

**REPORT OF  
SIXTH CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**  
(Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 12–13 October 2009)

and

**THIRTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS  
(CRGA 39)**  
(Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 6–9 October 2009)

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**SIXTH CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY****Chairperson**

Hon. Dr Feleti V. Sevele  
Prime Minister of Tonga  
Prime Minister's Office

**Vice-Chairperson**

Sir Terepai Maoate KBE (MD)  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs  
and Immigration  
Government of the Cook Islands

## AGENDA

### 1. **Conference Opening**

Opening prayer  
 Speeches of welcome  
 Election of drafting committee  
 Adoption of agenda

### 2. **Report of the Thirty-Ninth Meeting of CRGA**

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### 3. **Director-General's report to Conference**

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‘Maximising impacts of regional programmes at national level’

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- Strengthening the relevance and effectiveness of regional programmes at national level: Joint country strategies and progress on implementation
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### 7. **Evaluation of Director-General's performance for the period 2008/2009** (*closed session*)

### 8. **Year 2011 Conference**

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### 9. **Other business**

### 10. **Financial year 2008 budget**

### 11. **Adoption of the communiqué**

## **REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**

### **AGENDA ITEM 1 – OPENING OF THE SESSION**

1. The Chairperson, the Honourable Dr Feleti V. Sevele, Prime Minister of Tonga, called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees on behalf of the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga. He reminded delegates of the SPC's long history of service in the region, noting that its governing body comprised heads of government until the establishment of the Pacific Islands Forum (formerly the South Pacific Forum) in 1971. He said the 2009 Conference had historical significance because it would take decisions that would shape and cement the expanded role of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC ) following the decisions made on the reform of the regional institutional framework (RIF). He noted that the expanded scope of services to be provided through SPC made it extremely important for members to be represented at the political level at meetings of the governing body. He also highlighted the fact that the Conference was celebrating SPC's 63-year history of service to the region. He acknowledged the complementarity of the work of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) at the political and policy level and that of SPC at the technical, scientific, research, training and sectoral policy level. He reminded delegates of the theme of the Conference, *Maximising impacts of regional programmes at national level*, saying that SPC touches lives, gives hope and builds capacity throughout the region, and called on members to ensure they are represented at the ministerial level at future Conferences. He noted that more ministers were in attendance than at previous Conferences, and further encouraged members to continue full ministerial participation at future Conferences noting it is more important than ever before for ministers to guide the work of SPC into the future. He expressed his confidence that the meeting's deliberations would result in a successful outcome.
2. The meeting adopted the agenda as presented.
3. The Chairperson suggested that the Drafting Committee be composed of the same members as at the Thirty-Ninth Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA 39): American Samoa, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea [PNG], Pitcairn Islands, United States of America [USA] and Tonga, with Cook Islands again providing the Chairperson.
4. The meeting adopted this suggestion, as well as the proposed hours of work, with the Drafting Committee to meet in the afternoon as well as in the morning.

### **AGENDA ITEM 2 – LETTER FROM CHAIR OF CRGA TO CHAIR OF CONFERENCE**

5. The Chairperson of CRGA 39, the representative of Australia, presented a letter summarising the meeting's deliberations and recommendations to the Chairperson of the Conference (Annex 2). She thanked the Kingdom of Tonga for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and for its quick response to the tsunami alert that occurred part way through the proceedings.
6. The Chairperson of the Conference thanked the Chairperson of CRGA 39 for her work and for the recommendations.
7. The Director-General thanked the Chairperson and welcomed delegates. He clarified that CRGA is empowered to make decisions in the years in which Conference does not meet, and that therefore the decisions of CRGA 38 were also being presented for Conference simply to note. He noted that the issues covered in the Chairperson's letter were the key themes from the meeting and were not presented in the same order as in the CRGA agenda. These included the RIF implementation process, which was discussed in the Director-General's report; key items for action from the divisional reports; and policy issues such as the Pacific Plan and establishment of development indicators for the region.
8. The representative of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) thanked the government of Tonga for the opening ceremony and noted that the speeches made by Her Royal Highness, Princess Salote Mafile'o Pilolevu Tui, and the Director-General mentioned important issues that would be part of the agenda for the Conference. He also noted that most of the issues in the CRGA recommendations would be covered in the Conference agenda as well. He congratulated the Chairperson and thanked the Government of Tonga for its hospitality. He also extended the condolences of the people of FSM to Tonga, Samoa and American Samoa

for the loss of lives resulting from the recent tsunami, as well as to the Director-General, whose father died in Solomon Islands on 3 October. He thanked the development partners and the heads of the regional and international organisations represented at the Conference. He noted that the issue of long-term sustainable financing was raised in the letter and in the recommendations from CRGA, and said that FSM supported SPC's effort to address this issue. He said FSM endorsed the recommendations of CRGA and all efforts to ensure that SPC receives the necessary funding, including examining the funding provided by development partners and through assessed contributions.

9. The representative of American Samoa thanked attendees for their condolences and words of sympathy. He congratulated the Chairperson and thanked Tonga for its hospitality. He recognised the recent donation from Tonga and thanked the US Government and President for quickly declaring a federal disaster, which opened channels of special assistance. He offered the condolences of American Samoa to the people of Samoa and Tonga. American Samoa had hosted an SPC team headed by the Deputy Director-General in April, and in one intensive week, American Samoa and SPC developed a joint country strategy (JCS) to guide SPC's future work in the territory. He said that American Samoa looked forward to continuing to work with SPC.

10. The representative of Niue thanked the Government of Tonga for its hospitality and expressed the condolences of Niue to Tonga, American Samoa and Samoa. He noted that there was a need in Niue to review methods of response to earthquakes and tsunamis, as in some cases people responded in ways that were not appropriate. He said that Niue would provide whatever assistance it could to the three countries affected by the recent tsunami, stressing that recovery could be a difficult and slow process, particularly dealing with the psychological effects of the tragedy. He said that each of the regional organisations had been established in response to requests from countries; he welcomed the ongoing rationalisation and hoped there would be savings. He said that SPC had played a vital role in the lives of people in the region and had been effective in many areas. Like SPC, member governments had been affected by the global financial crisis and it was unreasonable to expect them to contribute more, as this might cause serious problems for national budgets. He said that leaders in the region needed to review and coordinate SPC's work with regional priorities. Niue's priorities were to develop its economy via tourism and fisheries. Given the region's vast fishery resources, it was hard to understand why countries were still poor despite the wealth of fish that had been taken from their exclusive economic zones (EEZ). Niue would take note of approaches used by other countries in the region. In tourism, Niue viewed Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Fiji Islands as models. Niue would focus on economic development as it was the best way to provide basic services to people. He said that climate change would have a major impact, not just in terms of environmental changes, but also by causing damage to infrastructure. He said Niue was grateful for the support from donor countries in the areas of economic and social services; the problem was that recipients of this support could become dependent on it and stop thinking about what they could do for themselves. He said that Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) were looking to SPC to help develop their economies and their social infrastructure, noting that donor priorities sometimes took precedence and were effectively forced on recipient countries.

11. The representative of Cook Islands endorsed the expressions of condolences to the host country and to the people of Samoa and American Samoa. He said Cook Islands supported the Chairperson's report overall, but that he wanted to make a few comments. He said he had been briefed by a task force on economic development made up of representatives from the private sector and that it recommended a holistic approach to development that included all sectors. A holistic approach to health would be welcome, but would require additional resources. He noted that in order to succeed, the parties would need to work together at all levels, and that SPC's work should be closely related to the outcomes of the Forum Leaders' meeting and their stated priorities. PIFS and SPC should work together to address these priorities.

12. The representative of Kiribati thanked Australia and Cook Islands for providing the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for CRGA, noting that it was a constructive meeting with important outcomes. He also thanked the Director-General and staff of SPC for the work that went into preparing the Conference papers and making arrangements for the meeting. He offered the condolences of Kiribati to those affected by the tsunami. He said that some members of the public had panicked but that governments had ensured that everything went as well as it could. With regard to the Chairperson's letter, he said that though some were questioning the decentralisation approach, the issue had been carefully considered by the leaders. Kiribati was interested to know the locations of SPC offices and to see an analysis of the costs. He noted that there

was a paper dealing with the effects of the global economic crisis and that he had expected it to be about the economy around the world but instead it was about SPC staff remuneration and how SPC was moving forward with a raise for its staff. This could affect the contributions of member countries. He recommended that SPC look at economic opportunities for PICTs, such as the relocation of US military forces in Guam. He said that Kiribati supported all of the other recommendations.

13. The representative of Fiji Islands extended the sympathy and condolences of Fiji to those affected by the tsunami. He said Fiji Islands was ready to endorse the recommendations of CRGA.

14. The Chairperson accepted the report of the CRGA Chairperson and asked the meeting if it endorsed the recommendations.

15. The representative of Niue noted that in the Chairperson's letter did not give details of what work had been done by Land Resources Division (LRD), for example. One could only see that it required greater resources.

16. The Chairperson responded that a number of programmes were highlighted in the letter.

17. The Director-General said that Niue had raised a valid point and he briefly expanded on some of the issues relating to the recommendations. He said that LRD focuses on plant and animal health and biosecurity and noted that after cyclone Heta caused widespread devastation in Niue, the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT) had helped replenish Niue's crops. In the area of economic development, a new division will deal with energy, infrastructure, transportation and communication. He said that trade in the region was dependent on phytosanitary standards and transportation services. There were development opportunities but they needed to be unlocked and where there were gaps, SPC would provide support to fill them. The new feeder shipping service with its hub in Fiji was an example of SPC's efforts to support economic development. SPC's Public Health Division had a range of programmes to promote health and prevent disease, including non-communicable diseases which were highly prevalent in the region. This work also includes preparedness planning, which was tested during the H1N1 pandemic, as well as mapping of priorities in health. He said everyone is aware that tuna is one of the Pacific's most valuable resources, and the Marine Resources Division (MRD) is working to improve management of the stock and maximise the value for PICTs. As not all PICTs benefit from tuna, there is a need to diversify sources of fish for food in order to feed increasing populations; SPC's MRD is assisting in this area through its aquaculture programme. In the area of human development, he said SPC's Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), part of the Social Resources Division, is helping members comply with their international obligations to support the human rights of their people.

18. The representative of Niue asked if the feeder shipping service was commercially viable, if there had been an analysis of trade, and if the service was likely to survive. Regarding fisheries, he said that SPC talks about management of the resource, but he was interested to know more about its commercialisation. He said the only form of commercialisation at present was licensing. He also asked for more information about advances in aquaculture.

19. The Director-General said it was too early to assess the commercial viability of the innovative feeder shipping service, but its initial voyages had gone well and it was appreciated by the countries involved.

20. The meeting accepted the recommendations from CRGA 39, with the exception of the recommendation regarding the reappointment of the Director-General, which would be addressed in a closed session.

21. The letter from the Chairperson of CRGA 39 is appended to this report.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3 – DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT TO CONFERENCE**

22. The Director-General said that the divisional reports presented at CRGA detailed the work of SPC's divisions and their programmes. His own report included a matrix giving the status of implementation of CRGA 38 decisions. It showed that work had begun on implementing 100% of them. SPC's annual report for 2008 was also presented. The two-part report provides an overview and a financial report. He noted that SPC

received a clean audit report for the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. Referring to the three pillars of SPC's corporate plan, he said the first one – *Increased focus on member priorities* – is the most important for members and consumed the majority of SPC's time and effort during the year. Regarding the second pillar – *Strategic engagement at the national and international level* – he said SPC is strengthening its partnerships with the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), allowing it to focus on areas in which it has a comparative advantage and avoid duplication of effort. With respect to the third pillar – *Strategic positioning of the organisation* – he said that in order to deliver at the national level, SPC needs to have the right structure and resources. He noted that an assessment of SPC's implementation of its corporate plan was included in the paper relating to the evaluation of the Director-General's performance. Regarding the reform of the regional institutional framework (RIF), he said that the negotiation and consultation phase had ended. Decisions had been made by the Forum Leaders and the joint meeting of the governing councils of the organisations involved (SOPAC, SPREP and SPC) and the process was now in the implementation phase. The Director-General then presented some corporate highlights for 2009, beginning with the appointment of Mrs Fekita 'Utoikamanu as Deputy Director-General (Suva). In her previous position she was Tonga's Ambassador to the United Nations in New York, and concurrently Ambassador to the United States, Venezuela and Cuba, and High Commissioner to Canada. Dr Rodgers noted that her appointment brought SPC's executive team back to full strength and supported SPC's commitment to addressing gender issues at all levels of the organisation. He said SPC faced challenges linked to its rapid growth and decentralisation, which required strong corporate systems and increased delegation of authority. As a result of a review of SPC's delegation policy, Deputy Directors-General could now approve all staff appointments up to level J, and directors could approve expenditure up to 100,000 CFP units. However, with greater delegation there was increased accountability. With regard to the response to the global economic crisis, he said SPC had taken strong measures, knowing that member countries were also suffering. All divisions had their budgets cut by 18 per cent, and staff chose to forego an approved pay increase in order to avoid having to further curtail services to members. He referred to Table 1 in his report, which showed SPC's budget in 2009 and the expected budget in 2010. He noted that 98% of the 2009 budget came from development partners and 2% from PICTs. The 2010 budget is USD 14 million less than the 2009 budget, mostly because some large projects are finishing. However, some funding received since the budget was put together is not shown but will be reflected in an updated budget. Looking ahead, the Director-General said that with the implementation of the RIF reforms, SPC will increase from four to six technical divisions. However, he said this may not necessarily be the best organisational structure and SPC plans a two-phase reform process to refine this structure. He concluded by saying that SPC is thinking ahead to ensure it is well-positioned to support the economic development of its members as well as their social and cultural development.

23. The representative of Solomon Islands congratulated the Chairperson and thanked Tonga for the warm welcome and excellent facilities. He also expressed sympathy to Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga for the tragic losses caused by the tsunami. He thanked the Director-General for his comprehensive report and noted that Solomon Islands appreciates the work of SPC, especially in implementing the JCS approach. He said that the closer SPC is to the people in the region, the greater the impact of its work at the national level.

24. The representative of Samoa congratulated the Chairperson and thanked the Government of Tonga for its warm hospitality. He also thanked the Director-General for his report. He noted that the RIF process was an enormous task and said that Samoa looks forward to the new combined services. He said that Samoa welcomes SPC's sustainable long-term financing initiative as financing is a challenge. He noted that SPC must be diligent in its effort to seek sustainable funding. He called on SPC's traditional funders to continue to have faith in the organisation as it is making a difference in people's lives.

25. The representative of Papua New Guinea (PNG) thanked the Chairperson and echoed the sentiments of his colleagues on the tragic losses caused by the tsunami. He announced that his government would contribute USD 1 million each to Samoa and American Samoa, and USD 500,000 to Tonga. He congratulated the Chairperson and thanked the Director-General for his report, noting that PNG welcomed SPC's decentralisation initiative. He said that decentralisation would encourage increased alignment with national priorities and ownership of regional programmes by island members. He agreed with Cook Islands and Niue that economic development is essential and that development partners must also align to national priorities. He closed by endorsing the report and complimenting the work of the Director-General and his team.

26. On behalf of Tonga, the Chairperson thanked PNG for its generous donation.
27. The representative of Niue thanked the Director-General and staff for the report and acknowledged the difficulty of continuing operations with a reduced budget. He thanked Australia and other donors for ensuring that SPC can continue to provide services. He said that it was important to agree on a definition of economic development, and noted that the work of SPC's LRD related to economic development. Niue was trying to coordinate all of its plans, which was difficult. Niue was also linking national strategic development plans to its budget. He said he was not party to the original agreement on Niue's JCS and was not sure how it aligned with other plans, agreements and strategies. He welcomed SPC's decision not to implement a staff pay rise in 2009, noting that it was an appropriate decision given the circumstances.
28. The representative of FSM thanked the Director-General and staff for their work. He also thanked SPC for establishing an office in the northern Pacific. He noted that the State Government of Pohnpei had provided welcome assistance, particularly regarding the procurement of land, and that the Governor of Pohnpei State was present at the meeting and would speak briefly.
29. The Governor of Pohnpei State offered greetings from the people of Pohnpei and noted that the state is the host of FSM's capital as well as the SPC Regional Office for the Northern Pacific. He said the state attaches great importance to the SPC office and wants to assist where possible. A central issue was the procurement of land for the Micronesian Village project. The state government had designated a piece of land near the Pohnpei Botanical Garden, which was large enough to also house a conference centre and other organisations and allow for future growth. He said the ambitious project would require assistance, and he was pleased to note that SPC would provide support for developing a design brief.
30. The representative of Cook Islands noted that he had reviewed the publication, *SPC and the Pacific Plan*, which answered some of the questions he had raised earlier. With regard to decentralisation, he asked if SPC planned to open offices or have representatives present in more PICTs, as it would not be possible to open an office in every country and territory that wanted one. He said that the small island states had little chance of having an SPC office, and suggested that SPC undertake to employ a minimum number of people from each small island state. He thanked Australia, New Zealand, France and other donors and echoed the comments of Niue that it was not an appropriate time to increase assessed contributions.
31. The representative of Australia acknowledged those who had thanked Australia and said that he was at the meeting to listen. He said Australia was very positive about the roles of SPC and PIFS and was interested in the evolution of the JCSs and their fit with Australia's own bilateral agreements. He said Australia regarded the Cairns Compact as an important document for improving coordination with its partners.
32. The representative of France stated that France has implicit trust in SPC and has been involved with the organisation for a long time. He said that France approves of SPC's JCS initiative as the best way to align its services with national strategies. He considered the CRGA-approved initiative to define SPC's core functions and minimum level of services an excellent idea. He also noted SPC's support for the French Pacific territories and said France hoped SPC's present direction would continue to be pursued.
33. The representative of New Zealand extended condolences to the governments and people of Samoa, American Samoa, and Tonga on the effects of the recent tsunami, and also remembered the victims of the maritime disasters in Tonga and Kiribati. She said New Zealand welcomed the theme of the Conference, given that regional activities can add value to national activities. She said she was at the meeting to hear what island members had to say. SPC had a broad mandate, and with the implementation of the RIF reform, it would increase in size. She that stressed there was a need to ensure the organisation functions well, and that one role of the Conference was to provide guidance on its structure and direction. With the challenges ahead, she said New Zealand also welcomed the development of a long-term financing strategy and looked forward to hearing from countries on the impacts of SPC services at national level.
34. The representative of USA thanked the Chairperson, the SPC staff and the people of Tonga. She offered condolences to American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga on the losses suffered in the recent tsunami and to Tonga and Kiribati on the lives lost in the recent ferry disasters. She said that national hopes and aspirations must fit into the regional context, and that there was a need for organisations like SPC to match them and to take on planning for such challenges as tsunamis and climate change. Meetings such as the

Conference provided good opportunities to take concrete steps, especially when the global economic crisis challenged everyone to be more efficient. She noted that it was a unique time for the USA as it had its first Pacific president, and was renewing its focus on the Pacific. She said the USA would work with development partners to ensure that it was multiplying rather than wasting resources.

35. The Chairperson noted that in a recent meeting, US Secretary of State, Mrs Hillary Clinton, reaffirmed President Obama's intention to re-engage with the Pacific.

36. The representative of Pitcairn Islands apologised on behalf of the Governor of Pitcairn, who is also the United Kingdom's (UK) High Commissioner to New Zealand. The Governor could not be present as he was in Samoa assisting British victims of the tsunami. She extended condolences to those affected by the tsunami. She said the UK mainly participates in supporting SPC through the EU but is grateful for the support that Pitcairn receives on biosecurity and other trade-related areas. She noted that with the new shipping service, it was possible that Pitcairn Islanders would attend future Conferences.

37. The representative of Kiribati thanked the Director-General for his report and acknowledged SPC's work in the implementation of the new shipping service – which Kiribati was participating in – the Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity System (PacRICS); the Centre of Excellence for Atoll Agriculture Research and Development in the Pacific; the tuna tagging programme; and public health initiatives addressing non-communicable diseases, HIV, H1N1, and health challenges.

38. The representative of PNG commended SPC, SOPAC, SPBEA and PIFS on their progress to date in implementing the RIF reforms. He said PNG highly valued the disaster risk management programme delivered to PNG by SOPAC and stressed that SOPAC's services should be maintained or enhanced under the new institutional arrangements. He said the long-term sustainable financing of SPC was critical. Equally, the processes of rationalisation and decentralisation should ensure that SPC's work complements members own development efforts, with measurable targets and indicators established to enable monitoring and evaluation.

39. The representative of Tokelau extended condolences to the governments of American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga for the losses due to the recent tsunami. He said Tokelau supported SPC's decentralisation. He noted that in 2006, five regional organisations and five international organisations had sent representatives to Tokelau to put together a regional framework so organisations could effectively work in support of Tokelau's development needs. The initiative began successfully, but coordination and implementation were lacking. This experience motivated Tokelau's leaders, public servants and community members to work to ensure that national development priorities underpinned all development work in the country. In 2008, Tokelau developed its first national strategic plan. Tokelau's view was that regional resources must focus on national programmes, and that decentralisation, and the continuation of regional programmes, must not interfere with this focus. He noted that in order to respond to the increasingly complex challenges that exist, Tokelau needed the support of friends and neighbours more than ever. In closing, he thanked the government and people of Tonga for their hospitality.

40. The Director-General thanked delegates for their support, saying that it was very encouraging to hear because it confirmed that the organisation's staff – 'your staff' – was delivering. With regard to decentralisation, he said that the instructions from the fourth Conference in Palau had been to move services beyond Suva and Noumea to be closer to the people and to match services to national development plans through JCSs. He said SPC is now working with other members of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) in developing JCSs, and that in a few years there might be a single JCS for each PICT including the work of all CROP agencies. Development partners are big players at the national level, with bilateral aid much larger than regional aid, and SPC would like to be a part of the bilateral process. He noted that in terms of decentralisation, Noumea was in the southern part of the region, Suva in the centre, PNG in the West and Pohnpei in the North. SPC would look at locations for an office in the East. Regional offices have staff that can be called on to assist countries and staff in country offices work on country programmes. He said that SPC would explore cooperating with PIFS where it has desk officers and consider co-financing positions. Decentralisation also had costs, and SPC needed commitment from members. He said that SPC had established a new Economic Development Division, though most of its other work also relates in various ways to economic development. CRGA had approved the creation of a subcommittee to identify SPC's core functions and priorities. This was a complex issue because the Canberra agreement stipulates what SPC must

focus on, and at present SPC does not do even 50% of what is listed. He thanked delegates for their comments about the publication, *SPC and the Pacific Plan*, noting that Chapter 14 presents lessons learned, and that other chapters address climate change and food security. In relation to partnerships, he said that meetings of CROP heads were becoming more strategic in providing feedback to leaders. Hence, the PIFS Secretary General was present at the Conference in order to hear feedback from members regarding regional services.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4 – THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS**

##### **AGENDA ITEM 4.1 – JOINT COUNTRY STRATEGIES: ALIGNING THE WORK OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

41. The Deputy Director-General (Noumea) said the joint country strategies (JCSs) are a key initiative of SPC's corporate plan. Sixteen strategies had been completed and SPC expected to have all 22 done by the end of 2010. Also in 2010, SPC would develop the first of a second cycle of JCSs. Country reports had been compiled for all 22 island members, detailing actions taken jointly with the countries during the year. For those countries with completed JCSs, these documents reported progress against the JCSs. He said that these strategies and reports would lift accountability, and would ensure an ongoing monitoring role for country focal points, who previously had taken on this role only temporarily before CRGA. He stressed that the JCSs take full account of each country's situation and are developed using a participatory approach, meaning that countries determine the priorities. The process results in strengthened accountability, with countries able to assess the benefits they receive and monitor progress, giving them greater ownership. He concluded by saying that SPC was looking for guidance from members to further refine the approach.

42. The representative of Niue said that work in agriculture should have commercial value. He said that the tuna tagging project was good but he wondered what the commercial value was. The work of CePaCT was important and had proven very useful, as had SPC's information and communications technology (ICT) programmes, such as PacRICS. These programmes were inexpensive and valuable for the future. He asked if there had been employment surveys to assess the extent to which programmes such as these led to employment. He noted that, given its small size, the focus in Niue was not just on the 'whole of government' but on the entire country, including the private sector. In terms of monitoring, Niue's budget is being linked to its national development plan and to donor contributions. Niue is able to see SPC's activities and how they contribute to the national plan, as well as monitoring tourism, population growth, labour migration and gross domestic product (GDP). However, economic information such as GDP is sometimes only understood by professionals, not by politicians. He asked for more information about SPC's work in agriculture and resulting employment, and about commercialisation of marine resources.

43. The Director of Marine Resources said that the aquaculture programme was focusing on vehicles to promote development by the private sector. He noted that limits needed to be set on tuna harvests and that the tuna tagging project was helping to gather information to determine what limits to set so that catches would be as profitable as possible but also sustainable.

44. The representative of Niue asked about unregulated catches.

45. The Director of Marine Resources said that illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing was a problem. The level was hard to determine but was estimated at perhaps 10%. He said that SPC was working with PIFS on reducing it.

46. The Director-General said that SPC had been asked to explore communications solutions and had presented PacRICS as an inexpensive technology that works. He said the next step was getting buy-in from countries. Countries had only realised some value in the last six months, and there would be a request for an extension of funding. He said that presentation of scientific information could be improved to make its application more easily understood. It could be helpful also to translate statistical information into more accessible measures, such as discussing the number of new clinics or classrooms that would need to be built rather than the rate of population growth.

47. The representative of Solomon Islands encouraged SPC to continue in areas where good results had been achieved. One practical example was the establishment of a piggery slaughterhouse in rural Isabel

Province. He said that with the Global Fund, SPC was taking a lead on fighting malaria and tuberculosis and was getting good results. The entire Solomon Islands population would be reached by several key interventions. But, he noted, SPC must work in partnership with the private sector and other regional organisations. He commended SPC's work on developing the JCS with Solomon Islands, saying that the strategy provides an important mechanism for monitoring and evaluating SPC's work. The JCS is aligned with Solomon Islands' Mid-term Development Strategy and reflects the government's priorities over the next four years. The government focal point has assessed the JCS, holding a meeting of key government stakeholders. The results were positive but there was one concern: the JCS is implemented in a fragmented way. Improvements were needed in the way SPC communicates information about staff movements in-country and about how the work of these staff members relates to the JCS. He noted that it was pleasing to see the increasing attention being paid to statistics, as tracking development progress, and progress on achieving the Millennium Development Goals and national development plans are dependent on good quality statistics. In developing countries such as Solomon Islands, development indicators are better indicators of the state of the economy than figures for economic growth. He acknowledged the work of SPC in building statistical capacity in Solomon Islands and noted that in the future there would be a need to focus on statistics in areas such as ICT.

48. The representative of Samoa said that Samoa welcomed SPC's commitment to ensuring that regional approaches are aligned with national priorities such as those expressed in the 2008–2012 Strategy for the Development of Samoa. This alignment was valuable in focusing attention and resources on key priority areas in order to achieve Samoa's national development outcomes. He said that Samoa looked forward to finalising its strategy with SPC, and that the JCS would strengthen priority setting in the context of limited resources. Because development issues were cross-cutting, SPC needed to engage in partnerships. Sustainable financing was also critical to ensure that SPC had the human capacity to continue to implement regional priorities, while it was important to remember that human capacity at the national level also had to be strengthened. In the area of public health Samoa supported 'whole of government and communities' and multi-sectoral approaches. Regarding the pilot studies on matching regional and national priorities and resource allocations in health, he asked if Samoa would be given an opportunity to study the methodology used in the study if it wished to implement a similar study in Samoa.

49. The representative of Australia said that Australia welcomed the requests of more and more countries for support to improve statistics, though this area may not be as immediately appealing as child health, for example. He said Australia acknowledged SPC's lead role in statistics for the region and was concerned about the lack of resources. He said that the minister would be making a statement on what Australia could do to help strengthen national statistics offices and work with the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC), but that he wanted to announce that Australia would make available up to AUD 10 million to SPC to strengthen statistics in the region. He said that gender-based violence was a global problem that existed in every country and the situation was not improving. The region had to face up to it and take concrete action. The results of recent studies had generated high-level political commitment in Kiribati and Solomon Islands and CRGA had requested an update in this area. He said that for Australia it was a top priority, given that there had been a lack of progress in the area despite good intentions and effort.

## **Decisions**

50. Conference:

- i. noted the progress made by the Secretariat and national partners in developing joint country strategies;
- ii. noted plans to start developing a second cycle of the strategies; and
- iii. welcomed the Secretariat's approach to involving other CROP (Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific) organisations in developing the JCSs.

## **AGENDA ITEM 4.2 – SECTORAL CASE STUDY: MATCHING REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS IN PUBLIC HEALTH**

51. The Director of the Public Health Division (PHD) presented this paper outlining the results of work on mapping priorities in health in three member countries – Nauru, Palau and Solomon Islands, noting that the studies were carried out in response to a request by the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference and Pacific Ministers of Health. He

said that at the beginning of 2009, PHD commissioned the three case studies which analysed not only the health sector and health services but also the underlying social determinants of health, the role of other sectors in determining health outcomes, and the alignment of development assistance in the health sector with stated national priorities. He said that these pilot studies, together with those to be conducted in other PICTs (if considered appropriate), will contribute to the development of a 'Framework of Priorities for Health in the Pacific' (FPHP), which will support national health plans and strategies, strengthen PICTs' individual efforts to mobilise resources and ultimately contribute to delivering better health outcomes. The pilot studies were conducted between February and July 2009 and the findings were still being analysed. However, a number of findings common to all three countries had been identified. These related to lack of data on gaps in funding; insufficient funds to combat the high prevalence of non-communicable diseases; dominance of project-based funding for specific health priorities, which does not address other and emerging priorities; no cohesive attempts to address social determinants of health outside the health sector; and weak health systems.

### **Decisions**

52. Conference:

- i. noted the findings of the pilot studies, particularly the imbalance between national priorities in health and the amount of funding available;
- ii. endorsed the adoption of a whole-of-government approach to addressing social determinants of health, and efforts to strengthen the ability of health systems to implement this approach; and
- iii. noted that additional resources will be required to implement a wider trial of the health mapping exercise and encouraged development partners to support the Secretariat's efforts to complete the mapping exercise as soon as possible.

### **AGENDA ITEM 4.3 – MONITORING DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS AT NATIONAL LEVEL: STATUS OF CORE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS**

53. The Manager of SPC's Statistics and Demography Programme presented a paper outlining SPC's efforts to develop a system to assist members in regular monitoring and reporting of development progress against national and international development targets, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He said the mid-point of the countdown towards the 2015 global targets for MDGs has been reached and although progress had been made, the Pacific region was struggling to meet many of the development objectives, with significant variability between individual PICTs. To enhance members' access to relevant development data, SPC was working with stakeholders including members to agree on a core set of indicators for Minimum National Development Indicator Datasets. The next step would be to finalise the initial dataset, which would be shared with development partners and members to ensure it met their monitoring and tracking requirements. This work would ultimately result in a monitoring system allowing tracking of development in real-time, based on collection and compilation of high-quality statistics. He noted that achieving this aim would require investment of additional resources at national and regional levels and welcomed the announcement by Australia that it would provide AUD 10 million to SPC over the next four years to support the work being led by SPC to improve the timeliness and quality of statistics in island member countries and territories to achieve real-time monitoring of development progress and enhance evidence-based decision-making. He also noted that Papua New Guinea had included statistics as the fifth key priority to be supported by Australia under the Australia-Papua New Guinea Pacific Partnership Agreement and commended this approach to other members in their own consultations with Australia.

### **Decisions**

54. Conference:

- i. recognised the efforts made by SPC to develop a system to assist members in regular monitoring and reporting of development progress against national and international development targets, including the MDGs;
- ii. noted that the work will result in a monitoring system that will allow tracking of development in real-time, based on collection and compilation of high-quality statistics;

- iii. further noted that achieving this aim will require investment of additional resources at national and regional levels; and
- iv. welcomed with great appreciation Australia's announcement that it will provide AUD 10 million to SPC over the next four years to support the work being led by SPC to improve the timeliness and quality of statistics in island member countries and territories.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4.4 – MAXIMISING IMPACTS OF REGIONAL PROGRAMMES AT NATIONAL LEVEL**

55. The Director-General introduced a discussion of the conference theme, *Maximising impacts of regional programmes at national level*, by saying that the essence of the theme is embodied in the Canberra Agreement, SPC's founding document, in the decisions taken by the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Pacific Community in Koror, Palau (2005), and in the organisation's corporate plan for 2007–2012. He stressed that regional organisations in the Pacific exist to serve their members' priorities and must add value to national development outcomes by supplementing or complementing the work of members' own programmes. In recent years, SPC had implemented several policies and initiatives to enhance the delivery of services at the national level, including decentralisation and the development of joint country strategies. He noted that in many instances regional mechanisms were the most effective and cost efficient way of delivering services to members. However, to achieve the full benefits of regionally delivered services, members, development partners and the Secretariat had to work together – with each playing a role in the process – to ensure optimum impacts at national level. As examples of such services, the Director-General highlighted SPC's regional maritime compliance audit system; the pandemic preparedness project, which had assisted in building national capacity to address the influenza pandemic; the demography and health surveys, which were providing significant strategic information and policy options for members; the work of the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT) in researching, developing and collecting 'climate ready' food crop and plant varieties to support Pacific food security; and the impact of SPC-led ICT initiatives in providing internet access for remote Pacific communities. He said just a small sample of the impacts of SPC's work would be highlighted in the following presentations by representatives of various national institutions and non-government organisations.

56. The Chairperson thanked the Director-General for his introduction and invited the meeting to listen to presentations on the impact of SPC's work at national level by speakers from Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

57. The presenters included two speakers from Kiribati. Tokintekai Bakineti, Coordinator of the Centre of Excellence for Atoll Agriculture, which was established by SPC in 2008, described the centre's work in supporting climate change adaptation. Bwanouia Tabeau Aberaam, CEO of the Kiribati Telecommunications Authority, spoke of the policy responses being made to capitalise on the opportunities offered by PacRICS (Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity System). He said the government was changing its ICT policy to open up the telecommunication area to more internet service providers. Sharon Potoi-Aiafi, Assistant CEO of Samoa's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, highlighted the value of regional contributions to Samoa's national taro breeding programme, which had successfully developed varieties with good tolerance to taro blight. She noted that in 1993, taro blight devastated this important staple crop in Samoa. Joseph Matou, Director of Vanuatu's Department of Cooperatives and Ni Vanuatu Business Development Services for Vanuatu's Ministry of Cooperatives and Business Development, spoke of the impact of a 'training of trainers' development project conducted in Vanuatu by SPC's Community Education and Training Centre (CETC). Dr Taniela L. Fusimalohi, Chief Executive Officer and Director of Tonga's Ministry of Training, Employment, Youth and Sports, made a presentation on nationalising 'best practice' regional training programmes, noting the support that the new ministry had received from SPC programmes including CETC, the Regional Maritime Programme, the Regional Media Centre, and the Marine Resources and Land Resources Divisions. He said a particular strength of SPC's services was that they were relevant to Pacific Island conditions. There were two presenters from Solomon Islands. Brian Bird, Principal of Patukae High School, described the huge benefits of the PacRICS and OLPC (One Laptop Per Child) regional initiatives for rural schools, clinics, businesses and communities in the Western Province of Solomon Islands, saying that 'with the help of SPC, remote children now have access to the world of information'. Both initiatives are being implemented by SPC as part of its role in leading the regional digital strategy. Eddie Sikua, Assistant Police Commissioner for the Solomon Islands Police Force, spoke about the national response to the results of the recently completed research on gender-based violence. An important part of the

response was the establishment of the first 'Family Violence Unit' within the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. The research project was implemented by SPC in partnership with the Solomon Islands government, AusAID and UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund). Finally, Mike Batty, Director of SPC's MRD, made a presentation on the work of SPC's regional observer programme, which supports the development of national programmes to train the observers required to monitor tuna fishing catches and methods. More than 200 observers had been trained and the programme was progressively developing the capacity of national authorities to take over observer training where appropriate. For instance, Papua New Guinea was increasingly using its own trainers, with SPC overseeing standards.

58. The Chair thanked all the presenters for their interesting and enlightening presentations and invited comments from representatives.

59. The representative from Cook Islands referred first to Australia's earlier announcement that it would provide funding of AUD 10 million to support the collection of statistical information in the region. He voiced strong support for further capacity building in this area, saying accurate statistics were an important tool in decision-making. Noting that the remoteness of some islands made collection of statistics difficult, he said there was a need for 'train the trainers' courses to provide support for people in rural areas. In relation to fisheries observers, he said they were dealing with the region's biggest resource. More needed to be done to ensure the region derived greater benefit from the resource, which was being exploited by larger nations. He cited recent instances of illegal fishing by two boats in Cook Island waters. Evidence had been obtained by patrol boats and both fishing boats had voluntarily paid penalties when informed by FFA that their activities were illegal. He said observers needed support for their work in protecting the region's fisheries resources. He compared the present situation, in which benefits were mostly derived from licence fees, to the establishment of OPEC by countries (in the Middle East, Africa and South America) to ensure benefits from their oil resources. He said the Pacific needed a similar organisation for its fishery resources, which were the largest in the world.

60. The representative of USA said managing fisheries was very important. USA had begun negotiations with countries on providing support for local efforts to police national waters. This support would be provided through US Coastguard vessels when in the area. She stressed that disincentives were needed for illegal fishing.

61. The representative of Kiribati noted the effectiveness of the ongoing bilateral agreement between Kiribati and USA. A US Coastguard vessel from Hawaii had assisted in protecting Kiribati waters and a boat fishing illegally in its waters had been fined as a result. He said Kiribati was working to strengthen the law in this area, e.g. once a ship violated relevant laws it could be confiscated, becoming the property of Kiribati. He also acknowledged Australia's provision of funding for statistics programmes in the region.

62. The representative of Marshall Islands praised SPC's work in monitoring tuna stocks in the region and asked what SPC was doing in relation to conservation of the resource.

63. The representative of New Zealand said that the New Zealand delegation was primarily there to listen to the experiences of other members. She said she appreciated the case histories presented and that their value was evident. She noted that in relation to the Conference theme of maximising benefits at the national level, there was a risk in diffusing the efforts of various development partners, which could reduce benefits. As specified in the Cairns Compact, it was important that there was coordination between regional organisations and other development partners. This coordination could maximise benefits by tying work to international and regional development plans and by ensuring that interventions were based on solid evidence, including statistical evidence.

64. The representative of Niue asked if there was a long-term agreement for PacRICS, what the cost was, if there was bulk purchasing of equipment, and if SPC would be turning the programme over to a private company to manage.

65. The Director-General responded, saying that there was a long-term agreement, with Australia having provided AUD 2 million to secure the satellite hub for the life of the satellite as well as funding for 16 pilot sites and bandwidth for two years. He said that PacRICS was a public/private mix, with SPC handling the public good sites and a private company, Pacific Teleport, handling the others, which were available at the

same rates. Bulk purchasing was already being taken advantage of. The overall result was the cheapest Internet access in the Pacific.

66. The representative of Niue asked if there was a limit on the capacity of PacRICS and if the satellite capacity could be expanded if many countries signed up. He also asked if it was possible to use the system to provide Wi-Fi wireless Internet access and cell phone access.

67. The Director-General responded that the satellite had a very high capacity and that the limits to expanding the system would most likely be related to affordability. He said that the system worked with Wi-Fi but not in its present configuration did not work with cell phones.

68. The representative of Niue noted that illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing may in fact be much more common than the 10 per cent estimate mentioned the previous day, and that regulation of fishing was the domain of national governments, while FFA and SPC performed research.

69. The MRD Director responded that although the 10 per cent figure represented SPC's best estimate, the level of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing was not known. He said that SPC would be starting a project in the next year to try to measure it. He said that SPC views fisheries management as occurring on three levels: national, subregional and regional. SPC provides advice at the national level. At the subregional level, the Parties to the Nauru Agreement work together on some issues, which is necessary as the fish move across international boundaries. At the regional level, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) decides on some comprehensive measures, but it can be hard to reach a consensus at that level.

70. The representative of Niue asked if the AUD 10 million funding for statistics in the region could be pooled by island members, noting that smaller PICTs needed to build capacity in the area.

71. The representative of Australia replied that Australia preferred to leave it to SPC to discuss specific proposals, but that in general it was the role of national statistical offices to gather figures and SPC's role to advise on making use of the data.

72. The representative of French Polynesia offered greetings from French Polynesia's President and condolences to American Samoa, Samoa, and Tonga. He said that French Polynesia would be hosting several events of regional significance in the coming months, including a session of WCPFC, which he encouraged delegates to attend. He noted that there would be discussion of fisheries regulation and of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing at this session. He said that since 2005 SPC had undertaken several initiatives, including JCSs and decentralisation, which French Polynesia welcomed. The two activities were complementary and should be undertaken simultaneously, in relation to the RIF reforms. In closing, he said that French Polynesia trusts SPC to do all it can to represent members and provide services in conformity with the Canberra Agreement.

73. The representative of Cook Islands requested documentation on the SPIN project, which he said he hoped would answer his questions. He said that it was important for PICTs to have appropriate legislation regarding mineral resources, especially those found in the seabed. Cook Islands had received advice from the Commonwealth Secretariat and realised that this area was very important. He also expressed appreciation for the presentation on the atoll agriculture and noted that people living on atolls traditionally survived largely on coconuts, using every part of the plant.

74. The representative of Kiribati said that the Conference theme was very relevant, particularly given SPC's current efforts to identify its core services to member countries and territories and the implementation of the RIF. Kiribati supported careful planning and management of the rationalisation of SPBEA and SOPAC, to ensure that the level and quality of services are not diminished. He said that Kiribati valued its membership in the Pacific Community, and acknowledged that SPC's work contributed substantively to improving livelihoods in Kiribati and to achieving MDGs and sustainable development. Kiribati believed that its JCS with SPC would add value to its partnership with SPC and other organisations, in the same way that the Pacific Plan had. The strategy helped focus SPC assistance on national priority areas in which it had a comparative advantage, and beneficial results were already being seen. However, there were still obstacles preventing Kiribati from achieving maximum benefits from the assistance being provided, including capacity constraints and the need to strengthen coordination across ministries and sectors. Kiribati would continue to

work to address these obstacles in cooperation with SPC and other partners. He said that the results of the 2008 Family Health and Support Study showed that Kiribati had an exceptionally high rate of violence against women and children in the home. He acknowledged SPC's work in the study and noted that the people of Kiribati were shocked by the amount of abuse that was found to be occurring. He said that Kiribati had made a political commitment at the highest level to address the problem, given that gender inequality and violence were major obstacles to social and economic development. The government of Kiribati believed that a whole of government and multi-sectoral approach was required, and that it was crucial to maintain the momentum that had resulted from the study to implement change with assistance from SPC and development partners.

75. The representative of PNG thanked SPC for all the work that had been done during its long history. He noted that each PICT was unique, with its own ways and needs, and thanked the partners who were part of their development, saying it was important to look to the prosperity of the region. He raised the issue of disaster risk management, and asked if SPC was able to assist with the provision of early warning systems to detect events. He said it was critical for PICTs to be able to monitor, detect and report on events such as seismic activity to help prepare for disasters and avoid loss of life. He noted that Hawaii had such a system and asked if similar national systems could be developed for the region. In relation to the conference theme, he acknowledged the work done by NGOs and churches in PNG and said these organisations were better at delivering some services than government, e.g. work on gender issues. He also acknowledged the value of SPC's joint country strategies, saying that there was value in making SPC activities part of national plans. The strategies provided a monitoring tool and could also help avoid duplication. However, there was a need for improved transparency, e.g. some funds from SPC came from the same donors who were already interacting directly with countries. He said fisheries, mining, economic and social development and infrastructure were all important, but financing was missing. The region needed to be prosperous to develop and that should be a national goal.

76. The representative of Samoa thanked delegates for the sympathy they had expressed on the tragic aftermath of the tsunami and reiterated his thanks to PNG for its pledge of financial support. He extended Samoa's condolences to American Samoa, Tonga and Kiribati on the tragedies that they had also suffered, saying that the recent events had highlighted the vulnerability of small islands to the forces of nature. Referring to the theme of the Conference, he said it posed an interesting question in the present economic environment, particularly in looking at how effectively donor assistance was applied in member countries. He asked if there were flaws in the targeting and delivery of regional programmes, and at the national level, that needed to be fixed to ensure programmes were effective and noted that this was one of the objectives of the Pacific Plan. He said that for SPC it was important to ensure that it was adding value in its delivery of services and that the services were closely aligned with national priorities. He welcomed SPC's JCS initiative, saying that Samoa already had similar strategies with other development partners. He pointed out that the JCS would not only help SPC plan its programmes to align with actual needs, but also provide a way for Samoa to monitor SPC's work to make sure it was addressing these needs. He emphasised the need for SPC to engage in partnerships and dialogue with development partners, other regional organisations and national partners, so that there is coordination of the work being carried out and no duplication. He also stressed the importance of building human capacity at the national level, noting that projects that did not address this need could not be sustainable. In closing, he commended the Director-General's work in streamlining the organisation and pointed out that although the decision to merge much of SOPAC's work into SPC would no doubt result in pressure on SPC in terms of ensuring that efficient delivery of services is maintained, he had no doubt that the organisation would continue to serve the interests of members in the future.

77. The representative of Tuvalu expressed condolences for American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga. He said that the Conference theme was very appropriate in the context of the RIF reforms, noting that as it expands SPC will face challenges in delivery of services. He said that the region's geographic dispersal poses challenges in communication, transportation and trade, but increasing subregional cooperation is helping overcome those. The new shipping service was a good example, as was the start of trade between Tuvalu and Rotuma. The establishment of a central Pacific shipping commission would continue the process. He cited PacRICS, CETC training, assistance in health and fisheries, and the atoll agriculture research as projects that were particularly valuable for Tuvalu.

78. The representative of Wallis and Futuna offered condolences to American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga on behalf of Wallis and Futuna. She noted that the territorial assembly was holding a special meeting to decide how Wallis and Futuna could most effectively provide assistance to victims. She congratulated SPC on the completion of the JCS for Wallis and Futuna, which she said was operating in a positive manner. She noted that when the decision on decentralisation was taken at the Conference in Palau it had seemed that it would be difficult to implement. She said she was glad to see that the decentralisation initiative was meeting members' needs. Decentralisation had been recommended for other organisations as well. She said the process was being carried out in a coherent way and that she hoped it would continue. She noted that it was important to coordinate activities at the national level to ensure that benefits are maximised at the local level.

79. The representative of Vanuatu noted that the history of development of SPC member countries and territories was characterised by remarkable cooperation, and that given the challenges facing the region, even greater cooperation, as well as coordination at the regional and national levels, would be required in the future. On behalf of the government of Vanuatu he recognised the excellent choice made by the government of Tonga for the theme of the Conference. He said the government of Vanuatu supported better coordination of efforts among CROP agencies and international organisations active in the region, and believed that this was key to increasing impacts at the national level. He said Vanuatu also supported development of the JCSs, and noted that this was in line with the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action, as well as the recent Cairns Compact. Vanuatu looked forward to the formalisation of its JCS with SPC, which would depend on wide stakeholder consultation and analysis of development needs. Vanuatu also recognised the importance of the RIF process in improving national implementation. He said SPC's decentralisation effort would have positive impacts on service delivery, and that the government of Vanuatu was glad to note SPC intention to have a RRRT presence in Port Vila. Input from member countries would be key to overcoming challenges of decentralisation, as well as achieving sustainability of services, and Vanuatu would invest resources to support SPC work. He noted that SPC had achieved many successes and recognised SPC's support for agriculture in Vanuatu. In closing, he thanked development partners for funding SPC's work.

80. The representative of France reiterated France's confidence in SPC. He said the value placed on SPC's services was evident in the statements made by PICT representatives on the impact of these services at national level and he requested that a similar approach be taken at future meetings to describe impacts in specific sectors such as health. Noting the comments made by the previous speaker on a disaster warning system, the representative said France was funding the installation of tidal gauges in its Pacific territories and in several other Pacific Community members. Information from these gauges would give authorities more time to react appropriately to tidal events. In relation to an earlier comment on the SPIN (South Pacific Information Network) submarine cable network, he said it was a complex, regional project and stakeholders were still being consulted on funding arrangements. There was a considerable amount of work yet to be done but at the end of the recent France-Oceania summit in Noumea, Mr Bernard Kouchner, France's foreign minister, had said 'We'll do it!'

81. The Chair, speaking as Prime Minister of Tonga, noted the comments on disaster preparedness and expressed gratitude to France, Australia and New Zealand for their assistance after the recent tsunami that hit the outer island of Niuatoputapu. In particular, he said the French navy had made two visits to provide vital energy supplies and water.

82. The representative of Nauru said in relation to maximising the effectiveness of aid that the whole nation had been involved in mapping out a strategy for the next 20 years – the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) – with help from the Asian Development Bank. Every stakeholder had provided input and the aim was to keep to the plan despite changes in government. He said the conference theme held great meaning for Nauru which 'was learning to walk again'. Nauru could not, however, depend on regional organisations such as SPC to take the lead and must discuss with them how they could support the NSDS. He said the joint country strategies were a commendable part of this process. He said Nauru would shortly be reviewing its progress at a donor roundtable and invited all CROP agencies to attend.

83. The representative of Pitcairn said its joint country strategy was a living document that supported Pitcairn's own initiatives. SPC had provided particularly useful assistance on biosecurity. Pitcairn was also seeking help in the area of human rights, specifically prevention of gender-based violence.

84. The representative of USA took the opportunity to thank Tonga for hosting a flawless conference and expressed condolences to American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga on the tragic loss of life caused by the tsunami, and to Tonga and Kiribati on the losses suffered in the recent ferry disasters. She said that clearly SPC plays a vital and widely appreciated role in helping member countries and territories, and administrations to develop strategies and build capacity to achieve their national goals and improve the welfare of their people. She noted that to a degree rarely found in multilateral organisations, SPC's programmes had the full buy-in of its members. The theme of the conference – *Maximising impacts of regional programmes at the national level* – highlighted the importance of SPC's regional reach at a time when many social and economic challenges, such as climate change, were unconstrained by national boundaries. Pacific Island countries and territories were among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including salt water intrusion into scarce freshwater resources; damage and destruction to terrestrial and marine ecosystems; threats to biodiversity; opportunistic invasive species; and threats to agricultural output, catch from fisheries and the maintenance of healthy fish stocks. In the case of low-lying atolls, climate change threatened their very existence. SPC's plant and agriculture initiatives, combined with tuna tagging and other activities to preserve and develop fisheries resources, were examples of concrete, practical steps to address these challenges. She noted that during her September meeting in New York with many of the Pacific prime ministers and foreign ministers, the US Secretary of State, Mrs Clinton, had announced that US assistance programmes would return to the Pacific. The representative said that over the next few months, the Department of State would consult with Congress to gain input on and endorsement of its plans. She said that it was expected that an in-depth assessment of areas of possible technical cooperation and assistance would be carried out by the end of the year. As these plans took shape, the importance of coordinating with SPC members in regard to their national development plans, and with other donor countries and regional organisations already providing assistance, would be kept in mind. She commented that the theme of the conference reinforced the importance of working with SPC to learn where US assistance could be most useful and to ensure partnerships were established to help address the Pacific's most pressing problems in concert with countries' priorities and strategic goals, and as a force multiplier to ensure US contributions were targeted most effectively. In that regard, she said the US appreciated SPC's efforts to coordinate and communicate with Pacific countries and territories, administrations and donor countries. She concluded by saying that the US remained strongly committed to the Pacific Community and looked forward to working with SPC, as it evolved following the RIF outcome, to face the regional and global challenges of the 21st century.

85. The representative of Fiji said Fiji valued its membership of the Pacific Community and noted that maximising the effectiveness of aid must be an ongoing effort. He cited just a few examples of areas in which SPC had recently assisted Fiji, including a trade/biosecurity workshop; support for crop regeneration after the January 2009 floods; CePaCT's support for building food security as part of climate change adaptation; surveys of fisheries resources; support for pandemic preparedness, particularly during the H1N1 outbreak; and assistance in the organisation of the Second Pacific Youth Festival held mid-year in Suva. He said Fiji was committed to providing SPC with a cost-effective operation. A new host country agreement would soon be ready, and a site had been identified for the Pacific Village for which funding would be sought. He said Fiji was optimistic that the joint country strategy would benefit all sectors and contribute to sustainable national development.

86. The representative of New Caledonia thanked Tonga for its hospitality and joined in expressing condolences to American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga on the losses suffered as a result of the tsunami. He noted that New Caledonia had sent personnel, medical aid and water to Tonga in coordination with New Zealand. The President of the New Caledonia Congress would also be tabling a request for financial support. He commented on the amount of work accomplished by SPC in 2009 and said the presentations by national representatives provided practical examples of the impact of SPC services. Referring to decentralisation, the representative said New Caledonia's government was largely decentralised through its three provinces, enabling it to respond more easily to people's needs. This style of government made service delivery more efficient, but care was needed to avoid duplication. The representative ended by expressing New Caledonia's full confidence in SPC under the leadership of the Director-General and said New Caledonia was proud to support the secretariat.

87. The representative of Niue said that after cyclone Heta in 2004, Niue had greatly appreciated the help of Australia, France and New Zealand. An example of particularly welcome assistance was the delivery of 20 house kits aboard a ship dispatched from French Polynesia. Everything needed to construct the houses, including workers, was provided. In relation to tidal gauges, he said Australia had funded a tidal gauge programme in some countries but not in Niue, and he asked if France could include Niue in its programme. He said Niue's national plan was being implemented but more funding was needed to achieve the plan's goals. Many donor countries and agencies, including SPC, were involved in various aspects of the plan. In this regard, SPC's joint country strategies were an excellent concept and it would be good if all organisations followed suit. He also stressed that development aid must focus on countries' own priorities.

88. The representative of France reassured the meeting that the strategic deployment of tidal gauges was coordinated by a UNESCO special commission. PICTs were protected by distant tidal gauges that enabled a warning to be given before a tidal event struck their shores, and gave them sufficient time to react. Similarly, the tidal gauges located on their coasts provided information that benefitted other countries.

89. The representative of RMI said it was gratifying to hear the support for SPC's work and he thanked the development partners who made it possible. He welcomed, in particular, the strengthened participation of the US in the organisation.

90. The representative of Solomon Islands said that in terms of the impact of SPC programmes at national level, the implementation of the OLPC project was an outstanding example. The pilot project showed the potential of enabling access to digital communication, even in a remote village. Such technology could have huge positive impacts at the rural level. He stressed, however, the need to put a proper implementation model in place to ensure the initiative was sustainable in the long run.

91. The representative of Tonga thanked delegates for their kind words and condolences. He said Tonga was about to sign its joint country strategy for 2009–2013. The concept of the strategies fitted well with the first pillar of SPC's corporate plan, which was an increased focus on members' priorities. The strategy identified Tonga's priorities and was based on its national plan. The activities of SPC's Land Resources, Public Health and Social Resources Divisions were particularly important for Tonga in terms of capacity building and provision of funding. The joint country strategy approach would assist in maximising the effectiveness of SPC's in-country activities and would also promote greater collaboration between Tonga and SPC, and between Tonga and other CROP agencies.

92. The Director-General thanked representatives for their feedback and support and for their acknowledgment of SPC's development partners. He said the presentations from representatives of national institutions on the effectiveness of regional programmes had been enlightening and similar presentations would be organised for other meetings as France had suggested, particularly in the health sector, which affected all members. Several delegates stressed the need for SPC activities to be linked to national sustainable development plans. He noted that these plans were in fact a starting point for the development of each joint country strategy. However, this process also required improved national coordination – SPC wanted to present one report to government, not separate reports for each of the 14 sectors in which it worked. An effort was also made to link SPC's activities to those of other agencies, though this presented challenges. For example the joint country strategy mission to Tokelau had involved 10 agencies, which created difficulties in developing the strategy because different levels of decision-making became a factor. The concept of the strategies was developed following the 2005 review of SPC, which concluded that the total impact of the organisation's work was difficult to assess because programmes were implemented in individual sectors. In contrast, the strategies promoted a 'whole of SPC' approach' and an emphasis on cross-sectoral activities where applicable. The Director-General then addressed specific points made by delegates. In answer to Cook Islands' comments on economic drivers, he said the SPIN project was originally only intended to benefit the French territories. SPC's role has been to provide information and facilitate discussion between other countries and the project developers. He said that the mineral sector came under SOPAC at present, but SPC would have a role from June 2010. In answer to Nauru, he agreed that the joint strategy should follow Nauru's 20-year plan and that it should therefore be updated. He acknowledged the US statement of renewed commitment to the region and thanked New Caledonia for its continued level of support. He agreed that decentralisation needed careful management, also noting Tokelau's point that it must not be at the expense of service delivery. The Director-General acknowledged the statement made by Samoa. He said Samoa had been asked if SPC should drop any of the services it delivered there but the answer was

no. He said that while decentralisation and joint country strategies were very efficient mechanisms for delivering SPC services, there was a need to ensure they were also cost-effective.

### **Decisions**

93. Conference:

- i. expressed appreciation for the presentations made by representatives of national institutions and non-government organisations, noting that the benefits they described showed the impact of SPC's work, and requested that similar presentations on specific sectors such as health be made at future meetings; and
- ii. directed the Secretariat to ensure that the changes following on from the RIF reform result in further enhancement of services at national level.

### **AGENDA ITEM 5 – THE ‘CAIRNS COMPACT ON STRENGTHENING DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION IN THE PACIFIC’: IMPROVING THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

94. The paper was presented by the Secretary General of PIFS. At their 40th meeting in Cairns, Australia, on 6 August 2009, Forum Leaders adopted the Cairns Compact to help lift the economic and development performance of the region. The key objective of the Compact is to drive more effective coordination of available development resources from both Forum island countries and all development partners, with the aim of achieving real progress on the MDGs. The Compact is based on the recognition that broad-based, private sector-led growth is essential to achieving faster development progress and that donors should encourage the private sector, e.g. through micro-finance and support for larger-scale private sector projects. It also recognises the need for more investment in infrastructure to underpin economic development and for a revitalised commitment to the achievement of the MDGs in the Pacific. The Compact calls for Forum island countries and development partners to deliver annual reports on development progress including progress towards achieving the MDGs.

95. The Director-General of SPC said that as an organisation with a broader membership than the Forum, the Pacific Community had a particular part to play in supporting the Cairns Compact. He asked the Conference to endorse this role, noting that resources would be needed. He said SPC had the expertise and experience to support the implementation of the Compact, especially through its work in supporting the efforts of countries and territories to meet MDG goals across several sectors. It was currently also finalising a major initiative to improve the availability and quality of development data (statistics) in the region. The Director-General expressed his appreciation for Australia's commitment of funding of AUD 10 million for this work, which was announced earlier during the meeting. He said that in addition to the specific technical contributions it could make to the Cairns Compact, SPC was a major development partner for Pacific Island countries and territories and donor agencies and would continue to work with PIFS and other partners to improve development cooperation in the region.

96. The representative of the US said the goals of the Cairns Compact were admirable. There were synergies between SPC and PIFS and the spirit of the post-Forum dialogue was to support each other and make the most effective use of resources. She stressed, however, that SPC was not a subset of the Forum. It had a different history and membership and was a separate organisation that must not be subsumed by the Forum. The representative said that this was not a critical judgement of the Forum. The US supported partnership between SPC and the Forum, but the language used to describe the relationship must be crafted to reflect that they were separate organisations.

97. The representative of Fiji said that Fiji had not officially endorsed the Cairns Compact and therefore could not support the recommendation as presented in the paper.

98. The representative of Cook Islands said that, according to his own understanding, there had always been the intention to expand the membership of the Forum, but for some reason current Forum members had reservations about bringing more members into the family. He noted that at the Nadi meeting with the EU, other countries and territories showed what their relationship with the EU involved and the advantages of that model. He said that since the issue had been raised by the US, perhaps the Forum needed to look at its membership, e.g. French Polynesia had in the past indicated that it would like to be a member.

99. The representative of Niue said the provisions of the Cairns Compact would increase awareness of what the Forum was doing and what SPC was doing, and would help avoid duplication of effort and resources. He said the only question before the present meeting was whether members agreed with the Compact. In Niue's view, even if some members did not agree with the whole Compact, the general principle was acceptable.

100. The Chairperson noted that although all members might support the principles of the Cairns Compact, some might have difficulty with the present wording of the recommendation, as alluded to by the US representative.

101. The representative of Cook Islands suggested the wording could be altered.

102. The representative of PNG said that the Cairns Compact had been signed by Forum Leaders and asked if it was therefore binding on regional organisations. He suggested that the Conference could note the agreement. Pacific Community members who were also members of PIF could use the Compact to avoid duplication and to ensure all SPC programmes complemented other efforts.

103. The representative of the US suggested changes to the wording of the recommendation that would make it acceptable to all members.

104. The representative of Australia said the Cairns Compact was endorsed by metropolitan members of PIF. It represented a way of working together and getting behind country leaders to ensure all resources were used to achieve country objectives. In terms of avoiding duplication, he said SPC had the capacity to provide a statistics-based account of the whole region, rather than only part of the picture. He acknowledged that SPC and PIF had a considerable number of members in common, which made for an interesting organisational set-up. The Cairns Compact was aimed at promoting a spirit of cooperation in achieving Pacific development. There was international agreement that this was the most effective way to proceed. SPC's contribution to the Compact should not require a serious redirection of SPC's resources.

105. The representative of France said that as a member of the post-Forum dialogue, France had agreed to the Cairns Compact and supported the approach it promoted. However, France would like to see a change in the existing wording of part (ii) of the recommendation, which requested increased resources for SPC's contribution to the Compact.

106. The Director-General responded to members' comments by noting that 16 SPC members were also PIF members, and 10 were not. The two organisations of course had different governing bodies, and it was important that the Secretariat received clear directions from the Conference. He stressed that as a point of principle, SPC worked collaboratively with all agencies. Statistics and the achievement of the MDGs were part of SPC's core business, and the organisation would continue working in this area, as it had been doing. However, it wished to cooperate with the Forum in seeking to achieve the aims of the Compact.

## **Decisions**

107. Conference:

- i. endorsed the goals of the Cairns Compact and encouraged the Secretariat to contribute to its successful implementation in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat;
- ii. noted that additional resources may be required to support the contribution of the Secretariat to the Cairns Compact; and
- iii. agreed to participate in ensuring that the capacity and resources of the Secretariat are enhanced to support its contribution to the Cairns Compact.

## **AGENDA ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL YEAR 2010 BUDGET**

108. The Director-General presented the SPC budget for the financial year ending December 2010. He said the budget was a balanced one that also reflected the transfer of SPBEA and most of SOPAC's functions to SPC from 1 January 2010 and followed SPC's new organisational structure. However, due to time constraints, the Secretariat was unable to fully integrate all financial information relating to these new components in its budget document, and the information had therefore been included in an addendum. Total anticipated income and expenditure for 2010 was 68,418,000 CFP units, comprising combined core budgets of 14,150,600 CFP units and non-core budgets of 54,267,400 CFP units (programme funding: 9,319,400 CFP units; project funding: 44,948,000 CFP units). For 'pre-RIF' SPC (i.e. without SOPAC and SPBEA), the Secretariat proposed a balanced budget of 51,666,500 CFP units, comprising a core budget of 11,323,400 CFP units and non-core budget of 40,343,100 CFP units (programme funding: 7,337,000 CFP units; project funding: 33,006,100 CFP units). He noted that since the budget had been prepared, funding had been received from Australia for SOPAC's climate change programme and from AusAID for RRRT (Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team). The 2010 non-core budget was lower than for 2009, mostly due to the completion of projects including Marine Resources projects worth 5 million CFP units. He said the 2010 budget did not include any provision for the payment of income tax by Fiji nationals working for SPC, as the Secretariat's position was that any extra cost to the organisation should be borne by the host country, which would be the sole beneficiary of the additional tax revenue. If income tax was imposed, salaries of locally recruited staff would need to be increased to ensure they remained comparable with the local reference market. The Secretariat estimated this cost at approximately 185,000 CFP units per year (FJD 420,000). He said the tax issue will be negotiated during the development of the new host country agreement, with a view to also harmonising arrangements for the SPBEA and SOPAC staff who will join SPC from 1 January 2010.

### **Decision**

109. Conference approved the proposed budget for financial year 2010.

### **LAUNCH OF PACIFIC ECONOMIC SURVEY REPORT**

110. During lunch the meeting heard a presentation on the 2009 Pacific Economic Survey conducted by AusAID.

111. The representative of Cook Islands noted that fuel prices in Cook Islands were among the highest in the world and that although there had been an attempt to remove nearly all import levies, prices had not decreased. He said that Cook Islands imports considerably more than it exports and pointed out that the large number of Cook Islanders living in Australia and New Zealand used to send large remittances, but that as time went by the amounts being sent to Cook Islands decreased. He said that Cook Islands had very limited means to invest in development of infrastructure to support economic development and he noted that banks charged higher interest rates in Cook Islands than in New Zealand. He also said that many countries depended on revenues from trade levies, and that decreasing levies to promote development led to a loss of revenue. All of these factors worked against development in small island states in the Pacific.

112. The presenter said that in the Pacific, and in the developing world, Cook Islands was considered a success story and that its people and government should be proud. In developing economic infrastructure, it was necessary to work with partners.

113. The representative of Niue thanked the presenter and said that dependency on aid had contributed to failure of economies in the region. Governments had pondered many ideas to build their economies, sometimes trying agricultural production systems that later collapsed. He pointed out that many countries had finance and tax systems that did not focus on bringing in revenue to sustain the government because they were dependent on aid. Hence, he said, it was necessary to reform these systems at the same time that basic infrastructure was developed. It was important for the region to become much less dependent on fossil fuels. Studies, particularly on markets for tourism, would be very helpful as governments in the region did not have the capacity to perform such studies themselves. Lastly, he noted that island farmers should focus on producing food for local consumption rather than for export.

114. The representative of PNG thanked AusAID for undertaking the study and providing reliable data. He said that although countries may seem on paper to have wealth, in practice there were still pockets of poverty and considerable resources were still required to develop social infrastructure. He noted that the study would be useful in national planning.

115. The representative of Samoa noted that according to Samoa's data, the country ranked higher in measures of progress against MDGs.

116. The representative of French Polynesia pointed out that although the study included Timor Leste, it left out about one-third of the region because it did not include territories such as French Polynesia. He said that this limited the usefulness of the study, and that he hoped SPC would do whatever was necessary to ensure that part of the region was not forgotten.

117. The representative of Australia responded that AusAID decided not to include the French territories because they felt that it would not add value given that France undertakes similar data collection and analysis. He emphasised that the territories were not excluded on political or other grounds.

118. The Director-General noted that this was an AusAID publication and said that SPC would be happy to work with French Polynesia and others in relation to such studies.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 7 – EVALUATION OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S PERFORMANCE FOR THE PERIOD 2008/2009**

119. This session was held *in camera*.

120. The Chairperson said that Conference had accepted CRGA's unanimous recommendation that the current Director-General be reappointed for a third two-year term. He said Conference had every confidence in the Director-General's performance and wished to reappoint him for another term.

121. The Director-General expressed his sincere appreciation to Conference for their confidence in his stewardship, saying that his performance reflected the quality of SPC's staff. He particularly acknowledged the work of the executive team and he said he was honoured to accept the leadership of the Secretariat for a third term.

#### **Decision**

122. Conference noted and unanimously approved the recommendation by CRGA 39 that the Director-General, Dr Jimmie Rodgers, be reappointed for a third two-year term. In doing so, Conference stated that it had every confidence in the Director-General and commended him highly on his performance.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 8 – YEAR 2011 CONFERENCE**

#### **Decision**

123. Conference accepted an offer from the Republic of the Marshall Islands to host the 7th Conference of the Pacific Community in 2011.

124. Conference also noted an expression of interest by Cook Islands in hosting the 8th Conference of the Pacific Community in 2013.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 9 – OTHER BUSINESS**

125. None.

## AGENDA ITEM 10 – ADOPTION OF THE COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE SIXTH CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

### Decision

126. Conference adopted the communiqué (Annex 1) summarising its deliberations and decisions.

### CLOSING

127. The Director-General acknowledged the participation of government leaders, deputy leaders and ministers in the Sixth Conference, saying that it was the first time in his four years as Director-General that a head of government and deputy head had been chairperson and vice-chairperson respectively of the meeting. He expressed appreciation for this higher-level of representation, noting that generations of Pacific leaders had played an essential role in the development and direction of ‘their organisation’. He thanked the Kingdom of Tonga for the warmth of its welcome and generosity of its hospitality, in particular thanking Her Royal Highness, Princess Salote Mafile’o Pilolevu Tui, for gracing the opening ceremony. He said SPC was indebted to the Tongan government staff who had provided such outstanding support for the day-to-day operation of the meeting. Finally, he acknowledged the Conference Chairperson, the Prime Minister of Tonga, for the excellent way in which he had directed the proceedings and asked him, on behalf of his government, to accept a wooden sculpture and a bound volume of historic photographs relating to Tonga from SPC’s special collection.

128. The representative of Niue spoke on behalf of members in thanking Her Royal Highness for opening the conference and the Kingdom of Tonga for its hospitality. He congratulated the Chairperson for his conduct of the meeting and for allowing room to debate the important issues on the agenda, saying that his guidance would contribute to ensuring successful outcomes from the meeting. He also congratulated the Director-General on his reappointment. He said he was impressed with the work that he and his staff had accomplished on behalf of grassroots people. He also thanked other organisations that were represented at the conference. He stressed that the region should avoid setting up further organisations and should rather focus on streamlining the size and number of organisations, as had been decided on as a result of the RIF process. He ended by expressing his best wishes to the leaders of all the countries and territories represented at the meeting.

129. The Director-General thanked the Premier of Niue for his remarks and also thanked all the regional organisations represented at the meeting for their partnership. On a personal note, he expressed sincere appreciation for the condolences offered to him on the loss of his father.

130. The Chairperson thanked both speakers and acknowledged the contribution of all representatives to the meeting’s success. He thanked the Premier of Niue, the Deputy Prime Minister of Cook Islands, the Vice-President of FSM, and government ministers for participating in the Sixth Conference in response to SPC’s request for higher-level representation of members. He said it was heartening to receive their expressions of support and guidance for the work of SPC. He especially noted the USA’s renewed level of commitment to the region as stated by its representative, and Australia’s announcement of funding for statistical development. He complimented the Director-General on his achievements over the previous four years and said his reappointment was evidence of the value members placed on his leadership. He said the task was not an easy one, especially with limited resources and organisational mergers, and the meeting’s unanimous approval of a third term spoke volumes. He told representatives Tonga had welcomed the opportunity to host them and looked forward to seeing them again. On behalf of His Majesty’s Government and the people of Tonga, he wished everyone a safe trip home, and saying ‘*malo ‘aupito,*’ declared the Sixth Conference closed.

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**Director-General**

Dr Jimmie Rodgers

**Deputy Director-General (Noumea)**

Mr Richard Mann

**Deputy Director-General (Suva)**

Mrs Fekitamoeloa 'Utoikamanu

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**THIRTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS  
(Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 6–9 October 2009)**

**Chairperson:** Ms Romaine Kwesius  
Counsellor Development Australian High Commission  
Suva, Fiji Islands

**Vice-chairperson:** Ms Myra Moeka'a-Patai  
Director, International Organisations & Treaties  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration  
Government of the Cook Islands  
Rarotonga



## AGENDA

- 1. Opening of the session**
- 2. Director-General's report**
- 3. Divisional reports**
  - 3.1 Land Resources
  - 3.2 Marine Resources
  - 3.3 Public Health
  - 3.4 Social Resources
  - 3.5 Transport, Infrastructure, Communications and Energy
- 4. Regional policy agenda – Increased focus on member priorities (Pillar 1)**
  - 4.1 Joint country strategies – progress and impacts
  - 4.2 Decentralisation – regional and national offices of SPC
- 5. Regional policy agenda – Strategic engagement at national, regional and international levels (Pillar 2)**
  - 5.1 SPC and the Pacific Plan
  - 5.2 Ratification of human rights conventions and treaties in PICTs
  - 5.3 Toward a Framework of Priorities in Health – outcome of mapping of priorities in health
  - 5.4 Tracking international and regional agreements/commitments – SPC assistance to members
  - 5.5 Tracking development progress in PICTs
- 6. Regional policy agenda – Strategic positioning of SPC (Pillar 3)**
  - 6.1 Organisational reform and implementation of the Regional Institutional Framework
  - 6.2 Longer-term sustainable financing strategy for SPC
- 7. Statements from observers**
- 8. Finance, management and administration**
  - 8.1 CROP harmonisation
  - 8.2 Staff regulations
  - 8.3 Host country matters
  - 8.4 Annual accounts and audit report for financial year 2008
  - 8.5 Revision of financial year 2009 budget
  - 8.6 Budget for financial year 2010
- 9. Evaluation of Director-General's performance for the period 2008/2009 (*closed session*)**
- 10. CRGA 40, Noumea, New Caledonia: Meeting chairperson and vice-chairperson**
- 11. Other business**
- 12. Adoption of summary of decisions**



## **REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**

### **AGENDA ITEM 1 – OPENING OF THE SESSION**

1. The Director-General called the meeting to order.
2. The Chairperson, the representative of Australia, welcomed delegates and invited them to observe a minute of silence in remembrance of the victims of the recent natural disasters in American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga, and the victims of other disasters in the region in 2009. On behalf of the members of the Pacific Community she also extended deep sympathy to SPC's Director-General, whose father died in Solomon Islands on 3 October.
3. The representative from Tonga led the meeting in the opening prayer.
4. The Director-General welcomed attendees and extended his condolences to victims of the recent tsunami and other disasters. He thanked Tonga for hosting the meeting and said he hoped that delegates would have time to enjoy the beauty and hospitality of the country, as well as contributing to its economic development.
5. The Chairperson acknowledged the government of France for providing the communication equipment being used for the meeting and opened the floor to comments regarding the agenda.
6. The representative of American Samoa moved to accept the agenda as presented. The representative of Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) seconded the motion.
7. The Chairperson said that according to the CRGA Rules of Procedure, the representative of Cook Islands, as Vice-Chairperson of the meeting, would chair the Drafting Committee. She asked for volunteers for the committee, bearing in mind the need for a balance between French and English speaking delegates. The representatives of American Samoa, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Pitcairn Islands, United States of America (USA) and Tonga volunteered.
8. The Chairperson also acknowledged the government of France for providing the communication equipment being used for the meeting.
9. CRGA adopted the agenda as presented and its hours of work. The meeting agreed that the Drafting Committee would meet for the first time on Thursday morning and that on the last day of the meeting, CRGA would consider and adopt its recommendations. A full report of the meeting would be distributed later.

### **AGENDA ITEM 2 – DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

10. In his overview, the Director-General reported on the status of implementation of the key decisions taken by CRGA 38 in 2008 (Annex 1) and the decisions on the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF). The process was an extremely challenging one for those involved, especially the CEOs of the respective organisations, and he acknowledged their commitment to achieving a successful outcome. As a result of the RIF decisions the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA) will become part of SPC from January 2010, bringing staff numbers close to 540. He also reported on some of the highlights for SPC in 2009. The global economic crisis resulted in a substantial reduction in the organisation's operating budget in 2009 with consequent curtailing of some services. The crisis also brought out the best in the organisation, with management and staff deciding to forego the increase in remuneration that was approved by CRGA 38 for implementation in 2009 to ensure services to members could be maintained to the greatest extent possible. Despite these budgetary setbacks, including persistent arrears in some members' assessed contributions, the Secretariat continued to push the boundaries in 2009 and achieved several milestones in regional collaboration. In doing so, SPC led key regional initiatives that could unlock major development potential for some of its members. The Director-General noted that strategic plans for the Marine Resources and Public Health divisions will be presented to this meeting. By the end of the year, SPC will also have finalised six more joint country strategies (JCSs).

This year, the Secretariat supported the establishment of a sub-regional feeder shipping service for the small island states of the central Pacific. The Facilitating Agricultural Commodity Trade (FACT) project was proving successful in supporting small enterprises and an expansion of the project was planned. The regional tuna tagging project has been very successful in providing data to improve stock assessments. In looking ahead, he said he foresaw two stages of reform for SPC. The first phase was underway and included the implementation of the RIF decisions as well as analysis regarding the future size and structure of the organisation. Reforms of SPC's corporate services systems were being undertaken to support its capacity to deliver effective services. Phase two would likely involve reorganising the organisation to move from a sectoral to a thematic focus, in keeping with global best practice. He said that although SPC had faced challenges, it is managing well and would not need to request an increase in assessed contributions this year. The Director-General thanked his executive and staff for their commitment to serving the region and mentioned the loss of two serving staff members, Michael Manning and Gabrielle Kari, who died during the year. He closed by thanking members for their continuing support and partnership in the work of SPC.

11. The Chairperson acknowledged the Director-General's comprehensive report and opened the floor to comments from delegates. All delegates prefaced their remarks by extending condolences to American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga on the losses suffered in the recent tsunami, and to the Director-General on his bereavement. Delegates also congratulated the Chairperson.

12. The representative of PNG said the agenda would be a useful foundation for discussions and highlighted agenda item 4 (Increased focus on member priorities), saying that PNG had benefitted at the national level from several SPC programmes. She thanked the Director-General and staff of SPC and commended the Secretariat on the transfer of functions from SOPAC, SPBEA and PIFS, stating that PNG would support the Secretariat during this transition as much as possible. She said the long-term financing strategy was a critical aspect of planning, as was decentralisation. She said that though there had been planning for the sub-regional office in PNG, the memorandum of understanding had not yet been signed, and she was hopeful that it would be concluded soon.

13. The representative of American Samoa said that American Samoa was humbled by the outpouring of condolences and support that had been received from members present at the meeting as well as from the wider international community. He said that this show of compassion was greatly appreciated by American Samoa and especially thanked USA for not only promptly declaring the territory a disaster area to speed up federal support, but also for quickly sending several aircraft with supplies and personnel. He thanked Tonga for hosting the CRGA meeting. He closed by welcoming the new Deputy Director-General, Suva, and thanking the Director-General for his report.

14. The representative of Kiribati thanked the Director-General for his report and thanked Tonga for hosting the meeting and receiving delegates so warmly. Speaking of the tsunami disaster, she said although island countries like Kiribati are vulnerable, it was valuable to know that they have good friends who are willing to lend a hand when it is needed. She welcomed the Deputy Director-General, Suva and thanked the Director-General as well as the staff of the Secretariat for their work. She said Kiribati was aware of the constraints on funding and was thankful that SPC continued to provide valuable services to members. In this regard, she thanked Secretariat staff for foregoing the CRGA-approved raise. She noted the progress made on the JCS and country profiles, as well as the subregional agreement on shipping services. She acknowledged the assistance of metropolitan members and development partners and thanked them for continuing to support SPC's work despite being affected by the global economic crisis. She said that Kiribati hoped that the major reform of the RIF that was underway would be carefully managed and would not result in a diminution of the services that have been provided by SOPAC and SPBEA. Kiribati hopes to be involved in the discussions on the topic. She said Kiribati regrets being in arrears in its assessed contributions, and that as Kiribati values the services provided by SPC and the money has been allocated each year, she expected that the situation would be corrected soon.

15. The representative of Tonga thanked delegates for attending, given the recent tsunami, and thanked the Chairperson and the Director-General. He welcomed all attendees to Tonga and wished them a very pleasant stay.

16. The representative of Samoa thanked delegates for their kind words and condolences, saying that the support for Samoa has been overwhelming but that it would take time for the country to return to normal. She thanked the Director-General for his report and said that it was clear that SPC was working hard to maintain services. There remained some work to finalise the Samoa–SPC JCS, but she said that Samoa sees value in the exercise and has entered similar arrangements with other partners. She closed by asking for more information from the Director-General regarding possible EU funding for proposed projects in the coming year.

17. The representative of Pitcairn Islands said Pitcairn had benefited enormously from its JCS. He explained that Pitcairn adopted a new two-tier governance structure in 2009, with responsibilities divided between the UK government and local Pitcairn government.

18. The representative of Niue thanked the government and people of Tonga for hosting the conference and welcoming attendees. He thanked the Director-General for his report and the CEOs of the regional organisations for their work in the RIF process, saying that Niue would support the Secretariat in its efforts. He said that Niue had adopted the JCS, which was aligned with its national development plan, and he acknowledged the contribution of donors and regional organisations to social and economic development. He said that though Niue was in arrears with its assessed contributions, it would settle half the amount due during this meeting and the remaining half at next year's meeting.

19. The representative of New Zealand thanked the Director-General for his report and congratulated the Deputy Director-General, Suva, on her appointment. She acknowledged the holistic approach illustrated at the national level by the JCSs and the Secretariat's divisional reports, both of which include cross references to the Pacific Plan. She said there was still considerable work to do in implementing the decisions made in the RIF process and in ensuring long-term sustainable financing for SPC's work. She said New Zealand looks forward to hearing from island member countries about service delivery at the national level.

20. The Director-General thanked the delegates for their comments and said the Secretariat had taken note of them. Regarding Samoa's question on EU funds, he said that although EU processes can be slow, SPC has two projects in fisheries that had been approved and for which funds would start to flow early in 2010. He said there was also a project in trade facilitation for agriculture and an energy project that had made it through the EU's first assessment. In addition, SOPAC had a project in deep sea minerals that would be funded starting early in 2010, and possibly others. He explained that all projects in the EU's Focal Sector 1 were on hold pending finalisation of the 'Aid for trade' strategy, while projects in Focal Sector 2 (including those mentioned earlier) could be approved.

## **Decisions**

21. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the Director-General's report; and
  - ii. note the directions being taken by SPC to address the challenges of the changing regional environment.

## **AGENDA ITEM 3 – DIVISIONAL REPORTS**

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.1 – LAND RESOURCES**

22. The Director of the Land Resources Division (LRD) said that this was the first year of implementation of its second integrated strategic plan (covering the period 2009–2012). He said LRD continues to align activities as much as possible to national priorities elaborated in the JCSs. The division plays a role in facilitating policy, legislation and planning development and tries to ensure that the Pacific Island voice is heard beyond the region by actively engaging at important international forums. He said that the collections of Annex 1 crops held in trust by the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT) have been placed in the Multilateral System of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). The Minister of Agriculture of Samoa, as Chair of the Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry meeting (Samoa 2008), signed an agreement on ITPGRFA on behalf of Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This improves the

region's ability to access non-Pacific crop germplasm for development purposes, thus improving biodiversity. Construction of the new facility to house CePaCT at the SPC Narere compound in Suva was recently completed. The centre will play an important role in efforts at climate change adaptation, improving food security and increasing domestic and export trade in agriculture and forestry products. Plant health, biosecurity and trade facilitation continue to be important areas of LRD's work. He said that after extensive effort, a biosecurity bill was enacted in Cook Islands, a bill is pending in Fiji Islands, and discussions on the status and next steps of the biosecurity bill are ongoing with Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), PNG, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Substantial assistance has been provided to PICTs in relation to pest and disease surveys, research and development, pest control, quarantine treatment, national legislation, trade in agricultural products and capacity building. However, lack of financial support is preventing adequate staffing and operation of the Plant Health team. The Director said that although the DSAP (Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific) project had ended, the project's former national staff had continued to actively liaise with each other and with LRD, completing unfinished work and initiating follow-up activities. In addition, the Centre for Excellence in Atoll Agriculture is continuing some of DSAP's work. He said the present science and technology capacity of LRD had been eroded with the completion of some relatively big projects and LRD staff were actively seeking new sources of funding to bridge gaps. The number of LRD staff has fallen from over 100 in June 2009 to 88, with five vacant posts. Project funding has consistently made up about 75 per cent of LRD funding, with an additional 20 per cent coming from programme funding and 5 per cent from core funding. Looking ahead, the Director said new initiatives currently being designed will probably begin in 2010 and may ease some of the staffing and operational difficulties faced by the division. LRD hopes to expand the FACT (Facilitating Agricultural Commodity Trade) project with additional EU funding through EDF 10. Other new initiatives include the SPC–Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) Pacific Regional Land Initiative; AusAID Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access (PHAMA) initiative; AusAID Climate Change Adaptation; and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) Pacific Agribusiness Research and Development Initiative (PARDI).

23. The representative of Pitcairn Islands thanked the LRD Director and staff for their work.
24. The representative of Kiribati thanked the LRD Director and staff. She said that low-lying countries like Kiribati were very thankful for the establishment of the Centre of Excellence for Atoll Agriculture Research and Development in the Pacific and that its work was very useful for atoll countries. She said Kiribati was very appreciative of its work in distributing planting material for food crops during the food crisis in Kiribati, which helped the country minimise imports and move toward self-sufficiency.
25. The representative of Tuvalu recognised the work of the LRD Director and staff. He highlighted the work in atoll agriculture and encouraged the programme to disseminate information to other countries, allowing them to improve agriculture on atolls. He thanked SPC and the Government of Fiji Islands for their work in facilitating trade with Rotuma, saying that Tuvalu would benefit from reduced costs for imported food.
26. The representative of American Samoa thanked LRD for its work with American Samoa's Department of Agriculture and with the American Samoa Community College, and said the territory looked forward to support from LRD in establishing private veterinary clinics.
27. The representative of Tonga said that as it was also a recipient of LRD services, Tonga wished to acknowledge the benefits it received, both at the level of individual farmers and the national level. He also acknowledged the timeliness and scope of LRD's response to the recent earthquake and tsunami.
28. The representative of RMI congratulated the division on its work, and noted the value of the new efforts on atoll agriculture. He said there was still room for improvement in 'bringing services closer to countries', for example, in collecting and storing germplasm and making it available to northern Pacific countries. He said that RMI had requested that divisional presentations include budgets and programme spending, so that delegates could approve budgets at the same time as they approved the divisions' workplans.

29. The representative of PNG thanked LRD for its work, particularly in food and nutritional security. She said that traditional knowledge provided useful and cost-effective techniques for preserving seedlings, and that PNG welcomed the establishment of CePaCT as well as support from LRD in work on a biosecurity bill for PNG. She asked when the 'Aid for trade' strategy would be completed, given the delay in funding from the EU. She said PNG was grateful for the FACT project and wanted to encourage the private sector, but that the country also wished to see greater benefits at the grassroots level for individual farmers.

30. The representative of New Zealand said it was encouraging to see SPC addressing the problem of reliance on project funding by beginning to define its core functions, and asked if that process was also providing greater clarity regarding LRD's core activities.

31. The representative of Niue thanked the LRD Director and staff, and said that in Niue the vast majority of the population are subsistence farmers, including those who are employed in industry or government. As an illustration, he explained that Niue law requires every man over 18 to have over 1000 taro, cassava, or yam plants as a way of addressing the high cost of imported food. However, he said it was important to work with farmers to diversify the crops that they plant and to build capacity in biosecurity to facilitate agricultural trade.

32. The Chairperson said that the question from PNG regarding EU funding could be answered by the EU representative during Wednesday's session. She invited the LRD Director to respond to the other questions.

33. The LRD Director thanked the members for their comments and recognised the division's staff for their work. He said it was encouraging to see that members were familiar with LRD's work. He said that the Director-General would answer the question regarding resources. In answer to the question from PNG about benefits at the grassroots level, he said that the aim of the pilot FACT project is to establish 'success stories' in trade and that some small-scale farmers who were producing for export enterprises were benefiting from the project. He said that SPC hoped that the project would expand in the coming 1–2 years and would provide greater benefits at that level. In response to the comment from American Samoa on veterinary laboratories and the comments from New Zealand and RMI on core functions and funding, he said that the division had 10 technical areas in which it would maintain core capacity, and that other work would vary depending on members' requests.

34. The Director-General, in response to the question on core functions, said that SPC has been struggling with defining these functions as everything the organisation does is in response to priorities expressed by members. The issue will be addressed as part of the RIF process and in CRGA paper 6.2 on long-term sustainable financing. He explained that programme funding is a semi-sustainable form of funding that comes mostly from Australia, New Zealand and France to support ongoing work, but that about two thirds of SPC's total funding comes from project funds. LRD's work covered three core areas: food and nutritional security, regional forest management, and trade in agriculture and forest products. He highlighted SPC's work in climate change adaptation and the work of CePaCT, which he said was not very well known and was undervalued. The Director-General said that CRGA would also hear from Samoa about work on climate change adaptation in that country.

## **Decisions**

35. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note the progress made by the Land Resources Division (LRD) toward achieving its strategic objectives;
- ii. note there are new initiatives expected to begin in 2010 that will help bridge some of the funding gaps for LRD programmes; and
- iii. note that for LRD to fully deliver the services envisaged in its new strategic plan it will require greater resources to maintain/strengthen its professional and technical capacity.

### AGENDA ITEM 3.2 – MARINE RESOURCES

36. The Director of the Marine Resources Division (MRD) summarised the work of the division in 2009. The division comprises two programmes, Coastal Fisheries (CFP) and Oceanic Fisheries (OFP), and the CRISP (Coral Reef Initiatives for the Pacific) project, which is based at SPC Noumea. CRISP covers a range of activities on coral reef conservation and networking that fall outside the scope of MRD's existing programmes. He noted that some restructuring had been undertaken in 2009, mainly in CFP. Following the recent review of the MRD, changes were being made including: (1) the creation of a support unit that will initially handle information from both programmes, and later might coordinate major donor projects as well as training; and (2) simplification of the structure of CFP to integrate fisheries science and management and provide a section capable of addressing each of the objectives of the programme. In terms of MRD's budget, there was a big decline in expected project funding for both CFP and OFP in 2010. For OFP this fall was partly explained by the completion of tuna tagging activities during 2009, while CFP was awaiting the approval of new European Development Fund projects. These have been progressing through the system in 2009, but a final decision on funding has not yet been made, illustrating the difficulties faced in planning services based on project funding. The funding cuts will have a severe impact on the staffing of CFP, with eight staff completing their contracts in 2009. However, the CRISP project has secured additional funding for next year, although much of this is likely to be disbursed in grants to implementing agencies.

37. Presenting the work of the OFP, the Director noted that the total catch of tuna in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) region continued to break records in terms of both tonnage and value. The increase was largely due to the expansion of the purse seine fishery in the region. Around 50% of the total catch was taken in PICT EEZs (exclusive economic zones), which means that PICTs have a large say in the management of the fishery. However, only 20% of the catch is harvested by vessels fishing under PICT flags. The OFP's stock assessments of the four main species that make up the regional tuna fishery show that bigeye tuna stocks are a cause for concern, with assessments for the past six years indicating that overfishing is occurring. New WCPFC measures are not having the desired impact on overfishing and OFP is currently conducting evaluations to indicate how further reductions in bigeye fishing mortality can be achieved. The tuna tagging project had been very successful and was providing high-value data on the movement growth, and exploitation of skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye. He noted that maintaining ongoing tuna tagging would provide an important fishery-independent source of data over the long term. Another highlight for OFP was its capacity building activities in stock assessment and ERA interpretation, tuna data management and fishery monitoring, including observer programme support.

38. The Manager of the Coastal Fisheries Programme presented specific aspects of the work of CFP in 2009. He mentioned the results that had been published from the ProcFISH C and CoFish projects, covering 63 sites in over 17 PICTs. A serious concern was the generally small size of fish found over all sites. The Aquaculture Section was carrying out a series of mini projects in collaboration with ACIAR. The Nearshore Fisheries Section was continuing its technical assistance in the establishment and use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) and was also supporting training for purse seine crew for PNG's industry and assisting national tuna fishing associations through DEVFISH. Assistance in implementing the community-based ecosystems approach to fisheries management (CBEAFM) was being provided to several PICTs. Future plans for the programme included greater use of applied science in support of resource management objectives in-country and looking at alternative income generating activities in support of development in fisheries and aquaculture.

39. In conclusion, the Director of MRD noted that SPC's fisheries programmes had generally been successful in attracting project funding. However, an ongoing shortfall in operational programme funding meant that a 25% increase in secure funding levels was needed to meet requirements and to ensure the continuity of certain core functions. He ended by thanking SPC's development partners in the fisheries sector.

40. The Chairperson thanked the MRD Director and Coastal Fisheries Manager for their presentations and invited representatives to comment.

41. The representative of Samoa acknowledged the MRD's work, particularly the in-country activities listed in Annex 1 of the report. She said it clearly answered the question of what SPC does at country level, but did not indicate the link between these activities and the JCS between Samoa and SPC. She noted that at

several national and regional fishery sector meetings, there had been mention of the high quality of the scientific data on fisheries provided by the Oceanic Fisheries Programme. Tuna fisheries were important for PICT economies and reliable data were essential for policy formulation and management decisions at national and regional level.

42. The representative of Kiribati agreed that the fisheries sector was an important one for the region and expressed gratitude for the technical assistance that MRD provided to Kiribati. She said the results of the tuna tagging project will be very useful in regional stock assessment, while the work of the Coastal Fisheries Programme is important in supporting local sustainable management of resources. She mentioned the assistance provided to develop trade in ornamental marine species from Christmas Island for export to USA. The project was important for local people and despite funding constraints, she hoped this support could be continued. The representative also acknowledged the support of development partners.

43. The representative of Niue acknowledged the work of MRD, saying the fisheries sector was very important for Niue. The work of the Oceanic Fisheries Programme in stock assessment has a high profile in the region. However, it was clear that the Coastal Fisheries Programme needs more resources to deliver the technical assistance necessary for proper management of coastal resources. He said training attachments at SPC were an excellent way of providing training and requested more such attachments. The representative also asked about the possibility of reviving programmes in the use and marketing of fish.

44. The representative of Cook Islands commended the division on its work. She noted that the mid-term review of the Cook Islands-SPC JCS showed that support had been provided for attendance at an International Advisory Board (IAB) workshop. The Oceanographic Commission was grateful for the support of SPC in enabling this. She expressed concern about the effect of funding constraints and funding gaps on the Coastal Fisheries Programme and said development assistance was needed to ensure gains in the area of coastal resources management were not lost.

45. The representative of Tonga thanked MRD for its work on several projects that have assisted Tonga, including capacity building and support for the formulation of a sea cucumber management plan. He agreed with the comment of the representative of Niue that coastal resources were very important, especially in terms of food security for rural communities. Coastal resources were vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters and lower funding in this area was a concern. Part of the problem was that these resources were very scattered and difficult to quantify in monetary terms. He thanked OFP for its great work in tuna fisheries. The tuna industry was important internationally so it attracted wide support, but Coastal Fisheries needed national support.

46. In response to the question from the representative of Samoa, the MRD Director said there had been insufficient time to link MRD activities in Samoa with the objectives of the joint strategy because the strategy had only been completed in August. However, these links would be made in the next report. He acknowledged that coastal fisheries were very important at national level and said the division was doing its best to secure more funding in this area.

## **Decisions**

47. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the activities and achievements of the division during the current year;
  - ii. note the short-term funding problems faced by programmes, particularly the Coastal Fisheries Programme;
  - iii. note the opportunities and challenges for the programmes in meeting the changing fisheries needs of members;
  - iv. support strengthening of initiatives to develop capacity in members' fisheries administrations and the private sector; and
  - v. note the reliance on project funding for service delivery, and the requirement for an increase of 25 per cent in longer-term funding to sustain core functions.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.2.1 – MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION REVIEW**

48. One of the two consultants who undertook an independent review of the Marine Resources Division at the beginning of 2009 presented a report of the review. He said six countries had been visited and feedback showed a high level of satisfaction with the activities of MRD. The review had made 13 recommendations relating to all areas of the division's operations. In general, it was suggested that MRD should adopt a more objective-oriented structure, similar to that of the Land Resources Division. In relation to the various sections of the Coastal Fisheries Programme, he said the ecosystem approach to fisheries had to be adopted in every area of its work. Countries were very appreciative of the work of the Nearshore Fisheries Section and there was high demand for its services. However, in the reviewers' opinion it was expensive to provide these services from Noumea and MRD could consider different options for the provision of some services. In relation to community-based management of resources, he said it was difficult to point to successes. The information produced by the Fisheries Information Section, including manuals, posters and ID guides, was highly visible in many of the countries visited. The Section had attempted to deliver more information through the internet but for many countries, this was a not a suitable option due to technological difficulties. In relation to Oceanic Fisheries, he said the tuna industry was a huge one and could contribute more to the costs of the services provided by OFP. OFP would benefit from having an economist on its team. Throughout the division, the lack of capacity in many national Fisheries Departments was a problem.

49. In response to the reviewer's presentation, the Manager of CFP said the 13 recommendations had been accepted unconditionally and steps were being taken to address them where possible. However, some could not be addressed immediately due to lack of funding.

50. The representative of French Polynesia congratulated the presenters and said that French Polynesia was naturally very interested in marine resources management. He said that French Polynesia was about to host a conference on Marine Protected Areas as well as a meeting of the WCPFC and looked forward to seeing all members represented at these two events. He asked for clarification of the reviewer's comment that it was expensive to provide services from Noumea, and also asked if the review team had visited any French territories.

51. The representative of New Caledonia asked for additional information on the statement that New Caledonia was not the best place to host an aquaculture programme, given that aquaculture ventures were thriving in the French territories.

52. In response, the consultant said the focus of MRD's aquaculture section was on food security, particularly in Fiji, Solomon Islands and PNG. It might therefore be more appropriate to base the section in Fiji. He also considered that because most of the work of the Nearshore Fisheries Section was done elsewhere, one development officer could perhaps be based in another country. The consultants visited New Caledonia during the review but not the other French territories.

#### **Decision**

53. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note the findings of the review and the actions being undertaken to address the recommendations.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.2.2 – UPDATE ON THE FUTURE OF FISHERIES STUDY**

54. The Director of the MRD updated the meeting on progress on the joint study being undertaken by the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and SPC on the future of Pacific fisheries. The study, which was approved by CRGA in 2008 subject to some amendments to the terms of reference, was launched in mid-2009 and will take a broad, forward-looking approach to the issues facing the region's fisheries and aquaculture over the next 25 years. The Director said that consultants have been selected, following an advertisement and tender process; an expert panel of 14 international fisheries specialists has been assembled to inform the study; and a steering committee of Pacific Island officials will review the draft report. He noted that panel and committee members were giving their time free of charge and commended their commitment to the study. The consultants planned to consult widely in face-to-face meetings and by phone and email. The results of

the study would be available in early 2010.

### **Decisions**

55. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note progress with the study; and
  - ii. note with appreciation the willingness of members of the expert panel and project steering committee to participate in the process.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.2.3 – MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION/FISHERIES AQUACULTURE AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION 2010–2013 DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN**

56. The Director of the MRD introduced the new strategic plan for the division. Unlike the current separate strategic plans for the Coastal Fisheries and Oceanic Fisheries Programmes, the new strategic plan covers the whole division over a four-year cycle (2010–2013), in line with the recommendations of the review of the MRD. He noted that the plan proposed a new name for the division – Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME), to recognise the true scope of the work of the division on broader marine ecosystem issues and freshwater aquaculture. The goals, objectives and intended outcomes were developed at the SPC Heads of Fisheries meeting in February, and subsequently endorsed by the Forum Fisheries Committee. The draft plan was now being presented for discussion and approval by SPC's governing body. The Director said the plan provided overall direction and would form the basis for more detailed annual work plans.

### **Decisions**

57. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. endorse the new Strategic Plan for the period 2010–2013 for the Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division (formerly known as the Marine Resources Division).

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.3 – PUBLIC HEALTH**

58. The Director of the Public Health Division (PHD) provided the first annual progress report of this new division in SPC. He reported that 2009 had been a challenging year and said the achievements made were a testimony to the commitment of staff. The division contributed toward the achievement of a number of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the implementation and monitoring of important regional health strategies, the realisation of various objectives in the Pacific Plan, and capacity building or supplementation at country level. An example of the impact of the division's work was the effective malaria prevention and control strategy comprising distribution of long-lasting insecticide treated bed nets, focal point indoor residual spraying, early diagnosis and treatment, and active case detection. The measures resulted in 50,000 fewer confirmed cases of malaria in 2008 in Solomon Islands compared to 2003. The division's Adolescent Health and Development (AHD) project is a joint initiative between the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and SPC. It focuses on health as a key aspect of youth development with an emphasis on sexual and reproductive health. Through AHD, adult reproductive health (ARH) education was conducted in schools and clinics and through community education programmes. However, rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) remain as high as they were in 2004 and a comprehensive review of the current strategies is being commissioned. In 2008 and 2009, PHD has assisted PICTs to increase their diagnostic capacity in a number of key disease areas including STIs and malaria. As a result of the implementation of an effective programme for prevention of mother-to-child transmission, the risk of babies being infected with HIV during birth has been substantially reduced. The Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN) works closely with WHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in targeting communicable diseases, particularly outbreak prone ones. The SPC team responded to the H1N1 pandemic in 2009 in partnership with WHO and CDC, and played a critical role in providing technical advice, services and capacity building to PICTs. It was also involved in the response to the recent cholera outbreak in PNG. The TB Section supports PICTs in implementing the regional Stop TB strategy in close collaboration with WHO and CDC. The HIV and STI Section is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Pacific Regional Strategy on HIV and

STIs in close collaboration with other agencies and countries. The Global Fund Section supports PICTs in their fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria through funding various regional projects. He noted that the region has a very high prevalence of non-communicable disease (NCD) risk conditions – diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. The Healthy Pacific Lifestyle (HPL) Section of the division provides an integrated approach to tackling NCD risk factors by promoting control of tobacco and alcohol, more physical activity and good nutrition. A joint SPC–WHO approach (2-1-22: two organisations, one programme, 22 countries) to NCDs was implemented under the Pacific Framework for the Prevention and Control of NCDs, which has received funding from AusAID and NZAID. In January to June 2009, grants amounting to 23 million CFP (approximately USD 270,000) were provided to three PICTs to support implementation of national NCD strategies. The grants will be rolled out to an additional six PICTs by November. PHD is collaborating with other SPC divisions on the Pacific Food Security working group, which includes WHO, other UN agencies, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and food industry representatives. The work of the group will feed into a high-level, multi-sectoral regional food security summit in early 2010.

59. The Director noted that 95 per cent of PHD's 2009 budget of 27.1 million CFP units was derived from project funding, 4 per cent from programme funding, and 1 per cent from core funding. Of the project funding, 50 per cent came from the Global Fund, 27 per cent from AusAID and 8 per cent from NZAID. Sixty-six per cent of all project funding was for HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria, and 54 per cent of the budget went in grants to countries. The predominance of project funding presented challenges for the division and led to it being perceived as a grand funding channel or donor. The Director said relatively neglected diseases in the Pacific included dengue and other vector borne diseases, rheumatic heart disease, and conditions relating to mental health status and environmental health. Gaps were also emerging in funding for maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, the health consequences of climate change, and provision of clean water and sanitation services. PHD policy was to strengthen its capacity to address the social determinants of health and to move beyond a vertical disease-based approach.

60. The Chairperson opened the floor for comments and questions.

61. The representative of Kiribati thanked the Director and PHD staff. She said that for Kiribati and the entire region, health issues pose a major development challenge and that a large portion of members' budgets is devoted to health. She thanked SPC for its technical support and assistance, particularly in TB, NCDs and the response to the H1N1 influenza pandemic. She said that the root causes of health problems go beyond the realm of health, citing the crowded living conditions of South Tarawa. She also spoke about the atoll lifestyle, which involves dependence on imported food, and about the challenges posed by rapid population growth. She said Kiribati welcomed plans to address health issues using multi-sectoral approaches, noting LRD's work on promoting healthy crops adapted to atoll conditions and EU funding for health clinics in outer islands as a means of addressing migration to population centres. She expressed Kiribati's gratitude for SPC's work and its collaboration with WHO, AusAID and others, and said Kiribati looks forward to continuing cooperation and collaboration.

62. The representative of Australia noted PHD's work and congratulated the division after a difficult year. He stressed that health is a complex and constantly changing area, citing the H1N1 influenza pandemic as an example. He said that the joint Australia and New Zealand-funded Pacific Regional Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Project (PRIPPP) had been very beneficial and should be applauded. For some countries, it was their only source of Tamiflu vaccine. He said Australia was aware of the need for continuous funding in health and was exploring options jointly with New Zealand. He said the Cairns Compact emphasised the need to work together and applauded SPC on its memorandum of understanding with WHO, saying it provided a good example of an approach that was very important for the region. He closed by encouraging SPC to also reflect on its core activities in the constantly changing field of health when it undertakes the process of defining its core functions.

63. The representative of France congratulated the Director. He acknowledged that SPC would be taking a holistic approach to health and said that this might provide an opportunity to expand services while examining health costs and exploring the possibility of recovering some of the costs of services from national health budgets.

64. The representative of Vanuatu acknowledged the presenters of the divisional reports and thanked SPC for its assistance in public health. He said that the decline in the incidence of malaria in Vanuatu, as shown during the presentation, illustrated the progress made.

65. The representative of Niue thanked PHD and development partners, particularly WHO and NZAID, for their assistance in responding to the H1N1 pandemic. He said NCDs remain a major concern in Niue. Preventive health measures were being promoted and the second cycle of the filariasis prevention programme was being implemented. He said the limitations now were in the area of human resources. He thanked SPC and said Niue looked forward to maintaining a good partnership.

66. The representative of Tonga thanked the PHD Director and staff for their work for the Pacific and for Tonga and looked forward to continuing the constructive partnership. He asked if PHD planned to support work to address gaps in health, similar to work addressing rheumatic heart disease in Tonga and Fiji Islands, and if PHD planned to work toward accreditation of laboratory services in the region.

67. The representative of PNG said that rates of HIV and other STIs were quite high and that children who contracted HIV from their mothers were stigmatised. She thanked AusAID and other donors for their support and said PNG was working to bring HIV infection rates down.

68. The WHO observer thanked the Chairperson and the PHD Director and said that the SPC/WHO collaboration was strengthening. For example, the 2-1-22 approach is now up to step 3, involving combined planning and implementation. In the context of the present focus on core functions, this collaboration is a good reminder that agencies' efforts should complement rather than duplicate each other's work. He said that the proposed new structure of PHD, with seven sections becoming four clusters, was similar to WHO's structure, but pointed out some apparent inconsistencies in the diagram of the new structure.

69. The PHD Director thanked all speakers for their comments and said it meant a lot to staff to hear that the division was meeting the needs of members. He thanked France for its suggestion and its support and said that PHD plans to continue its holistic approach to health system strengthening. In response to the question on health budgets and the costs of health service delivery, he said that PHD was trying to be selective in what it does. WHO has done some analysis, and there is agreement that countries need assistance in analysing the delivery of health services. In response to the comments from Australia, he said PHD agreed on the need to reflect on its core functions and planned to do so. In answer to the question from Tonga on accreditation of laboratories, he said that some work had been done but not region-wide, and that there was indeed a need to look at a possible role for SPC in this area. He said that SPC was also interested in discussing what its role could be in addressing rheumatic heart disease.

## **Decisions**

70. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the work and achievements of the Public Health Division (PHD) during 2009;
  - ii. note the substantial increase in funding mobilised for public health activities in member countries;
  - iii. note with concern PHD's continued dependence on project funding and, in association, the lack of continued funding for influenza pandemic preparedness activities beyond mid-2010; and
  - iv. note the need for timely recruitment of human resources in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) to support a scaled-up response to public health issues.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.3.1 – PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION STRATEGIC PLAN 2010–2014**

71. The PHD Director said that the PHD strategic plan for 2010–2014 had been developed following a wide range of consultation with stakeholders from health and non-health sectors at national, regional and international levels, and he thanked all partners for their help. The plan takes into consideration the significant changes that have occurred throughout the Pacific since PHD developed its previous plan covering the 2004–2009 period. In particular, it is guided by the direction outlined in SPC's Corporate Plan, the commitments and declarations made at Pacific Health Ministers meetings, regional priorities as articulated in the Pacific Plan (2005), and the various regional health strategies that have been developed

recently. The plan has four objectives:

- To reduce the overall impact and burden of diseases;
- To contribute towards strengthened national health systems, with a the aim of making them sustainable;
- To increase the capacity of PICTs to address non-health sector determinants of health; and
- To increase the scope, efficiency and impact of interventions.

The plan represents a significant change in strategy for SPC and PHD. It continues to place major emphasis on supporting the 'Healthy Islands' vision adopted by Pacific Health Ministers on Yanuca Island in 1995 while acknowledging that many of the primary determinants of people's health are outside the health sector. The plan therefore promotes a whole of health multi-sectoral approach and emphasises the importance of greater predictability of funding, untying development assistance in health, working with civil society and the private sector, and increasing collaboration with WHO and other partners. It also includes specific strategies to implement the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and the Paris Declaration (2005). Under the new strategic plan, PHD will strive to align its work programmes with national priorities. It proposes a more sustainable approach to training of health workers by placing more emphasis on utilising existing training institutions, such as the Fiji School of Medicine and national nursing education colleges. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of activities under the strategic plan have been linked to existing M&E frameworks as far as possible, and a rigorous performance framework has been developed to ensure that PHD focuses on the delivery and reporting of tangible outcomes and impacts at both national and regional level. The plan also outlines a new structure for the division consisting of four clusters rather than the present seven sections.

72. The representative of New Zealand congratulated PHD on the new strategic plan and the move toward a multi-sectoral approach to address determinants of health originating outside the health sector. She said that there would be challenges ahead given the current funding structure, which is heavily dependent on project funding, and that this would be a problem across SPC that would need to be addressed along with predictability of funding.

73. The Director-General said that probably 70 per cent of health determinants are outside the health sector, and that around 80 per cent of epidemics originate from outside the health sector, e.g. in Fiji Islands, leptospirosis kills more people than HIV. He said that this realisation required a change in the way programmes thought and operated. He said working to improve schools and other community infrastructure would improve the quality of life and thus population health. He therefore asked delegates to endorse the PHD strategic plan.

## **Decisions**

74. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. endorse the new strategic plan for the Public Health Division for the 2010–2014 period, noting that some aspects of the draft plan will be finalised following the meeting based on the feedback received; and
  - ii. note the need for greater predictability and flexibility of funding if the plan is to succeed.

## **AGENDA ITEM 3.4 – SOCIAL RESOURCES**

75. The Director of the Social Resources Division (SRD) said that the division was made up of four programmes – the Statistics and Demography Programme (SDP), Human Development Programme (HDP), Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) and Regional Media Centre (RMC). Individually and collectively all programmes were helping PICTs meet their commitments to the MDGs and international conventions and treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In addition, all of the programme areas contributed to a number of objectives under the Pacific Plan, with a major component of their respective budgets and work plans being devoted to the cross-cutting provision of education and training, including technical and vocational education and training. He said all four programmes contributed to building human resource capacity at the national level and supplemented national capacities where necessary. In 2009, SRD had presented 31 workshops and training courses, and had trained a total of 451 participants (representing more than 7,100 person days of training). It was thus

making a substantial contribution to capacity building at the national level, particularly through the Community Education and Training Centre's (CETC) seven-month residential course leading to a Certificate in Applied Community Development. The Director stressed that SRD programmes were uniquely positioned to contribute to SPC's cross-cutting and multi-sectoral approaches in areas such as gender equality, human rights and advocacy by working in partnership with other technical divisions within SPC and by ensuring that activities in individual programme areas had an impact beyond the specific sector involved. He described aspects of SRD's work in strengthening PICTs' capacity to address issues including human rights, women's empowerment and the contribution of youth to household economies. He noted the importance of sound and timely data in enabling countries and territories to adopt an evidence-based approach to policy development. He also noted that SRD programmes provided critical support to PICTs in terms of ratifying, implementing and/or meeting their reporting obligations on international conventions and treaties.

76. The Chairperson thanked the Director for his comprehensive presentation of SRD's work and invited representatives to comment.

77. The representative of PNG acknowledged the valuable work of the SRD team. She noted that gender issues had been to the fore recently in PNG. PNG was trying to ratify CEDAW and the Prime Minister had appointed three women to Parliament but this had 'caused an uproar'. The only elected female representative in Parliament was the Minister of Community Development. However, in 2012, 22 seats would be allocated for women, meaning that 30 per cent of Members of Parliament would be women. This would meet the minimum level advocated by the Commonwealth and would be a turning point for PNG politics. She said gender based violence was an increasing problem in PNG and the government was working with NGOs and the police to address the problems. Counselling and legal services, social services and women's safe houses were also being provided because the government realised the problem must be addressed at all levels. She said PNG would appreciate support from SPC in this area and requested that SPC work with its Department of Community Development, particularly in relation to the development of legislation.

78. The representative of Kiribati said the presentation reflected the extensive coverage of the SRD programmes, all of which assisted Kiribati in meeting its development plan goals and the MDGs. Kiribati continued to need support in statistics. Although SPC had provided support for the National Statistics Office (NSO), information and data were still outdated. She said Kiribati faced constraints in meeting reporting requirements and needed support from RRRT in collaboration with UNICEF and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and other agencies. SPC had recently conducted a study of gender based violence in Kiribati in partnership with AusAID and UNFPA. The results highlighted the seriousness of the problem and were being taken on board at the highest level of government. The study would provide an advocacy tool in addressing the issues. Kiribati would also need further assistance in developing appropriate legislation on gender based violence. In relation to CETC, she said its programme empowered women and supported their contribution to community development. CETC training also helped women further their careers, especially since the programme has been revised in the face of changing development challenges. The representative said Kiribati was grateful for the training provided by RMC and noted that the programme had recently visited Kiribati to document agricultural practices on atoll islands. In short, the work of SRD supplemented national efforts to achieve sustainable development and her country looked forward to further cooperation.

79. The representative of Vanuatu expressed gratitude for the immense assistance that SRD provided. In collaboration with UNFPA and the NSO, SDP had given extensive support for the census next year. Vanuatu would be the first Pacific country to use geo-referencing and automated technology to carry out the census. RMC had helped women in Vanuatu to produce radio programmes and RRRT had provided technical assistance for the drafting of the Family Protection Act, which had now passed into law.

80. The representative of Tonga said he was pleased at the mention of youth employment issues during the presentation, but there had been no mention of the regional youth strategy. Fragmentation of advice, funding, and technical assistance was a problem in this area. The consensus of a stakeholders' meeting in Noumea in 2008 had been that SPC should act as the focal point for resources and advice, and that countries would link their national strategies with the regional strategy, but nothing more had been heard. UN agencies had some resources but these resulted in little impact because they were too thinly spread. Tonga agreed with the view that SPC should act as the focal point for youth support. The representative said CETC had been very active in training women leaders. Like other countries, Tonga would like CETC to decentralise its provision of

training by 'exporting the product'. He congratulated the CETC Head on her understanding of Tonga's needs and its wish to have training delivered to rural areas. The same applied to the training provided by RMC and the Maritime Programme, though this was not part of SRD. He stressed that training at the informal level was important for development. The representative acknowledged the work of SRD in general, mentioning capacity building in business enterprise development, RRRT's support for the development of legislation and Tonga's progress towards ratifying CEDAW, and HDP's support for the arrangements for the Triennial Conference of Women, which would be held in Tonga next year.

81. The representative of Solomon Islands joined other colleagues in congratulating SRD on the positive impact of its work at ground level. He said the mid-term review of the JCSs demonstrated this impact, particularly for RRRT, which was supporting aspects of the constitutional revision currently being undertaken in Solomon Islands. Women were participating in this exercise. RMC was helping to improve the capacity of Solomon Islands TV to produce informative programmes. The channel was now televising parliamentary debates for example. The NSO was 'all praise' for the support provided by SDP. He said there was a need to continue expanding and updating statistical information, which was important in monitoring development.

82. The representative of Cook Islands acknowledged the work of SRD and asked if RMC had considered asking other regional airlines to include the Pacific Way programme in their in-flight entertainment. She noted there had been no mention of disability issues and asked if this was because these issues came under PIFS. In relation to basing some RRRT staff in Vanuatu, she asked if consideration had been given to sharing space with the University of the South Pacific (USP).

83. The representative of Australia congratulated SRD on its work. He noted the studies on gender based violence in Solomon Islands and Kiribati, saying Australia had a policy of zero tolerance for gender based violence and had supported the joint work of SPC and UNFPA in conducting the research. He said Australia also supported the strong commitment of Forum Leaders to the eradication of such violence. He expressed support for SDP's key role in helping measure progress towards achieving the MDGs, which added value to national efforts. He also congratulated SPC for strengthening its focus on its core functions and said statistics was one of these functions, in accordance with the provisions of the Canberra Agreement, and should be supported by core funding.

84. The representative of RMI congratulated SRD on its meaningful work. He said RMI was preparing for its census next year and appreciated the support of SDP. He requested assistance for RMI's youth. In relation to gender-based violence he noted that husbands and children also sometimes suffered the effects of violence. He supported the comments of Tonga on decentralisation of CETC services and suggested providing some of these services from the Pohnpei office, given that it was very expensive for students to travel from the North Pacific to Fiji to attend the residential course.

85. The representative of New Zealand thanked SRD for the delivery of its services. New Zealand especially appreciated the detailed reporting of national level activities. She said NZAID had a cabinet mandate to promote gender equality, which was considered critical for sustainable development. Therefore, New Zealand would like an update on SPC's gender policy and on gender mainstreaming within SPC to be presented at CRGA 40 in 2010.

86. The representative of FSM thanked SRD for its work and its contribution to the development of the planned JCS. In relation to youth, he thanked SPC for its assistance for the Micronesian Youth Services Network meeting. He acknowledged the relevance of SDP's work in supporting members' NSOs and noted that a statistician was now based in the North Pacific Regional Office. However, he said there was also a need for an economic statistician, ideally based in the North Pacific Office, to help develop sound, reliable information in this area. He supported Australia's comments that statistics should be prioritised as one of SPC's core functions. He also agreed with comments by RMI on providing CETC services in the North Pacific. Many women could not attend CETC in Suva because of funding constraints. He said there would also be benefits in locating RRRT staff in the North.

87. The representative of Nauru thanked SRD for all its assistance, especially for SDP's support of the NSO, the Demographic and Health Survey, and the development of PRISM. He also thanked development partners for their support, which was critical for Nauru. He said Nauru has yet to ratify CEDAW. The government needed to know more about the obligations involved and whether it had the resources to meet them. He asked for RRRT's support in this area.

88. The representative of Niue acknowledged the work of SRD's programmes. He said statistics were very important to Niue's decision-making. He also said that Niue was a passionate advocate of gender equality. Three of its 20 members of parliament were women and several key organisations in Niue, including the Department of Education, were headed by women. A recent youth parliament had an even balance of males and females, which augured well for gender equality in the future. A Niue delegate had been given support to attend the 2009 meeting in New York of the Commission on the Status of Women. The representative also spoke of the traumatic effect of natural disasters on survivors, as had been seen in Niue after Cyclone Heta, and asked if SPC could provide professional counselling services after such events.

89. The representative of Fiji expressed appreciation for the work of SRD programmes. He said Fiji was committed to addressing the problems that RRRT was experiencing in regard to the location of its staff in Fiji and that the new host country agreement would resolve the issues.

90. The representative of France expressed satisfaction with the work of SRD, especially that of RRRT. He said RRRT's strategic plan had links with civil society in every member country and territory. In relation to the location of part of RRRT in Vanuatu, he said France would prefer RRRT to remain in Fiji.

91. The representative of Tuvalu commended the work of the SRD and that of RRRT which had assisted Tuvalu in presenting human rights and CEDAW reports to the relevant UN committees. Gender based violence was the subject of one of the recommendations under the Universal Periodic Review and relevant legislation was being developed. Many Tuvaluan women had graduated from CETC and were active in development. He asked if SPC could provide a food preservation workshop to assist in preparations for a large event to be held on one of Tuvalu's islands. He also said Tuvalu would submit a formal request for assistance to review its youth policy. He mentioned that Tuvalu used to receive special small island states funding for youth development. These funds had been valuable in paying education fees for young people who could not otherwise afford the fees and he asked if the fund could be revived.

92. The representative of French Polynesia acknowledged the wide scope of SRD's work. He mentioned that in July 2009 French Polynesia had hosted the Francophone Organisation mission on CEDAW, which visited all French territories. He noted that parity in politics was being addressed in the region. In French territories, however, parity was required by French law and many government councils in French Polynesia had more women members than men. In regards to HIV, he noted that the work of RRRT had helped to ensure appropriate legislation and respect for the legal rights of people living with HIV and said French Polynesia would welcome support in this area. In relation to culture, he advised the meeting that a UNESCO workshop on world heritage would be held in French Polynesia and he cordially invited members to attend. He noted that Tahiti TV had signed agreements with other regional television providers and could perhaps consider some form of partnership with RMC.

93. The representative of American Samoa said that gaps in statistics over the 10-year period between censuses was a problem for American Samoa and asked if support was available to update information in the interim period.

94. An observer from UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) said that his organisation wanted to work more closely with SPC and the region than in the past. He said UNESCAP was keen to promote gender equality in the region. Such equality was of course a basic human right and a major economic issue. It had been estimated that gender-based violence costs more than USD 40 billion in South East Asia. RRRT had requested UNESCAP to apply a similar methodology to estimate this cost for the Pacific Islands region. He noted that disability was a marginalised issue and that the people affected were highly vulnerable to the effects of the economic crisis. The issue therefore needed support at the highest level. A meeting on disability was being held in Cook Islands with co-sponsorship from AusAID, PIFS and UNESCAP. The World Bank had estimated that not including disabled people in economies cost USD 80 billion annually. Importantly, most disabilities were preventable or treatable, but

poverty was a factor. At the recent Forum Leaders' meeting, it had been stated that people with disabilities were among the region's poorest and most vulnerable and in addition had little access to education and training.

95. In response to representatives' comments, the SRD Director thanked members for their support of the division's efforts. He said that representatives had made several requests for specific assistance. These had been noted by the Secretariat and programme heads would contact members to discuss possible options. In regards to disability issues, RRRT was assisting PICTs to collect data. Many programmes included components that addressed the prevention of disability, e.g. the NCD programme supported the prevention of diabetes, which was a significant factor in disability in the region. He thanked French Polynesia for its pertinent comments on the mission of the Francophone Organisation. He said he would ensure the objectives of the regional youth strategy were built into programme work plans. He said SPC did not have capacity to provide trauma counselling though he agreed that there was a need in the region, as highlighted by the representative of Niue. Such support could perhaps be sourced through external organisations.

96. The RRRT programme manager thanked representatives for their support for her team's work. She said the programme would follow up on requests for assistance in CEDAW reporting. RRRT would attend the meeting on disability in Cook Islands and would support the development of a regional disability policy. Placing RRRT programme staff in the North Pacific Office depended on resources. She said Vanuatu, Tonga and Tuvalu had all reported to the UN HRC (Human Rights Council) and the Consulate of the Netherlands had provided funds to support reporting by all countries.

97. The RMC representative said the Pacific Way programme was being translated so it could be disseminated to the French Territories.

98. The HDP Programme Manager agreed that support in the youth sector was fragmented. The regional youth policy workshop that SPC had held in partnership with the Commonwealth Youth Programme, UNESCAP and UNICEF had addressed this issue and a mechanism had been set up to share information between development groups in the sector. In relation to decentralisation of CETC services, she said this issue had been considered in the recent review of CETC and there had been discussion with RMI and FSM. CETC was looking at using service providers to deliver its course modules. The training could also be extended to men and youth.

99. The Manager of the Statistics and Demography Programme, in answer to American Samoa, said population projections were available on the SPC website. These were developed by SPC to cover gaps in the data available. He said the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) had carried out a mid-term census to update its data. He noted that the disability issue had been discussed at a UN meeting and could be included as a census question. He congratulated Tonga on being the first PICT to include the question in its census, saying the data gathered would provide a benchmark for later specific surveys on the issue.

100. The Director-General also agreed that support in the youth sector was fragmented, saying there were many actors all with good intentions, as had been shown by a recent mapping exercise to identify partners, contributors and organisations. In relation to the location of RRRT, he said it would continue to be based in Fiji. The movement of some staff was part of decentralisation and was intended to provide greater subregional support. He noted that RMC would appreciate support from members in lobbying regional airlines to include the Pacific Way programme in their in-flight entertainment. In response to FSM's request for an economic statistician to be based at the North Pacific Office, he said there had been some discussion with the US Department of the Interior on the question of economic statistics and there was the possibility of working in partnership with the department to provide support in this area. In answer to New Zealand, he said SPC would provide an update on its gender policy and gender mainstreaming at CRGA 40.

101. The representative of New Caledonia said that in New Caledonia, women's rights are the domain of the three provinces, as is violence against women and all other issues affecting women in particular. In 2004, a law on gender parity was passed, ensuring that 50 per cent of political representatives are women. Until 2007, New Caledonia had a female president, and in the 2008 municipal elections more women became mayors. New Caledonia also offers training to women in areas that have traditionally been dominated by men, such as electrical installation and operation of heavy equipment. The New Caledonia Department of

Statistics works closely with SDP and has completed a population atlas that is used in various areas of work such as health. A statistical atlas for the region is planned for 2011. She said New Caledonia's Northern Province and Customary Senate are working on protecting traditional knowledge in the territory. She noted that the next Festival of Melanesian Arts will take place in Noumea in 2011 and invited CRGA attendees to the festival.

### **Decisions**

102. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note the work of the Social Resources Division during 2009;
- ii. re-affirm the region's commitment to human rights, gender equality, the elimination of gender-based violence and violence against young people and children, and community (grassroots) development, and note the need for adequate resources to address these issues at the national and regional level;
- iii. note that an update on SPC's organisational gender mainstreaming and policy will be presented at CRGA 40 in 2010;
- iv. note the need for upgraded and expanded country and regional statistical information systems and databases across all sectors as a prerequisite to improving the availability of high-quality statistical outputs to make evidence-based policy decisions; and
- v. further note the need for permanent office space for the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) in Vanuatu in 2010 following decentralisation.

### **Gender Award**

103. The Director of Corporate Services introduced the SPC gender award, which is presented every two years to an SPC programme that has made an outstanding contribution to addressing gender issues. This year, the award was presented to the HIV & STI Section of PHD.

104. The PHD Deputy Director accepted the award along with the Director of PHD and SRD. He thanked the Director of Corporate Services and SPC on behalf of the section and its leader and said the section had shown that it was truly committed to gender equity and human rights and to making a difference through its work in preventing HIV and other STIs. He said that other sections within PHD would continue to work on mainstreaming gender in their plans and activities and might be equally deserving of the award when it is next presented in 2011.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.4.1 – STATISTICAL BENCHMARKING STUDY**

105. The Manager of the Statistics and Demography Programme (SDP) provided a summary of the recently completed statistical benchmarking study and its recommendations for future statistical developments in the Pacific Island region. He acknowledged the support of the Asian Development Bank in funding the study. The study was commissioned by the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM) in 2006. It was managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) in association with SPC, and the final report was presented in August 2009. The SDP Manager emphasised the importance of the extensive regional consultations that took place in Suva and laid the foundation for future collaboration. He said the region lacks statistical capacity, in terms of both staff numbers and expertise, particularly in economic statistics, and SPC has received specific requests to assist in addressing this area.

The study proposed three options:

1. An expanded SPC/Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC) programme including capacity supplementation;
2. An expanded SPC/PFTAC programme as above, plus optional contracting of certain statistical services to other agencies in the region such as the statistics services of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji Islands, Solomon Islands, or Vanuatu; or
3. A new regional statistical service taking on existing staff of national statistical offices.

The overwhelming consensus was that Option 2 was best. There was no support for Option 3, particularly given the recent emphasis on streamlining and combining agencies rather than creating new ones. In addition to being tabled at CRGA, the report will also be tabled at the FEMM in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, in late October 2009. There were some limitations to the study. These included an overall lack of benchmarks and comprehensive gap analysis across key sectors; lack of detailed costing of the options, including the cost of contracting services under Option 2; and the lack of strategic guidance and implementation planning.

106. The Chairperson opened the floor for comments.

107. The representative of Australia said Australia was happy to provide support for the study together with the Asian Development Bank. He acknowledged the support of member countries for Option 2 and said that Australia would consider supporting its implementation, pending the decision of the FEMM.

108. The representative of PNG welcomed the study and said it highlights what PNG would like to see in the region. She emphasised the usefulness of closer collaboration among regional organisations. She said trade statistics are very hard to keep track of and that this initiative would be helpful in making progress on trade agreements in the region.

109. The representative of New Zealand thanked SPC for this important work and said New Zealand could look at providing additional support for undertaking a detailed costing and implementation plan.

110. The representative of Kiribati commended SPC for this important work and said Kiribati supported the recommendations.

111. The representative of Niue thanked SPC for its work on the study. He said that statistics were very important for the region, but that sometimes they can work against small island states. For example, statistics can show that SIS do not qualify for programmes because of their small GDP and population. He also pointed out that sometimes statistics paint a more positive picture of the situation in a country than is in fact the case.

## **Decisions**

112. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note the findings and recommendations of the comprehensive statistical benchmarking study;
- ii. endorse the Secretariat's concurrence with countries' support for an expanded SPC/PFTAC (Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre) programme and optional contracting out by countries of selected statistical services to other providers (Option 2 outlined in CRGA paper 3.4.1) as the preferred way forward to strengthen statistical services and capacity across the region; and
- iii. request SPC to engage in strategic discussions with PFTAC, a core group of development partners, and PIFS (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat), to plan for the gradual implementation of Option 2, with an initial focus on three immediate priority areas:
  - a. Fine-tuning thematic/sectoral gap analyses and developing benchmarks;
  - b. Developing detailed costings for Option 2;
  - c. Developing medium- to long-term strategic objectives for statistical development across the region.

## **AGENDA ITEM 3.5 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

113. The Director-General introduced the Economic Development Division, which will be one of the two new technical divisions of SPC from January 2010. He said the establishment of the division is a culmination of SPC's internal reform process as well as a specific response to the broader reform agenda under the auspices of RIF. The new division will cover the four key drivers of economic growth – transport, energy, infrastructure and communication/ICT (information and communication technology). He said the division will be headed by a Director supported from SPC's core resources. The energy programme will be headed by a position at the Deputy Director level that will also be supported through the Secretariat's core resources. He said that the use of core funding for the two positions, even though they essentially involved costs

associated with implementing the RIF decisions, showed SPC's commitment to this area.

114. There were no questions or comments on this agenda item.

### **Decisions**

115. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note the establishment of SPC's new Economic Development Division from January 2010 to cover the four key drivers of economic development – energy, ICT (information and communication technology), infrastructure and transport;
- ii. note further that the positions of Director of the new division and Deputy Director (Energy) will be supported through the core resources of the organisation, with both positions to be advertised as soon as possible to enable appointments by the end of 2009; and
- iii. consider the presentations on the work of the transport and communication/ICT programmes and note the tremendous impacts of both programmes on members' national-level development outcomes.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.5.1 – RMP REPORT**

116. The Manager of SPC's Regional Maritime Programme (RMP) said the programme had four main objectives: managing and coordinating training of maritime personnel in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs); maintaining the audit manager function of the regional audit regime; assisting PICTs to comply with international and regional instruments; and developing and updating generic maritime legislation and regulations for PICTs to adapt. He said that at the second Transport Ministers meeting in Tonga on 14 May 2009, ministers reiterated their support for RMP's work. RMP also organised meetings of SIS transport ministers. He noted that administration of the maritime sector has been strengthened through the development of model maritime legislation, regulations and policies. Among the programme's major achievements was its support for the establishment of a subregional shipping service between Kiribati, Tuvalu, Nauru and Fiji Islands, which was already improving trade in these countries and enabling them to fulfil some of the aspirations of the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA). Importantly, freight rates had dropped. There was potential for Wallis and Futuna to also use the service. Subject to endorsement by the respective governments, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Nauru will pioneer the establishment of the Central Pacific Shipping Commission (CPSC), possibly by the end of 2009, to better regulate shipping services to their states. In 2010, RMP will give increased attention to assisting members with their domestic shipping by incorporating a system of safety audits on domestic ships in its current audit regime. This work will be undertaken in consultation with counterparts in Australia and New Zealand, along with other efforts to help ensure the safety of the region's domestic fleet. Over 1600 ships operate in the Pacific, carrying people and goods and the accident rate is actually low, but there is no room for complacency as the tragic ferry disasters in Kiribati and Tonga have shown. RMP will promote regional cooperation and recognition of the pool of expertise that exists in the region as well as the huge knowledge basis available to countries from RMP itself. He said one way of increasing regional cooperation was through the proposed amalgamation of the four regional associations involved in the maritime sector: the Pacific Islands Maritime Association (PacMA), Pacific Countries Ports Association (PCPA), Pacific International Maritime Law Association (PIMLA) and Pacific Women in Maritime Association (PacWIMA). He concluded by saying that given challenges such as minimal funding and limited resources available in-country, in 2010 RMP will focus on providing in-country assistance rather than on holding regional events.

117. The representative of Tonga expressed appreciation of RMP's services. She said Tonga faced pressure in capacity building and in obtaining suitable ships and these challenges had been spelled out in the report. Tonga was interested to hear of the SIS shipping agreement, though it did have its own shipping agreements, and acknowledged RMP's support for capacity building in the legislative area. Tonga also wished to take the opportunity to thank Australia and New Zealand for their efforts to locate the sunken ferry. She said Tonga had accepted New Zealand's offer of support to improve shipping safety.

118. The representative of Fiji congratulated RMP on the report and said Fiji appreciated the assistance provided for SIS shipping services, which was resulting in improved trade between the countries. Fiji was planning to improve the existing wharf and airport infrastructure in Rotuma to facilitate trade ventures.

119. The representative of Kiribati acknowledged the benefits of RMP's work, particular in relation to the SIS shipping services, which had begun in April. This had fulfilled a long-standing desire of Kiribati and would have great benefits. Kiribati looked forward to the establishment of the CPSC. SPC was playing a crucial role in the proposed CPSC by facilitating dialogue and a workshop on trade opportunities. Political commitment was required for the success of the venture and Kiribati asked for the support of other members in this regard. She said RMP had been instrumental in building the capacity of the national maritime authorities to ensure that seafarers were appropriately qualified and could obtain employment, and noted that remittances from seafarers were important for Kiribati. Finally, she said Kiribati hoped that development partners would continue supporting RMP, especially in light of the recent ferry tragedies, which had shown the need for improved safety and the incorporation of safety audits on domestic ships in RMP's audit regime.

120. The representative of RMI said RMP responded to the needs of the region and was now seeing the fruit of its work. RMI supported Kiribati's call for a focus on domestic shipping, especially its safety, and expressed appreciation for RMP's plans in this regard. He noted that shipping was crucial to the implementation of PICTA and to making the agreement meaningful. RMI requested SPC's assistance for its maritime institute, which needed support to improve its operations.

121. The representative of PNG congratulated the hard-working RMP team and said its audit regime was helpful as was its support for legislation. Similar support was needed on biosecurity issues in the region.

122. The representative of Samoa acknowledged RMP's concerns on domestic shipping and asked if RMP could explore setting up and formalising a body in the Pacific that would be acceptable to insurance companies and that would allow members to monitor and survey their own vessels.

123. The representative of Tuvalu expressed appreciation for the work of RMP, especially in supporting the introduction of a feeder service after 10 years of discussions. The service had brought benefits for Tuvalu with significant savings on freight costs. These savings were filtering down to the community. The service was a positive move for the region and Tuvalu hoped it could be developed further to support bulk procurement of fuel, which would be a great benefit for small remote populations.

124. The representative of New Zealand thanked RMP for its informative report, noting that in view of the recent tragic loss of life at sea, the focus on safety was pleasing. New Zealand looked forward to improving safety in the region in partnership with members, RMP and relevant agencies in Australia.

125. The representative of Nauru thanked RMP for its services, especially in supporting the new feeder shipping service, saying that freight rates had come down resulting in lower food prices. There were now also opportunities for inter-island trade, presenting a new market for Nauru. On the first voyage of the new service, there had been only one container for Nauru, while on the latest voyage there had been three. Nauru appreciated the workshop jointly organised by PIFS and SPC on regional trade opportunities and looked forward to the establishment of the CPSC.

126. The representative of Niue expressed appreciation of the training offered by RMP, especially on safety. He asked whether RMP had a role in maritime communication during search and rescue operations. Niue acknowledged the value of the new feeder shipping service. He said that while Niue already had a shipping service once a month, it was good to have options for such an essential service.

127. The representative of Australia extended condolences to Tonga and Kiribati on the losses caused by the ferry disasters. He said RMP had a demonstrable impact at national level in an essential service area. Australia was also looking at working with partners to find ways of improving safety in the Pacific maritime sector.

128. The RMP Manager thanked members for their support. In reply to Samoa, he said the issue of setting up a formal body or classification society had been raised at the Heads of Transport meeting and was being further discussed. He agreed with Niue that search and rescue communication was a serious issue and said the US Coastguard will host a meeting to look at a regional agreement on search and rescue. The issue of the mass rescue effort needed in the event of a cruise ship mishap will also be examined, especially given their increasingly frequent voyages and the thousands of passengers aboard such ships.

129. The Director-General said there was no need to remind members that 98 per cent of the region was ocean so a strong maritime sector was imperative. He noted that RMI had raised the issue of shipping needs in relation to the PICTA and PACER agreements and said it was a serious omission in the establishment of these agreements that shipping needs were not taken into account. He said he was pleased with the commitment to the sector expressed by Australia and New Zealand, especially in relation to safety. Speaking of the issue raised by Samoa on the establishment of a formal body in the region, the Director-General said the proposed amalgamation of the four regional associations involved in the maritime sector could be the basis of such a group and would certainly strengthen efforts to develop a strong and safe shipping industry.

### **Decisions**

130. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sxith Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note the positive impacts of the Regional Maritime Programme's (RMP) intervention in key areas of the Pacific maritime transport sector;
- ii. urge development partners to maintain their support for current RMP activities, to allow the programme to continue the delivery of vital maritime services to members; and
- iii. acknowledge RMP's latest initiatives to improve the safety of the domestic shipping sector.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.5.2 – ICT REPORT: PACIFIC DIGITAL STRATEGY**

131. SPC's PacRICS and OLPC Coordinator said good progress had been made with the three initiatives that SPC has had responsibility for under the Pacific Digital Strategy. He acknowledged the work of the Government of Tonga in chairing the ICT Task Force and the progress made. He said that there had been a lot of activity in the area of deregulation in the region and that this would enable further development. SPC has facilitated discussions between interested countries and SPIN (South Pacific Information Network), a private sector company that has been developing a trans-Pacific submarine cable. In addition, a US military cable project was planned for the North Pacific that could benefit FSM and RMI. There was a need for capacity supplementation in the area of regulation. There were also security risks associated with increasing dependence on computers. A suggested response is to establish two centres, one focusing on assisting countries with ICT regulatory matters and the other focusing on computer emergency response. He said that PacRICS (Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity System) was providing low-cost bandwidth in rural areas and outer islands – areas that industry has not addressed. PacRICS sites have been installed in 16 countries (34 public good sites and 52 commercial sites) in a good example of public/private partnership. He acknowledged AusAID's support and said that after a disaster the system could provide the only mode of communication. As an example, after facilities were destroyed on the Tongan island of Niuatoputapu by the recent tsunami, PacRICS was used to provide an open channel of communication for coordination of the emergency response. Public good sites are mostly in schools at present, but there is increasing interest in establishing such sites in health clinics and on remote islands, showing the cross-cutting nature of the system's uses. He explained that 15 countries have undertaken or committed to OLPC (One Laptop Per Child) trials. Experience was showing that the technology was appropriate and that educational systems were able to adapt to using the system, which has the potential to improve basic education outcomes. The project is now moving into the trial stage, having successfully completed the pilot stage. He said there was considerable interest in the project, and that it was now important to ensure that the necessary resources were made available. Future plans include working on the development of a strategic plan for the PCT programme and working with the Asian Development Bank to develop proposals for funding of infrastructure. A recent ministerial meeting called for a review of the Digital Strategy. He closed by saying that while larger countries had already realised many of the benefits of appropriate deregulation, assistance was required for smaller countries to do so.

132. The Chairperson opened the floor for comments and questions.

133. The representative of Tonga said that Tonga was appreciative of the work of SPC and partner agencies in assisting Tonga after the recent tsunami affected the Niua Group. He said that after one week, there was still no normal telephone service there but PacRICS had continued to function. He thanked donors and also acknowledged SPC for its work with SPIN, saying it has the potential to provide reliable communication to enable social and economic development.

134. The representative of Kiribati said that Kiribati had benefited greatly from the initiatives of the Digital Strategy. Its islands are scattered and communication can be difficult. Eight public good PacRICS sites in outer-island schools and some commercial systems were in operation in Kiribati. Some schools using the system have recommended it to other outer-island schools, saying that it was very helpful in communicating with the capital and with development partners such as SPBEA. The Ministry of Health has also shown interest in the system. She said that one issue is sustainability with regard to the technical capacity required to maintain the system and the cost of its operation. Countries presently receive assistance from SPC in these areas and she asked if SPC could address this issue.

135. The representative of Samoa thanked the Chairperson as well as the presenter and the ICT team for their work. She said that Samoa maintains an interest in the SPIN cable as a source of reliable broadband communication, which is a valuable resource. She requested that SPC work with France on project funding to reduce upfront costs to members.

136. The representative of PNG said that PNG was involved in the PacRICS pilot and thanked the Director-General and the PacRICS and OLPC Coordinator. She said the system was making a big difference in rural areas and outer islands.

137. The representative of Niue said the Digital Strategy was very important and acknowledged the work of SPC's ICT team. He said Niue had been the site of a pilot project providing communications services to Forum Leaders when they met there in 2008. Niue was also the site of a pilot OLPC project that provided every student in the country with a laptop, doubling the number of Internet users in Niue. He said that following the provision of the laptops, there was a need to review the school curriculum and incorporate the use of computers. He said that Niue was also the first country to sign up for the SPIN project, and that he fully supported Samoa's comments on the value of bandwidth resources. He noted that PacRICS was invaluable in disaster response and said that he understood that the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA) had equipment set aside for such events. He encouraged other PITA members to seek more information on that equipment. He said PacRICS had been very helpful in Niue's recovery from cyclone Heta. The system could be deployed instantaneously and allowed families to keep in touch, helping to reduce their anxiety. He said that Niue supported these important programmes and that every country could benefit from them.

138. The representative of Kiribati noted that Kiribati also piloted the OLPC project. She said that the Government of Kiribati sees the value of the project. Kiribati is now making plans for the trial period and deciding which schools will participate.

139. The representative of RMI acknowledged the work of the PacRICS and OLPC Coordinator and the Director-General. Given SPC's mandate to coordinate ICT projects in the region, he asked what should be done to address the fact that some countries will be connected to SPIN, and some to the US military cable in the north, but that other countries will not be connected to either cable.

140. The representative of FSM said that the SPIN project demonstrated SPC at its best in that it moved from planning to implementation very quickly. He said FSM supported the recommendations, and he asked if the PacRICS pilot stage, during which bandwidth is funded, could be extended for four to five years rather than ending in December. He noted that SPC's Pohnpei office was able to witness the current meeting thanks to the satellite system.

141. The PacRICS and OLPC Coordinator thanked the representative of Kiribati for her comments on sustainability. He noted that when multiple users shared the cost of a site, the cost for each individual user was low, and said this approach was working well in FSM. He said a workshop was planned next month in Fiji to build technical capacity. Other capacity building activities were also planned. In response to the question from RMI, he noted an initiative called O3B (the Other 3 Billion), which makes communications available with a low upfront cost but higher ongoing costs. He said that this may be a good solution for countries that were not ready or able to participate in a cable project. He said that the goal was for the system to become a fully commercial one with SPC providing bandwidth for public good sites.

142. The Director-General noted that the PacRICS hub was based on the only satellite system covering the entire Pacific region and was secure for 12 years with no additional cost. The only cost is for the use of bandwidth. He said that the project is envisaged as a partnership in which SPC provides inexpensive, easy-to-install infrastructure that countries can buy in to. He noted that a single system can provide access over an area of 50 km<sup>2</sup>, which made it possible to share costs widely. He said that SPC's mandate for SPIN was to facilitate countries' access to the project. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank have shown interest in the possibility of providing funding for countries to participate in the project.

### **Decisions**

143. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note SPC's progress on initiatives under the Pacific Digital Strategy and plans for further development of these initiatives;
- ii. note the rationalisation of the ICT functions of PIFS, SOPAC and SPC into a single programme at SPC;
- iii. acknowledge the importance of the Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity System (PacRICS) in monitoring and communication during disasters; and
- iv. support the Secretariat's request for a further year of bandwidth funding from development partners to give SPC members time to develop sustainable funding arrangements.

## **AGENDA ITEM 4 – REGIONAL POLICY AGENDA: INCREASED FOCUS ON MEMBER PRIORITIES (PILLAR 1)**

### **AGENDA ITEM 4.1 – PROGRESS WITH JOINT COUNTRY STRATEGIES**

144. The Deputy Director-General outlined the Secretariat's progress with the development, implementation and monitoring of JCSs. He noted that 16 JCSs had been finished and that the Secretariat planned to complete one for French Polynesia in late 2009. Once the Secretariat concludes the JCSs for Fiji Islands, Guam, New Caledonia, PNG and Vanuatu as planned in 2010, strategies will have been developed with all PICTs, and work will begin on the second cycle. A key initiative of SPC's Corporate Plan, JCSs outline in one integrated document the scope of planned SPC assistance to an individual member over a defined period. Key principles in developing the strategies are an emphasis on stated national development priorities, joint preparation (country and SPC) and a participatory multi-sectoral approach. He explained that planning SPC assistance on a country by country basis rather than on the basis of individual programmes represents a significant change in the Secretariat's established approaches and SPC systems and staff work practices have had to evolve to support this change. He said that good progress has been made with developing and further improving JCS design, implementation and monitoring approaches. He noted that the investment made by PICTs and SPC in the process is justified by the benefits achieved, in particular the improved alignment between regional programmes and national development objectives.

145. The representative of Kiribati said that the JCS is a good basis for collaboration between SPC and Kiribati, and that it is a very constructive initiative. She said that Kiribati would continue to work with SPC and would welcome increased monitoring and reporting on progress as well as the completion of JCSs for other countries.

146. The representative of American Samoa expressed gratitude to the Director-General, Deputy Director-General and staff for their work on American Samoa's JCS. He said the visit was very constructive and there was wide participation on the part of the territory's agencies.

147. The representative of Pitcairn Islands said that the JCS is significant as it dovetails well with the islands' priorities, especially in supporting continuing assistance in areas such as invasive species, exporting and quarantine.

148. The representative of PNG said that PNG wished to acknowledge SPC in advance for the completion of its JCS, which is planned for 2010. She noted that it is difficult to coordinate programmes at different levels and in various sectors, and that the JCS would help. She also noted that JCSs could provide a good basis for countries to evaluate where they stand in relation to the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid

Effectiveness.

149. The representative of Solomon Islands noted that the Solomon Islands JCS was easily approved by cabinet because it reflected Solomon Islands' development goals. He thanked SPC for undertaking the mid-term review, and said Solomon Islands would respond soon.

150. The representative of Niue thanked the Deputy Director-General and explained that the cabinet had only recently approved Niue's JCS, even though it was completed in 2008, because it took time to integrate it with the national strategic plan. He said that Niue would like to move toward the model presented by the Tonga JCS, which incorporates a matrix showing SPC activities and the objectives of the national development plan, and suggested that this could be a model for all countries. The matrix can provide accountability in both directions between SPC and the government concerned. He said that in Niue, the premier is able to question departments about progress on specific activities. He closed with the observation that rather than looking at what SPC does for countries, the emphasis should be on what SPC and countries do together.

151. The representative of New Zealand thanked SPC for its work on JCSs and remarked that they are useful for keeping track of various efforts. She noted that the Tonga JCS included the activities of other CROP agencies and said New Zealand would be interested to see reviews.

152. The representative of Nauru commended SPC for initiating the JCS approach and said that it had been helpful for Nauru in identifying resources and gaps. He said Nauru hoped other regional organisations would do the same and would welcome a new format incorporating a timeline and indicative budgets.

153. The Deputy Director-General thanked members for their comments and acknowledged Niue's comment that JCSs emphasised the joint nature of the work being undertaken. He added that formal invitations had been sent to other CROP agencies regarding integration of their activities in JCSs.

## **Decisions**

154. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note progress made in developing joint country strategies in 2009; and
- ii. endorse the Secretariat's intention to complete strategies for Fiji Islands, Guam, New Caledonia, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu in 2010.

## **AGENDA ITEM 4.2 – DECENTRALISATION: REGIONAL AND NATIONAL OFFICES OF SPC**

155. In introducing the paper, the Director-General said the 2005 Conference had directed the Secretariat to decentralise and 'move services closer to the people'. He said SPC had continued to strengthen the Northern Pacific Regional Office and had opened a country office in Solomon Islands. A host agreement with Vanuatu for a country office was almost ready to be signed, and agreements with PNG and Fiji will be finalised by the end of the year. He said SPC was being cautious as decentralisation came with a cost and host countries had to share responsibility for the costs of providing offices, etc. The overall vision, he said, was for a headquarters and four regional offices supported by a network of country offices. Regional offices (northern, central, western and eastern) were located where SPC had large programmes in excess of USD 1 million. He said SPC was not 'going it alone' with the new offices and was looking at co-hosting arrangements with PIFS.

156. The Manager of SPC's Northern Pacific Office said both the Federal Government of FSM and the Government of Pohnpei State have been extremely supportive of SPC's presence in Pohnpei. The State Legislature has provided additional office space, through the FSM government, at the Pohnpei Congress building to cater for SPC's office needs. The office now has a staff of 14, with officers from LRD, PHD and SRD. There are plans to base an MRD officer there in January 2010. He noted that the establishment of the Northern Pacific Office has made a real difference to both perceptions of SPC's role and to its ability to provide services and respond promptly to enquiries from northern members. It has also facilitated the work of all SPC's technical divisions in the subregion.

157. The officer-in-charge of the Solomon Islands Office said the office provides an in-country focal point for all SPC programme staff with work commitments in Solomon Islands and is involved in monitoring and coordinating reporting to the government and SPC on the implementation of the JCS. She noted that the report of the research on gender-based violence in the Solomon Islands had just been published and SPC would be providing support for follow-up action.

158. The Chairperson thanked the presenters and invited comments.

159. The representative of Cook Islands asked the manager of the Northern Pacific Regional Office why member countries Guam and CNMI were not represented at CRGA.

160. The representative of New Caledonia asked the Director-General whether any Noumea-based activities would be decentralised to Tonga and what would be the likely cost of such a move.

161. The representative of French Polynesia said French Polynesia supported the decentralisation policy and did not question its rationale. However, it would appreciate having information about the costs of decentralisation presented at CRGA 40, including an analysis of the costs and benefits of the Northern Pacific Office. He noted that more regional offices were being established and asked what was the reasoning behind the PNG office since there were already other offices in the Melanesian subregion. With the reduction in the SPC budget for 2010, French Polynesia could only recommend the greatest caution in undertaking any further decentralisation.

162. The representative of PNG reaffirmed its support for a new office in PNG and assured the meeting there will be benefits in the long run. The office will be a 'big plus' for PNG, she said.

163. The representative of FSM reiterated that FSM will meet its obligations in providing a secure permanent office for SPC, adding that an announcement would be made at Conference. He said the office had made excellent progress and FSM would stand by its manager and team. He requested that the manager of the Northern Pacific Office be made a Deputy Director-General and also asked SPC to consider basing appropriate programmes in the office.

164. The representative of Kiribati said her country was not pushing for a country office, but saw a lot of value in having joint desk officers with other CROP agencies. This would be cost effective and beneficial, she said.

165. The representative of RMI registered RMI's support for the 'very important' development of the Northern Pacific Office. He said SPC's presence in the Northern Pacific facilitated coordination and the provision of services in a subregion that had been somewhat neglected in the past.

166. The representative of Solomon Islands, referring to the establishment of the Solomon Islands office, said Solomon Islands would like to see SPC work closely with CROP agencies and possibly with Taiwan/ROC.

167. The representative of Tonga said Tonga supported decentralisation. He said the region was highly diverse and if members wanted SPC to be flexible and responsive, decentralisation was necessary. This was also in keeping with the theme of the Sixth Conference and with the needs of a changing world. He said Tonga had extended an invitation for LRD to be located in Tonga, citing as a precedent the location of the University of the South Pacific's (USP) Law School in Vanuatu.

168. Responding to the question from Cook Islands about the absence of CNMI and Guam, the manager of the Northern Pacific Office said these members were very active in participating in SPC meetings and SPC was undertaking several programmes in both, particularly in the areas of youth, gender and health.

169. The Director-General added that CNMI was spreading the burden of the assessed contributions from the Governor's office to other departments and that Guam currently had important issues to deal with in relation to the military build-up. In answer to New Caledonia's question on the possible movement of programmes from Noumea to Tonga and the cost, the Director-General said a request had come from Tonga and would be discussed. He pointed out that the directive to decentralise was made in 2005 and that SPC had

moved slowly, taking care to ensure that costs for members did not increase as a result. SPC would present an analysis of the costs of all offices to CRGA 40 to provide a full picture. He said the process of decentralisation meant that SPC would have a presence in the ‘four corners’ of the Pacific: New Caledonia in the south, FSM in the north, PNG in the west, a proposed office in the east (the location is yet to be determined), and Fiji in the centre. Staff in country offices worked on country-specific programmes while staff in regional offices had a wider brief. In the case of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, for example, SPC was involved in health programmes with major budgets. In relation to co-locating with the USP Law School in Vanuatu, the Director-General said the university did not see this as a long-term arrangement and that Vanuatu would probably provide an office for SPC. He noted that host country agreements are a membership issue, not just an issue between the host country and SPC. A decision of the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Pacific Community did, however, give the Director-General the right to negotiate individual agreements with countries.

### **Decisions**

170. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note progress on continued implementation of the organisation’s decentralisation policy during 2009 and plans to assess the feasibility of further decentralisation in 2010;
- ii. thank the government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Pohnpei State and the Solomon Islands Government for their strong support for the regional office in Pohnpei and country office in Honiara respectively;
- iii. in relation to SPC’s longer-term office needs, welcome Fiji’s update on the development of the ‘Pacific Village’, FSM’s similar initiative regarding the ‘Micronesian Village’, and the offer by Solomon Islands to provide a separate office building for SPC;
- iv. note the progress reports on the SPC Regional Office for the North Pacific and Solomon Islands country office respectively; and
- v. note that a full analysis of the costs of running regional and country offices and providing services from those offices will be presented to CRGA 40 in 2010.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5 – REGIONAL POLICY AGENDA: STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS (PILLAR 2)**

### **AGENDA ITEM 5.1 – SPC AND THE PACIFIC PLAN**

171. The Director-General introduced the recent SPC publication, *SPC and the Pacific Plan*. He said that many aspects of SPC’s core business relate closely to the priorities of the Pacific Plan, as articulated in the Niue Forum communiqué. The introductory chapters describe SPC’s perspective of the plan and the links between its core activities and the plan’s priorities. Following chapters show how the work of individual SPC programmes contributes to achieving the plan’s goals, while the chapters on climate change and food security show SPC’s approach to addressing cross-cutting issues involving multiple sectors. The publication also outlines results achieved and lessons learned in the three and a half years since implementation of the plan began. The Secretariat plans to produce an annual update of the publication.

172. The Chairperson thanked the Director-General for his presentation of the book and asked representatives to note the recommendations of the paper.

### **Decisions**

173. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note the publication of *SPC and the Pacific Plan*, which shows SPC’s contribution to implementing the Plan;
- ii. note the substantial benefits that members gain as a result of the synergies between SPC’s core business and the priorities of the Pacific Plan; and
- iii. further note the Secretariat’s intention to produce this publication annually.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5.2 – RATIFICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTIONS AND TREATIES IN PICTS**

174. In response to a request by CRGA 38, an advisor from SPC's Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) presented a report showing the status of ratification of human rights treaties and conventions in PICTs and the benefits to members of these treaties and conventions. He said the Pacific region has the lowest rates of ratification worldwide of the nine core international human rights treaties, though the Pacific Plan includes a strong commitment to human rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and CEDAW are the most widely ratified conventions in the region. Both the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are useful in terms of development goals but are not widely ratified in the region. The advisor presented a table showing the current status of PICT ratification of various conventions and requested members to inform the Secretariat of any updates or errors. He noted that for some PICTs, ratification is linked to arrangements with other countries, e.g. the links between Cook Islands and New Zealand. He said PICTs have shown active commitment to signing and ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. There has also been improvement in reporting on CEDAW and CRC. Lack of resources impeded progress on reporting and compliance and there was potential for the establishment of a regional approach, which would be cost-effective for members. He noted that although reporting can be a burden, PICTs gain benefits from ratifying these treaties and conventions, which constitute the only form of international accountability, provide useful frameworks for setting national goals and monitoring progress, and establish a legal context for aspects of development. CEDAW provides a good example in that its benefits for development can be measured, given the high social and economic costs of gender inequity and gender-based violence. He said the human rights approach also provides a useful way of addressing climate change in terms of access to essential commodities and services. The Universal Periodic Review requires all members of the UN Human Rights Council, regardless of their ratification status, to report to the council regarding human rights in their respective countries. SPC can assist with this reporting, as could a regional human rights mechanism.

### **Decisions**

175. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. take note of the status of ratification of international human rights treaties, conventions and covenants in PICTs;
- ii. endorse the Secretariat's efforts to continue to assist PICTs with ratification of and reporting on international human rights treaties and conventions as an effective means to gauge development progress in the region; and
- iii. support the proposed examination of the benefits that a regional human rights mechanism could provide in supporting ratification and reporting efforts within the Pacific, and in assisting PICTs to meet their own human rights obligations.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5.3 – TOWARD A FRAMEWORK OF PRIORITIES IN HEALTH – OUTCOMES OF MAPPING OF PRIORITIES IN HEALTH**

176. The Director of PHD and SRD described case studies on the public health priorities of three PICTs, which were commissioned by SPC in response to a request from the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference. The studies were conducted in Nauru, Palau and Solomon Islands and examined not only the health sector and health services but also the underlying social determinants of health, the role of other sectors in determining health outcomes, and the alignment of development assistance in the health sector with stated national priorities. He said the health sector is receiving higher funding through new modalities, e.g. the Global Fund, which target specific diseases. However, there has been slow progress in some areas relating to the MDGs, such as maternal and child health. He said that the biggest proportion of national health budgets goes to recurrent costs, which are not met by aid. The studies also looked at the role of non-state actors such as churches, and included reviews of national sustainable development strategies and questions on daily living conditions in order to gauge the effectiveness of aid and consistency with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles. The studies found that the three countries have national health strategies or plans. However, there were important gaps in financial and human resources, and while significant assistance is available it is focused on specific diseases, leading to a loss of efficiency. Many significant but previously undocumented health issues were identified in each country that are not being adequately

addressed, and many have clear links to social determinants. They include rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease (related to overcrowding, poor housing and poor environmental hygiene); trachoma (poor water supply and environmental hygiene); nutritional deficiencies; and mental health issues. The studies indicated that the focus on providing disease-specific assistance had not resulted in improvements in overall health outcomes.

177. The Director-General said that the goal of the mapping exercise was to document the top priorities for health investment in the Pacific region with a view to achieving greater impact at the country level. He said the information produced by the studies will allow PICTs to make better informed decisions on public health, particularly regarding health determinants that are outside the health sector.

178. The representative of Tonga noted that reviewing national and regional health budgets, rethinking the determinants of health and taking a 'whole of government' approach may result in less money going into the health sector and more money going into other sectors that impact on health.

179. The representative of PNG said that national health budgets do not reflect project and programme funding. However, according to the principles of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda, countries have responsibilities for improving financial management when they sign international agreements or when they seek grants from the European Development Fund. She said countries should take note of this.

180. The representative of New Zealand commended SPC on the mapping exercise and said New Zealand could see the value in identifying gaps and would welcome the finalisation of the framework. She asked how the framework priorities could feed into a guiding strategy at the regional level. She also asked for more information regarding the proposed timing for finalising and circulating the framework.

181. The representative of Niue welcomed the initiative to identify priorities in sectors outside of health and noted that health and education budgets were unlikely to ever shrink. He said that Niue had instituted a new tax on alcohol and tobacco in an effort to reduce alcohol abuse and smoking, and that perhaps this would help reduce demands on health services.

182. The representative of Australia echoed the comments from Tonga and Niue and noted that violence against women and gender equity are also determinants of health. He suggested that SPC include them in the framework and in the related regional guiding strategy mentioned by New Zealand. He thanked SPC for its work in helping to provide clarity in the area of health priorities.

183. The representative of Samoa noted that the fourth recommendation of the paper would be a massive undertaking that would require considerable resources. She said Samoa encouraged SPC to work with WHO and other sources outside of CRGA on national health financing.

184. The Director of PHD and SRD said in answer to the question from New Zealand that originally the studies were to cover five PICTs, but this had been reduced to four as there was not enough funding, and then to three as one PICT could not participate. He said that the national benefits were clear and could flow into a framework at the regional level, but to develop a representative framework, studies of additional countries would be required, particularly countries in the northern Pacific and Polynesia. He said that five to six country studies would be needed to enable information to be extrapolated to the regional level. The studies would be finalised once they were approved by the countries. The study for Nauru had just been finalised, the Palau study would be finalised soon, but the Solomon Islands study would require more time. In 2010, SPC hopes to finish most of the other country studies and integrate the results into a regional framework near the end of the year. He said that SPC might not do all of the studies itself but had developed a methodology that could be applied by partner agencies. In response to the question from Samoa, he said that it was not SPC's intention or mandate to revise the architecture of all aid. The request from the 2005 Conference and Pacific health ministers was to put together information on budgets in health and other sectors so that countries and donors could reflect on the results and undertake changes that would give PICTs more flexibility in addressing their own priorities. He noted that WHO had been involved in the mapping and that SPC would welcome interest by other agencies in carrying out some of the studies as they were quite costly to undertake.

185. The Chairperson said that recommendation iv would be referred to the Drafting Committee to address Samoa's concerns.

186. The Director-General said that as a large and growing organisation, SPC would first look at its own processes to ensure they are aligned with the principles of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda, and then move to ensuring the principles are applied to its work with countries. The JCS approach was useful in this regard.

### **Decisions**

187. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. acknowledge that adopting a 'whole of government and communities' approach to addressing social determinants of health has the potential to achieve better health outcomes, and demand the urgent development of coordinated multi-sectoral policy and programmatic responses at both regional and national levels;
- ii. note with concern the imbalance in funding to address stated national health priorities, including undocumented health issues;
- iii. direct the Secretariat to:
  - a. finalise the paper synthesising the three country pilot studies and circulate it to development partners, technical agencies and PICTs for information and consideration; and
  - b. provide direct assistance to other PICTs, on request, to develop their own country case studies using the methodology developed, tested and refined during the pilot studies;
- iv. further direct the Secretariat in collaboration with others to:
  - a. develop a strategy across all SPC divisions to fully implement the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) and the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles;
  - b. coordinate a more strategic, multi-sectoral approach to improving public health in the Pacific that involves other important national, regional and international stakeholders including WHO (World Health Organization), SPREP, FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), ILO (International Labour Organization), PIFS, and key development partners such as AusAID, NZAID, and the World Bank as well as internally within SPC; and
  - c. work with development partners and PICTs to develop a revised architecture for health financing in the Pacific that provides improved flexibility and predictability to address both country- and region-specific priorities in health as a matter of urgency, with a draft of the proposed architecture to be presented to CRGA 40.

### **AGENDA ITEM 5.4 – TRACKING INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL AGREEMENTS/COMMITMENTS: SPC ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS**

188. The Director-General said the paper described SPC's support for efforts by members to monitor and report progress on international agreements they had signed and ratified. In 2009, SPC estimated that members had signed up to 53 agreements in total, with 26 in the human and social development sector. These included the MDGs and he said that if members were falling behind in meeting MDG targets, the same might be true of their obligations under other agreements. The Director-General said the main issue was that reporting progress on agreements took considerable effort and resources, especially for smaller PICTs. He said that governments and administrations needed to consider bringing together under one umbrella all the monitoring and reporting tasks associated with the international and regional agreements they have signed. Given the importance of this task, the 'umbrella monitoring and reporting facility' should be located within the Office of the Head of Government with clear terms of reference and with sufficient resources to carry out the task effectively, including appropriate levels of delegated authority. To achieve full coverage across all sectors in which governments have signed international/regional agreements, the centralised facility would need to cover at least the following areas: (i) human and social development; (ii) natural resources and the environment; (iii) economic growth and the private sector; and (iv) the finance sector. The persons responsible for compiling national-level monitoring and reporting data against development progress in each of these areas would be the primary focal point for the relevant sector or ministry. He said that at the regional level, it was important that all regional and international agencies

pooled their resources and agreed on a common plan based on the priorities determined by each member in relation to their reporting obligations. SPC had been identified in the Pacific Plan to lead this work and had begun consulting with PIFS, members and other partners with a view to achieving the best mechanism to support national systems under a ‘many agencies one team’ approach. The support provided could include assistance in data collation, data analysis, identifying policy options, report writing and, in parallel, capacity building of national staff.

189. The representative of French Polynesia suggested that reporting against agreements should be ‘upstreamed’ and simplified. He said Australia had presented an interesting paper on this at the last meeting of SPREP. It recommended upstreaming and simplifying the reporting structure as much as possible and described remarkable work in this respect on international environmental agreements.

190. The representative of France fully agreed with the suggestion from French Polynesia and supported the approach being taken by SPC on the issue. He said the Australian model presented at the SPREP meeting was a very useful one.

191. The representative of New Zealand supported the initiative and asked for SPC’s thoughts on such a mechanism and the costs of placing it within SPC.

192. The representative of Cook Islands said her government was grappling with the task of reporting on agreements. At the moment it was being done sectorally and was working, but there had been difficulties and delays in getting commitment from key areas. She supported French Polynesia’s suggestion of upstreaming.

193. The Director-General acknowledged the value of French Polynesia’s suggestion and said SPC was interested in adapting the SPREP model – it was an oversight that this was not mentioned in the paper. He said the reality was that the lone voice of small countries was not easily heard in international organisations such as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). At the national level, all PICTs had mechanisms for reporting on agreements, but they needed support and SPC considered it should offer this support. He noted that in Cook Islands there might be two people able to undertake the task of reporting whereas countries such as Australia and USA had thousands of staff to report against exactly the same agreements. As delegates had said, there was thus a need for simplification, upstreaming and support, perhaps through the development of a virtual arrangement by regional organisations.

194. The Chairperson said the SPREP reporting model would be included in the recommendation and asked France and French Polynesia to work with the drafting committee on the wording.

195. The representative of New Zealand suggested that the proposed mechanism should be spelt out in the recommendation.

## **Decisions**

196. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note that meeting the monitoring and reporting requirements of international and regional agreements imposes a considerable burden on some SPC members;
- ii. encourage the development of mechanisms, such as the establishment of a dedicated office/umbrella monitoring and reporting facility at national level and a ‘many agencies, one team’ approach at regional level, to assist members in meeting these obligations and building their relevant capacity; and
- iii. endorse initiatives, similar to those undertaken by SPREP, to simplify and standardise reporting requirements.

## **AGENDA ITEM 5.5 – TRACKING DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS IN PICTS**

197. The Manager of SPC's Statistics and Demography Programme updated CRGA on the Secretariat's progress in developing a system to assist PICTs in regular monitoring and reporting of development progress against national and international development targets, including the MDGs. He said there had been slow, uneven progress on the MDGs and some countries might not reach their targets. A major issue was the lack of useful data. For example in child health, data was available for only eight PICTs. In three of these, the data were three years old, and in the remaining five it was only available because expensive surveys had been done. There was a need to add value to the MDG framework with alternative development indicators that were more relevant to the Pacific. These included rural/urban data and statistics on remittances, which were vital for some PICTs. Per capita growth indicators were often less relevant, e.g. in PNG there had been 7 per cent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) but 80 per cent of the population lived a subsistence lifestyle outside the GDP zone. Political commitment was needed to improve the implementation of mechanisms for monitoring progress. To assist improved monitoring, he said SPC was working on two strategic initiatives: (1) the development of a core set of development indicators across key sectors, known as a Minimum National Development Indicator Dataset; and (2) development and piloting of a monitoring system to allow tracking of development progress in real-time, based on collecting and compiling high-quality statistics. This involved the development of national administrative databases in key sectors, and development and piloting of a multiple development indicator survey (to be carried out in 2010, with assistance from the World Bank). He acknowledged the growing collaboration between SPC and the Pacific Financial Assistance Centre (PFTAC) and the ongoing support for the work of the programme provided by AusAID, ADB, NZAID, UNFPA, and recently the World Bank and Paris21.

198. The representative of Vanuatu registered Vanuatu's appreciation of the continued assistance of development partners and SPC in the statistics area. He particularly acknowledged the increased support from Australia and told the meeting that Vanuatu would continue to invest in building its national capacity in statistics.

199. The representative of Australia strongly agreed on the importance of statistics in tracking development in the Pacific. He said Australia was exploring how it might support further strengthening in this area.

200. The representative of Nauru thanked SPC for singling out Nauru as a 'star performer' in the collection of statistics and expressed appreciation for the support received.

201. The representative of Niue said that statistics were regarded as essential for government decision-making. There were only two people in Niue responsible for statistics and the representative said he would consult with them after the CRGA meeting.

202. The Director-General thanked delegates for their comments and said that CRGA needed to make a strong recommendation to Conference on the importance of statistical tracking of progress.

### **Decisions**

203. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note the lack of consistent progress across all PICTs towards achieving the MDGs, and the work by the Statistics and Demography Programme to assist in developing and maintaining a regional monitoring system to allow tracking of development progress in the region;
- ii. further note with concern that under-resourced national statistical systems in PICTs are a major factor in the lack of relevant datasets for assessing development progress;
- iii. re-affirm the need for relevant, timely and complete datasets to provide leaders and policy makers with a basis for evidence-based policy decisions in relation to both MDG commitments and national sustainable development strategies;
- iv. re-affirm the critical role SPC, the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC) and other technical agencies play in helping PICTs strengthen their national statistical systems to increase access to high-quality, timely development statistics across a broad range of sectors, and in this context note countries' and other stakeholders' support for a strengthened SPC and PFTAC role in statistical development across the region based on the recommendations of the

- PIFS-SPC benchmarking study, and invite member countries to play a more active role in this partnership; and
- v. provide guidance to the Secretariat on further development of a core set of minimum national development indicators as considered necessary.

**AGENDA ITEM 6 – REGIONAL POLICY AGENDA: STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF SPC  
(PILLAR 3)**

**AGENDA ITEM 6.1 – ORGANISATIONAL REFORM AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
REGIONAL INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK (RIF)**

204. The Director-General presented a report on progress on implementing the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF). He said decisions on the new institutional arrangements were made at a first-ever joint meeting of the governing bodies of the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA), the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and SPC. These decisions were endorsed by subsequent separate meetings of the three bodies and by Forum Leaders at their August 2009 meeting. Discussions were also held between SPC and PIFs on rationalising some of the functions of PIFS. As a result of these decisions, from January 2010 the majority of SOPAC's core work programme will become the SOPAC Science and Technology Division of SPC, and SPBEA will be merged with SPC, initially as a stand-alone programme in 2010. SPC will assume the role of lead coordinating agency for the regional energy sector. SOPAC's current energy programme will become part of a new Economic Development Division of SPC together with the transport, infrastructure and ICT functions of PIFS.

205. The Director-General said the process was now moving from the analytical phase to the implementation phase. He acknowledged the intensive work of the CEOs of the organisations involved in the process, saying it had been both time consuming and draining. However, progress to date on the three implementation plans was satisfactory. The next two years were critical for SPC because they would determine the success of the merged organisation. As a result of the RIF decisions, SPC would go from four to six divisions and staff numbers would increase from around 390 to over 520. SPC would therefore be revising its organisational structure and systems to ensure they were the most appropriate ones for delivering service to members.

206. In relation to members' assessed contributions to SPC, SOPAC and SPBEA, The Director-General said it was planned to retain the existing separate contributions to all three organisations for 2010 and to examine the issue for 2011.

207. In regards to the energy sector functions placed under the Economic Development Division, SPC would have a policy and co-ordination role, while SREP would lead environmental aspects of energy. The other functions of the division were transport, infrastructure and communication/ICT. The Director-General noted that SPC would be using core funds to support the manager of the energy programme but more resources would be needed to support the objective of achieving better services. Two staff would come with the SOPAC energy programme that was moving to SPC. A transport adviser position was also needed to coordinate a regional strategy. Overall, five new positions were required in the division to fulfil the mandate given to SPC under the RIF reforms.

208. The proposed implementation plan for the transfer of SOPAC functions to SPC was presented to the joint meeting in July. It included a milestone table developed by consultants. Although the SOPAC Science and Technology Division of SPC would come into being on 1 January 2010, SOPAC would retain its corporate systems until the full integration of its functions with SPC, which was forecast for October 2010. There were key legal decisions (for example, on staff contracts) that the SOPAC Council needed to make as the sovereign council of SOPAC. The SOPAC Council meeting in late October 2009 will be given information on the plans to date, but the Council has given the SPC Director-General the right to appoint the Director of the SOPAC division. The SOPAC Council has one year to resolve the legal status of SOPAC.

209. The Director-General ended by stressing that additional resources will be required to ensure that the full benefits of the reforms are realised by Pacific Island communities, particularly in the energy, transport and communication sectors.

210. The Chairperson invited the CEO of SOPAC to comment on the proposed arrangements.
211. The CEO of SOPAC said the SOPAC Council expected an update on the implementation plans for the integration of SOPAC functions into SPC. These plans would be refined as events unfolded. She noted that the principle objectives of RIF were cost effectiveness and improved services. The joint meeting had also stressed there should be no diminution of SOPAC's services. She said SPC and SOPAC were working together on plans for integrating finance, administration and ICT functions, but additional resources were needed to combine these functions. Staff contracts were also an issue. There were numerous synergies to be realised between SPC and SOPAC programmes and a divisional strategic plan would be developed for the new SOPAC division. She noted that project funding accounts for 89% of SOPAC's current budget of FJD 30 million and there were legal matters to discuss with development partners. The question of whether SOPAC should be dissolved or suspended will be addressed by the SOPAC Council at its upcoming meeting. Whichever decision was made, the assets and liabilities of SOPAC could be distributed or liquidated. The CEO concluded by saying that with diligence and cooperation, full integration could be achieved by October 2010.
212. The Chairperson thanked the presenters and called for comments.
213. The representative of Kiribati thanked the presenters for their explanation of the implementation plans and said it was important when discussing the logistics of the process not to lose sight of the RIF's objectives. Kiribati had benefitted from SOPAC services and she hoped these could be enhanced and not compromised. She also hoped the legal implications of the transfer would be resolved satisfactorily with no adverse impacts on staff, and there would be no shift in the focus of SPC.
214. The representative of PNG said that the organisations involved had provided a platform that gave members confidence. PNG would also like to hear from other organisations (SPREP, etc.) to ensure that no services were lost and the processes being followed were inclusive.
215. The representative of Niue said the reform process was a difficult task and commended the work done to date. He stressed that the objectives of the RIF must be kept in mind. He expressed gratitude to SOPAC for its work and the hope that its services would be further enhanced.
216. The representative of France asked for clarification of the recommendations, noting the statement that additional resources will be needed. He asked if the contribution of these resources was intended to be on a voluntary basis.
217. The representative of the US acknowledged the work that had gone into streamlining regional organisations. He noted that the US was not a member of SOPAC or SPBEA but had cooperated with these organisations. He said the US would welcome more specific information on the process planned for assessment of members' contributions.
218. The Chairperson invited the presenters to respond to the questions raised.
219. The CEO of SOPAC again stressed that meeting the RIF objectives was one of her organisation's primary goals. She acknowledged PNG's concern about inclusiveness, particularly in relation to the energy sector, and hoped that there would be wide consultation with both internal and external stakeholders. She said American Samoa, French Polynesia and New Caledonia were associate members of SOPAC and could access services on a fee-paying basis. She noted that one of SOPAC's EU-funded projects will also include Pitcairn Islands and Wallis and Futuna and said that, in future, all SPC members will be able to access SOPAC services.
220. The Director-General reiterated that members' assessed contributions to SPC, SOPAC and SPBEA would be maintained at existing levels for 2010. SPC members that were not members of SOPAC and SPBEA could access their services on a user pays basis. In answer to the US, he said the Secretariat would provide an analysis of the formula for members' assessed contributions to next year's CRGA meeting. Responding to the question from France on the extra resources required, he said that this issue would be covered more fully in the next item on the agenda, which dealt with building a long-term sustainable

financing strategy for SPC.

221. The Chairperson invited SPC's Suva-based Deputy Director-General to update CRGA on plans for the merger of SPBEA with SPC.

222. The Deputy Director-General noted that the joint meeting in July 2009 had acknowledged the work of the SPBEA CEO, its Board and Chairperson. She paid tribute to the Chairperson who had passed away after attending the first meeting of the guiding coalition group that had been set up to oversee the merger and expressed appreciation for the continuation of work on the implementation plan by the acting Chairperson. She said the guiding coalition group had been approved by the special session of CRGA in July. Three project teams had been established to assist in the merger process – Human Resources, Finance and ICT. These areas needed to be aligned with SPC systems and, as had been commented on in relation to SOPAC, additional resources were needed for full integration of systems. She said SPBEA will continue using its current systems until funds are available. On 1 January 2010, SPBEA staff will move to SPC contract conditions. In relation to health and life insurance, she said negotiations would be conducted when current arrangements were due to expire. The Deputy Director-General concluded that satisfactory progress was being made and arrangements were on track to meet the 1 January 2010 timing of the merger.

223. The representative of New Zealand asked that the recommendations be amended to reflect the undertaking to provide an analysis of the costs involved in the rationalisation and the extra functions being taken on by SPC so development partners would be in a better position to know what resources were needed.

224. The representative of RMI noted that the July joint meeting had discussed the legal implications of the proposed RIF reforms and the decisions had been made and endorsed. He said it was now time to move forward. RMI supported the recommendations presented and the additional ones suggested by representatives.

225. In response, the Director-General said there was no need for delay on SPC's part and the organisations were moving as fast as they could, given the legal processes that must be completed, e.g. the SOPAC Council had to make a decision on whether to suspend or dissolve the organisation. He said the SPC, SOPAC and SPBEA budgets will be integrated from the beginning of next year, while full integration will occur in a phased process to be completed by the end of 2010.

## **Decisions**

226. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note that arrangements for the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF) reforms are on track for implementation from 1 January 2010;
- ii. endorse the proposal to continue members' assessed contributions for all three agencies at current levels for 2010, with a view to reviewing payment modalities in 2010;
- iii. further note that additional resources will be required by SPC to ensure that Pacific Island countries and territories receive the expected benefits of the reforms in the energy, transport and communication sectors from 2010 and request the Secretariat to provide a cost analysis to CRGA 40 that clearly identifies one-off and recurrent costs;
- iv. note the Secretariat's commitment to ensuring that the region benefits from enhanced synergies and efficiencies as a result of the movement of SOPAC's core services to SPC and the merger of SPBEA with SPC.

## **AGENDA ITEM 6.2 – LONGER-TERM SUSTAINABLE FINANCING STRATEGY FOR SPC**

227. The Director-General introduced the Secretariat's proposal to develop a long-term sustainable financing strategy. He explained that SPC would be looking at what it does and how its activities relate to members' national priorities, as well as how it is financed and the mix of sustainable and non-sustainable financing. He said the goal of regionally provided services is to supplement, complement and add value to national services, not to replace or duplicate them. Regional organisations are financed through a mix of core, programme and project funding. Project funding is time bound and has a defined end date, while programme funding is similar to core funding. The Director-General said that 38 per cent of SPC's funding

comes from core or programme funds, and that it was important to define what should be funded by that portion. While the growth in project funding is positive because it enables implementation of projects that achieve development objectives and outcomes, the nature of this funding also means that total resources expand or contract from year to year, which is a significant disadvantage in implementing core business that needs to be sustained over longer time frames. He said that in many cases regional services were perceived as extensions of national services. While this was good, the challenge for regional organisations is that to continue to support countries they had to grow, as countries tended to add priorities. He said that another driver of SPC's growth has been the decisions of CRGA and Conference, for example, the decision of the 2005 Conference that SPC should decentralise. A third driver of growth is the regional agenda, including the outcome of the RIF process and the implementation of the Pacific Plan, which identifies many priorities but not the resources to address them. SPC's response was to mainstream the Pacific Plan into its work where feasible. He noted that the original priority of the regional reform process had not been to cut costs but to find the most effective arrangements for delivering services. He said that a critical aspect of developing a long-term financing strategy was to define SPC's core services and the 'inner core' of essential services that must be provided and that should therefore be funded under core funds. He said that the level of ownership of the organisation is an issue, with less than 2 per cent of SPC's funding coming from island members. However, he noted that the actual contribution of members is greater, as budget figures do not capture costs such as those for hosting meetings and that SPC would need to do further analysis to establish the real level of such contributions. There was potential to expand member ownership, including through non-monetary contributions, cost-sharing, and voluntary contributions such as those made regularly by New Caledonia. The Director-General said that as part of a long-term financing strategy, SPC would also attempt to expand the resources available for core functions by looking at new ways of increasing its income, further managing expenditure, or considering changes in how the organisation holds or invests its funds.

228. The representative of Pitcairn Islands thanked the Director-General for his presentation and asked what percentage of its funds the organisation spends on administration and overheads, noting that SPC is highly thought of for its ability to stretch its resources.

229. The representative of PNG noted that as countries request additional programmes the overall costs of running regional organisations rise, and this can strain budgets. She suggested that SPC could develop a business arm to bring in income from project fees. She also noted that SPC has expertise in many areas and could provide consulting services for a fee.

230. The representative of USA suggested that SPC consult with interested donor countries in building the long-term financing plan.

231. The representative of Kiribati commended the Director-General for this effort to ensure sustainability of funding. She noted that it was important to ensure continuity of services even when there was a risk of funding gaps and asked if SPC had reserve funds.

232. The representative of FSM said that the suggestion from USA on consulting with member countries was a good one.

233. The representative of France thanked the Director-General for his clear presentation. He noted that SPC's efforts to define its core services needed a consensus from members on what these services were to reveal any gaps between expectations and available resources. He also noted that with EU funding, for example, it was possible to plan over several years so that even when there were gaps, such as the one between EDF 9 and EDF 10, they were expected and planned for.

234. The representative of New Zealand thanked the Director-General for his forward-looking approach and the effort to enhance members' ownership and define SPC's core business. She asked if CRGA was the best forum in which to seek the guidance that SPC needed, noting that a more considered approach might be appropriate.

235. The representative of Australia noted that the key themes of the strategy included cost-effectiveness, efficiency, collaboration and work with partners, and that Australia supported these in keeping with the Cairns Compact, under which countries come together to direct resources toward national priorities. He said Australia considers that SPC has a key role in this process and supports the organisation's continuing efforts to identify its core work and minimum level of service. He encouraged member countries to participate in these efforts. He also said Australia believes SPC should be actively involved in areas in which it has a comparative advantage, such as statistics.

236. In response to the question from Pitcairn, the Director-General said that 7.6 per cent of the 2010 budget would go on administrative costs. In response to the comments from PNG, he noted that USP allows its staff to do consulting work, and that a business arm could be considered. He also noted that much of SPC's work allows countries to benefit from collecting fees, such as work relating to the tuna treaty, and that although FFA gets a portion of these fees, SPC does not. In response to the question from Kiribati, he said that at present SPC had negative reserves because of the arrears in several members' contributions. He noted that there had been much discussion of reserves recently in the context of the global economic crisis and that SPC will review the levels of its reserves to see if they are still appropriate, given that in some cases they had remained the same for many years. In response to the comment from France, he said that SPC's divisions had been assessing the question of service provision and resources, and that in MRD, for example, a gap of 25 per cent had been identified between its core business and the available resources. He said that once these gaps had been fully identified, SPC could come back to CRGA for guidance on whether the gaps could be filled or if services would have to be cut. In response to the question from New Zealand, he noted that SPC was seeking feedback, and that one suggested way forward was to create a subcommittee of CRGA to examine the issue and report to CRGA 40. He said that the issue of member contributions could be included in the terms of reference for the subcommittee. He suggested that the present Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of CRGA could act in the same capacity for the subcommittee.

237. The representative of Pitcairn Islands noted that the fact that 2 per cent of SPC's funding comes from its island members meant a debt of gratitude was owed to donors. He said they would be glad to see that SPC has such low overheads, adding that this was an exemplary figure for a regional organisation.

238. On the subject of ownership by members, the representative of French Polynesia noted that they are the first beneficiaries of SPC's services and that SPC should ask members what they can put on the table to contribute. He said that French Polynesia believes that ownership is very important and that any propositions in this area would be favourably received and reviewed by the territory's government. He said members also needed to know exactly how the money was being spent. For example, French Polynesia supports decentralisation but would like more information on the costs of setting up new offices. He noted that SPC had said that there was no additional cost for the new offices or that the cost was offset by gains in productivity, but he said that it was vital to know the level of financing coming from the host countries. He also noted that SPC was discussing opening offices in countries that were in arrears with their dues, and that while it was good to direct efforts to countries experiencing financial difficulties, it was important to have information regarding the costs.

239. The Director-General responded that SPC had undertaken to do an analysis of the costs involved in opening new offices, and noted that the offices were opened both to help the host countries and to help SPC better manage its programmes at the country level.

240. The Deputy Director-General suggested specific wording for a recommendation regarding the establishment of a subcommittee and terms of reference.

241. The Chairperson asked if CRGA approved the recommendation.

242. The representative of PNG asked if the subcommittee would also include monitoring of RIF.

243. The Director-General responded that the terms of reference had not yet been developed, and that this could be included if members desired. He noted that the impacts of RIF would be included but that monitoring of RIF implementation might be outside the terms of reference.

244. The representative of USA said that this was a reasonable recommendation for CRGA to make and that the work of the subcommittee could be informed by the suggestion from France on identifying core business.

245. The representative of Niue agreed that the establishment of a subcommittee was a good way forward. He suggested that a year into RIF implementation, CRGA could look at the question of members' ownership and priorities.

246. The representative of French Polynesia asked whether the subcommittee would meet in Noumea or Suva or whether it would work exclusively through the Internet. He said this information might influence members in volunteering for the subcommittee.

247. The representative of FSM asked if terms of reference could be developed immediately.

248. The Director-General agreed that the Secretariat could take time overnight to develop the suggested terms of reference for the subcommittee including the identification of minimum core services as requested by France. He noted that this was a crucial topic and that the subcommittee would need a mix of countries and territories, given that SPC would prioritise services based on the input it received from members.

249. The Chairperson said that the recommendation regarding establishing a subcommittee would be sent to the Drafting Committee and that discussion on agenda item 6.2 would resume the next day when CRGA would have an opportunity to discuss the proposed terms of reference.

*(The Secretariat presented draft terms of reference for the subcommittee at the following day's session for members' consideration.)*

250. The representative of Pitcairn Islands said the proposed terms of reference made sense, but suggested that instead of two members from each cultural area (Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia), the sub-committee include only one from each.

251. The representative of USA said that the terms of reference addressed the concerns discussed the previous day. He asked that more than one donor representative be included, noting that USA hoped to be on the subcommittee.

252. The representative of RMI noted that it was important for the subcommittee to include someone who understood the work programmes of SOPAC and SPBEA.

253. The representative of New Caledonia thanked the Chairperson and Director-General for responding appropriately to the issue and said New Caledonia wished to apply to be the French speaking member of the subcommittee.

254. The representative of France said that given the extent of EU funding of the expanded SPC, if there were to be several donor representatives then EU should be one of them, but he noted that he had not consulted the EU representative.

255. The representative of New Zealand supported the comment from USA on having more than one donor representative. She also noted that New Zealand could not commit any funding at the present meeting and would prefer that the subcommittee meetings took place in Fiji.

256. The representative of Australia echoed the comments from USA and New Zealand. He said that he had had experience in trying to represent more than one donor, and that it would be too difficult in this case.

257. The representative of PNG noted that as the membership of the subcommittee was expanded, the cost increased as well. She said that PNG supported the suggestion from New Zealand that the meetings be held in Fiji.

258. The representative of French Polynesia thanked the Secretariat for developing the draft terms of reference and said that they met expectations perfectly. He said French Polynesia supported the suggestion from Pitcairn to include one representative from each cultural area instead of two. He noted that it was not clear if the representatives of SPBEA and SOPAC had to be members of these organisations. He said that French Polynesia was not a candidate for membership but suggested that the first meeting be held in Noumea. He noted that New Zealand's Consul General in Noumea could perhaps represent New Zealand at the meeting.

259. The representative of Fiji Islands noted that as funding had yet to be secured, it was prudent to consider the most cost-effective way to proceed.

260. The Chairperson said there was consensus on most of the terms of reference, and that the issues still to be finalised were the membership, location of meetings and the budget. She noted that donor representatives would be self-funding.

261. The Director-General said that the membership of the subcommittee could be streamlined as suggested by Pitcairn with one representative per subregion and one each to represent SPBEA, SOPAC and SPC. He agreed that while all members of SPBEA and SOPAC are also SPC members, it was important for representatives on the subcommittee to have a good understanding of the work programmes of the regional organisations. He suggested that there could be a core membership, with the possibility of the subcommittee co-opting other members. He also suggested that it could be worthwhile to differentiate between member donors and other donors, as metropolitan members provided more than 60 per cent of SPC's budget. With two metropolitan member representatives and one development partner representative the size of the subcommittee would be manageable. As for funding, he said that development partners could finance their own participation. The first meeting was likely to be at SPC headquarters in Noumea, with the location of the second meeting to be decided. He noted that it was a critical undertaking and that therefore it was important to do it as well as possible. He said that the budget presented would be sufficient if metropolitan members financed their own participation.

262. The representative of France said that before solving the issue of the membership, it was important for prospective members to know how many meetings there would be. If several meetings were planned, then metropolitan members could consider representing each other.

263. The Director-General noted that two meetings had been proposed in the budget.

264. The Chairperson noted that one CROP agency uses an electronic tool to make information available, and said that such a tool could help ensure that all members were kept up to date.

265. The Director-General suggested that perhaps the best approach would be to have all four metropolitan members on the subcommittee along with one development partner representative. He said that as the francophone member would be New Caledonia and the donor representative would probably be EU, the remaining issue was to establish which countries would represent the three cultural areas. He said that if the second meeting is in Fiji, Suva-based missions could participate. He noted that SPC could create a special area on its website for the subcommittee that members could access using a password.

266. The representative of Samoa nominated Cook Islands, as Vice-Chairperson of CRGA, to represent Polynesia on the subcommittee.

267. The representative of Cook Islands accepted the nomination, on the condition that it was acceptable to the other Polynesian countries and territories.

268. The representative of American Samoa said that American Samoa would be glad to have Cook Islands represent Polynesia.

269. The representative of Pitcairn Islands said Pitcairn supported Cook Islands as the representative of Polynesia. He noted that he had a personal background in banking and finance that could be of benefit and he would be happy to report to the subcommittee.

270. The representative of Fiji Islands said that the views of island states must not be devalued or minimised in any way by the weight of donor and development partner representation, as it was important not to lose sight of national development goals.

271. The Director-General noted that the first draft of the terms of reference called for only two out of nine members to be from metropolitan countries, but the changes requested by CRGA meant that now six out of 14 would be from metropolitan members. He said that to respond to the concerns expressed by Fiji it would be possible to increase the number of island members. He summarised the consensus thus far regarding the membership of the subcommittee, noting that 12 was a manageable number. He asked for nominations for representatives of Melanesia and Micronesia.

272. The representative of Fiji Islands requested more time to discuss the matter with other Melanesian countries.

273. The representative of RMI asked for clarification on whether representatives from Suva-based missions would be invited if there was a meeting in Suva.

274. The Chairperson said yes, this was noted in paragraph 9 of the terms of reference but could be made more explicit by the drafting committee. She said there was general consensus on the rest of the terms of reference.

275. The Deputy Director-General suggested specific language for the recommendation.

### **Decisions**

276. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. establish a CRGA subcommittee to guide the development of a long-term financing strategy for SPC, which will include the definition of SPC's core functions and the minimum level of services that must be provided;
- ii. endorse the terms of reference (appended to Attachment 1, Annex 1 of the Communiqué) for the CRGA subcommittee, including the membership of the subcommittee.

### **AGENDA ITEM 7 – STATEMENTS FROM OBSERVERS**

(These statements are included in Annex 4.)

### **AGENDA ITEM 8 – FINANCE, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 8.1 – 2009 CROP TRIENNIAL REMUNERATION REVIEW**

277. The Director of Corporate Services said six participating CROP (Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific) agencies (FFA, PIFS, SPC, SOPAC, SPREP and SPBEA) have adopted a harmonised approach to their remuneration principles and practices. These remuneration processes are assessed on a triennial basis by the governing bodies of the agencies. He said the 2009 CROP Triennial Remuneration Review was conducted by a consortium comprising Strategic Pay (New Zealand) and PricewaterhouseCoopers (Fiji). The review produced 12 recommendations including an expanded salary band structure; retention of the policy allowing incumbents to re-apply for their position after a six-year term, with selection based on merit; the use of a common template for job descriptions across agencies; changes to performance management systems to ensure individuals' results are linked to agencies' overall strategies; the removal of any specific retirement age from conditions of service; and several changes to existing employment terms and conditions, including health insurance and relocation provisions, to increase harmonisation across agencies. In regard to the latter, the Director noted that most of these changes were based on SPC's existing practices.

278. The Chairperson thanked the Director for his presentation, and in the absence of any discussion asked CRGA to approve the recommendations of the paper.

## Decisions

279. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the outcome of the 2009 CROP (Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific) Triennial Remuneration Review;
  - ii. endorse the adoption of the proposed new banding model, noting that more work needs to be done to move staff from the current structure to the new banding model before it can be fully implemented;
  - iii. re-affirm its current policy on the application of the six-year rule;
  - iv. endorse the removal of the reference to a mandatory retirement age from the Staff Regulations;
  - v. note the other recommendations; and
  - vi. note the change to a new job sizing methodology (Strategic Pay's SP10 methodology).

### AGENDA ITEM 8.2 – CROP REMUNERATION: 2009 MARKET DATA SURVEYS

280. The Director of Corporate Services said that under a mechanism previously agreed on by CROP governing bodies, the annual tracking of 'market movement data' from the three approved reference markets – Australia and New Zealand (public service sector), and Fiji Islands (all organisations) – provides the basis for the annual assessment of CROP remuneration levels for staff recruited internationally. The 2009 market data was provided by Strategic Pay in its report 'Annual comparison of reference markets 2009 update', and was presented to CROP Executives in June 2009. The analysis of the 2009 market data showed that for staff recruited internationally, no increase in salaries was required in 2010 to align the CROP salary scale to the benchmark. However, CROP Executives noted that there was already a salary differential between the CROP agencies, with three of the six agencies having implemented the 2009 salary increases (FFA, PIFS and SOPAC) and three not implementing them (SPBEA, SPC and SPREP). For staff recruited under local conditions in Suva, a 2.5 per cent increase was recommended for PIFS, SPBEA and SOPAC staff in Grade H. He noted that Noumea-based staff recruited under local conditions, received a 0.8 per cent salary increase effective from 1 January 2009, based on data from the Institute of Statistics.

281. The Chairperson thanked the Director for the information presented and asked CRGA to approve the recommendations of the paper.

## Decisions

282. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that, in the case of **staff recruited internationally**, it:

- i. note the CROP Executives' decision that a further increase in the staff salary scale was not required for 2010;

and in the case of **staff recruited under local conditions**, it:

- ii. note the CROP Executives' decision that for Suva-based staff, there would be no change to the current SPC salary scale;
- iii. note the one-off cash payment of FJD 500 to Suva-based staff to compensate for the devaluation of the Fiji dollar; and
- iv. note that for SPC Noumea-based staff, a 0.8 per cent salary increase was paid effective from 1 January 2009.

### AGENDA ITEM 8.3 – PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE STAFF REGULATIONS AND STAFF RULES

283. The Director of Corporate Services outlined proposed amendments to the SPC Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, noting that CRGA has been delegated the authority to approve amendments to the Staff Regulations. The amendments related to deletion of mention of the age of retirement, a change to the procedure for a staff member to appeal against a decision on a disciplinary measure, and a change to the rules governing compensation for hours worked during duty travel.

284. The Director General said it was worth noting that the appeal procedure had been used only once in SPC's 63-year history. He said the deletion of the mention of a retirement age was in line with international practice in human resource management.

285. The Chairperson asked CRGA to consider the recommendations presented.

### **Decisions**

286. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. approve the deletion of Staff Regulation 26 – Age of Retirement;
- ii. approve the change in terminology of Staff Regulation 27 – Disciplinary Measures;
- iii. endorse the proposed amendments to Staff Rule V.2 – Official Holidays;
- iv. endorse the proposed amendments to Chapter XIII – Appeals to the Joint Appeals Board; and
- v. note the amendments to Staff Rule VI.1 – Travel Time Compensation.

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.4 – HOST COUNTRY MATTERS**

287. The Deputy Director-General, Suva, presented the paper. She said that the host country agreement with New Caledonia had been signed in 2003, and that while SPC had enough office space at present at its Noumea headquarters there were still difficulties with residential accommodation. She said discussions were continuing with the government. She recognised the government of France for its efforts to resolve the issue of visas for people attending SPC-sponsored meetings in New Caledonia. Visas are now once again being issued on arrival. She noted that the host country agreement with Fiji is being renegotiated. This was a priority now that SPBEA and much of SOPAC are to merge with SPC. She stressed the need to standardise approaches to issues such as taxation, as each organisation had a slightly different system at present. Another important matter that will be addressed in the host country agreement is that of visas, and SPC is requesting that all staff be treated the same in this regard. In terms of office space, she said there is enough space with the Lotus Building and the new CePaCT facility to meet SPC's needs until the Pacific Village is completed. The host country agreement with FSM was signed in 2006 and the office space in Pohnpei is sufficient for the time being. Accommodation is still an issue, and SPC is exploring establishing a housing compound for Pohnpei staff, similar to the one in Noumea. The Deputy Director-General said SPC is awaiting a response from PNG regarding the host country agreement. An agreement has been signed with Solomon Islands and the government has provided office space. There is a shortage of accommodation in Honiara but it is manageable at present. In Vanuatu, RRRT is sharing USP's office space until December.

288. The representative of Fiji Islands said that the issues around taxation would be negotiated as part of the new host country agreement, but that Fiji law did not allow locals to be exempt from taxation and employees of other regional organisations were taxed. He noted that Fiji was committed to following through on the Pacific Village project and had identified several possible parcels of land for it. He said that Fiji wished to reiterate its commitment to providing a suitable environment for regional organisations to do business.

289. The representative of FSM said the proposed Micronesian Village project was an ambitious one but it has political support in FSM and would bring important benefits to FSM and the northern Pacific. He requested that SPC provide architectural input to develop a project brief, which could be used to obtain funding from the FSM government.

290. The representative of New Caledonia thanked the Deputy Director-General for her presentation and noted that there would be a technical meeting addressing the matters she had raised between SPC and representatives of the government of New Caledonia following CRGA.

291. The representative of RMI thanked the government of France for resolving the issue of visas. He asked if there was information on how much SPC offices contribute to the economies of host countries. He also noted with a smile that the name 'Micronesian Village' implied a project that concerned the entire cultural area when in fact there had not been any consultation regarding the title.

292. The representative of France noted that the administration of visas for New Caledonia was the responsibility of the government of France. He said France's Foreign Minister, Mr Bernard Kouchner, had committed to resolving the issue following the recent France–Oceania summit in Noumea and that France was glad to see that the situation had improved satisfactorily.

293. The representative of PNG said the host country agreement with SPC was still pending and that PNG intended to have it completed as soon as possible.

294. The Director-General noted that the name 'Micronesian Village' had come from FSM and that perhaps it was a reflection of its own name – the Federated States of Micronesia. In any case, he said, the village could perhaps include an RMI wing, a Palau wing and so on. He noted that the budget presented at CRGA 38 had included some information about the costs and benefits to New Caledonia and Fiji of hosting SPC offices. He also said that SPC would be willing to assist with the development of a design brief for the Micronesian Village project as it had done with the Pacific Village project in Fiji, but that SPC itself did not have architectural expertise.

### **Decisions**

295. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note the progress made by the host governments and the Secretariat in support of efficient and effective service delivery by SPC's headquarters and regional and national offices;
- ii. note specifically the resolution of the issue of visas for entry to New Caledonia, the signing of the host country agreement with Solomon Islands and the provision of additional office accommodation in FSM, Fiji Islands and Solomon Islands;
- iii. note the commitments by Fiji and FSM to expedite the implementation of the Pacific Village and Micronesian Village projects respectively to address SPC's longer-term office requirements in each location, and further note that the Secretariat will provide input to the development of a design brief for the Micronesian Village;
- iv. note the progress made in negotiating a new host country agreement with Fiji, which will also cover negotiations on the taxation of Fiji nationals and the issuing of work permits to staff of all SPC programmes based in Fiji; and
- v. note the progress made in negotiating host country agreements with Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.5 – ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REPORT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2008**

296. The annual financial statements and audit report for 2008 were presented by the Deputy Director, Corporate Services. He said the Secretariat's auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers of New Caledonia, conducted the independent audit of the 2008 SPC financial records between May and August this year. The 2008 records for both SPC's overall finances and the Staff Provident Fund received clean audit opinions, making this the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that SPC has received clean audit reports. The auditors raised a number of issues and recommendations in their management letter that management has either already addressed or undertaken to address. He highlighted that SPC's balance sheet had strengthened, with net assets increasing in 2008 to 2,178,958 CFP units from 2,046,847 CFP units in 2007. A general surplus of 612,280 CFP units was recorded. The general reserve increased to 1,079,129 CFP units and core income increased to 12,002,509 CFP units in 2008 compared to a budgeted amount of 10,755,100 CFP units. Assessed contributions for 2008 remained unchanged from the 2007 level at 8,221,832 CFP units. Non-core income increased by 12,367,611 CFP units to 43,145,579 CFP units in 2008. Assessed contribution arrears at 31 December 2008 stood at 1,971,717 CFP units. The Deputy Director noted that a table summarising the updated status of outstanding contributions had been given to delegates. It showed that as of Thursday, 8 October 2009, net arrears were 1,947,000 CFP units; 11 countries had paid off their debts and 12 countries had paid their contributions in advance or in full.

297. The representative of Fiji Islands asked that it be placed on record that his country made a payment on 1 July.

298. The representative of Tonga asked that it be recorded that his country had paid on 5 October, not 8 October.

299. The Deputy Director acknowledged these corrections.

300. The representative of Kiribati congratulated SPC on a clean bill of financial health for the 13<sup>th</sup> year running. She had discussed her country's arrears with the relevant officials and wanted to re-affirm that Kiribati was committed to paying its arrears to SPC.

301. The representative of Nauru said the arrears for 2008 and 2009 were more of an oversight. As for earlier arrears, he said he would discuss this with his government and get back to SPC before the end of CRGA and Conference.

302. The representative of Niue offered congratulations to SPC on obtaining unqualified audit opinions for the 13<sup>th</sup> successive year and said it was pleasing to see some progress on settling its arrears in contributions to SPC. Subject to cash flow, Niue hoped to settle 50 per cent next year and then perhaps look at two payments a year.

303. The representative of USA said he would raise the issue of USA's arrears of 1,417,665 CFP units with Washington in order to have it taken care of.

304. The Director-General said SPC had agreed with Nauru that arrears for 2008 and 2009 will be cleared first. He said they still needed to agree on how much extra Nauru would need to pay to clear the debt from previous years.

305. The Chairperson noted the efforts being made by management and members to clear arrears and also congratulated SPC on its unqualified audit report.

### **Decisions**

306. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. accept the 2008 audited financial statements as presenting a true and fair view of the financial position and financial performance of the Secretariat and of its Staff Provident Fund;
- ii. note that proper accounting records have been kept and clean audit reports were received by SPC for the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive year; and
- iii. note the comments of the auditors in the management letter and the responses made by management to address these issues.

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.6 – REVISION OF FINANCIAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET**

307. The Director-General presented the revised core budget for 2009 for noting by CRGA. The revision took into account changes in exchange rates and a shortfall in anticipated income in 2009, amounting to 261,700 CFP units. He said the budget revision allowed the Secretariat to realign its budget to match the decrease in income and to meet new resourcing priorities using funds from net savings in a number of budget lines during the year.

308. The Chairperson asked CRGA to approve the recommendation of the paper.

### **Decision**

309. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note the revised 2009 core budget.

## AGENDA ITEM 8.7 – BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2010

310. In presenting the SPC budget for the financial year ending December 2010 (the ‘Green Book’), the Director-General said the budget was a balanced one. It reflected the transfer of SPBEA and most of SOPAC’s functions to SPC from 1 January 2010 and followed SPC’s new organisational structure. However, time constraints meant the Secretariat was unable to integrate all financial information relating to these new components of SPC in the Green Book, and the information had therefore been included in an addendum. He said total anticipated income and expenditure for 2010 was 68,418,000 CFP units, comprising combined core budgets of 14,150,600 CFP units and non-core budgets of 54,267,400 CFP units (programme funding: 9,319,400 CFP units; project funding: 44,948,000 CFP units). For ‘pre-RIF’ SPC (i.e. without SOPAC and SPBEA), the Secretariat proposed a balanced budget of 51,666,500 CFP units, comprising a core budget of 11,323,400 CFP units and non-core budget of 40,343,100 CFP units (programme funding: 7,337,000 CFP units; project funding: 33,006,100 CFP units). He noted that since the budget had been prepared, funding had been received from Australia for SOPAC’s climate change programme and from AusAID for RRRT. The drop in the non-core budget, compared to 2009, mostly related to the completion of projects, including the ending in 2009 of Marine Resources projects worth 5 million CFP units. In relation to the issue of payment of income tax by Fiji nationals working for SPC in Fiji, he said the 2010 budget did not include any provision for the tax as the Secretariat’s position was that any extra cost to the organisation should be borne by the host country, which would be the sole beneficiary of the additional tax revenue. If income tax was imposed, salaries of locally recruited staff would need to be increased to ensure that their net salaries remained comparable with the local reference market. The Secretariat estimated this cost at approximately 185,000 CFP units per year (FJD 420,000). He said the tax issue will be negotiated during the development of the new host country agreement with a view to also harmonising arrangements for the SPBEA and SOPAC staff who will join SPC from 1 January 2010. He added that total revenue gained from an income tax on Fiji national staff is estimated at FJD 790,000 a year, while SPC injects around FJD 33 million into the Fiji economy through salaries and purchase of local goods and services. In addition, SPC holds most of its meetings in Fiji. Fiji’s contribution was about FJD 2.5 million. He said similar levels of economic benefit could be shown for other host countries.

311. The representative of Fiji said his country differed with the Director-General on his assessment of the costs and benefits of hosting SPC. He said the cost of construction and maintenance of infrastructure, including roads and electricity, for all missions was very expensive. Maintaining a suitable environment for regional organisations was also a cost carried by the government of Fiji and he wished to drive home the point that the arrangement was mutually beneficial.

312. The representative of RMI asked how much Fiji would lose in the event that the Land Resources Division (LRD) was moved out of Suva.

313. The representative of Nauru asked whether the amalgamation of SOPAC and SPBEA with SPC would result in a reduction in members’ assessed contributions.

314. The representative of PNG thanked the Secretariat for consolidating the budgets of SOPAC and SPBEA into the budget and said the information in the addendum was very helpful. It gave a clear understanding of how SPC was moving forward with the RIF process after 2010. She asked for further clarification of what was funded by core funding.

315. The representative of New Zealand congratulated SPC on presenting a balanced budget.

316. The representative of Australia noted that under RIF implementation in the previous budget, Australia had agreed to fund change management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) positions. He noted that the M&E position was not listed in the 2010 budget and said Australia would like to know its status.

317. The representative of French Polynesia sought clarification on the total budget amount that CRGA was being asked to approve and asked whether SOPAC and SPBEA were included in this amount. He said it also appeared that AusAID funding for information and communication technology (ICT) was being replaced by funding from the Peoples Republic of China.

318. The representative of USA said that in the revised budget, programmes were not identified. He sought more information on the differences between support for administration and support for programmes.

319. The Director-General said Fiji's point was well taken and that SPC's cost/benefit analysis did not consider roads and electricity. Responding to the question from RMI, the Director-General said a possible move of LRD was a matter yet to be considered. In answer to Nauru's question, he said there would not be a reduction in assessed contributions. The separate contributions made by members to SPC, SOPAC and SPBEA supported services in countries. He added that at the moment SPC core funding was 'miniscule' and if anything it needed to go up. The Director-General noted PNG's comments and said SPC will make sure it refines the process of identifying work funded by core funding. On the question of the M&E position raised by Australia, the Director-General said this will be reflected in the updated version of the budget. In response to French Polynesia, the Director-General said CRGA was being asked to approve a total budget of 68,418,000 CFP units, as outlined in section 1 of the addendum. He said funding from the Peoples Republic of China was not replacing AusAID funding for ICT. He said there were two elements of this funding. Two million CFP units from AusAID had been used to kick-start the Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity System (PacRICS) by securing a satellite hub and establishing 16 pilot sites. The Peoples Republic of China was supporting specific initiatives in the ICT sector. In relation to PacRICS, he said a key issue was bandwidth costs, e.g. FSM was requesting support for four to five years. Countries were only beginning to realise the potential benefits of this system, which had been very well demonstrated when a tsunami warning interrupted CRGA on the third day of the meeting – for one or two hours everyone was trying to use their mobile phones but lines were jammed. He said PacRICS was the only system for uninterrupted disaster communications that could be set up in half an hour and he urged representatives to support it. In response to the question from the United States about the difference between administration and programme costs, the Director-General explained that administration costs related to the overall governance, administration and financial support of the organisation, while programme funding covered expenditure directly involved in the delivery of services by programmes. Chapters I and II of the budget covered corporate and support services, and Chapters III–IX covered programmes.

### **Decisions**

320. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note the inclusion of the SPBEA and SOPAC budgets in SPC's 2010 budget as presented; and
- ii. approve the proposed budget for financial year 2010.

### **AGENDA ITEM 9 – EVALUATION OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S PERFORMANCE**

#### **Decision**

321. CRGA agreed that the Chairperson would present its recommendation (discussed *in camera*) to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community by letter.

### **AGENDA ITEM 10 – CRGA 40 IN NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA: MEETING CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

322. In accordance with the rules of procedure for CRGA, the next meeting of CRGA will be held at SPC headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia.

### **Decisions**

323. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:

- i. note that the venue for the meeting of CRGA 40 in 2010 will be SPC headquarters, Noumea, New Caledonia (members will be advised in due course of the meeting dates); and
- ii. note that the chairperson for CRGA 40 will be provided by Cook Islands and the vice-chairperson by FSM.

**AGENDA ITEM 11 – OTHER BUSINESS**

324. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. invite interested parties, including non-government organisations, to attend CRGA meetings as observers.

**AGENDA ITEM 12 – ADOPTION OF SUMMARY REPORT OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

325. The meeting adopted a summary report of its recommendations (Annex 1).

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**Director-General**

Dr Jimmie Rodgers

**Deputy Director-General (Noumea)**

Mr Richard Mann

**Deputy Director-General (Suva)**Mrs Fekitamoeola 'Utoikamanu

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**COMMUNIQUÉ**

**SIXTH CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**  
 (with recommendations of CRGA 39 and decisions of CRGA 38 attached)  
 Nukualofa, Kingdom of Tonga, 12–13 October 2009

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community was held in Nukualofa, Kingdom of Tonga, from 12 to 13 October 2009. It was officially opened by Her Royal Highness, Princess Salote Mafile’o Pilolevu Tuita. The Conference was attended by heads of state and government of Tonga and Niue; deputy heads of government of Cook Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia; ministers of Australia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; a member of the legislature of American Samoa; the governor of Pohnpei State, Federated States of Micronesia; ambassadors and high commissioners of France, New Zealand, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Pitcairn Islands and Tuvalu; and senior officials of Fiji Islands, French Polynesia, Tokelau, the United States of America, and Wallis and Futuna. Representatives from the Commonwealth Secretariat, Fiji School of Medicine, Oceania Customs Organisation, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and World Health Organization (WHO) attended as observers.
2. The Prime Minister of Tonga, the Honourable Dr Feleti Vaka’uta Sevele, chaired the Conference and the vice-chairperson was the representative of Cook Islands.
3. The Conference expressed its appreciation to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Tonga for their warm welcome and generous hospitality and for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting.
4. The Conference also extended its profound sympathy to the Governments and people of American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga on the tragic loss of life, injury and devastation caused by the tsunami in late September, to Tonga and Kiribati for the lives lost in recent ferry accidents, and to other countries in the region that suffered catastrophic events during the year.
5. The Conference considered and approved the recommendations presented to it by the 39th meeting of CRGA (Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations), which was held the previous week in Nukualofa from 6 to 9 October (Attachment 1). In addition, the Conference noted the decisions of CRGA 38, which was held at SPC headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, 13–16 October 2008 (Attachment 2).
6. The Conference also considered and reached resolutions on issues covered in its substantive agenda.
7. This communiqué is based on the decisions resulting from both the recommendations of CRGA 39 and the agenda of the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community.

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL’S REPORT**

8. The Conference accepted the Director-General’s report for 2009 and commended the work of the Secretariat. It addressed the following specific areas of the report.
  - 8.1 **Decentralisation** – The Conference welcomed the update on the implementation of its decision to ‘move services closer to people’ through decentralisation of the organisation beyond Noumea and Suva, noting the Secretariat had taken a cautious approach in light of the potential cost implications. The Conference acknowledged with appreciation the commitment by host countries to support the regional/national offices of SPC as well as the Secretariat’s efforts to improve its systems to support the decentralised delivery of services. It also noted the Secretariat’s intention to present to CRGA 40 in 2010 a full analysis of the costs relating to each of its offices, including all decentralised offices, emphasising that decentralisation must be cost effective and not at the expense of service delivery.

The Conference noted the request from the Government of Tonga to consider the relocation of some of SPC's programmes to Tonga. The Secretariat will consider this request in the context of its organisational restructuring and will report on the issue to CRGA 40.

- 8.2 **Global economic crisis** – The Conference acknowledged that the global economic crisis has impacted on all members of SPC and noted that SPC had to curtail some services during 2009. It commended the staff and management of SPC for agreeing to forego the approved increases in remuneration in 2009, in the face of the financial crisis, to safeguard the provision of services to members.
- 8.3 **Arrears in members' assessed contributions** – The Conference expressed concern about the level of arrears in members' assessed contributions, recognising the impact of these arrears on SPC's capacity to provide services, and requested members in arrears to settle their dues in full or agree on a payment schedule with the Secretariat by 31 December 2009.
- 8.4 **Organisational restructure** – The Conference commended and supported the Director-General's proposed two-phase reform of SPC's organisational structure and systems, which will take place over 2010 and 2011. It noted that the new organisational structure is likely to be based on themes rather than sectors and will be shaped to optimise the services delivered to members.

## SPC'S WORK PROGRAMME

9. The Conference endorsed the recommendations from CRGA 39 in relation to SPC's work programme as follows:

- 9.1 **Land Resources** – The Conference acknowledged the work conducted by SPC's Land Resources Division in a range of areas including trade, biosecurity, adaptation to climate change, food security, plant protection and animal health. In particular, it commended SPC on the recent opening of a new facility to house the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT) in Suva, Fiji Islands. The centre holds large collections of Pacific crop and tree varieties that are well-adapted to various Pacific conditions. It noted that the collections are being made available to the region's farmers and communities through plant tissue-culture techniques. In particular, the Conference commended SPC on the development of 'climate-ready' seeds, including salt-tolerant and flood-tolerant varieties, to support efforts to adapt to climate change, improve food and nutritional security and increase domestic and export trade in agriculture and forestry products.
- 9.2 **Marine Resources** – The Conference acknowledged the work of SPC's newly renamed Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division in providing research, training and technical assistance in one of the Pacific region's most important economic sectors. In particular, the Conference recognised SPC's work in scientific assessment of tuna stocks, which is fundamental to tuna fisheries management in the region, noting that the ongoing and very successful tuna tagging project is providing vital information in this regard. The Conference acknowledged the work as a good example of a programme that is best carried out at the regional level, especially as there is no national capacity for such assessment and regional assessments must be undertaken by an unbiased regional organisation. Representatives commended SPC and the Forum Fisheries Agency on undertaking a joint study on the future of Pacific fisheries to help determine the direction of the sector.
- 9.3 **Public Health** – The Conference acknowledged the work of SPC's Public Health Division in helping to prevent communicable and non-communicable diseases and its support for strengthening health systems in member countries and territories. It commended the division's efforts to assist members to better prepare for disease outbreaks, noting that SPC's pandemic preparedness project contributed to most countries and territories having the capacity and equipment on hand to mount an effective response to the recent H1N1 pandemic influenza outbreak. It supported the continued provision of assistance to SPC to sustain this emergency

preparedness and response capacity in the region. The Conference supported the division's new strategic plan, which focuses on addressing the wider determinants of health, such as education, gender equity, adequate sanitation and clean water and livelihoods, in addition to addressing the diseases common to the region. It welcomed the cross-sectoral approach being taken by SPC in collaboration with development partners to ensure the most effective application of resources for health.

- 9.4 **Social Resources** – The Conference commended the efforts of SPC's Social Resources Division to assist members to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and meet commitments to international conventions and treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It welcomed SPC's work on issues relating to human rights, gender, youth, culture and community leadership, noting the relevance of these issues to sustainable development. The Conference also expressed appreciation for the work of the Regional Media Centre.

The Conference acknowledged the support provided to national statistics offices by the Statistics and Demography Programme, noting the results achieved in member countries and territories. The Conference also noted the need for upgraded and expanded national and regional statistical information systems and databases across all sectors as a prerequisite to improving the availability of high-quality statistical outputs.

The Conference noted the outcomes of the socio-cultural research on gender-based violence and violence against children in Kiribati and Solomon Islands. The research project was funded by Australia and UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) and implemented by SPC in collaboration with the governments of Kiribati and Solomon Islands. The Conference noted further that efforts need to be made to step up responses at national and regional levels to address this issue. It acknowledged Australia's commitment to work with SPC to explore effective mechanisms for reducing gender-based violence as a priority for Australia and all countries and territories in the region.

- 9.5 **Economic Development** – The Conference acknowledged SPC's role in establishing a new feeder shipping service between Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu, using a Kiribati state-owned vessel. This new feeder service has already resulted in lower freight rates and more frequent and reliable shipping. The Conference was pleased to note that SPC's Regional Maritime Programme will incorporate a system for safety audits on domestic ships in its existing audit regime, in consultation with counterparts in Australia and New Zealand, along with other efforts to improve the safety of the region's domestic fleets.

The Conference acknowledged the utility of the Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity System (PacRICS) in enabling communication with rural areas and outer islands. Each PacRICS site is capable of providing Internet access to a wide area (around 50 square kilometres), allowing sharing of costs. The Conference noted that the system proved to be particularly valuable during the recent tsunami disaster where it provided the only electronic communication channel to and from Niutoputapu (an outer island of Tonga) for up to two weeks after the event and greatly assisted in coordinating relief efforts. PacRICS is the only satellite communication system that both covers the entire Pacific Island region and is suitable for use as a low-cost disaster surveillance and response tool. The Conference supported the request for a further year of bandwidth funding to support the PacRICS initiative, which provides the region with a robust and responsive communication backbone that can be used for education, health and disaster response purposes, noting in particular that the equipment required is compact and inexpensive and, in the event of a disaster, can be landed and set up with relative ease.

## THE POLICY AGENDA

10. The Conference addressed and endorsed actions on the following key policy agenda items presented by the Secretariat.

- 10.1 Reform of the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF)** – The Conference endorsed the final decisions on the framework, which were reached after exhaustive consultation and discussion and a historic joint meeting of the SOPAC (Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission), SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme) and SPC governing councils, as well as subsequent individual special sessions of these councils in mid-2009. Representatives noted that the decisions were also endorsed by Forum Leaders and that implementation plans for various aspects of RIF have been developed by SPC in partnership with PIFS, SOPAC, SPBEA (South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment) and SPREP. As a result of these decisions, from January 2010 the majority of SOPAC’s core work programme will become the SOPAC Science and Technology Division of SPC, and SPBEA will be merged with SPC, initially as a stand-alone programme in 2010. SPC will assume the role of lead coordinating agency for the regional energy sector. SOPAC’s current energy and ICT outreach programmes will become part of the new Economic Development Division of SPC together with the transport, infrastructure and ICT functions being transferred from PIFS.
- 10.2 Long-term sustainable financing strategy for SPC** – The Conference commended the proactive stance taken by SPC in seeking to develop a long-term sustainable financing strategy for the organisation. It endorsed the establishment of a subcommittee of CRGA to assist the Secretariat in undertaking an in-depth analysis of the core functions that SPC should provide and the most appropriate funding modalities. This analysis will provide the basis for developing the long-term financing strategy. The Conference endorsed the terms of reference and membership of the subcommittee and noted that it will report its findings to CRGA 40 in 2010.
- 10.3 Tracking development progress** – The Conference recognised the efforts made by SPC to develop a system to assist members in regular monitoring and reporting of development progress against national and international development targets, including the MDGs. To enhance members’ access to relevant development data, SPC is working with stakeholders including members to agree on a core set of indicators for Minimum National Development Indicator Datasets. The next step will be to finalise the initial dataset, which will be shared with development partners and members to ensure it meets their monitoring and tracking requirements. The Conference noted that the work will ultimately result in a monitoring system that will allow tracking of development in real-time, based on collection and compilation of high-quality statistics, and further noted that achieving this aim will require investment of additional resources at national and regional levels.

In this regard, the Conference welcomed with great appreciation the announcement by Australia that it will provide AUD 10 million to SPC over the next four years to support the work being led by SPC to improve the timeliness and quality of statistics in island member countries and territories to achieve real-time monitoring of development progress and enhance evidence-based decision-making. It noted the priority that Australia accords to further developing and improving statistical services in member countries and territories. The Conference also noted that Papua New Guinea has included statistics as the fifth key priority to be supported by Australia under the Australia-Papua New Guinea Pacific Partnership Agreement and commended this approach to other members in their own consultations with Australia.

- 10.4 Mapping priorities in health** – The Conference welcomed SPC’s work on mapping priorities in health in three member countries and endorsed the extension of the mapping exercise to other countries and territories to provide a representative sample of SPC members. The Conference noted that the end result of this work will be a document that (i) lists the top priorities for improved health outcomes at regional and national levels; (ii) demonstrates the links between these priorities and decisions or agreements made at regional and international levels that impact on health, such as the Pacific Plan, MDGs, and decisions by the WHO World Health Assembly and Regional Committee of the Western Pacific Regional Office; (iii) demonstrates the link between national priorities and budget allocations by governments and the non-government sector, especially churches and development partners; (iv) documents all stakeholders contributing to health development in the region and identifies what they each do, the level of resources they each provide and how these resources are made available to members; and (v) analyses efforts made by governments and administrations to address the

social determinants of health that exist outside the health sector. The Conference acknowledged that the document will give members a context for deciding how best to invest in priorities that will help achieve desired health outcomes through ‘whole of government approaches’. The document will also be useful in consultations with development partners. It noted that additional resources will be required to implement a wider trial of the mapping exercise and encouraged development partners to support the Secretariat’s efforts to complete the mapping exercise as soon as possible.

- 10.5 **Joint country strategies** – The Conference acknowledged the value of the joint country strategies (JCSs) that have been developed between members and SPC. The Conference also noted progress with the development, implementation and monitoring of the strategies and supported the Secretariat’s plans to complete strategies with Fiji Islands, Guam, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu in 2010 and to start on developing a second-cycle strategy with Marshall Islands. The JCSs outline in one integrated document the scope of SPC’s planned assistance to an individual member over a defined period. They present a ‘whole of SPC’ approach and are based on working jointly with members to improve the responsiveness, relevance, effectiveness and strategic impact of interventions at the country level, and to strengthen priority setting and monitoring. Key principles in developing the strategies are joint preparation, an emphasis on national development priorities (as stated in members’ national sustainable development strategies/plans) and a participatory multi-sectoral approach. The Conference welcomed the Secretariat’s approach to involving other CROP (Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific) organisations in developing the JCSs, noting that this process may in time lead to CROP-wide JCSs with members.
- 10.6 **SPC and the Pacific Plan** – The Conference commended SPC for its initiative in mainstreaming relevant Pacific Plan priorities into its core business and welcomed the publication *SPC and the Pacific Plan*, which gives detailed information on SPC’s contribution to implementing the Pacific Plan across the 14 sectors in which SPC works.
- 10.7 **The Cairns Compact** – The Conference acknowledged the purpose and intent of the ‘Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination in the Pacific’ and expressed its appreciation to the Secretary General of PIFS, Tuiloma Neroni Slade, and the Director-General of SPC for presenting a joint paper on the Compact. The Conference endorsed the goals of the Cairns Compact and encouraged the Secretariat, where feasible, to contribute to its successful implementation in collaboration with PIFS.

#### **THE CONFERENCE THEME – ‘MAXIMISING IMPACTS OF REGIONAL PROGRAMMES AT NATIONAL LEVEL’**

11. The Conference commended the government of the Kingdom of Tonga for selecting a theme that was both relevant and timely for regional organisations. The Conference reiterated the value of regional services to members, as aptly demonstrated by the detailed divisional presentations to CRGA 39 and through statements from member representatives on the theme.
12. The Conference expressed particular appreciation for the presentations made by representatives of national institutions and non-government organisations, noting that the benefits they described showed the real impact of SPC’s work at ground level. The Conference requested that similar presentations on specific sectors such as health be made at future meetings, noting that the presentations demonstrated how SPC’s services both supplement and complement the work of members’ own institutions and programmes.
13. The Conference acknowledged the benefits delivered by SPC’s programmes and the impacts made in many sectors at the national level. In this regard, it directed the Secretariat to ensure that the changes following on from the RIF reform result in further enhancement of services. It recognised that SPC’s initiatives in decentralising its operations and developing joint country strategies with its members have greatly improved the implementation and coordination of regional services in Pacific Island countries and territories.

14. The Conference stressed the need for regional programmes to be closely aligned to national sustainable development strategies and plans, noting the need for continuing coordination of service delivery, both by SPC itself and by members at the national level to avoid duplication and maximise impact. The Conference directed SPC to continue collaborating with other partners working bilaterally or multilaterally at national level in the spirit of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action, the Cairns Compact, the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles and the Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration. It also noted the need to ensure there is a common monitoring and evaluation framework that is consistent with the national-level framework to monitor the impact of regional services at national level.

15. The Conference also acknowledged that members need to ensure a receptive environment and better coordination between sectors at national level, especially through capacity building of government departments and institutions.

16. The Conference emphasised the need to address key constraints to economic growth, such as lack of resources for infrastructure, and the importance of ensuring these areas are integral parts of national sustainable development strategies. In this regard it noted the early impact of the feeder shipping service between Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu, and requested exploration and coordination of other subregional initiatives in areas that involve groups of members or opportunities between members.

17. The Conference requested that SPC continue supporting the provision of appropriate ICT, in particular the PacRICS and OLPC (One Laptop Per Child) projects, and continue to play a role in facilitating access by members to the SPIN (South Pacific Information Network) submarine cable.

#### **PACIFIC ECONOMIC SURVEY**

18. The Conference noted with appreciation the joint presentation made by PIFS and Australia on the Pacific Economic Survey and commended Australia for undertaking this important work, recognising that for many members it provided information that would be extremely useful in their own national planning processes.

#### **FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT**

19. The Conference commended SPC on receiving clean audit reports, for the 13th successive year, for its 2008 financial records and the Provident Fund. It approved the balanced budget presented by the Secretariat for 2010. Total anticipated income and expenditure for 2010 is 68,418,000 CFP units, comprising combined (SPC, SOPAC and SPBEA) core budgets of 14,150,600 CFP units and non-core budgets of 54,267,400 CFP units (programme funding: 9,319,400 CFP units; project funding: 44,948,000 CFP units). The Conference noted that some recently approved funding had not been included in the budget it approved and that these funds would be incorporated in a revision of the budget.

#### **WORKING PAPERS FOR CRGA AND CONFERENCE**

20. The Conference acknowledged the quality of all the papers and presentations given at the meeting. It welcomed the clear focus on impacts and outcomes, noting that the detailed reporting of programme activities at the national level made it easier for members to appreciate the value of the services that SPC provides in each sector.

#### **EVALUATION OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S PERFORMANCE**

21. The Conference unanimously agreed to reappoint the Director-General to serve another two-year term in accordance with the unanimous recommendation of CRGA 39.

**YEAR 2011 CONFERENCE**

22. The Conference accepted the offer from the Republic of the Marshall Islands to host the Seventh Conference of the Pacific Community in 2011, and agreed that according to the rules of procedure, Marshall Islands will provide the chairperson. The Secretariat will advise regarding the vice-chairperson.

23. The Conference also noted the expression of interest by Cook Islands in hosting the Eighth Conference of the Pacific Community in 2013.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE THIRTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS  
(CRGA 39)**

(Nuku'alofa, Tonga, 6–9 October 2009)

**Introduction**

1. The Thirty-Ninth meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA 39) took place in Nukualofa, Kingdom of Tonga, from 6 to 9 October 2009. The meeting was chaired by Australia. The vice-chairperson was the representative of Cook Islands, who also chaired the Drafting Committee. It was attended by representatives from 23 of the 26 member countries and territories of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and observers from the Commonwealth Secretariat, European Commission, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA), University of the South Pacific, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and World Health Organization. Before considering the agenda, the meeting observed a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the tsunami in American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga and other recent tragedies in the region. The proceedings opened with a presentation from the Director-General on SPC's implementation of the key decisions taken by CRGA 38 in 2008, the decisions on the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF), and highlights of SPC's work in 2009. As a result of the final decision on the new RIF, and the endorsement of this decision by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders, SPBEA will become part of SPC from January 2010, and the majority of SOPAC's functions will transfer to SPC, substantially enlarging the organisation. The global economic crisis resulted in a substantial reduction in SPC's operating budget in 2009 with consequent curtailing of some services. The crisis also brought out the best in the organisation, with management and staff deciding to forego the increase in remuneration that was approved by CRGA 38 for implementation in 2009 to ensure services to members could be maintained to the greatest extent possible. Despite these budgetary setbacks, the Secretariat achieved several milestones in regional collaboration in 2009 as the reports of the work done by programmes demonstrated.

2. After extensive discussion of the programme, policy and budgetary presentations made by the Secretariat, CRGA 39 put forward the following recommendations for consideration by the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community:

**AGENDA ITEM 2 – DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

3. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the Director-General's report; and
  - ii. note the directions being taken by SPC to address the challenges of the changing regional environment.

**AGENDA ITEM 3 – DIVISIONAL REPORTS**

**AGENDA ITEM 3.1 – LAND RESOURCES**

4. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the progress made by the Land Resources Division (LRD) toward achieving its strategic objectives;
  - ii. note there are new initiatives expected to begin in 2010 that will help bridge some of the funding gaps for LRD programmes; and
  - iii. note that for LRD to fully deliver the services envisaged in its new strategic plan it will require greater resources to maintain/strengthen its professional and technical capacity.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.2 – MARINE RESOURCES**

5. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
  - i. note the activities and achievements of the division during the current year;
  - ii. note the short-term funding problems faced by programmes, particularly the Coastal Fisheries Programme;
  - iii. note the opportunities and challenges for the programmes in meeting the changing fisheries needs of members;
  - iv. support strengthening of initiatives to develop capacity in members' fisheries administrations and the private sector; and
  - v. note the reliance on project funding for service delivery, and the requirement for an increase of 25 per cent in longer-term funding to sustain core functions.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 3.2.1 – MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION REVIEW**

6. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
  - i. note the findings of the review and the actions being undertaken to address the recommendations.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 3.2.2 – UPDATE ON THE FUTURE OF FISHERIES STUDY**

7. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
  - i. note progress with the study; and
  - ii. note with appreciation the willingness of members of the expert panel and project steering committee to participate in the process.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 3.2.3 – MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION/FISHERIES AQUACULTURE AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS DIVISION 2010–2013 DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN**

8. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
  - i. endorse the new Strategic Plan for the period 2010–2013 for the Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division (formerly known as the Marine Resources Division).

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.3 – PUBLIC HEALTH**

9. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
  - i. note the work and achievements of the Public Health Division (PHD) during 2009;
  - ii. note the substantial increase in funding mobilised for public health activities in member countries;
  - iii. note with concern PHD's continued dependence on project funding and, in association, the lack of continued funding for influenza pandemic preparedness activities beyond mid-2010; and
  - iv. note the need for timely recruitment of human resources in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) to support a scaled-up response to public health issues.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 3.3.1 – PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION STRATEGIC PLAN 2010–2014**

10. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
  - i. endorse the new strategic plan for the Public Health Division for the 2010–2014 period, noting that some aspects of the draft plan will be finalised following the meeting based on the feedback received; and
  - ii. note the need for greater predictability and flexibility of funding if the plan is to succeed.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.4 – SOCIAL RESOURCES**

11. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the work of the Social Resources Division during 2009;
  - ii. re-affirm the region's commitment to human rights, gender equality, the elimination of gender-based violence and violence against young people and children, and community (grassroots) development, and note the need for adequate resources to address these issues at the national and regional level;
  - iii. note that an update on SPC's organisational gender mainstreaming and policy will be presented at CRGA 40 in 2010;
  - iv. note the need for upgraded and expanded country and regional statistical information systems and databases across all sectors as a prerequisite to improving the availability of high-quality statistical outputs to make evidence-based policy decisions; and
  - v. further note the need for permanent office space for the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) in Vanuatu in 2010 following decentralisation.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 3.4.1 – STATISTICAL BENCHMARKING STUDY**

12. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the findings and recommendations of the comprehensive statistical benchmarking study;
  - ii. endorse the Secretariat's concurrence with countries' support for an expanded SPC/PFTAC (Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre) programme and optional contracting out by countries of selected statistical services to other providers (Option 2 outlined in CRGA paper 3.4.1) as the preferred way forward to strengthen statistical services and capacity across the region; and
  - iii. request SPC to engage in strategic discussions with PFTAC, a core group of development partners, and PIFS (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat), to plan for the gradual implementation of Option 2, with an initial focus on three immediate priority areas:
    - a. Fine-tuning thematic/sectoral gap analyses and developing benchmarks;
    - b. Developing detailed costings for Option 2;
    - c. Developing medium- to long-term strategic objectives for statistical development across the region.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.5 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

13. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the establishment of SPC's new Economic Development Division from January 2010 to cover the four key drivers of economic development – energy, ICT (information and communication technology), infrastructure and transport;
  - ii. note further that the positions of Director of the new division and Deputy Director (Energy) will be supported through the core resources of the organisation, with both positions to be advertised as soon as possible to enable appointments by the end of 2009; and
  - iii. consider the presentations on the work of the transport and communication/ICT programmes and note the tremendous impacts of both programmes on members' national-level development outcomes.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 3.5.1 – TRANSPORT PROGRAMME – MARITIME**

14. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the positive impacts of the Regional Maritime Programme's (RMP) intervention in key areas of the Pacific maritime transport sector;
  - ii. urge development partners to maintain their support for current RMP activities, to allow the programme to continue the delivery of vital maritime services to members; and
  - iii. acknowledge RMP's latest initiatives to improve the safety of the domestic shipping sector.

**AGENDA ITEM 3.5.2 – ICT REPORT: PACIFIC DIGITAL STRATEGY**

15. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note SPC's progress on initiatives under the Pacific Digital Strategy and plans for further development of these initiatives;
  - ii. note the rationalisation of the ICT functions of PIFS, SOPAC and SPC into a single programme at SPC;
  - iii. acknowledge the importance of the Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity System (PacRICS) in monitoring and communication during disasters; and
  - iv. support the Secretariat's request for a further year of bandwidth funding from development partners to give SPC members time to develop sustainable funding arrangements.

**AGENDA ITEM 4 – REGIONAL POLICY AGENDA: INCREASED FOCUS ON MEMBERS' PRIORITIES (PILLAR 1)**

**AGENDA ITEM 4.1 – PROGRESS WITH JOINT COUNTRY STRATEGIES**

16. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note progress made in developing joint country strategies in 2009; and
  - ii. endorse the Secretariat's intention to complete strategies for Fiji Islands, Guam, New Caledonia, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu in 2010.

**AGENDA ITEM 4.2 – DECENTRALISATION: REGIONAL AND NATIONAL OFFICES OF SPC**

17. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note progress on continued implementation of the organisation's decentralisation policy during 2009 and plans to assess the feasibility of further decentralisation in 2010;
  - ii. thank the government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Pohnpei State and the Solomon Islands Government for their strong support for the regional office in Pohnpei and country office in Honiara respectively;
  - iii. in relation to SPC's longer-term office needs, welcome Fiji's update on the development of the 'Pacific Village', FSM's similar initiative regarding the 'Micronesian Village', and the offer by Solomon Islands to provide a separate office building for SPC;
  - iv. note the progress reports on the SPC Regional Office for the North Pacific and Solomon Islands country office respectively; and
  - v. note that a full analysis of the costs of running regional and country offices and providing services from those offices will be presented to CRGA 40 in 2010.

**AGENDA ITEM 5 – REGIONAL POLICY AGENDA: STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS (PILLAR 2)**

**AGENDA ITEM 5.1 – SPC AND THE PACIFIC PLAN**

18. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the publication of *SPC and the Pacific Plan*, which shows SPC's contribution to implementing the Plan;
  - ii. note the substantial benefits that members gain as a result of the synergies between SPC's core business and the priorities of the Pacific Plan; and
  - iii. further note the Secretariat's intention to produce this publication annually.

**AGENDA ITEM 5.2 – RATIFICATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTIONS  
AND TREATIES BY PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES (PICTS)**

19. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. take note of the status of ratification of international human rights treaties, conventions and covenants in PICTs;
  - ii. endorse the Secretariat's efforts to continue to assist PICTs with ratification of and reporting on international human rights treaties and conventions as an effective means to gauge development progress in the region; and
  - iii. support the proposed examination of the benefits that a regional human rights mechanism could provide in supporting ratification and reporting efforts within the Pacific, and in assisting PICTs to meet their own human rights obligations.

**AGENDA ITEM 5.3 – TOWARD A FRAMEWORK OF PRIORITIES IN HEALTH –  
OUTCOMES OF MAPPING OF PRIORITIES IN HEALTH**

20. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. acknowledge that adopting a 'whole of government and communities' approach to addressing social determinants of health has the potential to achieve better health outcomes, and demand the urgent development of coordinated multi-sectoral policy and programmatic responses at both regional and national levels;
  - ii. note with concern the imbalance in funding to address stated national health priorities, including undocumented health issues;
  - iii. direct the Secretariat to:
    - a. finalise the paper synthesising the three country pilot studies and circulate it to development partners, technical agencies and PICTs for information and consideration; and
    - b. provide direct assistance to other PICTs, on request, to develop their own country case studies using the methodology developed, tested and refined during the pilot studies;
  - iv. further direct the Secretariat in collaboration with others to:
    - a. develop a strategy across all SPC divisions to fully implement the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) and the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles;
    - b. coordinate a more strategic, multi-sectoral approach to improving public health in the Pacific that involves other important national, regional and international stakeholders including WHO (World Health Organization), SPREP, FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), ILO (International Labour Organization), PIFS, and key development partners such as AusAID, NZAID, and the World Bank as well as internally within SPC; and
    - c. work with development partners and PICTs to develop a revised architecture for health financing in the Pacific that provides improved flexibility and predictability to address both country- and region-specific priorities in health as a matter of urgency, with a draft of the proposed architecture to be presented to CRGA 40.

**AGENDA ITEM 5.4 – TRACKING INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL AGREEMENTS/  
COMMITMENTS: SPC ASSISTANCE TO MEMBERS**

21. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note that meeting the monitoring and reporting requirements of international and regional agreements imposes a considerable burden on some SPC members;
  - ii. encourage the development of mechanisms, such as the establishment of a dedicated office/umbrella monitoring and reporting facility at national level and a 'many agencies, one team' approach at regional level, to assist members in meeting these obligations and building their relevant capacity; and
  - iii. endorse initiatives, similar to those undertaken by SPREP, to simplify and standardise reporting requirements.

### **AGENDA ITEM 5.5 – TRACKING DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS IN PICTS**

22. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the lack of consistent progress across all PICTs towards achieving the MDGs, and the work by the Statistics and Demography Programme to assist in developing and maintaining a regional monitoring system to allow tracking of development progress in the region;
  - ii. further note with concern that under-resourced national statistical systems in PICTs are a major factor in the lack of relevant datasets for assessing development progress;
  - iii. re-affirm the need for relevant, timely and complete datasets to provide leaders and policy makers with a basis for evidence-based policy decisions in relation to both MDG commitments and national sustainable development strategies;
  - iv. re-affirm the critical role SPC, the Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre (PFTAC) and other technical agencies play in helping PICTs strengthen their national statistical systems to increase access to high-quality, timely development statistics across a broad range of sectors, and in this context note countries' and other stakeholders' support for a strengthened SPC and PFTAC role in statistical development across the region based on the recommendations of the PIFS-SPC benchmarking study, and invite member countries to play a more active role in this partnership; and
  - v. provide guidance to the Secretariat on further development of a core set of minimum national development indicators as considered necessary.

### **AGENDA ITEM 6 – REGIONAL POLICY AGENDA: STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF SPC (PILLAR 3)**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 6.1 – ORGANISATIONAL REFORM AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK (RIF)**

23. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note that arrangements for the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF) reforms are on track for implementation from 1 January 2010;
  - ii. endorse the proposal to continue members' assessed contributions for all three agencies at current levels for 2010, with a view to reviewing payment modalities in 2010;
  - iii. further note that additional resources will be required by SPC to ensure that Pacific Island countries and territories receive the expected benefits of the reforms in the energy, transport and communication sectors from 2010 and request the Secretariat to provide a cost analysis to CRGA 40 that clearly identifies one-off and recurrent costs;
  - iv. note the Secretariat's commitment to ensuring that the region benefits from enhanced synergies and efficiencies as a result of the movement of SOPAC's core services to SPC and the merger of SPBEA with SPC.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 6.2 – LONGER-TERM SUSTAINABLE FINANCING STRATEGY FOR SPC**

24. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. establish a CRGA subcommittee to guide the development of a long-term financing strategy for SPC, which will include the definition of SPC's core functions and the minimum level of services that must be provided;
  - ii. endorse the terms of reference (appendix 1 to this attachment) for the CRGA subcommittee, including the membership of the subcommittee.

### **AGENDA ITEM 7 – STATEMENTS FROM OBSERVERS**

(These statements are included in Annex 4.)

## **AGENDA ITEM 8 – FINANCE, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.1 – 2009 CROP TRIENNIAL REMUNERATION REVIEW**

25. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the outcome of the 2009 CROP (Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific) Triennial Remuneration Review;
  - ii. endorse the adoption of the proposed new banding model, noting that more work needs to be done to move staff from the current structure to the new banding model before it can be fully implemented;
  - iii. re-affirm its current policy on the application of the six-year rule;
  - iv. endorse the removal of the reference to a mandatory retirement age from the Staff Regulations;
  - v. note the other recommendations; and
  - vi. note the change to a new job sizing methodology (Strategic Pay's SP10 methodology).

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.2 – CROP REMUNERATION: 2009 MARKET DATA SURVEYS**

26. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that, in the case of **staff recruited internationally**, it:
- i. note the CROP Executives' decision that a further increase in the staff salary scale was not required for 2010;

and in the case of **staff recruited under local conditions**, it:

- ii. note the CROP Executives' decision that for Suva-based staff, there would be no change to the current SPC salary scale;
- iii. note the one-off cash payment of FJD 500 to Suva-based staff to compensate for the devaluation of the Fiji dollar; and
- iv. note that for SPC Noumea-based staff, a 0.8 per cent salary increase was paid effective from 1 January 2009.

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.3 – PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE STAFF REGULATIONS AND STAFF RULES**

27. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. approve the deletion of Staff Regulation 26 – Age of Retirement;
  - ii. approve the change in terminology of Staff Regulation 27 – Disciplinary Measures;
  - iii. endorse the proposed amendments to Staff Rule V.2 – Official Holidays;
  - iv. endorse the proposed amendments to Chapter XIII – Appeals to the Joint Appeals Board; and
  - v. note the amendments to Staff Rule VI.1 – Travel Time Compensation.

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.4 – HOST COUNTRY MATTERS**

28. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the progress made by the host governments and the Secretariat in support of efficient and effective service delivery by SPC's headquarters and regional and national offices;
  - ii. note specifically the resolution of the issue of visas for entry to New Caledonia, the signing of the host country agreement with Solomon Islands and the provision of additional office accommodation in FSM, Fiji Islands and Solomon Islands;
  - iii. note the commitments by Fiji and FSM to expedite the implementation of the Pacific Village and Micronesian Village projects respectively to address SPC's longer-term office requirements in each location, and further note that the Secretariat will provide input to the development of a design brief for the Micronesian Village;

- iv. note the progress made in negotiating a new host country agreement with Fiji, which will also cover negotiations on the taxation of Fiji nationals and the issuing of work permits to staff of all SPC programmes based in Fiji; and
- v. note the progress made in negotiating host country agreements with Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

**AGENDA ITEM 8.5 – ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REPORT  
FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2008**

29. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. accept the 2008 audited financial statements as presenting a true and fair view of the financial position and financial performance of the Secretariat and of its Staff Provident Fund;
  - ii. note that proper accounting records have been kept and clean audit reports were received by SPC for the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive year; and
  - iii. note the comments of the auditors in the management letter and the responses made by management to address these issues.

**AGENDA ITEM 8.6 – REVISION OF FINANCIAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET**

30. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the revised 2009 core budget.

**AGENDA ITEM 8.7 – BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2010**

31. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note the inclusion of the SPBEA and SOPAC budgets in SPC's 2010 budget as presented; and
  - ii. approve the proposed budget for financial year 2010.

**AGENDA ITEM 9 – EVALUATION OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S PERFORMANCE**

32. CRGA agreed that its Chairperson would present this recommendation (discussed *in camera*) to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community by letter.

**AGENDA ITEM 10 – CRGA 40 IN NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA: MEETING CHAIRPERSON  
AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

33. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. note that the venue for the meeting of CRGA 40 in 2010 will be SPC headquarters, Noumea, New Caledonia (members will be advised in due course of the meeting dates); and
  - ii. note that the chairperson for CRGA 40 will be provided by Cook Islands and the vice-chairperson by FSM.

**AGENDA ITEM 11 – OTHER BUSINESS**

34. CRGA agreed to recommend to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community that it:
- i. invite interested parties, including non-government organisations, to attend CRGA meetings as observers.

**AGENDA ITEM 12 – ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

35. The meeting adopted the recommendations.
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## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **CRGA SUBCOMMITTEE ON LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE FINANCING STRATEGY FOR SPC**

#### **BACKGROUND**

1. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) presented a policy paper to CRGA 39 (6–9 October 2009) on a long-term financing strategy for SPC for consideration by the meeting and by the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community (12–13 October 2009).
2. The paper outlines the regional services currently provided to address members' priorities and the way these services are funded, and presents proposals for an integrated strategy for sustainably financing the delivery of agreed regional services to members in the longer term.
3. CRGA decided to recommend to the Sixth Conference that a subcommittee of CRGA be established to help determine a sustainable financing strategy for SPC. The subcommittee will have the overall objective of reporting back to CRGA on the following key questions:
  - a) From the members' perspective, what are the core functions and services that SPC must be able to maintain and deliver over the longer term, irrespective of funding constraints? Levels of priority should be assigned to each function (inner core, middle core, outer core) if necessary.
  - b) What are the costs associated with the delivery of these core functions and services?
  - c) How should they be funded?
  - d) In the event that there is a funding gap between the budget required to finance these core functions and the budget available, how might this funding gap be financed?
  - e) What is the most viable financing strategy, and funding mix, over the longer term to support the delivery of core services?
  - f) How and over what time frame should the proposed financing strategy be implemented?
  - g) How should services that are priorities of members but that are not included in the category of core services be addressed and financed? These services should also be identified.
4. In addressing these key questions, the subcommittee should take into careful consideration the impact of the regional institutional reforms, particularly in terms of how to incorporate the mix of funding streams and different country memberships of SOPAC and SPBEA once they come on board in 2010.

#### **BROAD TERMS OF REFERENCE**

5. In answering the above questions, the subcommittee should examine each of the six pillars of the longer term financing strategy proposed by SPC in paper 6.2, which was tabled at CRGA 39. The subcommittee may explore other potentially viable options identified during the course of its work.

#### **METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH**

6. During its first meeting, the subcommittee should determine the methodology and approach that it will use to undertake this important work. To facilitate this process, SPC (in its role as secretariat) may prepare and/or make available background documents, which could include the findings of studies addressing similar strategic financing issues in other organisations such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE**

7. Membership of the subcommittee will be guided by the principle of fair representation of members' interests, in terms of both geographic location and representation of the governing bodies of SPBEA (South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment) and SOPAC (Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission), which will join SPC in January 2010.

8. The membership of the subcommittee shall comprise the Chair of CRGA (currently Australia), the Director-General of SPC, and representatives of the following stakeholders/subregions:

- a) 1 representative from Francophone members
- b) 2 representatives from Melanesia
- c) 2 representatives from Micronesia
- d) 2 representatives from Polynesia
- e) 1 representative each from the metropolitan members – France, New Zealand and USA
- f) 1 representative of donors/development partners
- g) 2 representatives of SOPAC
- h) 1 representative of SPBEA

9. The work of the subcommittee will be facilitated by SPC through the provision of secretariat services and other support. The subcommittee may co-opt additional members as necessary (including consultants) for specific tasks associated with its work.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

10. SPC will assist subcommittee members in developing/coordinating the processes for consulting with and representing the consensus views of the stakeholders they represent, and will provide regular updates to stakeholders on the deliberations of the subcommittee.

11. As part of the communication strategy, SPC will create a secure web site for the work of the subcommittee and provide access codes to members.

## **FREQUENCY AND LOCATION OF MEETINGS**

12. Meetings will be convened by the chairperson following consultation with members of the subcommittee.

13. The subcommittee will hold at least two face-to-face meetings, the first one in Noumea at the beginning of its work and a second in Fiji towards the completion of its work. These meetings will be open to other SPC members based in Noumea and Fiji. The third meeting will take place during the full meeting of CRGA 40 at headquarters.

14. In between the face-to-face meetings, the subcommittee will also use phone and video conferencing and the internet to maintain progress on the terms of reference.

## **REPORTING**

15. The subcommittee will share a first draft of its findings and recommendations with the whole of CRGA by August 2010.

16. The subcommittee will take into consideration feedback and comments from all CRGA members in finalising its report, which will be presented by the chairperson of the subcommittee to CRGA 40 in October 2010.

17. Should more time be needed to complete the work, an update will be provided to CRGA 40.

**BUDGET**

18. Based on the membership listed in paragraph 8, and also on the understanding that representatives of metropolitan members and development partners will self-fund their representation, the cost of the work is estimated to be 85,000 CFP units. This amount covers travel expenses for 10 members attending two meetings of the subcommittee at a cost of 2,500 CFP units per member per meeting, plus a budget allocation of 35,000 CFP units for consultants and other costs associated with the conduct of this work. Funding support for the study will be sought from donors and other partners.

19. The costs of secretariat services and the participation of senior SPC executives in meetings of the subcommittee will be paid from the CRGA-approved 2010 budget.

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**RESOLUTIONS OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS  
(CRGA 38)**

(Noumea, New Caledonia, 13–16 October 2008)

1. The Thirty-Eighth Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA 38) was held at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) headquarters in Noumea, New Caledonia, from 13 to 16 October 2008.
2. It was attended by delegates from American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji Islands, France, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna.
3. CRGA 38 was chaired by Mr Toetasi Fue Tuiteleleapaga of American Samoa. Ms Romaine Kwesius of Australia was the vice-chairperson.
4. The meeting considered the work programme of SPC during 2008, as well as policy issues that the organisation is working on and financial and administrative issues.
5. At the conclusion of the meeting, CRGA 38 adopted the following resolutions in relation to each agenda item.

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

6. CRGA:
  - i. noted the Director-General's report;
  - ii. endorsed the key policy directions presented in the report; and
  - iii. agreed to assist the Director-General in his efforts to have ministers from all 26 member countries and territories attend the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community in Tonga in 2009.
7. CRGA acknowledged the tremendous contribution of Falani Aukuso to the Pacific region and to SPC, noting that in his short time with SPC, Falani had left a lasting legacy. CRGA expressed condolences to Falani's family and the people of Tokelau.

**REPORT OF THE LAND RESOURCES DIVISION**

8. CRGA:
  - i. noted and endorsed the decisions made by Pacific Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry at their second regional conference, 8–9 September 2008, Apia, Samoa, including their approval of LRD's strategic plan for 2009–2012;
  - ii. welcomed the high priority accorded by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in their Niue communiqué to food security, climate change adaptation, and land management and conflict minimisation, which was subsequently endorsed by the Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry at their regional conference in Apia;
  - iii. acknowledged that LRD will require additional resources to implement the decisions made by Forum leaders;
  - iv. endorsed the Secretariat's efforts to secure resources to implement effective responses to food security, climate change adaptation, land management and conflict minimisation as a matter of urgency; and
  - v. requested development partners to support SPC's efforts to make a difference in the lives of Pacific people by enabling the organisation to implement the decisions taken by Pacific leaders.

### **REPORT OF THE MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION**

9. CRGA:
- i. noted the challenges being faced by the Oceanic Fisheries Programme in continuing to provide the scientific support required by SPC members as more sophisticated tuna fisheries management regimes are adopted;
  - ii. noted the challenges being faced by the Coastal Fisheries Programme in continuing to provide the scientific support required by SPC members as project funding support is discontinued, and also noted the financing requirements implicit in the Apia Policy, the Aquaculture Action Plan, and the Regional Aquatic Biosecurity Capacity Building Project;
  - iii. noted the need for additional funding of 340,800 CFP units for the Regional Maritime Programme to sustain important maritime security services during 2009;
  - iv. supported the augmentation of longer-term programme funding support for the core business of the SPC Marine Resources Division programmes; and
  - v. noted the proposed terms of reference for the Future of Fisheries study, subject to comments to be submitted to SPC by 31 October 2008.

### **REPORT OF THE SOCIAL RESOURCES DIVISION**

10. CRGA:
- i. noted the work of the Social Resources Division during 2008;
  - ii. noted the substantial increase in funding for the Public Health Programme, much of which will be of direct benefit to members;
  - iii. invited members to provide inputs to the proposed strategic plan for the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) within the next six months; and
  - iv. requested the SPC Public Health Programme to assist members through possible reviews of the capacity of their public health services, noting that in some countries this may already be part of a sector-wide approach.

### **FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS**

11. CRGA expressed appreciation to the government and people of American Samoa for hosting a very successful Tenth Festival of Pacific Arts in 2008, and offered best wishes to Solomon Islands as the host of the next Festival in 2012.

### **FOOD SECURITY IN THE PACIFIC**

12. CRGA:
- i. supported the priority given to addressing food security by the Forum Leaders in their Niue communiqué;
  - ii. recognised the importance of a multi-sectoral approach and encouraged a ‘whole of society’ and ‘whole of government’ approach to providing food security;
  - iii. supported the work SPC is leading to assist members to address the food security challenges they face across a range of sectors; and
  - iv. encouraged development partners to provide additional support to strengthen the capacity of SPC programmes to assist members to achieve food security by adopting the conclusions in Paper 3.1, paragraphs 25–36, that relate to:
    - a. boosting local production of crops and fish;
    - b. making agriculture attractive to youth;
    - c. strengthening infrastructure for food distribution;
    - d. reducing the burden of higher prices;
    - e. providing incentives for economic growth;
    - f. diversifying production systems to adapt to climate change;
    - g. developing urban agriculture; and
    - h. raising awareness of the nutritional value of local foods.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM SPC TO REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ADAPTATION INITIATIVES**

13. CRGA:
- i. recognised the long-term threat posed by climate change to the capacity of the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors to provide food security, livelihoods and economic growth;
  - ii. endorsed the strengthened focus on climate change activities within the Land Resources and Marine Resources Divisions and the Public Health, Statistics and Demography and Human Development Programmes, particularly those aimed at helping rural communities adapt by diversifying methods for producing food and generating income;
  - iii. noted the strong cooperation between SPC, SPREP and other CROP agencies to assist Pacific Island countries and territories to achieve the goals of the Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change, in line with the Niue Declaration on Climate Change; and
  - iv. supported the efforts of SPC and its partners to obtain the resources needed to further develop strategies and implement effective demonstration projects.

### **SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SECURITY**

14. CRGA:
- i. noted the decision of Pacific Islands Forum leaders to prioritise land management and conflict minimisation in the Pacific Plan;
  - ii. noted the findings of the study entitled ‘Making land work’ and the assistance that Australia planned to provide to support this initiative in the region;
  - iii. endorsed the promotion by SPC’s Land Resources Division of land zoning and mapping, economic analysis of land use practices and community-based consultation processes as tools for sustainable development and management of land resources for economic growth in Pacific Island countries and territories; and
  - iv. endorsed the joint development by SPC and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat – with the support of national, regional and international partners – of a regional initiative on land management and conflict minimisation for economic and social development to be implemented by SPC, specifically by its Land Management and Resources Support Team.

### **REGIONAL MDG MONITORING SUPPORT FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES**

15. CRGA:
- i. discussed and endorsed the Secretariat’s proposal to establish a regional Millennium Development Goal (MDG) monitoring support framework for Pacific Island countries and territories;
  - ii. supported the consultation and development plan proposed by the Secretariat for establishing the framework over the next 12 months; and
  - iii. requested development partners to support the implementation of the proposed MDG monitoring support framework for Pacific Island countries and territories.

### **SMALL ISLAND STATES AND TERRITORIES — SHIPPING SERVICES AND COMMODITY MAPPING**

16. CRGA:
- i. noted the direction, progress and nature of SPC support for small island states and territories (SIS), and the assistance, advice and training provided by RMP to SIS maritime administrations, shipping companies and other maritime personnel, and noted the request by SIS for SPC’s assistance in helping to solve their shipping service-related issues;
  - ii. supported the review of feeder shipping services and commodity mapping for Pacific Island

- countries and territories, and acknowledged that they need to work as subregions to improve SIS shipping services and increase intra-regional trade;
- iii. acknowledged with appreciation the offer from Kiribati to commence a limited service to Tuvalu and Nauru using Kiribati Shipping Services Ltd vessels, and supported the facilitation by SPC of a meeting to resolve issues relating to the commencement of this service, subject to necessary funding being secured;
  - iv. noted the need for training in commercial ship management in SIS and supported the delivery of risk-free simulation training by RMP; and
  - v. encouraged additional financial support from donor partners for the establishment of an SIS Ship Management Unit within RMP to enable capacity supplementation, delivery of technical advice and increased support for shipping management services.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH — CHALLENGES AND DIRECTIONS**

17. CRGA:

- i. noted the urgent need to address the ‘triple burden of disease’ in all PICTs;
- ii. further noted that many of the solutions to better health outcomes exist outside the health sector;
- iii. committed to advocating, at national government level, for a broad-based approach to health that involves all the sectors that impact on health; and
- iv. supported the development of a ‘Framework of Priorities for Health in the Pacific’.

### **REACHING OUT TO RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE PACIFIC PLAN DIGITAL STRATEGY**

18. CRGA:

- i. noted the Secretariat’s achievements in implementing the digital strategy;
- ii. noted the progress on the SPIN (South Pacific Information Network) initiative and the positive impact of PACRICS (Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity System) and OLPC (One Laptop Per Child) in the region to date;
- iii. encouraged continued facilitation of the wider roll-out of the PACRICS and OLPC initiatives; and
- iv. endorsed the Secretariat’s efforts to secure additional funding to ensure implementation of current plans to establish pilot roll-outs of both PACRICS and OLPC can continue in 2009.

### **JOINT COUNTRY STRATEGIES**

19. CRGA:

- i. noted progress made in developing joint country strategies (JCSs) and country profiles in 2008;
- ii. welcomed feedback from members on the value of JCSs and country profiles; and
- iii. endorsed the Secretariat’s intention to complete JCSs for American Samoa, French Polynesia, CNMI, Palau, Samoa and Tonga in 2009, and to update the country profiles of all island members.

### **DECENTRALISATION — SPC REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE NORTH PACIFIC**

20. CRGA:

- i. noted further progress in implementing the decision by Conference to decentralise SPC’s services, through the strengthening and planned expansion of SPC’s Regional Office for the North Pacific in Pohnpei;
- ii. thanked the government of FSM and Pohnpei State for their rapid response in providing alternative office space for the Secretariat after the loss of its office in a fire;
- iii. welcomed the intention of the government of FSM and Pohnpei State to explore the possibility of building a ‘Micronesian Village’ to accommodate the longer-term office needs of SPC and other agencies in Pohnpei; and

- iv. acknowledged the update from the representative of FSM on the government's plans for the Micronesian Village.

#### **TAX SITUATION FOR FIJI NATIONALS WORKING AT SPC IN FIJI**

21. CRGA:

- i. noted the progress made by the Secretariat in implementing the decision by Conference on the subject of taxation of Fiji nationals employed by SPC in Fiji;
- ii. thanked the Government of Fiji for its decision agreeing to a temporary cessation of this taxation;
- iii. supported the proposal put forward by the Director-General to the Interim Minister of Foreign Affairs that a new host country agreement be negotiated between Fiji and SPC, with the tax issue to be part of these negotiations;
- iv. noted the update provided by the Fiji delegation on the Government of Fiji's response to the proposal put forward by the Director-General; and
- v. requested the Secretariat and Government of Fiji to present the final outcome of this matter to CRGA 39 and the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community in Tonga in 2009.

#### **OFFICE AND STAFF ACCOMMODATION, NOUMEA/SUVA**

22. CRGA:

- i. noted the progress made by the Secretariat and the host governments of SPC's offices in Noumea and Suva in addressing SPC's office and staff accommodation needs;
- ii. thanked the delegates from New Caledonia and France for the briefings provided on plans to address the issue of staff and office accommodation for SPC in Noumea, and encouraged the Government of New Caledonia to continue to study solutions likely to meet these housing and office space needs over the long term, in line with the explanations provided by France and New Caledonia.
- iii. thanked the delegate from Fiji for briefing CRGA on plans to address the short- and long-term office requirements of SPC in Suva, acknowledged the Government of Fiji for providing more office space to meet the immediate needs of SPC's Suva regional office, and welcomed the Government's commitment to pursuing the Pacific Village project; and
- iv. noted that office and staff accommodation requirements in other SPC locations will be addressed in the context of individual host country agreements signed between the member and SPC.

#### **PACIFIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION THREE YEARS ON**

23. CRGA:

- i. acknowledged the Secretariat's major contributions to implementation of Pacific Plan priorities since the plan's adoption and noted that, to date, this has been done without seeking additional resources;
- ii. noted the priority areas being targeted by the Secretariat in 2009, which reflect the Pacific Plan priorities outlined in the Alofi and Vava'u Decisions;
- iii. requested development partners to provide the new resources needed to respond effectively to the priorities identified by Forum leaders for urgent action; and
- iv. requested that the Secretariat prepare and present to CRGA 39 a policy paper that details the status of ratification, implementation and reporting of human rights-related treaties, conventions, covenants and agreements by members in accordance with initiative 12.5 of the Pacific Plan, and that examines the development benefits to members of the ratification of those agreements.

## REGIONAL INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

### 24. CRGA:

- i. noted the excellent progress achieved during 2008 in responding to the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF) review and decisions related to rationalising the activities of regional organisations;
- ii. noted that the CEOs of SPC and SPBEA (South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment) have agreed on a process for developing an implementation plan for the merger between the two organisations;
- iii. endorsed and adopted the approach agreed on by the SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme) Meeting with regard to the RIF process; and
- iv. directed the Director-General to implement the decision of CRGA 38 as set out in Annex 3 of the addendum to CRGA paper 4.2 (see below).

### **Addendum — Decision by CRGA 38 on the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF)**

1. At its 38<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Noumea, New Caledonia, from 13 to 16 October 2008:
  - recalling the decision made by the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Pacific Community on the RIF in Apia in November 2007,
  - noting the decision by the SPREP Meeting in 2008 on the RIF,
  - wishing to establish one single mechanism between SPC, SPREP and SOPAC (Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission) to respond to the RIF review and the Forum leaders' decision on regional institutional arrangements, and
  - noting that the SOPAC Governing Council will meet after CRGA,
2. CRGA:
  - a. endorsed the process contained in the SPREP decision,
  - b. added three more parameters to the analysis proposed in the SPREP decision, including two that were approved by the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Pacific Community in Apia in 2007.
3. CRGA also:
  - a. directed, the Director-General of SPC to engage collaboratively with the CEOs of SOPAC and SPREP immediately following the 2008 SOPAC Council Meeting to determine and jointly identify the new proposed institutional arrangement based on:
    - i. synergies and linkages between programmes
    - ii. optimising service delivery
    - iii. organisational capabilities
    - iv. maintaining the integrity of applied science and technical services
    - v. transparency and timeliness with respect to the process, and effective involvement of stakeholders
    - vi. cost-effectiveness, and
    - vii. analysis of the core function of each SOPAC programme to assess whether it is primarily (a) an environmental programme, or (b) an economic development programme.
  - b. directed the Director-General of SPC, in collaboration with the CEOs of SOPAC and SPREP, to jointly commission an independent analysis of the legal, financial, administrative, and programmatic implications of the proposed new institutional arrangements;

- c. directed the Director-General of SPC to propose to the other CEOs that the proposed institutional arrangements and analysis of implications are circulated to all member focal points of SPREP, SPC and SOPAC with an invitation for a representative from each Member country to attend a meeting of all countries and territories for consideration by May 2009;
  - d. directed, subject to the guidance of the above-referenced meeting, the Director-General of SPC to work collaboratively to finalise and jointly recommend new institutional arrangements and implementation plans, to be provided to Members by July 2009, for consideration and decision by their respective Governing Bodies in 2009;
  - e. agreed that the 39<sup>th</sup> meeting of CRGA and the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community in 2009 will consider the institutional arrangements and implementation plan recommended by three CEOs before the next Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in 2009;
  - f. directed the Director-General of SPC to propose to the other CEOs to provide a joint quarterly update on progress and to seek and share the views of, and give due consideration to, all members of SPREP, SPC and SOPAC;
  - g. noted the instruction by the SPREP Council to the Director of SPREP in his deliberations on the new institutional arrangements to take account of the ICR recommendations and implementation; and
  - h. agreed that an independent external consultancy would be commissioned, if necessary, to assist the three CEOs to achieve the objective of paragraph 3 (a).
4. To try and ensure the three governing bodies and their respective CEOs work together using one mechanism, CRGA requested the Chairperson of CRGA 38 to write to the respective Chairpersons of the SPREP Council and the SOPAC Council to inform them that CRGA has endorsed the process contained in the SPREP decision as outlined above.

#### **AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND JOINT REVIEW**

25. CRGA:
- i. noted that Australia and New Zealand have commissioned a joint review to look at their assistance to the region through Pacific regional organisations;
  - ii. expressed appreciation to these two governments for their ongoing and important support to the organisation; and
  - iii. further noted the information provided by the representative of New Zealand on the review process and on the time frame for negotiation of new funding agreements with Australia and New Zealand.

#### **STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT, POLICY AND PLANNING FACILITY**

26. CRGA:
- i. noted progress in establishing the Strategic Engagement, Policy and Planning Facility; and
  - ii. endorsed the Secretariat's efforts to secure additional resources to further enhance the facility's capacity to support the membership.

#### **CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION STRATEGIC PLAN**

27. CRGA:
- i. noted and endorsed the direction taken in the development of the Corporate Services strategic plan for 2008–2012; and
  - ii. noted the requirement for resource input to enable Corporate Services to enhance its capability to move from providing routine administrative support to developing strategic and effective partnerships with programmes and development partners.

### **PROGRESSIVE ORGANISATIONAL REFORMS**

28. CRGA:

- i. noted the Secretariat's planned implementation of a two-phase reform process over the next 15 months;
- ii. noted that the Phase 1 reforms are not likely to incur additional costs;
- iii. noted the Secretariat's plans to implement a composite-grade remuneration structure (a variation of the current harmonised CROP remuneration structure) effective from January 2009, in accordance with the provisions of the guiding principles and strategies for CROP harmonisation and remuneration;
- iv. further noted that there were no cost implications resulting from this change in structure in 2009; and
- v. supported the Secretariat's implementation plan for the reforms.

### **AUDIT REPORT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2007**

29. CRGA:

- i. considered and accepted the 2007 audited financial statements for SPC's overall finances and Staff Provident Fund;
- ii. noted that clean audit reports were received by SPC for the 12th consecutive year;
- iii. noted that in regard to the comment in the auditor's management letter on the fixed assets register, that the Secretariat accepts the auditor's recommendations and has begun implementing them;

and in regards to arrears in some members' assessed contributions,

- iv. endorsed the position of the Secretariat not to provide for arrears in members' assessed contributions, in line with its existing policy;
- v. noted the Secretariat's efforts to work with relevant members on arrears in contributions; and
- vi. requested members with outstanding arrears to work with the Secretariat to draw up a schedule for settling the arrears as soon as possible.

### **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR FINANCIAL YEARS 2008–2010**

30. CRGA:

- i. considered and approved the Secretariat's recommendation to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers, Noumea, to audit SPC's accounts for the financial years 2008–2010; and
- ii. thanked Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu of Papua New Guinea for their excellent work over the past six years.

### **FINANCIAL YEAR 2008: CORE BUDGET REVISION**

31. CRGA noted the revised 2008 core budget.

### **TRIENNIAL REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS**

32. CRGA:

- i. agreed with the Secretariat's proposal to present a detailed long-term budget strategy to CRGA 39 and the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community in 2009; and
- ii. agreed to defer the triennial review of SPC's assessed contribution funding formula to 2009.

**CROP HUMAN RESOURCES AND REMUNERATION ISSUES: 2008 MARKET DATA SURVEYS**

## 33. CRGA:

- a) In the case of staff recruited internationally:
  - i. approved the payment of the full increases recommended by CROP Heads with effect from 1 January 2009, i.e. Grade I, 9.5%; Grade J, 14.0%; Grade K, 14.0%; Grade L, 14.2%; and Grade M, 15.5%;
  - ii. noted that the resulting net increase in local currency salaries would vary according to location, being lowest in Noumea, and highest in Pohnpei due mostly to the weaker US dollar and increased cost of living there; and
  - iii. noted that the total increase was funded from savings on salary costs resulting from the weak SDR coupled with the lower cost of living in Noumea, and savings due to increased efficiency and other cost reduction measures.
- b) In the case of staff recruited under local conditions:
  - i. noted that the Suva-based CROP agencies, PIFS, SPBEA, SPC and SOPAC, have jointly commissioned a job-evaluation exercise to standardise their methodology and facilitate comparison and standardisation of similar positions across the four agencies; and
  - ii. noted that for SPC Noumea staff, the Secretariat was awaiting the outcome of the 2008 local market study before deciding on a course of action, and that any increases indicated by the Noumea market survey and approved by the government of New Caledonia for implementation in New Caledonia would be passed on to Noumea-based staff.

**FINANCIAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET**

## 34. CRGA:

- i. approved the proposed budget for financial year 2009; and
- ii. requested development partners and stakeholders to favourably consider providing bridging funds to sustain in 2009 important activities currently funded by the European Development Fund.

**THIRTY-NINTH CRGA: VENUE AND MEETING CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

## 35. CRGA:

- i. noted that Nuku'alofa, Tonga, will be the venue for the 2009 meeting of CRGA 39 and the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community, to be held from 6 to 13 October; and
- ii. noted that the Chairperson for CRGA 39 will be provided by Australia and the Vice-Chairperson by Cook Islands.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

## 36. CRGA noted that the Secretariat will:

- i. prepare a policy paper for consideration by CRGA 39 on:
    - a. associate membership of SPC;
    - b. guidelines for non-governmental (NGOs) and civil society organisation (CSOs) that do not have direct links with SPC but would like to attend meetings of SPC's governing body; and
  - ii. extend invitations to NGOs, CSOs and development partners that work with SPC to attend future CRGA meetings as observers.
-

**SPC BUDGET FOR 2010**



**LETTER FROM CHAIRPERSON OF CRGA 39 TO CHAIRPERSON OF THE SIXTH  
CONFERENCE**

Nuku'alofa, 9 October 2009  
The Honourable Dr. Feleti Vaka'uta Sevele  
Chair 6<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Pacific Community  
Nuku'alofa  
Kingdom of Tonga

Dear Dr Sevele,

It is my honour to present to you and to the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community the recommendations agreed on by the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) at its 39th session last week.

On behalf of CRGA, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the chair of the Conference and convey to you our confidence that under your stewardship the meeting will enjoy great success.

It has been a privilege for me to chair CRGA 39 in your beautiful country and on behalf of all members I wish to thank your government for the excellent arrangements made and for the warm hospitality we have all enjoyed.

Before outlining our discussions and recommendations, let me inform you that CRGA 39 first observed a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the tsunami in American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga and of other recent tragedies in the region. We extend our deepest sympathy to all those affected by these tragic events.

Below is a summary of the discussions of CRGA 39. I'm pleased to report that these discussions were both constructive and useful. The recommendations of the meeting for consideration by the Conference are attached to this letter (Attachment 1).

**Summary of major outcomes of CRGA 39 for consideration by the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community**

**Director-General's Report** – CRGA 39 accepted the Director-General's report for 2009 and commended the work of the Secretariat, noting in particular the following areas of the report.

**Decentralisation** – CRGA 39 welcomed the update on the implementation of its decision to 'move services closer to people' through decentralisation beyond Noumea and Suva, noting the Secretariat's cautious approach in light of the potential cost implications. Representatives noted with appreciation the commitment by respective host countries to support the national/regional offices of SPC, as well as the efforts by the Secretariat to improve its systems to support the decentralised delivery of services. CRGA 39 welcomed the Secretariat's intention to present a full analysis of the cost of establishing all decentralised offices to CRGA 40 in 2010.

**Global economic crisis** – CRGA 39 commended the staff and management of SPC for agreeing to forego the approved increases in remuneration in 2009, in the face of the global economic crisis, to safeguard the delivery of services to members.

**Arrears in members' assessed contributions** – CRGA 39 expressed concern about the level of arrears in members' assessed contributions, recognising its impact on SPC's capacity to deliver services to members, and requested members in arrears to settle their dues in full or agree on a payment schedule with the Secretariat by 31 December 2009.

**2010–2011 reforms** – CRGA 39 commended and supported the Director-General’s proposed two-phase reform of SPC’s organisational structure and systems, which will take place over the next two years, 2010 and 2011. It noted that the new organisational structure is likely to be based on themes rather than sectors and will be shaped to optimise service delivery to members.

**Reform of the Regional Institutional Framework (RIF)** – CRGA 39 endorsed the final decisions on the framework, which were reached after exhaustive consultation and discussion, and a historic joint meeting of the SOPAC (Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission), SPREP and SPC governing councils as well as their respective special sessions in mid 2009. Representatives noted that the decisions have also been endorsed by Forum Leaders and that implementation plans for various aspects of RIF have been developed by SPC in partnership with PIFS, SOPAC, SPBEA and SPREP. As a result of these decisions, from January 2010 the majority of SOPAC’s core work programme will become the SOPAC Science and Technology Division of SPC, and SPBEA will be merged with SPC, initially as a stand-alone programme in 2010. SPC will assume the role of lead coordinating agency for the regional energy sector. SOPAC’s current energy programme will become part of a new Economic Development Division of SPC together with the transport, infrastructure and ICT functions transferred from PIFS.

**Sustainable development of Pacific resources** – CRGA 39 recognised that the Pacific region has an abundance of natural resources in its people and cultures, its forests, plants and seafood, but that none of these can be taken for granted. It stressed that climate change, food security issues, the financial crisis, pandemic outbreaks, too few opportunities for young people, and loss of skilled people to other countries are all challenges for the conservation and sustainable development of natural resources for current and future generations. It therefore welcomed the work of SPC’s technical divisions at national, regional and international levels to address these challenges by providing policy support, research and technical assistance to enable Pacific people to use their resources sustainably as described below.

**Land Resources** – CRGA 39 acknowledged the work conducted by SPC’s Land Resources Division in a range of areas including trade, biosecurity and plant and animal health. In particular, it commended SPC on the recent opening of a new world-class facility to house the Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees (CePaCT) in Suva, Fiji Islands. The centre holds large collections of Pacific crop and tree plants that are well-adapted to various Pacific conditions. It noted that the collections are being made available to the region’s farmers and communities through tissue-cultured plants. Representatives commended SPC in particular on the development of ‘climate-ready’ seeds including salt-tolerant and flood-tolerant varieties to support efforts to adapt to climate change, improve food and nutritional security and increase domestic and export trade in agriculture and forestry products.

**Marine Resources** – CRGA 39 acknowledged the work of SPC’s newly renamed Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division in providing research, training and technical assistance in one of the Pacific region’s most important economic sectors. In particular, CRGA 39 recognised SPC’s important work in objective scientific assessment of tuna stocks, which is fundamental to tuna fisheries management in the region, noting that the on-going and very successful tuna tagging project is providing vital information in this regard. Representatives acknowledged this as a good example of an initiative that is best done regionally, especially as there is no national capacity for such assessment and that regional assessments must be undertaken by an unbiased regional organisation. Representatives commended SPC’s joint initiative with the Forum Fisheries Agency to conduct a study on the future of Pacific fisheries, which will help in determining the direction of the sector

**Public Health** – CRGA 39 acknowledged the work of SPC’s Public Health Division in helping to prevent communicable and non-communicable diseases and strengthening of health systems. It commended its efforts to assist member countries in being better prepared for disease outbreaks as was demonstrated during the recent H1N1 pandemic influenza. SPC’s pandemic preparedness project contributed to most member countries and territories having the capacity and equipment on hand to mount an effective response to the outbreak. It supported the continued provision of assistance to SPC to sustain this emergency preparedness and response capacity in the region. CRGA 39 supported the division’s new strategic plan, which is strongly focused on addressing the wider determinants of health such as education, gender equity, adequate sanitation and clean water and livelihoods, in addition to addressing the diseases common to the region. It welcomed the cross-sectoral approach being taken by SPC in collaboration with development partners to ensure the most effective application of resources for health. Representatives also welcomed SPC’s initiative to map

priorities in health in three member countries and supported the extension of this mapping to other countries.

**Social Resources** – CRGA 39 commended the efforts of SPC’s Social Resources Division in assisting members to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and meet commitments to international conventions and treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It welcomed SPC’s work on issues relating to human rights, gender, youth, culture and community leadership, noting the relevance of these issues to sustainable development. It expressed appreciation for the work of the Regional Media Centre, and the support of the Statistics and Demography Programme for the functions of national statistics offices, noting the impacts achieved in member countries and territories. CRGA 39 also noted the need for upgraded and expanded country and regional statistical information systems and databases across all sectors as a prerequisite to improving the availability of high-quality statistical outputs to make evidence-based policy decisions.

**Economic Development** – CRGA 39 acknowledged SPC’s role in establishing a new feeder shipping service for Kiribati, Nauru, the Republic of Marshall Islands and Tuvalu, using a Kiribati state-owned vessel. This new feeder service has already resulted in lower freight rates and more frequent and reliable shipping. The meeting was pleased to note that the Regional Maritime Programme will incorporate into its existing audit regime a system of safety audits on domestic ships, to be undertaken in consultation with its counterparts in Australia and New Zealand, along with other efforts to help ensure the safety of the region’s domestic fleet. CRGA 39 acknowledged the utility of the Pacific Rural Internet Connectivity System (PacRICS) in enabling communication with rural areas and outer islands. PacRICS is inexpensive and the Internet access provided by each site can be spread over a wide area, allowing sharing of costs. Representatives noted that the system proved to be particularly valuable during the recent tsunami disaster where it provided the only electronic communication channel to and from Niutoputapu for up to two weeks after the event and greatly assisted in the coordination of relief efforts. CRGA 39 noted that PacRICS is the only satellite communication system that both covers the entire Pacific Island region and lends itself to use as a low-cost disaster surveillance and response tool. CRGA 39 also supported the request for a further year of bandwidth funding for the PacRICS initiative, which provides the region with a robust and responsive communication backbone that can be used for education, health and disaster response purposes, noting in particular that the equipment required is compact and inexpensive and, in the event of a disaster, can be landed and set up with relative ease.

**Quality of papers and presentations** – CRGA 39 acknowledged the quality of the papers and presentations made by the Secretariat. It welcomed the clear focus on impacts and outcomes, noting that the detailed reporting of activities at the national level made it easier for members to appreciate the value of the services that SPC provides in various sectors.

**SPC and the Pacific Plan** – CRGA 39 commended SPC for its initiative in mainstreaming Pacific Plan priorities into its core business and welcomed the publication *SPC and the Pacific Plan*, which gives detailed information on its contribution to implementing the Pacific Plan across all the sectors in which SPC works.

**Joint country strategies** – CRGA 39 acknowledged the value of the joint country strategies (JCSs) that have been developed between members and SPC. CRGA 39 also noted progress with the development, implementation and monitoring of the strategies and supported the Secretariat’s plans to complete strategies with Fiji Islands, Guam, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu in 2010 and to start on developing a second-cycle strategy with Marshall Islands. The JCSs outline in one integrated document the scope of SPC’s planned assistance to an individual member over a defined period. They present a ‘whole of SPC’ approach and are based on working jointly with members to improve the responsiveness, relevance, effectiveness and strategic impact of interventions at the country level, and to strengthen priority setting and monitoring. Key principles in developing the strategies are an emphasis on stated national development priorities, joint preparation and a participatory multi-sectoral approach. Representatives welcomed the Secretariat’s approach to involving other CROP organisations in developing the JCSs, noting that this process may in time lead to CROP-wide JCSs with members.

**Tracking development progress** – CRGA 39 welcomed the approach taken by SPC to develop a system to assist members in regular monitoring and reporting of development progress against national and international development targets, including the MDGs. To enhance members’ access to relevant development data, SPC is working with stakeholders including members to agree on a core set of indicators

for Minimum National Development Indicator Datasets. The meeting recognised the progress that has been made. The next step will be to finalise the initial dataset to share with development partners to ensure their development tracking requirements are met. The dataset will then be shared with members to ensure their monitoring and tracking requirements are met, after which it will be finalised and put forward for implementation. CRGA 39 noted that the work will ultimately result in a monitoring system that will allow tracking of development in real-time, based on collection and compilation of high-quality statistics and further noted that achieving this aim will require investment of additional resource at national and regional levels.

**Long-term sustainable financing strategy for SPC** – CRGA 39 commended the proactive stance taken by SPC in developing a long-term sustainable financing strategy for the organisation and endorsed the establishment of a subcommittee of CRGA to assist the Secretariat in undertaking an in-depth analysis of the core functions that SPC should perform and the most appropriate funding modalities. This analysis will provide the basis for developing the strategy. The meeting endorsed the terms of reference and membership of the subcommittee and noted that it will report its findings to CRGA 40 in 2010.

**Financial administration and management** – CRGA 39 commended SPC on receiving clean audit reports, for the 13<sup>th</sup> successive year, for its 2008 financial records and the Provident Fund. It approved the balanced budget presented by the Secretariat for 2010, with total anticipated income and expenditure amounting to 68,418,000 CFP units, comprising combined (SPC, SOPAC and SPBEA) core budgets of 14,150,600 CFP units and non-core budgets of 54,267,400 CFP units (programme funding: 9,319,400 CFP units; project funding: 44,948,000 CFP units). The meeting noted that some recently approved funding had not been incorporated in the budget it approved and that these funds would be incorporated in a budget summary that would be circulated to members at a later date.

**Evaluation of the Director General's performance**– CRGA 39 convened 'in camera' for this session and its recommendations will be presented to the Chair of Conference also 'in camera'.

CRGA 39 reached agreement on a number of other recommendations, which are included in full in Attachment 1. In accordance with established practice, the decisions of CRGA 38 held in Noumea in October 2008 are also attached (Attachment 2) for noting by the Conference, given that in the years the Conference does not meet, CRGA is empowered by the Conference to make decisions.

I commend these decisions and recommendations to the Conference. In this regard, I wish to thank CRGA 39 members for their cooperation in completing the business of the meeting and for their commitment and dedication to the work of the Pacific Community.

I end by wishing you a stimulating and fruitful meeting,

Yours sincerely,

Ms Romaine Kwesius  
 Chair  
 39<sup>th</sup> Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations

**STATEMENTS FROM OBSERVERS AT CRGA 39****Statement by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat**

On behalf of the Secretary General of the Forum Secretariat, who is unable to be here this week, thank you for the opportunity to make a few remarks, to this the 39<sup>th</sup> meeting of CRGA. May we take this opportunity, please, to extend our condolences to those of you who have lost loved ones recently during the recent tsunami and to you too, Director General for the loss of your father.

Our Secretary-General, Mr Tuiloma Neroni Slade, will be attending the Sixth Conference of the Pacific Community next week. He will be addressing Conference on some of the key outcomes of the Forum Leaders meeting that was held in Cairns, Australia, from the 4<sup>th</sup> – 7th August.

For now, suffice to say, that the Forum Leaders meeting was a great success and possibly one of the largest gatherings of delegates for a Leaders' meeting. The meeting was convened against the backdrop of the global financial and economic crisis and as expected, the theme for the meeting was about the region's responses to this crisis and how the region might build resilience to it.

One of the major outcomes of the Leaders' meeting was the Cairns Compact for Strengthening Development Coordination. This compact is designed to improve development outcomes, to address the impacts of the global economic crisis, and to strengthen long term economic resilience for the region. The Secretary General will present the Compact to Conference next week and will elaborate on other essential features of it, including its implementation.

The Forum Leaders at their meeting this year acknowledged with appreciation the significant work undertaken in relation to RIF, the regional institutional framework review. We would like to take this opportunity, to congratulate the Director General, his staff and CRGA for persevering through this process and seeing it to the end. We'd also like to extend our congratulations to the CEOs and staff of SOPAC and SPREP.

The joint meeting of the governing councils of SPC, SPREP and SOPAC on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8th July this year, was a historical occasion and the outcomes were equally historical in that they lay the foundation for resolution of one of the more difficult aspects of the RIF exercise as it pertained to the rationalisation of the work programmes of SOPAC into SPC and SPREP. I am sure our Secretary General will also touch on this, as he played an important facilitative role in that exercise.

As I mentioned earlier the Secretary General will provide a fuller update on key developments arising out of the Leaders meeting and the envisaged role of SPC in those developments.

For the remaining of my remarks, I wish to share with CRGA some of the progress made to date on the corporate reforms that we have embarked upon at the Forum Secretariat.

Last year, we started on a journey of institutional strengthening – a journey that will take some time to complete. The key platform for these reforms was the completion of the 2008-2012 Corporate Plan and the four Programme Strategic Plans for 2009-2011, all of which have now been endorsed by FOC. Strategic planning guidelines, with the assistance of SPC, have been produced to ensure strategic planning practices become embedded in the Secretariat's work and in our culture.

Since then, our focus has been to ensure that the Secretariat has the appropriate systems to implement these plans. We are on track to improving the Secretariat's systems to serve this purpose.

Essential reforms in the Secretariat's accounting systems have been undertaken, with improved services being set in place or now being developed. Taking the lead from SPC, a new accounting system, the same as being used by SPC, has been installed and implemented. The budgeting module has made possible, significantly improved formats for our Budget and Work Programme.

New Financial and Staff Regulations were submitted and approved by FOC in July 2009. These, along with the Remuneration Regulations, form the over-arching guiding documents for the management of the human and financial resources of the Forum Secretariat. In turn, all regulations will be supported by our internal policy and procedures which will be available for staff on our brand new Intranet, which will be launched in the very near future.

The Secretariat has also developed a new risk management policy with associated guidelines. To support the risk management framework, business continuity plans have been drafted. While these are still in the early phases of development, the work done so far provides a strong base on which to build.

Work continues with the development of a new monitoring and reporting framework. Initial thinking has been discussed with FOC and a new reporting framework is being trialled internally, with a view to determining how well some of the ideas from the initial thinking will work in practice. Further work on the reporting framework will be developed during the remainder of this year, with a view to reporting against delivery of the Corporate Plan and the programme strategic plans at the end of this financial year.

The ongoing institutional strengthening exercise demonstrates our commitment to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of services to our Members. They are reforms that respond to our Members interest and concerns for the Secretariat to be more strategic and focused and to be smarter in undertaking our core functions.

Chair, this is just a brief summary of some of our progress with respect to our institutional strengthening. I look forward to observing your corporate reforms and developments, and, with your approval, of taking the opportunity to learn from SPC.

I wish the CRGA all the best for the remainder of your meeting.

#### **Statement by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

It is a great honour to be here at the 39<sup>th</sup> CRGA representing the UNESCAP Executive Secretary, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, and I thank the Director General Dr. Jimmie Rodgers for inviting ESCAP, and the Government of Tonga for the excellent arrangements and the warm hospitality.

Yesterday, the honorable delegate from Tonga asked how the development partners were coordinating their programs with SPC and Pacific island governments. In response, let me say that ESCAP is attending the CRGA this year because it is now committed to working much more closely with SPC and other regional organizations than it has been able to do in the past. Having taken over this job only recently, my instructions from Dr. Heyzer are to ensure that ESCAP becomes a valuable partner in and for the Pacific.

The UN Secretary General and Dr. Heyzer have already conveyed condolences and offers of support to the Governments of American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga and I am to attend the CRGA and to be part of the UN team to discuss with the Tongan Government and other development partners on the ground how best the UN can assist the recovery process. In Samoa, the UN has been given the task of coordinating the development agencies' immediate post disaster assessment and support.

I have commented in the course of the meeting on how UNESCAP can work closely with the SPC and the Pacific Islands Forum in promoting gender equality and in addressing disability in the Pacific particularly in costing the gaps and mainstreaming solutions through national policies and budgets. The costing of total damage and loss after natural disasters such as the ones we have just had in our region is one of UNESCAP's stronger points and the UN Resident Coordinator in Samoa has already indicated to the Samoan Government our readiness to assist in such an exercise if needed.

The Forum Ministerial Meeting on Disability in the Cook Islands in a couple of weeks time—the first such Ministerial meeting in the Pacific is ESCAP—is another good example of where ESCAP is partnering the region (Forum Secretariat, Australia, Cook Islands and NGOs) in addressing a critical issue. I was very pleased to learn yesterday that there is a much wider interest in and support for disability issues in SPC and in the member countries than previously thought; and that there is plenty of scope for extending the disability partnership in the Pacific.

Statistics is another one of UNESCAP's strengths and I am pleased to advise that ESCAP is recruiting a statistician for its Pacific office, whom you can count as a member of the proposed team of region based experts under the expanded regional statistics program envisaged in Option 2 of the Benchmarking Study. Given the likely difficulty in funding all of the 12 or so statistics experts under one agency, I was pleased to learn from Dr Rodgers that his "many agencies one team" approach includes the creation of a virtual statistics team led and coordinated by SPC with some of the members located in different agencies and countries in the Pacific. The ESCAP member of such a team should ensure that ESCAP's other contributions, from its Statistics Division in Bangkok and from the Statistical Institute for the Asia and Pacific in Tokyo, are enhanced and coordinated. While I can only speak for UNESCAP, I do note that other UN agencies have been working closely with SPC and PIFS on this statistics benchmarking study as well and have indicated their interest in continuing their support.

The other comment we have on Statistics, which relate to ESCAP's other interest—the support for national sustainable development strategies (NSDS)—refers to a comment made Dr Gerald Haberkorn yesterday on the main reasons why statistics continues to be under-resourced in the Pacific. Annex I of meeting paper 3.4.1 (pp. 4-5) also refers to such constraints as including the lack of support and appreciation of statistics at the national level. It seems to us based on these comments that without greater national demand and support for the national statistical services, there is a limit to how much regional and international efforts can do to meet the requirements and ensure sustainability of statistical development.

It is therefore probably necessary to do more in mainstreaming statistical services at the national level including through national policy and budgetary processes. This is one of the many reasons why ESCAP and some of the other UN agencies are keen to support the efforts of SPREP, PIFS, SPC and others to form a Regional Partnership in support of National Sustainable Development Strategies or the like. The CROP Sustainable Development Working Group is meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October to consider this initiative and we look forward to a positive decision so that we can all help member countries promote the demand for good statistics, gender equality, the inclusion of people with disabilities, and the achievement of MDGs as well as other internationally agreed goals. I should also mention that a partnership of agencies (SPREP, UNESCAP, UNDP, UNICEF, and UNFPA) has just returned from Nauru where they provided assistance to the Government in the review of its National Sustainable Development. A request has been received from Tuvalu for similar assistance and we're looking at again responding in partnership with others.

In conclusion, UNESCAP is here because it believes strongly in coordinating and partnering with others in the Pacific, with the member countries, with SPC and other CROP agencies, with development partners, and with its other sister UN agencies primarily through the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) which of course was developed in consultation with member countries and on the basis of the Pacific Plan and the national development strategies.

#### **Statement by United Nations Children's Fund**

UNICEF Pacific has the pleasure of acknowledging here at the 39<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CRGA, our partnership with SPC, formalized by a Memorandum of Understanding. The SPC UNICEF Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in November 2008. The MOU set out principles to guide cooperation between the two organizations and notes 8 core activity areas for the partnership in countries that fall under both agencies' responsibilities.

Key achievements of the SPC UNICEF partnership are acknowledged. These include:

- In the area of data management, there has been substantial engagement and collaboration, particularly on the collection of important demographic and social data and monitoring of progress towards achievement of Millennium Development Goals. A Letter of Agreement is to be developed for this

core activity and will consider new areas of work such as civil registration.

- In the area of communication for behaviour and social change, the two agencies collaborated closely to support all 22 Pacific countries and territories to strengthen risk communication on H1N1. Progress has also been made in taking forward the development of a common framework for providing training on and planning for Behaviour Change Communication.
- In the area of education, the collaborative work with SPBEA on education standards and education data management through the Programme Cooperation Agreement will be appended to the MOU between UNICEF and SPC.
- In the area of emergency preparedness, UNICEF works together with SOPAC as members of the Pacific Humanitarian Team to coordinate and deliver both immediate and recovery response to emergencies in the region.
- In the area of HIV & AIDS awareness and prevention, the joint Adolescent Health and Development Programme, which also includes UNFPA has been in operation since 2005. In compliance with the Pacific Regional Strategy on HIV & AIDS, the tripartite of agencies is working to ensure countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals on HIV & AIDS. The task now is to secure new funding for the AHD programme to continue the synergistic benefits of this particular partnership.
- In the area of health and sanitation, SPC and UNICEF have worked closely on a number of key events in the region, including an agenda item for the Pacific Health Ministers meeting in PNG, the Pacific Health Countdown to 2015 initiative and the Regional Food Summits, including communication plans, together with other UN agencies.
- In the area of youth, there has been substantial engagement and collaboration, which is to be further formalized by a Letter of Agreement to coordinate efforts and combine technical assistance. This agreement shall include the advancement of national youth policies in national development strategies and capacity building of youth departments. The two agencies were requested by the Pacific Youth Council to facilitate the participatory process to develop the Pacific Youth Festival's Outcome Document, *Suva Declaration: Actioning the Youth Agenda*. The initiative involved a documented response from regional and national youth development agencies to document the progress against the Pacific Regional Youth Strategy 2010. This we intend to do by jointly preparing a report on the State of Pacific Youth in 2010, to coincide with the development of the next regional youth strategy. This report shall also feature an in-depth analysis of youth in urban areas.

Distinguished delegates, UNICEF's shared vision of maximizing on human potential that exists in our children, young people and women for both economic and social development, underpinned by the principles of human rights, is the basis for our partnership with SPC. We look forward to supporting progress in your countries through the continuation and expansion of this partnership.

### **Statement by the World Health Organization**

First, WHO would like to express sincere condolences and deep sympathy to the governments and people of the Kingdom of Tonga, Samoa and American Samoa on the tragic loss of lives, injuries and the devastation caused by the recent tsunami.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the 39th Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations, the governing body of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, which is one of the main collaboration partners of WHO in the Pacific. My name is Li Dan. I am the Medical Officer, Noncommunicable Diseases, in the WHO Office for the South Pacific and it is my honour today to deliver to you the statement of Dr Chen Ken, WHO Representative in the South Pacific, who is unable to attend due to previous commitments.

Madam Chair, the WHO role in Pacific Island countries is to act as a catalyst and advocate for action at all levels, from local to global, on health issues of public concern. WHO's mandate is to lead the response to public health issues in Pacific island countries: WHO brings the global and regional health policies and

strategies to the Pacific Island countries through its network of offices from headquarters to Regional, South Pacific and Country Liaison Offices.

WHO continuously provides effective and appropriate support to Pacific Island countries to deal with H1N1. At least 190 of WHO's 193 member states have reported H1N1 outbreaks and, as of 22 September 2009, 19 Pacific Island countries have reported 1,698 cases. WHO keeps in close contact with countries and provides technical support by sending WHO experts and consultants to Pacific Island countries to work with local staff to improve surveillance and reporting systems for H1N1, laboratory diagnosis and disease prevention activities. The Director General of WHO has stated that WHO has no current plans to lower the phase-six pandemic alert. She also has stated that while WHO believes mass swine flu vaccinations will be effective in minimising the impacts of the disease, governments should closely monitor adverse side effects of the vaccines.

WHO, on the front line, provides quick responses to disasters occurring in the Pacific Island countries. One and a half days after the tsunami hit the northern island of Tonga on 30 September, a WHO expert was deployed from the WHO South Pacific Office in Fiji to Tonga to provide initial and urgent support. Similarly, another expert was sent to Samoa from the WHO Regional office in Manila arriving within 48 hours following the disaster. WHO Offices in Fiji, Philippines, Tonga and Samoa are working hand in hand, and with other partners, to provide assistance to the affected countries and populations.

WHO provides clear evidence on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in Pacific Island countries. WHO assists the Pacific Island countries by providing training on conducting field surveys, data analysing, drafting, reviewing and publishing NCD STEPS reports. These reports have provided scientific, national, updated and comparable data. The STEPS Survey results show that the Pacific Island countries, as a group of countries/territories, or as a region, had the highest prevalence of the key NCDs (overweight, obesity and diabetes) of any other region of the world. For example, the prevalence of overweight among the 25–64 age group was 93.5% in Tokelau, 93.5% in American Samoa and 93.3% in Nauru. The prevalence of diabetes among the 25–64 age group was 47.3% in American Samoa, 43.6% in Tokelau, 32.1% in FSM (Pohnpei). These results are useful tools for developing and updating the regional and national NCD strategies, food summit strategies and for selecting interventions and other activities.

WHO provides systematic approaches to health and development through its work in Health Systems Strengthening. WHO has produced a global health system strengthening strategy entitled "Everybody's Business: Strengthening Health Systems to Improve Health Outcomes - WHO's Framework for Action", which identifies six key building blocks of health systems: service delivery, information, medical products and technologies, health workforce, financing, and leadership and governance. In the area of health workforce development, WHO has successfully implemented the Pacific Open Learning Health Net in 12 Pacific Island countries.

WHO provides effective technical support to Pacific Island countries on STI/AIDS and EPI activities. WHO has assisted six Pacific Island countries in conducting the first rounds of Second Generation Surveillance Surveys on HIV/AIDS. WHO has led the process of developing a training package on comprehensive STI case management for the Pacific and conducted the training of trainers for 10 countries. WHO provides technical support to Pacific Island countries so that at least 3,000 childhood deaths are prevented annually through universal immunization, with the result that no measles cases and deaths have occurred in most Pacific Island countries in the past decade and the chronic hepatitis B infection rate has been significantly reduced among children born after the late 1990s. WHO is working with MOH and MOE to implement health-promoting schools in many Pacific Island countries.

WHO provides comprehensive support to Pacific Island countries on "whole of government" and "whole of society" approaches. WHO works with different GOs, NGOs and key stakeholders on health issues. Partnerships for health are indispensable. The roles of partners in dealing with health include basic collaborative work, combined planning and implementation, participation in conducting evaluations, the sharing and mobilizing of technical, financial and material resources, and the sharing of information on health issues. Different sectors will also take primary responsibility for the health of their staff. For example, WHO experts provide support for national food summits in several Pacific Island countries. They work with different ministries, such as ministries of agriculture and education, and also with food industries and are organizing a food summit in Pacific Island countries to take place in May, 2010, with other key stakeholders.

WHO also works with ministries of trade, finance, and education in Pacific Island countries to assist in the effective implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

WHO and SPC have been collaborating with each other on health issues for many years. This collaboration covers several areas including NCD prevention and control, communicable disease surveillance and response, H1N1 prevention and control, prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis control, human resource development, food security and food summits, climate change, and maternal and child health. Joint programmes between WHO and SPC have been set up and implemented, such as the 2-1-22 Pacific NCD Programme and the Pacific Regional Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Project.

For primary health care, most Pacific island countries provide government-financed free health care to all citizens. This health care guarantees a relatively fair health system in many countries in terms of financial access, but the level of health spending in Pacific Island countries in general is still insufficient to address the many health challenges. To strengthen primary health care, WHO convened the "1<sup>st</sup> Steering Group Meeting on Revitalizing Primary Health Care in the Pacific" in September 2009. For Healthy Islands activities, WHO organized a "Meeting on the Revitalization of Healthy Islands and Building Capacity" on 20 September 2009, just before the Regional Committee Meeting held in Hong Kong. The meeting agreed that Healthy Islands and primary health care were linked and mutually supportive and neither should be ignored as a result of a focus on the other. Healthy Islands is the vision; primary health care is the tool.

WHO will prepare a working paper with guidance on how to revitalize Healthy Islands in countries and the steps required to develop an Alliance for Healthy Islands that will engage multi-sectoral stakeholders and mobilize donors and resources. WHO will organize the first Healthy Islands Forum in May, 2010, which will be convened at the time of the World Health Assembly in Geneva and will thereafter be held at the time of the Pacific Health Ministers meetings every two years. WHO will work with the Pacific Island countries and key stakeholders on Healthy Islands activities at country level.

We wish to acknowledge the Director General, Dr Jimmie Rodgers, and staff of SPC, for their great work in the Pacific and effort in organizing this important meeting. We also thank the Government of Tonga for hosting this meeting.

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