2017; and SPC's budget for the financial year ending 31 December 2019.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC REGIONALISM (FPR)

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.1: CROP COHESION AND COORDINATION,
INCLUDING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE**

14. The Director-General affirmed that the Framework for Pacific Regionalism remains an important policy instrument for all CROP agencies – it is a fundamental blueprint and roadmap that all CROP agencies refer to. CROP agencies are making progress in achieving the goals of the FPR, but there remains work to do in the areas of CROP cohesion and coordination, and on regional governance and financing. CROP executives met in April 2018, and committed to the following actions: holding an annual meeting of CROP heads and Governing Council chairs, to progress a CROP strategic work programme; PIFS representation at annual CROP Governing Council meetings to strengthen understandings of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and regional priorities; establishing a CROP Deputies Group, to support the implementation of regional priorities as directed by CROP executives; and developing a CROP communications strategy. A review of the CROP charter was undertaken and endorsed by CROP heads, who renewed their mutual commitment, as heads of agencies, to do better and provide consistent and coherent advice. The D-G provided an update to CRGA on current initiatives to strengthen CROP cohesion and coordination, in response to the 2017 Analysis of Regional Governance and Financing and subsequent 2017 Forum Leaders' decisions for the Leaders' agenda to be embedded across CROP and its member agencies. The CROP deputy-level meeting deals with CROP issues in more detail than can be achieved at the CROP heads level, and operationalises decisions of CROP heads. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat updated CRGA on the governance and financing review that will be considered by CROP heads later in 2018.

15. CRGA:

- i. noted the update on current initiatives to strengthen CROP cohesion and coordination;
- ii. noted the call from Pacific Leaders to embed the Forum agenda across CROP and its member agencies, and directed the Secretariat to continue to give priority consideration to the Pacific

Leaders' decisions in developing its work programme, and to work proactively to support CROP cohesion and coordination in pursuit of effective regionalism;

- iii. requested that the Secretariat provide out-of-session analysis and updates on the Pacific Leaders' agenda and its impact on the work programme of SPC;
- iv. commended the Secretariat for its engagement with the CROP mechanism and urged it to continue to further enhance these processes.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.2: SOFT REVIEW OF FPR AND IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY PRIORITIES

16. The Director-General updated CRGA on the Secretariat's implementation of key FPR priorities, in particular in the areas of fisheries, climate change and disaster risk management, and cervical cancer. PIFS updated CRGA on the current review of the FPR. The review will focus on the processes that have been established under the Framework to ensure that they deliver on its underlying principles and intent. PIFS noted that the review report and its recommendations will be considered by the Forum Officials Committee (FOC) in November 2018.
17. CRGA noted the update on the review of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, and related joint work addressing priorities in fisheries, climate change and disaster risk management, and cervical cancer.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.3: IMPLEMENTATION OF SIS LEADERS' STRATEGY

18. PIFS provided CRGA with a status report on progress in implementing the Smaller Island States (SIS) Regional Strategy 2016–2020, which was endorsed by SIS Leaders in Koror, Palau, in June 2016, and by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in Pohnpei, FSM, in September 2016, as well as the Strategy's companion Implementation Plan. The purpose of the strategy is to advocate, and build resilience and partnerships, for the development of Smaller Island States. PIFS acknowledged the important role of SPC in pursuing SIS priorities. The Forum Secretariat has progressed work in the Strategy's priority areas of air and sea transportation, particularly regarding the negotiation of fair and equitable air services agreements and the development of a model for joint tendering of air services on selected intra-regional routes between the SIS and with neighbouring countries. Work has also progressed on labour mobility with regard to skilled migration, employment creation and immigration facilitation, including legislative drafting of immigration laws in partnership with the Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC). Climate change work under the Strategy includes a joint SIS proposal to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), agreeing on: (i) infrastructure resilience; (ii) sustainable transport; and (iii) a climate change insurance facility, as the three thematic areas that SIS wish to pursue under joint proposals. The SIS Regional Strategy will undergo a mid-term review in late 2018 as part of the overall effort to keep it relevant and responsive to the expectations of SIS members and stakeholders. The Joint CROP-SIS Attachment Programme will commence in 2018, and will run for a minimum of three years, involving the placement of SIS representatives across all nine participating CROP agencies in fields consistent with the five priority areas under the SIS Strategy and Implementation Plan. The D-G indicated that SPC provides services in most of these areas, except air services, and has a role in all of the other areas identified in the SIS Regional Strategy.

19. CRGA:

- i. reaffirmed the SIS Regional Strategy and Implementation Plan as the basis for articulating its support for SIS regional priorities;
- ii. noted the updates on air services, labour mobility, and climate change work under the SIS Strategy;
- iii. agreed on activities within the SIS Implementation Plan where PIFS and SPC can build stronger partnerships in order to access the technical and financial assistance needed;
- iv. endorsed SPC's participation in the Joint CROP-SIS Attachment Programme;
- v. noted the investment of the Secretariat in implementing the SIS programme, and directed the Secretariat to continue to work closely with the SIS programme, identifying and implementing actions of the SIS Strategy that are relevant to SPC's comparative strengths.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE REPORT

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.1: 2017 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

20. The Secretariat presented SPC's 2017 audited financial statements, for consideration by CRGA, in accordance with SPC's Financial Regulations. The annual financial statements for both the Pacific Community and the Pacific Community Provident Fund received unqualified audit opinions for the financial year 2017. The Secretariat noted that the organisation had moved to a single company structure, which has allowed the Secretariat to prepare financial documentation more clearly and efficiently. The Secretariat continues to evolve the detail contained in the financial reports, and a significant change in the current set is the detail, contained in Appendix A, of development partner contributions by project, including funding movements – this is important, given that around 80 per cent of SPC's activity is project-based. SPC's surplus in 2017 was income-driven, while the Secretariat has maintained a sharp focus on improving project execution rates (which have improved), with flow-on effects for higher levels of project management fee recoveries, offsetting administrative costs. SPC incurred an exchange rate loss of EUR 1.7 million in 2017, effectively offsetting a favourable exchange movement in the previous period; volatility in global currencies remains a challenge for SPC. While overall expenditure has increased, the Secretariat reduced staff expenditure as a result of organisational restructuring in 2016, noting that around 40 per cent of SPC's expenditure is staff or staff-related. SPC has liabilities of around EUR 17 million. SPC runs a highly leveraged business, especially because of the large proportion of project activities, which impacts the organisation's liquidity. Reserves were EUR 19.5 million, but these are matched or tied directly to illiquid property assets. Member contributions and host country grants decreased during the year, and the Secretariat talks regularly to members around the need to ensure they pay their assessed contributions and host country grants. SPC reported total current/non-current provisions of EUR 12.6 million, a significant part of which related to current project audit liabilities for ineligible expenses. At year-end, provision for ineligible expenses was EUR 7.5 million. The Secretariat is working directly with the EU on this issue, and in the last several weeks, that provision has decreased to EUR 3.7 million.

21. CRGA:

- i. adopted the 2017 audited financial statements for the Pacific Community and the Pacific Community Provident Fund;
- ii. noted that the 2017 audited financial statements for the Pacific Community and the Pacific Community Provident Fund were unqualified and presented a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of these entities in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.2: BUDGETS: 2018 REVISED BUDGET; 2019 PROPOSED BUDGET; ASSESSED CONTRIBUTION AND HOST COUNTRY GRANTS

22. The Secretariat presented SPC's revised 2018 budget to CRGA for noting, in accordance with SPC's Financial Regulations, which require the Director-General to inform CRGA of budget revisions. The Secretariat also presented the draft 2019 budget for consideration by CRGA. The revised 2018 budget was adopted out of session by CRGA in December 2017, based on a detailed review and recommendation by both the Audit and Risk Committee and the CRGA Subcommittee on Strategic Plan Implementation. The revised 2018 budget was restated in euro, following the out-of-session decision of CRGA in December 2016 to change the organisation's operating currency from January 1 2017. This change has allowed the Secretariat to improve the quality of treasury management. The Secretariat presented a balanced budget for 2018, with expenditure and income both running at approximately EUR 82 million. The 2019 draft budget shows a deficit of EUR 2 million, but the shift of the timing of CRGA to mid-year means that there is a degree of uncertainty around the levels of funding available for the subsequent year, particularly given the organisation's heavy dependence on project funding. SPC has a large suite of projects that are ending this year, and the Secretariat is working hard to replace project funding for the next period to reduce the projected deficit. The Secretariat requested that members work with the Secretariat to ensure that new projects address priorities, and informed members that the Secretariat is in the process of finalising new projects relating to EDF11. The Secretariat is engaging in discussions with the EU, which aim to increase flexibility in the way that the EU funds SPC. The organisation's reliance on project funding is highlighted by the squeeze in other income sources. SPC's core income is predicted to decline in 2019 by EUR 1 million, while assessed contributions are constant, and voluntary contributions are expected to decline. Adverse currency movements are impacting the predicted level of core income.

23. CRGA:

- i. endorsed the 'out-of-session' adoption of the revised 2018 budget;
- ii. noted the draft budget for financial year 2019, subject to:
 - a. the Secretariat presenting a revised 2019 budget that substantively addresses the current forecast deficit;
 - b. review by the Audit and Risk Committee;
 - c. review and endorsement by the CRGA Subcommittee on Strategic Plan Implementation by December 2018;

- d. out-of-session adoption by all members of CRGA before 31 December 2018;
- iii. noted the ongoing budgetary challenges for future years that stem from SPC's high reliance on cyclical project financing;
- iv. requested that:
 - a. the Secretariat publish and share with all members the core-funded SPC governance meetings (whether CRGA, Conference, subcommittees, ministerial or heads of sector meetings) that the Secretariat considers to be critical for member attendance;
 - b. the Secretariat engage in discussions with members – and consider practices of other CROP agencies – to explore ways for members to directly fund their own travel and accommodation costs for participating in critical, core-funded SPC governance meetings, and present proposals as part of the out-of-session budget approval process in December 2018;
 - c. a detailed review of assessed contributions be undertaken, in consultation with members, with recommendations to be submitted to CRGA 49;
 - d. a detailed review of host country grants be undertaken, in consultation with host countries, on feasible and appropriate levels of host country grant, with recommendations to be submitted to CRGA 49;
- v. requested members to scale up their advocacy efforts in support of the Secretariat, utilising bilateralism to support multilateralism.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.3: AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE REPORT

24. The Chair of the SPC Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) presented the report prepared by the ARC to update CRGA on the Committee's work over the past 12 months.
25. CRGA:
- i. noted the report from the Chair of the SPC Audit and Risk Committee;
 - ii. approved the establishment of a small working group with interested members to consider proposed amendments to the ARC Charter and Internal Audit Charter, and the circulation of these documents to the Audit and Risk Committee and to all members for out-of-session adoption before November 2018;
 - iii. endorsed the appointment of Ms Caren Rangī as an ARC member for a term of three years.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.4: REPORT ON HUMAN RESOURCES

26. The Secretariat updated CRGA on key initiatives being undertaken by the Secretariat's Human Resources Department (HR Department) from 2017 to 2018 to ensure its professional services meet the requirements of the Operations and Management Directorate's (OMD's) business plan, the needs

of programmes and divisions, and the objectives of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020. The HR Department has implemented, or is implementing, several projects to enhance the efficiency of its systems and processes. System development initiatives include a new online HR information system and a redesigned (automated) performance development system. Training programmes on policies, including child protection and domestic violence, have been implemented across the organisation, the latter of which goes towards fulfilling SPC's gender mainstreaming strategy. The current Staff Regulations (2014) are being reviewed, and a full suite of HR policies are being drafted, with consultations with staff currently occurring. The Secretariat proposed that any recommended changes to the Staff Regulations be submitted for approval out of session in December 2018. Members proposed that the Secretariat convene a working group, comprised of members, to be tasked with considering any recommended changes to the SPC Staff Regulations. The HR Department is also actively engaged in enhancing SPC's competitiveness in the job market and its capacity to attract and retain talented people. Members commended the Secretariat for its work to ensure that SPC's HR policies are updated and modernised. Members affirmed support for SPC's bilingualism policy, and its nature as a multi-lingual organisation representing the entire Pacific region.

27. CRGA:

- i. noted progress in implementing the human resources work programme and key initiatives in alignment with the Operations and Management Directorate's business plan;
- ii. directed that the Secretariat convene a working group, comprised of interested members, to be tasked with considering any recommended changes to the SPC Staff Regulations and referring proposed changes to CRGA members for final review and approval out of session in December 2018.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.5: REMUNERATION UPDATE AND SALARY SCALES FOR 2019

28. The Secretariat presented the 2019 SPC salary scales for positions advertised internationally and for those advertised locally in each of SPC's five host countries. The scales proposed are in accordance with the recommendations of the 2015 CROP Strategic Triennial Remuneration Review (2015 Triennial Review), and address the weakening position of the Secretariat's salary scales compared with those of other CROP agencies and the need to ensure SPC is a competitive employer, while balancing operational budgets. In addition, inflation in SPC's main host countries means that SPC salaries in local markets have depreciated. A review of the SPC salary and benefits system is in progress, and accordingly the Secretariat proposed only interim adjustments to the SPC salary scales, taking into account the movement of the salary scales of other CROP agencies. Members requested clarifications around the methodology used to calculate the proposed change in the mid-point of SPC's salary scales. Members indicated reservation around the proposed salary increases in the context of the organisation's projected budget position. The Secretariat emphasised the cost-neutral nature of the initial proposed increase, and the critical importance of SPC maintaining its ability to attract and retain appropriately qualified and skilled staff, bearing in mind that competing employers for SPC staff are not limited to CROP agencies.

29. CRGA:

- i. directed the Secretariat to prepare further analysis and justification of the change to salary scale and proposed salary increase, and to present these to CRGA for adoption as part of the out-of-session budget approval process in December 2018;

- ii. noted the update on the review of (a) the SPC reference currency for the salaries of positions advertised internationally, and (b) CROP harmonisation on human resources processes and remuneration.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: PROCESS FOR RECRUITMENT OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Process for recruitment of Director-General

30. CRGA:

- i. agreed to a timetable for the recruitment of the next Pacific Community Director-General, while noting the importance for flexibility, given the uncertainty surrounding the timing of the departure of the incumbent Director-General;
- ii. affirmed its preference, if circumstances allow, for an in-person discussion of the new Director-General proposed by the Selection Advisory Committee at CRGA 49 and the Eleventh Conference in 2019;
- iii. appointed the members of the Selection Advisory Committee, in accordance with the Pacific Community Governance Arrangement.

The Director-General's performance assessment

31. CRGA:

- i. endorsed the Troika's assessment that the Director-General has, over the past year, been performing in the 'adding value zone' – that is, his performance has repeatedly exceeded the requirements of the position;
- ii. noted the areas of strength and areas of development identified in the Director-General's performance assessment;
- iii. noted that the Director-General has, for the second consecutive year, opted to forego any increase in his remuneration, in light of SPC's financial challenges;
- iv. endorsed the enhancements the Troika has made to the Director-General's performance assessment process – that is:
 - a. setting out, in an annual Letter of Expectations, the Director-General's priorities for the year ahead;
 - b. having ongoing performance discussions with the Director-General through the performance year; and
 - c. utilising an online feedback process to improve the transparency and efficiency of the feedback collected as part of the Director-General's performance assessment;

- v. noted that the Troika will relay the outcome of this performance assessment to the Director-General following CRGA.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: CRGA 49 AND CONFERENCE – VENUE, CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

32. CRGA was advised that the venue for the meeting of CRGA 49 in 2019 will be the same as the venue for the 11th Conference, which shall be chaired by the Cook Islands, and that the Secretariat will advise members of the proposed dates for CRGA 49 and the 11th Pacific Community Conference in due course.
33. CRGA agreed that the Chair for CRGA 49 will be provided by Palau, and the Vice-Chair by Pitcairn Islands.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: EVALUATION OF CRGA 48

34. CRGA responded to questions evaluating the conduct and content of the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11: OTHER BUSINESS

35. Kiribati raised a range of protocol-related issues, and requested that its statement be entered into the record of the meeting, which the Secretariat undertook to do. The Secretariat acknowledged that, at high-level meetings involving members, it would continue to endeavour to exercise its best efforts to ensure that members' expectations were met, where these matters were within its control.
36. RMI raised the question of meeting procedures around remote submissions to meetings, and requested that the CRGA meeting procedures be clarified around this issue. The Secretariat indicated its position of encouraging direct and full participation in meetings, and generally discouraging remote submissions. The Chair indicated that in the specific case of allowing remote submission to this meeting on behalf of one member, this was allowed on an exceptional basis. The Secretariat confirmed that the CRGA rules of procedure permit the Chair of CRGA to exercise discretion of this nature.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12: OBSERVER STATEMENTS

37. CRGA heard, with appreciation, in order of presentation, statements from the European Union, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG). The following observers tabled their statements, to be appended, with all observer statements, to the meeting report: the International Organisation of la Francophonie, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and University of the South Pacific.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13: ADOPTION OF CRGA 48 DECISIONS

38. CRGA adopted its decisions.
-

Annex 1: List of participants

SPC/CRGA 48 (2018)

List of Participants / *Liste des participants*
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH / ANGLAIS

**FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 26–28 June 2018)

**QUARANTE-HUITIÈME SESSION DU COMITÉ DES REPRÉSENTANTS
DES GOUVERNEMENTS ET ADMINISTRATIONS**
(Nouméa, Nouvelle-Calédonie, 26–28 Juin 2018)

**PROVISIONAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
LISTE PROVISOIRE DES PARTICIPANTS**

Chairperson: Ms Peleni Talagi
Présidence : Niue

Vice-Chairperson: Mr Jeffrey Antol
Vice-Présidence : Palau

<p>Australia <i>Australie</i></p>	<p>Mr Paul Wilson Australia's Representative to the Pacific Community and Consul General of Australia in Noumea</p> <p>Mr Daniel Emery Director Regional Organisations and Governance, DFAT</p> <p>Ms Haidee Barrenger Australian Focal Point to the Pacific Community and Consul Noumea</p>
<p>Cook Islands <i>Îles Cook</i></p>	<p>Mr Jim Armistead Director Pacific Division Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration P.O. Box 105 Avarua</p> <p>Ms Antonina Browne Foreign Affairs Officer Pacific Division Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration P.O. Box 105 Avarua</p>
<p>Federated States of Micronesia <i>États fédérés de Micronésie</i></p>	<p>Mr Samson E. Pretrick Deputy Secretary Department of Foreign Affairs FSM National Government</p>

	Palikir, Pohnpei FM 96941
Fiji Islands <i>Fidji</i>	Mr Esala Nayasi Deputy Secretary for Foreign Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Box 2220, Government Buildings Suva Ms Sokoveti Naiyaga Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Government of Fiji Suva
France	M. Christian Lechervy Représentant de la France auprès de la CPS Délégation française auprès de la CPS BP 8043, 98807 Nouméa M. Luc Asselin De Williencourt Représentant permanent adjoint de la France auprès de la CPS Délégation française auprès de la CPS BP 8043, 98807 Nouméa Mme Mélanie Farman Délégation française auprès de la CPS BP 8043 98807 Nouméa
Kiribati	H.E. David Teaabo High Commissioner Kiribati High Commission Suva, Fiji
Marshall Islands <i>Îles Marshall</i>	Mr Bruce Kijiner Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs Government of the Marshall Islands MAJURO
Nauru	Mr Michael Aroi Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade Government of Nauru H.E. Kim Aroi High Commissioner Nauru High Commission Suva, Fiji
Nouvelle-Calédonie New Caledonia	Mme Anne-Claire Goarant Chargée de mission pour la coopération multilatérale et les organisations régionales Gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Calédonie

	<p>Nouméa</p> <p>M. Jimmy Naouna Chargé de mission pour la coopération multilatérale et les organisations régionales Gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Calédonie Nouméa</p>
<p>New Zealand <i>Nouvelle-Zélande</i></p>	<p>Mr Michael Appleton Unit Manager Regional Institutions, Geopolitics & Security Pacific Regional Division Pacific & Development Group New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade</p> <p>Mr Sean Buckley Pacific Regional Division Pacific & Development Group New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade Wellington</p>
<p>Niue</p>	<p>Ms Peleni Talagi Acting Secretary of Government Crown Law Office, Commercial Centre Alofi</p> <p>Ms Emi Hipa Head of External Affairs Niue Public Service Building, Fonuakula Alofi</p>
<p>Palau</p>	<p>Mr Jeffrey Antol Chief of Staff / Acting Director Bureau of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry of State Koror</p> <p>Ms Ekei-Lalii Eve Remengesau Chief, Division of Foreign Affairs Bureau of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry of State Koror</p>
<p>Papua New Guinea <i>Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée</i></p>	<p>Ms Jacinta Tony-Barrion First Secretary PNG High Commission Suva, Fiji</p>
<p>Pitcairn</p>	<p>Mr Robin Shackell Deputy Governor British High Commission Auckland</p>

	New Zealand
Polynésie française French Polynesia	M. Maurice Lau Poui Cheung Délégation aux affaires internationales, européennes et du Pacifique Bureau des affaires internationales, européennes et du Pacifique BP 2551 98713 PAPEETE, TAHITI
Samoa	Peseta Noumea Simi Chief Executive Officer Ministry Foreign Affairs & Trade
Solomon Islands Îles Salomon	Ms Gladys Luahiti Chief Desk Officer / REC Desk Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade P.O. Box G10 Honiara Ms Alice Mary Iwebu Chief Planning Officer Ministry of Development Planning & AID Coordination PO Box G30 Honiara
Tokelau	Mr Tiso Fiaola Planning & Strategic Officer Government of Tokelau Fakaofu
Tonga	HSH Marcella Kalaniuvalu Senior Assistant Secretary Asian Desk Officer Ministry of Foreign Affairs St. George's Government Building, Level 3 P.O.Box 821 Nuku'alofa
Tuvalu	Ms Emma Penitala Lauti Deputy High Commissioner Tuvalu High Commission Suva, Fiji
United States of America États-Unis d'Amérique	Ms Jennifer Spande Deputy Director Office of Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Islands, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs Department of State 2201 C Street NW, Rm 4318 Washington DC, 20520 Ms Jenny Morrell Pacific Islands Multilateral Officer Office of Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Islands,

	<p>Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs Department of State 2201 C Street NW, Rm 4318 Washington DC, 20520</p> <p>Mr Mark R. Mineo Regional Environmental Officer US Embassy 158 Princess Road, Tamavua Suva, Fiji</p> <p>Ms Maria Elder-Ratutokarua Environment Specialist US Embassy 158 Princess Road, Tamavua Suva, Fiji</p>
Vanuatu	<p>Mr Richard Balkonan Olul Acting Director Department of Foreign Affairs and International Organization Port Vila</p> <p>Mr Serge Alain Mahe Consul General Vanuatu Consulate General Noumea, New Caledonia</p>

OBSERVERS/OBSERVATEURS

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	<p>Dr Wulf Killmann Team Leader Suva, Fiji</p> <p>Mr James Forbes Director Programmes Pacific Islands Suva, Fiji</p>
European Union / <i>Union européenne</i>	<p>Ms Emmanuelle Guiheneuf Head of Economic Cooperation & Agriculture European Union Delegation to the Pacific Suva, Fiji</p>
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) / Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique (AIEA)	<p>Mr Paul McGinnity Department Nuclear Sciences and Applications</p>
The International Organisation of la Francophonie (OIF) / Organisation internationale de la francophonie (OIF)	<p>Dr Eric-Normand Thibeault Director / Regional Representative for the Asia Pacific Office</p>
Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) / Groupe du fer de lance mélanésien (GFLM)	<p>Mr Peter Eafeare Deputy Director General PMB 9105</p>

	Port Vila, Vanuatu
Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO) / Bureau de la sécurité aérienne dans le Pacifique (PASO)	Mr Andrew Valentine General Manager PO Box 139 Port Vila, Vanuatu
Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS)/ Secrétariat général du Forum des Îles du Pacifique (FIP)	Mr Joel Nilon Framework for Pacific Regionalism Adviser Ms Bethany Sargeant Regional & International Partnerships Adviser
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) / Programme régional océanien de l'environnement (PROE)	Mr Roger Cornforth Deputy Director General
South Pacific Tourism Office (SPTO) / Organisation du tourisme du Pacifique Sud (SPTO)	Ms Elizabeth Ragimana Manager Research Suva, Fiji
University of the South Pacific (USP) / Université du Pacifique Sud (USP)	Professor Jito Vanualailai Director Research Mr Jandra Karan Director Strategic Partnerships, Advancement and Communications
Resource Person Expert-conseil	Mr John Davidson CRGA Governance Training Facilitator
Resource Person Expert-conseil	Mr Alan Morris Audit and Risk Committee Chair

**SENIOR LEADERSHIP OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY
DIRECTION DU LA COMMUNAUTÉ DU PACIFIQUE**

Director-General / Directeur général	Dr Colin Tukuitonga
Deputy Director-General (Noumea) / Directeur général adjoint (Nouméa)	Mr Cameron Diver
Deputy Director-General (Suva) / Directrice générale adjointe (Suva)	Dr Audrey Aumua
Chief Adviser to the Director-General – Director- General's Office / Conseillère principale et attachée de liaison auprès du Bureau du Directeur général	Ms Patricia Sachs-Cornish

Director, Finance / <i>Directeur des finances</i>	Mr Martin Van Weerdenburg
Director, Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division / <i>Directeur de la Division pêche, aquaculture et écosystèmes marins</i>	Mr Moses Amos
Director, Public Health Division / <i>Directeur de la Division santé publique</i>	Dr Paula Vivili
Director, Statistics for Development Division / <i>Directrice de la Division statistique pour le développement</i>	Dr Ofa Ketu'u
Director, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability / <i>Directrice du Programme durabilité environnementale et changement climatique</i>	Ms Sylvie Goyet
Director, Human Resources / <i>Directeur des ressources humaines</i>	Mr Craig Parker
Director, Information Services / <i>Directeur des services d'information</i>	Mr Johan (Bas) Berghoef
Director, Communications and Public Information / <i>Directeur de la communication</i>	Mr Peter Foster
Director, Land Resources Division / <i>Directeur de la Division ressources terrestres</i>	Mr Jan Helsen
Director – Social Development Programme / <i>Directrice adjointe – Département développement social</i>	Ms Kuiniselani Tago
Director, Geoscience, Energy and Maritime Division / <i>Directeur de la Division géosciences, énergie et services maritimes</i>	Mr Andrew Jones
Director Regional Rights Resource Team / <i>Directeur de l'Équipe régionale d'éducation en matière de droits de la personne</i>	Mr Miles P Young
Director Melanesian Regional Office / <i>Directrice régionale pour la Mélanésie</i>	Ms Mia Rimon
Director Micronesian Regional Office / <i>Directrice régionale pour la Micronésie</i>	Ms Lara Studzinski
Acting Director, Strategy, Performance and Learning / <i>Directrice par intérim de l'équipe Stratégie, performance et amélioration continue</i>	Ms Emily Sharp

Annex 2: Statements of observers

48th CRGA

June 28, 2018

Observer Statement of GIZ

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, friends,

Good afternoon. The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) has been supporting Pacific Island countries for 40 years in their efforts towards Sustainable Development, for the past 20 years in close cooperation with SPC. We are also working closely with PIFS, SPREP and USP, as well as with other development partners.

For the past 9 years we have been working hand-in hand with SPC on climate change adaptation and mitigation, including REDD +. New areas of cooperation between SPC, GIZ and SPREP will be the Regional Pacific NDC Hub and Blue Carbon.

Dear colleagues, the reason for two guys sitting here is our GIZ-internal handing over. I will leave the region next Monday after serving you for over seven years, and I will leave with a heavy heart.

I want to thank all of you, and your colleagues at home, as well as our DG Dr. Colin Tukuitonga and his staff, for your trust and support, and your excellent collaboration. I will carry your friendship and the Pacific in my heart and mind to warm me on cold German shores. Vinaka, Malo aupito, Faafetai Lava, Tankyu tumas, Komoltata!

Handing over to my successor Mr. James Macbeth Forbes.

Also from me thank you very much, but in the sense of the warm welcome you afforded me. Wulf has been a great help in introducing me to the region and to the various players. I had the pleasure of meeting some of you already and will be looking forward to our joint future work. I am pleased that GIZ has managed to be a strong and reliable partner to SPC and have no plans to change that at all. On the contrary, I am looking forward to expanding and deepening our relations.



Draft Observer Statement
by
Mr Peter Eafeare
Deputy Director General of the MSG Secretariat
to the
Forty-Eight Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and
Administrations (CRGA)

26-28 June 2018,
Pacific Community,
Noumea, New Caledonia

Chair, Head of Delegations & Distinguished delegates,

Ladies & gentlemen, Oi wantoks

Merci Monsieur le President du conseil, et Bonjour a tous,

Gutpela dei long yupela olgeta, Nisa Bula Vinaka,

Warm Greetings to you!

At the outset, let me express on behalf of Ambassador Amena Yauvoli, Director General and Staff of the MSG Secretariat and members, our most sincere appreciation to the Pacific Community Secretariat for availing us this opportunity to make a statement as an observer to this auspicious gathering. In the same vein, may I offer sincere appreciation to Dr. Colin Tukuitonga and the Secretariat, especially, Ms Mia Rimon, Regional Director Melanesia for the warm and close working relationship we have had and continue to have with you.

We have a formal arrangement through and under the MOU we have with the Pacific Community which articulates the mutual recognition we have given to the seven (7) priorities we have agreed to implement in a collaborative and cooperative manner with the interest of the people of Melanesia at the core of our objectives.

I pledge to you on behalf of the Director General and the MSG Secretariat, our commitment to continue to work with you on these issues relating to the MOU, some of which I will elaborate on later.

May I also express sincere gratitude to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for the gracious hospitality; especially the logistical arrangements for the meeting including provision of secretarial services, facilities and support staff, which have been afforded to me thus far.

Chair, I have noted from the agenda of this meeting, issues that mirror the goals and priorities of the MSG as envisaged under MSG 2038 PROSPERITY FOR ALL PLAN. These include Innovative partnerships, the Pacific Youth Development Framework, the report of the Pacific Board for Educational Quality (PBEQ) which has some implications for our endeavours within MSG especially with the revised MSGTA III which is yet to come into force and the agenda which has a special point of interest for us, Framework for Pacific Regionalism.

Chair, on the issue of the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, MSG believes this is a priority as it has great benefits and opportunities for the region and especially the sub-region of Melanesia. Our MSG Leaders have embraced the common purpose of Pacific Regionalism, which encourages and urges us at the end of the day, to work towards “enhancing sustainable and inclusive development within the Pacific countries and territories and for the Pacific region as a whole”. In this regard, it requires a CROP wide coordination, which should naturally include sub-regional organisations, amongst others, the MSG Secretariat.

In our progressive efforts to augment and supplement the realisation of Pacific Regionalism, MSG Secretariat's contribution is through our collaboration and coordination with the Pacific Community under the recently updated MOU, which identifies areas of priorities of; Energy, Fisheries, Shipping, Agriculture, Statistics & Database, Capacity Building and Human Rights. All of these identified work areas are linked to the Pacific Community's national work programmes in Vanuatu, PNG and the Solomon Islands, as well as in New Caledonia and Fiji. MSG's objective and intention is how best we can further enhance our work with the Pacific Community in their area of work in countries in Melanesia where they have large work programmes. This would involve exploring ways that MSG can be utilised in the divisional work of the Pacific Community in MSG member countries and to assist each other as partners for development in Melanesia.

Specifically,

- **Energy** – MSG would like to see SPC assist and complement initiatives in the MSG to deploy Sustainable Renewable Energy (RE) and Energy Efficiency Initiatives in Melanesian communities both on and off – grid. Amongst which are; RE technologies- Solar, Hydro, Wind and Geothermal. I know discussions on Sustainable Renewable Energy has gone on for sometimes, however, I do recall that at the Westin Hotel, on Denarau, Fiji, in 2013, SPC sponsored a workshop for Melanesian countries on Sustainable Renewable Energy which provided amongst others, some options on how to address the on and off grid challenges countries in Melanesia were facing and continue to face. To this end we would like to explore ways in which SPC can share this information, experience and its expertise on how best practical approaches can be implemented to alleviate and/or translate the livelihoods of our people from being heavily reliant on fossil fuels to renewable energy sources for their domestic use.

- **Inshore fisheries**- under the MSG roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management & Sustainable Development 2015-2024, especially in relation to managing bechederme and maximise benefits to fishermen in MSG countries, we (MSG) would like to jointly explore financial resources with the Pacific Community to have a fisheries officer stationed at our Secretariat to help coordinate Bechederme management work with the MSG Fisheries Technical Advisory Committee (FTAC). We will be discussing with SPC how to jointly explore financial resources (ways?) to develop a Fisheries Curriculum for primary through to higher schools including TVET on raising awareness and providing information on the importance and management of inshore fisheries to all stakeholders. Curriculum work in Solomon Islands, PNG and Fiji will require financial resources. Vanuatu's has been completed and translated into French in 2016 through seed money from New Zealand. In publications of this nature, we insist that MSG logo is included as the work stems from the MSG Roadmap. Still at discussions level is the development of appropriate information products on the "Sustainable Use and Protection" of the coastal marine ecosystems and resources.
- **Offshore fisheries** – MSG will be discussing with SPC the possibility of assistance with information and data on harvests and management of Albacore tuna resource.
- The other areas which require further exploration and discussion between SPC include; **Agriculture** - on climate smart agriculture and pests management, **Statistics & Database** - support in provision of statistics, **Capacity Development**- short term attachments of MSG staff to SPC and exchange programmes and support to States on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) under **Human Rights**.
- **Shipping** - in regards to the proposed MSG Shipping Commission as per recommendation of the recent Trade Com II report to be set up in strong partnership with SPC since they have the expertise and competency. We look forward to further work with SPC in order to make this happen pending the ratification of the MSG Free Trade Agreement hopefully before the end of 2018.

Chair, I am positive that this meeting, will yield the desired outcomes of issues before us. But more importantly MSG Secretariat's participation here as an observer signifies the importance we give to our member countries who are active members of the Pacific Community with the added bonus of interacting with the wider membership of Pacific Community and CROP agencies.

Chair, in equal manner, we value our close collaboration and working relations with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community led by Dr Colin Tukuitonga and look forward to greater collaboration which will accrue to the enhancement of the livelihoods of all the people we serve in this region.

With these few remarks, I would like to express on behalf of Director General Amena Yauvoli, every success in your deliberations.

Thank you tru

Tank u Tumas

Vinaka vaka levu

Merci Beaucoup!

Oleti

*MSG Secretariat
Port Vila, Vanuatu
21st June 2018*



N/Réf : BRAP/AB/ENT/20181122-011

Déclaration de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie

Nouméa, le 28 JUIN 2018

La Secrétaire générale de l'OIF a désigné le Directeur – Représentant régional du bureau de l'Asie-Pacifique pour représenter l'OIF, en tant qu'organisation au statut d'Observateur, lors du Comité des représentants des gouvernements et administrations (CRGA) qui a tenu une session du 26 au 28 juin 2018 à Nouméa (Nouvelle-Calédonie).

L'OIF a constaté que l'usage du français et, plus spécifiquement, du bilinguisme demeure fortement ancré dans le cadre des prises de paroles des représentants provenant de 21 pays et territoires membres du Comité des représentants des gouvernements et administrations (CRGA).

Le bilinguisme et le plurilinguisme constituent une condition au dialogue interculturel et contribue à la reconnaissance de la diversité culturelle.

S'appuyant sur un dispositif d'interprétariat simultané les intervenants s'expriment en anglais et en français. Le Service de traduction a également permis que soit disponible une documentation bilingue en version papier et numérique. Cette pratique du bilinguisme à la CPS participe de fait à la mise en œuvre du Vade-mecum relatif à l'usage de la langue française dans les organisations internationales que promeut l'OIF auprès de ses membres. Le Représentant de l'OIF a adressé aux plus hautes autorités de la CPS ses félicitations pour avoir obtenu l'ensemble des documents, rapports et stratégies en langue française. La délégation de l'OIF a affirmé son entière satisfaction pour une offre de services d'interprétariat simultané de très haut niveau professionnel tout au long du CGA en séance plénière ainsi que lors des ateliers.

La participation de la délégation de la Francophonie s'est inscrite dans la perspective d'un partenariat entre l'OIF et la Communauté du Pacifique. La réunion du CRGA a été l'occasion de poursuivre le dialogue dans la continuité des efforts communs de collaboration dans la région de l'Asie-Pacifique. L'ensemble régional, où la CPS exerce ses missions, offre à la Francophonie un espace illustrant les réussites de la diversité culturelle.

La paix, la stabilité et le renforcement des institutions démocratiques sont des priorités communes à l'OIF et à la CPS.

Conscients du fait que la jeunesse est la principale source d'innovation et qu'elle incarne l'avenir partagé entre les membres de l'OIF et de la Communauté du Pacifique, nous nous réjouissons de la désignation de la jeunesse comme public prioritaire de nos interventions mutuelles. L'OIF et la Communauté du Pacifique souhaitent en outre poursuivre dans les semaines à venir leur dialogue afin d'encourager l'identification d'interventions communes en faveur de l'égalité femme-homme. Elles le feront notamment à travers les indicateurs de mesure de la gestion axée sur les résultats ainsi que la mise en œuvre de - pratiques contextualisées, partagées entre les Directions-programmes.

La Délégation de l'OIF a pu observer le potentiel de mise en œuvre d'activités de sensibilisation, d'accompagnement, de formation et d'expertise visant à renforcer les capacités des institutions des Etats membres de la CPS. Elle a constaté leur présence au sein des Réseaux de la Francophonie dans les domaines de l'État de droit et de la démocratie et des efforts entrepris pour l'atteinte des Objectifs liés au développement durable. Les pays océaniques sont en effet extrêmement vulnérables face à l'impact des événements géopolitiques et économiques externes et plus encore aux effets du changement climatique et de catastrophes naturelles toujours plus violentes. Il est essentiel de tisser des liens de coopération étroits entre les pays océaniques, les organisations internationales et régionales ainsi que les partenaires du développement si l'on veut promouvoir le développement durable et ininterrompu de la région.

L'essor des coopérations entre l'OIF et la CPS est indispensable notamment dans les domaines de la politique et de la diplomatie, de la culture, de la formation et de l'éducation, du développement économique et de l'environnement durable représentant les fondamentaux d'un Accord-Cadre en cours de discussions.

Appréciation

La délégation de l'OIF fait part de sa parfaite satisfaction à l'égard des conditions d'accueil du gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Calédonie et notamment du membre du gouvernement en charge de la Francophonie. Le Bureau régional de l'OIF pour l'Asie et le Pacifique remercie le Secrétariat de la Communauté du Pacifique pour toutes les dispositions qui ont facilité les audiences du 26 au 28 juin 2018 auprès du personnel de sa haute direction, agents et expert en poste au siège de la Communauté du Pacifique.

Le Bureau régional pour l'Asie et le Pacifique de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie saisit cette occasion pour exprimer sa gratitude à la Commission du Pacifique à qui il exprime sa haute appréciation du statut accordé en tant qu'Observateur.

Pièce jointe : Correspondance n°ADM/BUR/AP/ac/20180419-007 du 20 avril 2018

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat – CRGA Observer Statement

- The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat welcomed the opportunity to participate in CRGA 2018.
- We extend our thanks to the Pacific Community for its significant role in supporting the sustainable development of the Pacific region and for its continued, deepening collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum and Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP).

The Blue Pacific

- Pacific unity and solidarity are at the heart of the *Blue Pacific* narrative. Adopted by Forum Leaders last year, the *Blue Pacific* seeks to recapture the collective potential of our shared stewardship of the Pacific Ocean and give new impetus to the way in which we work together as a region, for the shared benefit of all.
- We commend SPC for continuing to consider ways in which it can promote the Blue Pacific narrative and build a collective and collaborative approach to addressing regional opportunities and challenges.

Framework for Pacific Regionalism

- The Forum Secretariat would also commend CRGA for continuing to embed the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR)* as a standing agenda item in CRGA.
- The successful implementation of the FPR requires that the regional architecture – principally the CROP – is a true partner in the priority setting process and on delivering on priorities.
- SPC continues to play a critical role in the implementation of the FPR through the provision of technical policy advice and the delivery of initiatives in response to Leaders’ priorities, in its areas of expertise. This includes:
 - Working to maximise the economic returns of fisheries and on coastal fisheries management, including as part of the Fisheries Taskforce;
 - Climate change and disaster risk management through the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific and the establishment of the Pacific Resilience Partnership; and
 - Combatting cervical cancer through its role as Chair of the Population and Health Working Group.
- The Forum Secretariat commends SPC for the continued and clearly demonstrated commitment to resourcing implementation of Leaders’ priorities, in its areas of expertise.

- As discussed at CRGA, the Forum Secretariat is currently undertaking a review of the FPR, to ensure it is delivering on its underlying principles and intent. The Forum Secretariat looks forward to the views of SPC informing this review, alongside those of Forum Members, other CROP agencies, civil society, the private sector and development partners.

CROP Cohesion and Coordination

- The Forum Secretariat welcomed the opportunity for CRGA to be updated on recent initiatives to strengthen CROP cohesion and coordination. SPC has played an important role over the past year in supporting efforts in this regard.
- As highlighted at the CRGA, a revised CROP Charter will be considered by Forum Leaders this September, following an in depth review in 2016 and the draft Charter being endorsed in principle by CRGA in 2017.
- As also highlighted at CRGA, CROP agencies have been working proactively this year to strengthen cohesion and coordination including through a commitment to hold an annual meeting of CROP Heads and Governing Council Chairs, the establishment of a CROP Deputies Group to drive implementation of CROP Heads' decisions; and the development of a CROP communications strategy to promote Pacific priorities globally and regionally, based on the Blue Pacific narrative.
- While progress has been made, there is an opportunity to further strengthen CROP cohesion and coordination in the delivery of regional priorities. This will continue to be a priority for the Forum Secretariat and CROP agencies over the coming year.
- We look forward to CRGA's continuing views as to how CROP can further be strengthened.

Supporting the 2016-2020 *Smaller Island States Strategy*

- CRGA is commended for continuing to commit to implementing the SIS Regional Strategy 2016-2020 as the strategic platform to ensure greater influence and presence by the SIS in shaping the regional policy agenda and direction.
- We welcome CRGA's recognition of the SIS Regional Strategy as a standing agenda item and welcome the consideration of the paper 'Implementation of the SIS Leaders' Strategy'.
- In the past year, the Pacific Community has shown great leadership in embedding the SIS Regional Strategy into its respective work plans including with regards to the SIS focal areas of climate change, health, marine, labour mobility and sea transportation.

Closing Remarks

- In closing, the Forum Secretariat would like to thank Director-General Dr. Colin Tukuitonga and the SPC staff for a productive 2017/18 period and for the continued collaboration and commitment to working with the Forum Secretariat and other members of CROP, as we continue to advance the prosperity, inclusion, harmony and security of the Pacific region.
- The Forum Secretariat would also like to thank the Government and people of New Caledonia and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for hosting this meeting.

Statement by SPREP/PROE to the 48th CRGA

Director-General, Members of SPC and participants at the 48th CRGA - it has been a privilege to have been able to observe your successful meeting. I have been impressed at the insightful and thoughtful discussion that has characterised your meeting.

SPREP is a very close partner of SPC, and at the outset I would like to recognise and appreciate the attention that the DG and his Deputies pay to collaboration with SPREP and the other CROP organisations. SPREP and SPC are actively engaging in collaborative actions at both the strategic and operational levels, and I would like SPC Members to be aware of the strength and depth of this relationship:

- Last year the senior management teams of both our organisations met together for the first time to plan a common path forwards. As a result our Deputies are tasked with developing a joint resilience programme for the region that will begin with mapping the areas and extent of our existing collaboration in order to assess those areas needing attention as well as the potential for future joint action.
- At a practical level we are working together in support of the FRDP, both as members of the Support Team, and by sharing the CROP chair at the PRP with SPREP currently acting in the role for the CROP constituency.
- We are also collaborating in a number of significant EDF11 projects coming on stream imminently, and
- We are sharing office accommodation for some of our regional Desk Officers - notably Vanuatu and FSM.

I would also like to express our support for SPC's efforts to encourage timely payment of membership fees. SPC is not alone in this issue. SPREP appreciates that the more punitive approach taken by SPC at the last CRGA has resulted in an often negative reaction from Members and recommends that the Secretariat considers the rather more successful approach taken by SPREP to work with countries in arrears and jointly develop a repayment schedule which may well be a multi-year agreement.

This approach to arrears also reflects the approach taken by SPREP over Member self-funding for key governance meetings which you have favourably referenced in your discussions. We believe that providing for flexibility to recognise particular circumstances, and to offer support to overcome difficulties is an appropriate Pacific way to move forwards with our Members.

I would also like to take this opportunity to appreciate the governance training that SPC now undertakes immediately prior to each CRGA. This training addresses issues that are also common to SPREP's own governance processes, and I hope that between our two organisations we can continue to strengthen the engagement of our Members in our governance. This in turn will enhance the commitment of our Members to our particular mandates, and the support that we are able to provide our Members.

And finally I would like to recommend to CRGA participants the considerable opportunities for future collaboration and participation between our two organisations in wider partnerships that will be possible through the Pacific Climate Change Centre to be hosted by the Government of Samoa and SPREP and which is scheduled to open in mid-2019.

Fa'afetai lava - thank you

Roger Cornforth
DDG



Celebrating the Pacific, Shaping its Future

**STATEMENT BY THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC (USP) –
JAINDRA KARAN, DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS,
ADVANCEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

I am pleased to be representing The University of the South Pacific (USP) at this important 48th CRGA, together with my colleague Professor Jito Vanualailai, Director of Research.

2. USP, as member of the CROP works very closely with SPC and other members. Apart from being a tertiary education provider and research institution, USP is also a regional integration organisation. In its dual role, USP therefore not only provides sustainable training, capacity building and undertakes research but also takes active part in pursuing regional mandates of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders.

3. USP, in collaboration with SPC and other CROP agencies works in areas such as environment, climate change, oceans, energy and others apart from its core areas. It is important that we all work together in ensuring that the maximum benefits in these key areas of concern and opportunity are delivered to our member countries in a most effective manner. Some of the good examples include our collective and collaborative work on climate change, oceans and our collective resource on renewable energy.

4. In moving forward, we hope to continue to work collaboratively with SPC and other CROP agencies in pursuing some of the outcomes related to our respective areas of competence as outlined in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism, and other international agendas such as SDGs, S.A.M.O.A Pathway etc.

5. We also have an opportunity to work collaboratively on the EDF11 Pacific Regional Indicative Programme and USP will work with SPC and other relevant CROP agencies to ensure that there is maximum benefit to the Pacific ACP States.

6. We are working towards renewing MOU to work collaboratively in the areas of mutual interest and hopefully will be signed by the Director General, SPC and the Vice-Chancellor and President, USP next month.

7. Our current Strategic Plan 2013-2018 ends in December and its implementation is a high 82% so far. USP is already advanced in the development of its new Strategic Plan 2019-2024, which will be finalised at the Council meeting in November. This plan will be a result of extensive consultation with all our stakeholders- member countries, development partners, CROP agencies, private sector, NGOs and others.

8. Learning and Teaching; Student Support; Research, Innovation and Internationalisation; Digital Transformation; Regional Campuses; Our People; Governance, Management, Leadership and Continuous Improvement; and Regional Cooperation and Integration are eight key priority areas for the next 6 years.

9. It will be remiss on my part not to mention that USP is celebrating its golden jubilee (50 years of existence) this year. I wish to thank SPC for pro-actively engaging with the University in capturing our journey from the beginning until now using video and still photos.

10. Finally, on behalf of the University, our delegation wishes to sincerely thank SPC for inviting USP as an observer to CRGA 48 and we provide our assurance that we will continue to work collaboratively with SPC and other CROP agencies to achieve best results for our member countries.

The University of the South Pacific

27 June 2018