

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) input into

Part I of the SG Report: “Oceans and sustainable development: Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development”

The contribution sought is:

- (i) Information regarding the relevant activities of your Organisation fostering an integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development with regards to oceans; and
- (ii) Challenges and opportunities in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development in that regard, including matters which may require further consideration with a view to fostering integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development with regards to oceans, with an emphasis on areas where coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels could be enhanced.

SPREP is the Pacific region’s inter-governmental environment agency, supported by its member states of 21 Pacific Island countries and territories and 5 metropolitan countries. It is the lead agency in the Pacific for: biodiversity and ecosystem management; waste management and pollution; environmental monitoring and governance; and climate change. SPREP’s ecosystem-based management and adaptation programmes directly address the three pillars of sustainable development.

SPREP’s role, niche and activities in the management and protection of the Pacific Ocean environment includes projects and programmes under:

- (i) ecosystem-based management and adaptation of ocean and island natural resources (ridge-to-reef, integrated island management)
- (ii) conservation and sustainable use of critical marine habitats
- (iii) marine protected areas, including marine spatial planning (local, EEZ and regional scale)
- (iv) marine pollution, including marine debris
- (v) marine mammal species, and other threatened and migratory species
- (vi) ocean observation, including addressing Ocean Acidification and hosting the Pacific Islands Global Ocean Observation System (PIGOOS)

Challenges for SPREP to integrate social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development are in the following areas:

Enormous constraints in governance, economic, knowledge and cultural capacity of governments and communities to transition toward green economies and resource management options for sustainable development. [Examples include: integrity within governance (corruption, etc) and old cultural norms constrain social and gender equity in decision-making processes concerning development and resource management].

Growing populations, international industry pressures and global economic structures are often too large, too complex and too expensive for small island developing states and businesses to respond

within and to create significant local or regional transitions to sustainable development. [Examples include: distant water fishing nation dominance of tuna fisheries use and management; foreign investors driving unsustainable practices in use of coastal zone and ocean resources/ ecosystems - including coastal and ocean fish stocks, species of conservation significance and future deep sea mineral sites].

Political will to seek, and then implement, sustainable development options is low in many places, or is smothered by the urgency for economic development and modernization.

Opportunities include:

Improving coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels, is already occurring in each of our focus areas listed above. Recent beginnings in regional scale ocean planning need to be expanded.

A diverse, abundant and growing set of strong partnerships with global, regional and local organisations is critical to SPREPs ability to achieve sustainable development goals on behalf of its member states and territories.

Traditional knowledge and community-based resource management practices, whilst being lost, still provide the most appropriate and unique opportunities for achieving sustainable use of coastal and oceanic resources. Modernisation threatens this opportunity.