

**REPORT OF THE THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF  
THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS  
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 4–7 November 2002)**

Including:  
**SUMMARY OF DECISIONS OF  
THE THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF  
THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**

**Annexes to the Reports of proceedings have not been included in this printed document,  
exception of Annexes 1, 2, 3 and 4.**

**A companion CD-ROM containing all the report annexes, conference and meeting papers, photos and  
Programme presentations is available on request from the Secretariat.**

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**SUMMARY OF DECISIONS OF THE THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF  
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**REPORT OF THE THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF  
THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**  
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 4–7 November 2002)

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## **AGENDA**

- 1. Director-General's Reports**
- 2. Programme Focus**
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**SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY****THE THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF  
THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**  
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 4–7 November 2002)**SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS  
OPENING/ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS****Official Opening**

1. The Chairperson, the representative of Solomon Islands, opened the 32nd meeting of CRGA with a brief welcome to all delegates.
2. The representative of FSM gave the opening prayer.

**Adoption of Agenda and hours of work  
Election of drafting committee**

3. **The Committee adopted its agenda (appended to this report) and working hours. In accordance with the rules of procedure, the Vice-Chairperson of the next CRGA (Tokelau) was elected Chairperson of the drafting committee, which consisted of Australia, Fiji Islands, France, French Polynesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tuvalu and United States of America.**

**AGENDA ITEM 1 – DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS**

4. The Director-General of SPC welcomed everyone to SPC headquarters. The Director-General commented that SPC as an organisation is doing well and that she is proud to be a part of it.
5. She gave a general overview of the major points, stating that the Secretariat had responded to a number of important decisions reached at last year's Conference and CRGA. Two primary responses were the new Corporate Plan and the revised Declaration de Tahiti Nui, which will be reprinted next year in final form. She reported that negotiations with New Caledonia and France regarding privileges and immunities were successful, and that a draft document will be presented for endorsement by CRGA. She thanked the personal efforts of Bernard Deladrière, Chief of Staff of the President of the Government of New Caledonia, French Ambassador, Bruno Gain, and Deputy Director-General, Yves Corbel.
6. She noted that in terms of key developments in individual programmes, there was significant expansion in SPC's agriculture, fisheries, statistics and demography programmes. She also noted that SPC is now in full compliance with the CROP remuneration structure. With respect to corporate development she noted that the staff now numbers 243, and that 40% of professional staff are Pacific Islanders, a slight increase from last year. She said SPC continues to work towards increasing this amount. She did note that the number of professional women has decreased and is currently 30%. She noted there was a comprehensive job sizing exercise in 2002, and she noted that a staff performance-appraisal system is now in place, and is linked to remuneration. The Director-General also made reference to a survey of local economic conditions that is being conducted to ensure support staff salaries are in line with local levels.
7. The Director-General reported that SPC's current financial state is sound, but made mention of the growing assessed contribution arrears, which, as at 30 September 2002, is over one million CFP units (1 CFP unit = 100 CFP Francs), roughly USD 800,000. She looked forward to discussion on this topic. She saw SPC's relationship with its donors as evolving into more of a partnership. She closed by noting that a major challenge remaining for the Secretariat was to more effectively communicate with stakeholders and members, and noted that she has already given this issue personal attention and will continue to do so over

the coming year. She highlighted excellent relations with CROP organisations and other international agencies working in the region, specifically noting the draft agreement of cooperation with the International Maritime Organization and SPC.

8. The representative of France congratulated the Director-General on her clear and comprehensive presentation and acknowledged the importance of France's relationship with SPC. He acknowledged SPC's importance in the coordinated development of the region, which contributes to Pacific Island growth and stability. He acknowledged the work done on the new Corporate Plan, noting its importance for the organisation's direction and for SPC's ability to respond to the needs of the region. He also stated that France viewed the negotiations regarding privileges and immunities as being fruitful, and that they were carried out in a constructive and efficient spirit with an outcome that had fulfilled their expectations.

9. The representative of Fiji Islands expressed appreciation to the Director-General for her excellent presentation and able leadership. He stressed that Fiji Islands has remained a key supporter of SPC since its establishment and hopes the organisation will maintain its role as guardian of Pacific Island resources. He made reference to the continuing significance of the Canberra Agreement and noted SPC's biggest challenge is to be responsive to new and emerging issues of development, such as globalisation, climate change, free trade and increasing population. He stated that Fiji Islands was committed to the construction of the Pacific Village and the hosting of CRGA 33 in 2003, and will provide further update in the course of the meeting.

10. The representative of Papua New Guinea thanked the Director-General for her review of the Secretariat's progress and achievements. He noted that the late delivery of information and working papers complicated the consideration of certain issues and requested that the Secretariat in the future make documents available a minimum of six weeks before CRGA, as is the official requirement, to allow for appropriate and timely consideration by member governments. He also stated that he hoped representatives would have access to the recommendations contained in programme reviews. He was pleased to note that the Marine and Land Resources Divisions had received excellent funding support. He welcomed the expansion of DFID-funded programmes in Statistics and Demography to other parts of the region. He was sad to hear that Commonwealth funding had been lost. He closed by commending the Secretariat as well as France and New Caledonia on reaching agreement on privileges and immunities.

11. The representative of Samoa expressed thanks to the Director-General on her annual report. Regarding the financial state of the Secretariat, he expressed concern regarding members' arrears, which have gone beyond one million CFP units, as reported by the Director-General, but were not reflected in the prepared budget. He requested that an updated budget reflecting current arrears be made available. He inquired as to what action had been taken on the part of the Secretariat, including direct consultation with members, to address this issue. He welcomed the improvement in Pacific Islander staffing levels, but noted that it still fell significantly short of the 50% target set five years ago. He asked for clarification regarding the communication problems SPC was facing, as mentioned in the Director-General's report, and the responsibility/role of the new Communication Officer position.

12. The representative of Tuvalu requested clarification on the cooperation of SPC and SOPAC on energy-related programmes.

13. The Director-General apologised for the tardiness of some working papers and other communications. She explained that key documents were delivered in advance, but that some working papers had only just been completed because of ongoing reviews. She welcomed a full discussion on staffing issues, particularly input from countries regarding the Pacific Island representation, later in the week, and also stated that members would have the opportunity to examine in detail programme reviews that had been undertaken. She noted that other concerns that had been raised would be addressed under other agenda items throughout the week. The Director-General stated she was committed to leading a team from the Secretariat to Tokelau in 2003. She also hoped to visit Pitcairn.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2 – PROGRAMME FOCUS**

14. The focus of the programme presentations this year was the theme “Linking SPC technical programmes with Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) priorities and the SPC Corporate Plan”.

### **Overview of Suva operations**

15. The SPC Senior Deputy Director-General (Suva), presented a broad overview of the SPC Suva office operations, which comprise the Land Resources Division (Agriculture and Forestry) and the Suva operations of the Marine Resources Division, the Social Resources Division, the Corporate Services Division and the Programme Support Services.

## **AGENDA ITEM 2.1 – LAND RESOURCES DIVISION**

16. The SPC Plant Protection Adviser presented a report on the outcomes and achievements of the Land Resources Division over the past year as reported against the objectives in the Agriculture and Fisheries strategic plans.

17. A full text of the division presentations, including Information Paper 2.1 and the PowerPoint presentations, are attached to the companion CD-ROM\* to this report.

18. The SPC Senior Deputy Director-General (Suva) introduced the team conducting the review of the Land Resources Division (LRD) — Aleki Sisifa (team leader), John Low (Natural Resource Adviser, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat) and John Skerritt (Deputy Director, ACIAR) — and acknowledged the support of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat for making available John Low to participate in the review and of ACIAR for making available the services of John Skerritt.

19. The team leader stated that he was presenting preliminary, in-progress findings. He stated that the purpose of the review was to evaluate LRD’s effectiveness and relevance to its stakeholders and analyse its efficiency, organisational structure, and processes. He explained the team’s methodology and indicated there were several countries yet to be visited. He reviewed several LRD “success stories” in the areas of plant protection, animal health, community forestry and crop improvement. He indicated that key issues the review was addressing included:

- possible benefits of consolidating the strategic plans for the Agriculture and Forestry Programmes;
- introduction of specific and measurable performance indicators;
- priority setting;
- restructuring of LRD into two larger programmes, possibly addressing biosecurity and trade support, and farms and forests;
- ensuring continuity of extension activities;
- collaboration with regional organisations and stakeholders; and
- sustainability of LRD programmes.

20. The Senior Deputy Director-General remarked that this was the first divisional review within SPC, and one which essentially addresses one-third of the organisation’s activities. He also indicated this was the first occasion on which the results of a divisional review were being made available to CRGA. He expressed his appreciation of the review team’s progress to date, and indicated that some of the findings were in keeping with the current LRD focus, such as close integration between the two programmes. He also stated that the need to address policy analysis is well recognised within SPC, and is reflected in the draft Corporate Plan.

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\* CD-ROM available from the Secretariat on request.

21. The representative of Papua New Guinea stressed the importance of agriculture and forestry to his country, particularly in light of its large population, land mass and agricultural diversity. He stated that it was important for the region to maximise on competitive and comparative advantages, harness existing potential and utilise available expertise. He commended the continuing support from donors for the work of LRD. The representative asked SPC to focus on anticipated outcomes.
22. The representative of the Marshall Islands acknowledged the work of the review team, remarked on the importance of atoll agriculture to the Marshall Islands, and looked forward to future work in this area.
23. The representative of French Polynesia expressed thanks to the Senior Deputy Director-General and the review team. She commented that although French Polynesia had not yet been visited by the review team, she wished to pass on comments from her country's Minister of Agriculture. She noted that the general objectives of SPC to increase the profitability and sustainability of agriculture, increase food security and public health, and facilitate the commercial exchange of agricultural products, meshed with those of French Polynesia. However, for the final objective, which concerns reducing the consequences of natural disasters, French Polynesia does not have any specific programme, she said that French Polynesia accords particular importance to the sustainable economic and social development of its agricultural and forestry sector. She further noted that SPC's activities provide valuable support to existing programmes carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture and ensure their better integration at the regional level. She made reference to the technical assistance and regional expertise that SPC can give French Polynesia in the animal health sector, plant protection, crop improvement and forestry. French Polynesia does, however, regret that the Secretariat has not adequately developed its livestock improvement support programme.
24. The representative of Tonga thanked the review team and inquired whether the results of the review team be a subject for discussion among the regional heads of agriculture; and if there was a possibility of extending the concept of integrated management to agriculture and fisheries.
25. The representative of Australia stated she was impressed with the presentations and documentation from LRD and supported the move towards output/achievement-based reporting. The Australian representative welcomed the inclusion of the division's budget in the report, and recommended it as a model for other divisions reporting. She stated that Australia also supports a programme-based funding approach (as opposed to a project-based one), and congratulated SPC on this initiative. She stated that the LRD review appeared to be proceeding in the right direction. She was impressed by SPC's openness in allowing an outside review team to present partial findings in such an important forum.
26. The representative of Fiji Islands supported the comments from previous speakers regarding LRD's review. He stated that PICTs are in varying stages of development and it was, therefore, important for SPC to take a lead role in providing assistance. He applauded the efforts made in developing a model law on quarantine and biosecurity, and stated that this should help to overcome some technical barriers to trade. For instance, the kava exporting countries of Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu and Fiji Islands are unable to provide scientific evidence that kava does not cause liver related diseases. It is therefore imperative that the region be provided with laboratory equipment to comply with WTO standards and other related laws.
27. The representative of the United Kingdom thanked LRD presenters as well as the review team. He stressed the importance of examining the structure of LRD and commented that DFID does such internal reviews frequently.
28. The Chairperson, speaking as the representative of Solomon Islands, observed that as yet there had been no consultation by the review team in Solomon Islands. He commented on reform efforts in his country and encouraged SPC to focus on commercial forestry and agricultural initiatives that would bring economic returns to rural dwellers.
29. The representative of Samoa thanked the review team and asked for clarification on the proposed integration of the Agriculture and Forestry Programmes.



30. The Senior Deputy Director-General responded to country representatives' queries, stating that the review team's findings would be presented to heads of agriculture throughout the region and the subject would be an agenda item at the next Heads of Agriculture and Heads of Forestry meetings. He remarked that although many PICTs currently combine agriculture, forestry and fisheries departments under one larger ministry, this may be difficult to do on a regional basis at this point due to the complexity of SPC programmes.

***Official signing of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Pacific Consortium***

31. *The official signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of the Pacific Consortium, between the University of Guam, and the National University of Samoa took place.*

32. The Committee noted with satisfaction that for the first time in the Pacific, a strategic alliance had been created between the health and education sectors, with the establishment of a Pacific Consortium of universities responsible for the delivery of the Health Leadership and Management Development Programme for Pacific health ministries. The unique collaboration will provide great potential for addressing and sustaining efforts in the development of the Pacific health workforce, and the delivery of quality health care systems. This Consortium is a partnership between the University of Guam and the National University of Samoa, and brings together the North and South Pacific regions. In addition, the University of Auckland (New Zealand) has agreed to strategically support the National University of Samoa.

33. The Director-General indicated that SPC was proud to host the historical signing of the Pacific Consortium and congratulated the Project Coordinating Committee for the Health Leadership and Management Development Programme, NZAID, and the World Health Organization for this significant achievement.

34. Before the signing ceremony took place, the Committee heard speeches from Dr Harold Allen, President of the University of Guam; Mr Magele Mauilu, Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Samoa; Ms Lorraine Kerse, WHO Regional Adviser in Development and Human Resources; and Mr Sunia Soakai, Project Coordinating Committee Chairperson.

35. The full text of the MOU and the speeches are attached to the companion CD-ROM\* to this report.

**AGENDA ITEM 2.2 – MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION**

36. A full text of the division presentations, including Information Paper 2.2 and the PowerPoint presentations, are attached to the companion CD-ROM\* to this report.

37. The SPC Director of Marine Resources introduced the division, and outlined the strategic plans within the division, and described the the work that goes into the achievement of these plans. He said that SPC's Corporate Plan is the primary guide for the operation of the division, noting that another important guide is the Pacific Island Regional Ocean Policy.

38. The Director made the remark that the "mixed basket" of donors for the division had pluses and minuses. It meant major changes of direction for the programme as a whole are difficult, but there is flexibility in the new directions that can be taken within the programme.

39. The Director described programme objectives. He said that the supervision/monitoring of programme performance was not only by the SPC Executive, but also included input from management and sectoral meetings, and through cooperation with other fisheries partners such as FFA.

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\* CD-ROM available from the Secretariat on request.

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40. In presenting the Marine Resources Division (MRD) vision and mission statements, the Director mentioned the various programme reviews: the Oceanic Fisheries Programme was reviewed in 2001, Coastal Fisheries and Maritime will be reviewed in 2003, in time to report to the Heads of Fisheries Meeting. He said a review of the SPC/Nelson Polytechnic Fisheries Officer Training Course is under way.
41. The Maritime Training Adviser presented the Regional Maritime Programme (RMP) strategic plan for adoption by the meeting. He noted that RMP, based in Fiji Islands, is one of the three components of MRD. He then highlighted the programme's outputs for the past year, noting the private/public benefit of the training provided.
42. The representative of France expressed his appreciation for a very clear presentation, stressed the importance of fisheries resources, and commented on MRD's essential role in the region. He stated that job creation resulting from seafarer's training was encouraging as it fulfilled a practical and urgent need.
43. The representative of Tuvalu stated his appreciation of RMP, to which Tuvalu is a direct beneficiary, with some 700 men currently employed on vessels. He said that remittances from seafarers is the only source of revenue for many outer island residents and are crucial for Tuvalu's development, providing for about half the population. He agreed that transiting seafarers in Fiji Islands resulted in some social problems and indicated that Tuvalu is working to address this. He expressed the hope that the programme continue.
44. The representative of Cook Islands thanked the presenters and commented on the recently opened training centre in his country. He stated the domestic fishing industry had rapidly expanded over the past 12–18 months and that there was a shortage of trained Cook Islands crew members to man the vessels. This is being addressed through the training centre. He stressed the importance of RMP for Cook Islands.
45. The representative of Tonga expressed appreciation to the Director of Marine Resources and MRD, especially for work done in Tonga. She stated that the areas of marine resources and maritime development are peripheral for many, but that much of Tonga's workforce depends on it. She stated that RMP had helped Tonga revive its maritime training programme and expressed the hope that the assistance would continue.
46. The representative of Samoa stated that the longline fishing industry was important for Samoa as a major revenue earner, and inquired about the possibility of RMP assisting in the training of longline vessel skippers, as recruiting skippers from overseas is costly.
47. The representative of Fiji Islands thanked MRD for presenting its outputs in a quantifiable manner, and stated that the division's activities were important for employment, especially for rural peoples, who comprise more than half of Fiji Islands' population. He made reference to the importance of community fisheries and felt that that sector needed to be strengthened. He also stressed the need for training in management and administrative aspects of fisheries. He noted that foreign commercial enterprises benefit the most from commercial longline fishing because they are capital intensive. He further noted that small fishermen cannot benefit from such ventures, and so there is a need to strengthen community-based fisheries as these are vital for the sustainable livelihood and self-employment of rural people. He said that SPC should complement national efforts in this area.
48. The representative of Papua New Guinea acknowledged the importance of MRD and RMP to national development objectives and aspirations, and made reference to the benefits that Papua New Guinea has received from seafarer training programmes. He mentioned existing training colleges in Kavieng and Madang. He acknowledged the Maritime Training Adviser's concern regarding the clarification of government and private sector responsibilities, and commented there would be a continuing need for assistance in the area of legislation and safety. He also stated that the capacity of the national government to administer maritime programmes was an ongoing problem, with many qualified government officers moving to the private sector. He inquired whether SPC had a way to evaluate the impact of programmes, either through feedback from individuals or via training institutions. He agreed that the issue of social impacts should be addressed and wondered if this could be incorporated in seafarer training.

49. The representative of the United Kingdom expressed his appreciation for the presentations and asked whether the RMP review will look at strategies for sustainability. He also stated that from DFID's viewpoint, it would be interesting to examine the impact of remittances on the economies of small island nations.
50. The representative of the Marshall Islands acknowledged the important work of MRD and RMP.
51. The representative of Australia commended the work of RMP, and re-emphasised that Australia supported a move toward programme (as opposed to project) funding, which would allow SPC programmes greater freedom in determining priorities.
52. The representative of American Samoa praised the presentations, and inquired whether there had been any study that examined the flag or country of origin of the ships on which Pacific Island seafarers are currently serving.
53. The Chairperson, speaking as the representative of Solomon Islands, stated that with assistance from the EU, Solomon Islands had recently established a maritime training school. He observed that no mention had been made of Solomon Islands during the preceding presentations, and inquired if assistance was being given to Solomon Islands by RMP.
54. The Director of Marine Resources responded that some of the issues raised would be addressed in the following day's agenda, for example training for longlining skippers, and fisheries business management training.
55. The Maritime Training Adviser responded to maritime related issues raised:
- SPC has facilitated the training of 900 officers and engineers in PICTs with assistance from donors, and SPC has also organised courses that were specifically for local ships.
  - SPC has been regularly bringing people from Solomon Islands to Fiji Islands for training. SPC has not gone to Solomon Islands yet as training staff are awaiting invitation. People from the training school in Solomon Islands have been coming to SPC for training. The Chairperson, speaking as the representative of Solomon Islands, requested that Australia review its travel advice in regard to Solomon Islands. The USA, Japan and New Zealand have done so. Solomon Islands is currently being victimised as a result of this travel advice.
  - SPC has a database regarding the flag of ships on which Pacific Island seafarers are serving and can provide the country figures sought.
  - Papua New Guinea tutors/lecturers are being used to train seafarers in other countries. SPC is using Fiji Islands people to do training as well. The aim is that in time the larger countries will provide training for seafarers from the smaller countries.
56. The representative of Samoa questioned the figure given on qualified longline vessel skippers and engineers from Samoa that have undergone RMP training.
57. The Senior Deputy Director-General made some general remarks in response to some of the issues raised:
- He noted that RMP came to SPC from the Forum Secretariat in 1997. At that time it appeared that this was a "sunset" programme, yet it was far from that. It became clear that it was a "sunrise" programme in fact. Initially, SPC has been playing a catch-up game: it was recognised that seafarers needed to retrain in order to meet the upgrading requirements in four to five years' time to prevent the impact of loss of revenue to island states if their seafarers lost employment because they had not retrained.
  - SPC has the responsibility of retraining officers, and the retraining of ratings is the responsibility of their countries. Once the retraining of existing seafarers has been completed, ongoing training will be required. This regular retraining is the countries' responsibility, so the catch-up phase of the programme will finish for SPC in 2004.

- The other main area of the training programme, which is supported by New Zealand funds, is the strengthening of the maritime training institutions, their staff and their curricula.
- It is very important that the seafarer training part of the programme and the maritime administration part of the programme are in sync.
- The link-up of the network of training institutions in Auckland, Fiji Islands and Papua New Guinea maritime colleges is important to the auditor training programme. The Programme now has 38 trained auditors. (At the last audit training course, there was a 100% pass rate in the course.) This programme is ongoing. It will continue when the catch-up programme is finished.
- SPC is conducting a study that focuses on the problems of sexually transmitted infections (STI) amongst seafarers. It has organised a meeting from the health perspective, and social responsibility curricula are being devised for the training programmes.

58. **The Committee adopted the Regional Maritime Programme strategic plan as a living document. The Chairperson stated that this meant that the interventions by the speakers would be taken into consideration in developing and reviewing all of the SPC strategic plans to meet the needs of SPC members.**

59. The Director of the Marine Resources Division (MRD) presented an overview of the work of the **Coastal Fisheries Programme**, which encompasses reef fisheries science, aquaculture, coastal fisheries management and fisheries information and training. He described the challenges of developing a strategic plan to cover such a wide range of activities. He described the Division's vision, outlined the challenges CFP faces, and reviewed CFP's goals and objectives.

60. The Aquaculture Adviser highlighted one of the **Aquaculture Section's** outputs for the past year — the first regional aquaculture meeting in March 2002. He noted that SPC was serving as the region's focal point for aquaculture activities. He reviewed the regional shortlist of priority aquaculture commodities that are a focus of the Aquaculture Section's work.

61. The Fisheries Information Adviser stated the objective of the **Fisheries Information Section** is to help PICTs gain access to fisheries information with the goal of improving the management of marine resources. He highlighted several of the information materials that the Fisheries Information Section produces.

62. The Principal Reef Fisheries Scientist described the evolution and current work of the **Reef Fisheries Observatory**. He outlined the human resource, scientific and technical and management challenges of the Observatory.

63. The Director of MRD gave the presentation for the **Community Fisheries Section**, and highlighted the Section's outputs. He also described the community training programmes, which utilise participatory methods.

64. The Fisheries Development Adviser described the objectives and outputs of the **Fisheries Development Section** and outlined hands-on, in-country training workshops that were undertaken in the region. He also described the Section's publications, highlighting an awareness brochure and a technical manual.

65. The Fisheries Training Adviser made reference to last year's Conference, which stressed the importance of human resource development to the region and SPC, and noted that the **Fisheries Training Section** shared this focus. He reviewed the objectives and primary outputs of the Section.

66. The representative of Fiji Islands thanked the Director of MRD and his staff for their presentations. He noted there was considerable scope for expansion of work in the area of fisheries, and stated that Fiji Islands could benefit from expansion in the fisheries sector. He noted the importance of the participation of women in fisheries, especially at the village level, and hoped this was being taken into account in SPC's

work. He raised the issue of SPC developing pilot programmes in close collaboration with island governments. He noted the success of seaweed farming in Tonga and requested that best practices be disseminated to the other member countries of SPC.

67. The representative of French Polynesia thanked the Director of MRD. She referred to the table he presented, expressing surprise to see no mention of the French territories, despite the importance of fisheries in those countries, and the many French speakers at SPC who are involved in fisheries programmes. She also expressed satisfaction at the fruitful collaboration with SPC that has existed for many years now in the area of direct exchanges between technicians and scientists on the programmes' technical and scientific aspects, as well as participation in numerous symposiums, seminars and technical meetings on lagoon, coastal and oceanic fisheries resources and, more recently, in the area of agriculture. She also expressed satisfaction at collaboration on specialised training sessions (fisheries statistics, fish processing and fisheries resource assessments) and involvement in regional research projects such as PROCFISH. In particular, she mentioned that French Polynesia had participated in the PROCFISH oceanic fisheries resource assessment programme, which began fieldwork in the early part of the second half of 2002. This involved placing scientific observers on French Polynesian fishing boats, strengthening the in-port collection programme and tagging tuna. She took the opportunity to congratulate SPC on the work that had been conducted thus far. She also presented the main points of direction that French Polynesia had taken with regard to fisheries. A detailed statement by French Polynesia is annexed to this report as Annex 1.

68. The representative of Tonga thanked the Director of MRD and his team for their presentations and supported the comments by the representative of Fiji Islands to prioritise the involvement of women in fisheries.

69. The representative of Australia recognised the difficulties faced by the Director of MRD in pulling together a strategic plan for the Division, given the diversity of activities. She stated she was pleased to see the inclusion of performance indicators in the plan and stated that the presentations had helped clarify progress toward achieving the Division's objectives.

70. The representative of Papua New Guinea agreed with earlier comments about the need to involve women in fisheries activities. He also concurred with French Polynesia about the need for better fisheries information on the French countries. He expressed regret that the tables presented in the Director of MRD's presentations were not made available ahead of time. He stated he was pleased to hear that the work of the Aquaculture Section has its main focus on the grassroots sector, and hoped this would go a long way toward improving the living standards of people in rural villages. He asked whether coral farming was for the purpose of the ornamental trade or to seed reefs. He also inquired about the source of the 6000 "hits" per day on the Fisheries Information webpages. He said it would be interesting to know whether these hits were coming from the public, governments or the private sector, and also wondered what the overall impact of this section was on the region. He stated he was impressed by the training activities around the region, and hoped that any technical manuals would be made available to local fisheries authorities. He inquired whether the Director had any information on the amount of illegal fishing that occurs in territorial waters, stating that Papua New Guinea has caught quite a number of vessels fishing illegally. He expressed his pleasure with the Fisheries Training Section, and asked whether additional training materials such as videos could be made available for other subject areas, including coastal fisheries management. He also inquired whether it would be possible to use examples from successful community management projects to inform other communities. He closed with a comment on the successful work of the Regional Media Centre, and wondered if they could be involved in producing materials on coastal fisheries subjects.

71. The representative of Wallis and Futuna supported comments made by French Polynesia regarding the absence of statistics relating to Wallis and Futuna and other French territories. He noted that Wallis and Futuna had major fisheries projects under development, funded by the EU with technical help from French Polynesia. He stated that fisheries resources were currently abundant, but that a prudent management regime would need to be implemented to ensure long-term sustainability. He welcomed SPC's assistance in appraising fisheries stocks, which constitute the primary natural resource for Wallis and Futuna.

72. The representative of Tokelau noted that his country was not mentioned in any of the presentations, and stated that his country had no resources other than those in the ocean. He invited representatives from MRD to join the Director-General when she visited Tokelau in 2003.

73. The representative of Samoa expressed thanks to the Director of MRD and his staff and noted that the domestic longline industry was a major revenue earner for Samoa. He expressed Samoa's support for the work of MRD, in particular the Coastal Fisheries Programme (CFP). He inquired if the work/future directions of the Oceanic Fisheries Programme could be looked at in conjunction with the planned Coastal Fisheries Programme Review in 2003 to better reflect the roles and impact of the two programmes on the national economy and hence the budgetary allowances given to those programmes.

74. The representative of New Zealand remarked on the importance of fisheries resources to the economies in the region, and also stressed their importance with regards to PICT relationships with other nations, stating that access to fisheries was a powerful negotiating tool. He encouraged greater collaboration between SPC and other regional organisations to ensure that PICTs have information and are informed about how best to manage their marine resources in a sustainable manner.

75. The Chairperson, speaking as the representative of Solomon Islands, expressed his thanks to the Director of MRD and his staff, and stated he looked forward to the upcoming training in his country by the Aquaculture Section. He agreed with earlier comments regarding the positive assessment of CFP, and suggested that it was important to consider fisheries from a commercial standpoint, even at the community level.

76. The Director of MRD noted that the presentations focused on giving an overview, with selected highlights, and that work was being done in a number of countries on many issues. He apologised for the absence of figures for the French territories and Tokelau, noting that SPC had not prepared the tables, and stated that SPC would look at developing complete figures for the region. He noted delegates' comments on the importance of women in fisheries, and stated that SPC continued to take a lead role in this area. He observed that a review of the Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP) had been completed in 2001 and stated that review and the upcoming Coastal Fisheries Programme review would be presented at the next Heads of Fisheries Meeting in 2003. He also mentioned the possibility of undertaking a review of MRD as a whole at a later stage. Regarding illegal fishing, he observed that the issue was more appropriately the mandate of the Forum Fisheries Agency, but that OFP data also provided some indication of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities.

77. The Aquaculture Adviser stated that coral aquaculture activities were targeting the ornamental trade, and stated that the Pacific region had an excellent opportunity to exploit this niche, thanks to the region's high biodiversity and healthy environmental conditions.

78. The Fisheries Training Adviser remarked that most PICTs had adopted a standardised certification scheme for vessel skippers, and that training programmes were currently in place across the region (including in Samoa) to ensure that crews were in compliance with international standards. He stated that some business and engineering skills particular to fishing require additional specific training and that his section had developed short courses on these subjects, but lacked funding for implementation. He also mentioned that the SPC/Nelson Polytechnic course was currently under review and he anticipated a positive outcome. He also mentioned that the section had developed safety-at-sea materials, and hoped to secure funding to translate these into local languages.

79. The representative of Samoa supported the work of the Fisheries Training Section and requested that additional funds be allocated to the section's activities for the new year in relation to the domestic longline industry.

80. The representative of Papua New Guinea seconded the observations made by the representative of New Zealand, regarding the significance of the fisheries sector and stated the importance of fisheries training to the people of Papua New Guinea.

81. The representative of Cook Islands stressed the importance of training skippers and engineers to meet the demands of the growing domestic tuna industry and appealed to the donors to continue funding SPC's training efforts.

**82. The Committee adopted the Coastal Fisheries Programme's strategic plan as a living document.**

83. The Director of MRD introduced the **Oceanic Fisheries Programme (OFP)** strategic plan for adoption by the meeting. OFP is primarily concerned with tuna fisheries, as tuna are the main migratory species fished in the region. He said that as the majority of the current tuna fishing effort for tuna is international and as tuna is a regionally migrating species, the management of the fishery requires a collective regional approach. He noted that in designing the OFP's strategic plan, SPC tried to categorise and prioritise the various challenges faced by SPC and its members in this area. These include the need for:

- accurate, unbiased scientific evidence on which to base management decisions;
- an understanding of the marine ecosystem supporting these fisheries.

He stated that these considerations shaped OFP's goal as given in the strategic plan, which is that *PICTs access the best available scientific information and evidence necessary to rationally manage fisheries exploiting the region's resources of tuna, billfish and related species*. He further stated that CRGA had the opportunity to review the wording of the strategic plans, which are living documents, expected to be revised in changing circumstances.

84. The Acting Manager of OFP then presented an outline of SPC activities aimed at meeting the objectives in the strategic plan. He noted that the programme faces a continuing challenge in obtaining catch data from the large domestic fisheries of Indonesia and the Philippines. He noted that a cornerstone past achievement of SPC was its tuna tagging programme, which gave decision makers the confidence to allow an increase in catch over the last decade. In outlining the various activities of OFP, the Acting Manager made mention of the series of National Status Reports produced for various countries, including Papua New Guinea, Wallis and Futuna, and Tokelau during the past year. He said that SPC sees this assistance to national fisheries expanding due to continued development of domestic fisheries in the member countries.

85. The representative of France expressed thanks to the Director of MRD and his team for having so clearly defined the challenges that PICTs face and take up within the region. He said that it is essential that SPC continue to play its role, particularly with regard to forums such as the upcoming meeting in two weeks in Manila to discuss the implementation of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific. He pointed out that SPC could both enable the new Tuna Fisheries Commission to do its work, and support the work of other international agencies in the region in collaboration with FFA on legal aspects of management of the tuna fishery. He emphasised the complementarity of SPC's work with that of other regional organisations, such as SPREP, USP, etc., under the heading of sustainable management of fisheries resources. He commented that PICTs had an increasing need for scientific support for decision-making in the legal area and are increasingly realising that science, information and management are interrelated. The representative of France stated his belief that OFP is in a very good position to play a leading role in gaining a better understanding of migratory species in the Pacific, and unhesitatingly approved the strategic directions in the plan, which are highly relevant to negotiations currently under way.

86. The representative of the United States of America supported the comments made by France. He said that USA highly values the support that OFP has been providing to the tuna fisheries of the western and central Pacific. He expressed hope that OFP could continue to provide scientific advice and input to the new Commission as its functions evolve.

87. The representative of Fiji Islands said that he very much appreciated the contributions by the Director of Marine Resources and the Acting Manager of OFP on the value of the tuna fishery in the region. He said there is a need to strengthen the regional processes that are in place, and that there is a role for SPC and SOPAC in dealing with these matters that have been mentioned. He considered that perhaps there is not

enough information on how to deal with these matters, in relation to contact with other international agencies and conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. He also made the point that member countries and territories did not have enough information concerning the impact on the fishery of areas of potential development such as undersea mining, which may be a matter for another forum. He said that SPC's work should not be confined to tuna. The continental shelf should be further explored for the possibility of offshore mining as there is increasing pressure on other resources. The CROP agencies SOPAC, SPC, SPREP and FFA should therefore closely collaborate on these matters as their roles interconnect in certain areas.

88. The representative of Papua New Guinea joined previous speakers in commending the Director of MRD and the Acting Manager of OFP for their presentations. He commended the work of OFP, particularly that of providing critical information necessary for the oversight and management of tuna resources. He acknowledged the contribution by Fiji Islands in regard to maximising benefits to member countries. He asked whether threats to the spawning grounds of tuna and other migratory species have been investigated, especially from activities such as exploration and possible undersea mining. He acknowledged the remarks by the Acting Manager of OFP concerning the input to deliberations of other regional bodies, and also the national governments themselves. He noted that Papua New Guinea had gained by SPC's loss of Tony Lewis, who is now helping Papua New Guinea. He remarked that his comments on undersea mining were made in light of exploration work in Papua New Guinea, and approaches made to Fiji Islands and other countries by private sector interests which are keen to exploit undersea mineral resources.

89. The Chairperson remarked that there appeared to be overwhelming support for the work of the programme.

90. The representative of Australia remarked that national capacity building, which was one of the recommendations of an earlier CRGA, had not come through as strongly in this programme's presentation.

91. The representative of New Zealand noted that the programme strategic plans needed to be seen as living documents — the objectives needed to be changed over time, and the performance indicators needed to be reformed and revised in the light of these changing objectives. He noted that all the strategic plans needed to be seen as dynamic documents that are responsive to the needs of the members.

92. The representative of the Marshall Islands expressed an interest in the tuna tagging proposals and asked when this might take place.

93. The Chairperson, speaking as the representative of Solomon Islands, wondered whether similar software to that demonstrated in the Demography/Population GIS presentation might be applied to fisheries, and suggested that idea be "left on the table".

94. The Director of Marine Resources replied that the tagging programme will be implemented, essentially, when SPC can source the money for it. SPC will be putting its proposals to several possible sources, including the EU.

95. The Acting Manager of OFP said that spawning grounds for most of the tuna species are very extensive throughout the Pacific, and that spawning takes place in deep oceanic waters. He explained that most of the tuna species tend to avoid spawning near the shallow continental shelves where mining and other activities might have an impact, although there would be a need to know whether any longer range influences might be generated. He said that SPC pays attention to national capacity building. At this point in time SPC is involved with building data management resources in country, training, and assisting with compiling fisheries statistics feeding into national management plans. He said that SPC would like to expand this last activity, and that SPC likes to bring in national counterparts to work with SPC when national reports are being compiled, and would like to expand this activity. He further noted that the tagging programme was such a large, logistically complicated and expensive programme that it would take one to two years to be implemented following agreement to support the programme. He mentioned that SPC would like to see this programme taking place within the next two to three years.



96. **The Committee adopted the Oceanic Fisheries Programme strategic plan as a living document.**

### AGENDA ITEM 2.3 – SOCIAL RESOURCES DIVISION

97. The Deputy Director-General gave an overview of the Social Resources Division (SRD), stressing that its work focused on maximising human potential in the Pacific region, an important theme raised at last year's Conference. He outlined the Division's four main groups of programmes that serve member countries:

- Public Health Programme
- Women and Youth Bureaux, Cultural Affairs Programme, and the Community Education Training Centre
- Statistics and the Demography/Population Programmes
- PREFACE (renewable energy)

He also mentioned the support services, which ensure a good circulation of information and communication within SPC and with the region. He described two major strategies used by SRD programmes — human resource development and capacity supplementation — and gave specific examples of how programmes were implementing these strategies. He also indicated how SPC was increasing its capacity and ability to respond to the emerging needs of its members, and commented on the increasing move from project-based to programme-based funding. He closed by gratefully acknowledging the support of SPC's donors, including AusAID, the Government of France, NZAID, DFID, Taiwan/ROC, the Government of Japan, the Asian Development Bank, and UN organisations.

98. A full text of the division presentations, including Information Paper 2.3 and the Powerpoint presentations, is attached to the companion CR-ROM\* to this report. Presentations by Programme Support Services (IT, Library, Translation and Publications), which were not delivered at the meeting, are also attached to the CD-ROM.

99. The Manager of the **Public Health Programme (PHP)** opened with an overview of the principles of public health, and reviewed the public health challenges facing the region, which include high rates of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and communicable diseases. He then outlined how PHP's strategic plan addresses these challenges through the work of the programme's sections and projects. Beginning with PHP's goal 1— healthier Pacific Island communities — he described the programme's objectives and outputs. He closed with an overview of PHP's achievements for 2002.

100. The Manager of the **Health Leadership and Management Development (HLMD) Programme** presented a summary of the programme's accomplishments, stressing the significance of having developed a self-sustaining programme for training middle-level health managers, which will be housed within Pacific Island institutions. She expressed her appreciation to many individuals, programmes and organisations that made important contributions to the programme's success.

101. The Lifestyle Health Adviser described the work of the **Lifestyle Health Section**, which addresses a wide range of issues that impact the health of Pacific Island people, including nutrition, diet, NCDs, food safety, malnutrition, etc. She indicated that the primary focus of the programme is on long-term disease prevention through the development of a more highly skilled workforce, stronger partnerships with PICTs, and more comprehensive access to information.

102. The Tuberculosis Specialist presented statistics on the prevalence of TB in the region, and outlined the work the **Tuberculosis Programme** is doing to address this serious health issue, emphasising the importance of the need to cure the disease, given the danger of drug-resistant TB, which is incurable and would have disastrous effects in the region. She reviewed the project's achievements for 2002, and described the problems and challenges it faces. She closed by thanking the donors, including NZAID and France, and the assistance provided by other regional organisations.

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\* CD-ROM available from the Secretariat on request.

103. The Senior Deputy Director-General presented details on the **Population Advocacy Project**, **Reproductive Health IEC Project**, and the **Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) Project**, the first two of which finished in 2002. He indicated that ARH is strengthening the public health capacity in PICTs, and that the other projects have achieved a number of significant accomplishments.

104. The representative of Papua New Guinea expressed appreciation to the Deputy Director-General, Senior Deputy Director-General and their staff for their presentations, and commended the work of the HLMD Programme, hoping it could train as many staff as possible. He asked for clarification from the Lifestyle Health Adviser regarding difficulties programmes face in communicating and travelling to remote island countries, as well as Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, which she had mentioned in her presentation. He acknowledged that the Tuberculosis Specialist faced a large task in expanding its coverage to all countries by 2005, and suggested that an integrated approach, working with other SPC staff and programmes, might be helpful.

105. The Chairperson, speaking as the representative of Solomon Islands, agreed with the comments of the representative of Papua New Guinea, encouraging SPC staff to visit his country and make their own assessment regarding safety issues. He suggested that problems were not as serious as the media often portrayed, and again asked Australia to review their travel advice for Solomon Islands.

106. The Lifestyle Health Adviser endorsed the comments of the representative of Papua New Guinea, and stressed that SPC staff regularly visited all countries in the region. She apologised for any misunderstanding and indicated that she had intended to say that situations may be portrayed as dangerous, when in fact they are not.

107. The Director-General commented that the strategic plans under discussion were living documents and therefore subject to change. She assured the representatives of Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea that SPC's goal is to deliver services to all member countries, and that the organisation remains committed to seeing this is done.

108. The representative of New Zealand requested clarification on the freezing of a core-funded epidemiologist position, and on language in the PHP strategic plan, which could possibly be misinterpreted as written.

109. The Deputy Director-General indicated that the epidemiologist position was frozen following a transfer of funds to the PHP Manager position, which was recommended by an outside review of PHP in 2001. He explained that this reallocation of funds was necessary because core funding had not increased, but indicated that SPC was committed to finding funds to hire an additional epidemiologist as soon as possible.

110. The Manager of PHP addressed the comment by the representative of New Zealand by stating that the strategic plan merely meant to say that SPC was unique in having a specific focus on the Pacific region, as compared with other organisations that work in other regions. He indicated that the plan would be amended to avoid confusion.

111. The representative of Fiji Islands expressed his appreciation to the presenters and to the various sections of PHP for their hard work. He indicated that Fiji Islands was committed to addressing the issue raised the previous day regarding transiting sailors and HIV/AIDS, and stated Fiji Islands would be working with other governments on this matter. He highlighted the importance of incorporating training courses on HIV/AIDS and STI for sailors as part of community education and training in respective member countries in order to prevent HIV/AIDS.

112. **The Committee adopted the Public Health Programme's strategic plan as a living document.**

113. The Assistant Statistician presented the **Statistics Programme's** strategic plan, and reported on the programme's outputs for the past year.

114. The Acting Demographer presented the **Demography/Population Programme's** strategic plan, and reported on the programme's outputs for the past year.

115. The representative of Papua New Guinea supported and commended the work of the Statistics and Demography/Population Programmes, and expressed gratitude to the donor countries for the support given to these programmes, particularly the GIS and PRISM projects, which still needed considerable support to address all the countries in the region.

**116. The Committee adopted the strategic plans of the Statistics and Demography/Population Programmes as living documents.**

117. The Cultural Affairs Adviser presented the **Cultural Affairs Programme's** strategic plan and 2002 outputs, including the significant achievement of the development of the Regional Framework for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture, and the meeting of PICT ministers of culture, which endorsed the work done on this model law for the protection of traditional knowledge and intellectual property rights.

118. The representative of New Zealand asked for clarification: New Zealand's understanding was that the ministers had endorsed regional priorities for cultural development but didn't have the opportunity to review the strategic plan and inquired whether the priorities had been included. He asked that the wording of the regional priorities statement as endorsed by the ministers meeting be reflected in the regional priorities section of the strategic plan.

119. The representative of France said that he was convinced that PICT development would advance through the development of culture. He paid tribute to the section's work. He mentioned that culture does not seem to be a priority in the Pacific, but it should play an important role in the social and economic development of island countries. He stated that SPC should assign a minimum of funding to the Cultural Affairs Programme directly from its core budget so that the programme would not be so dependent on receiving voluntary donor funding.

120. The Cultural Affairs Adviser stated that New Zealand had made a very good point in its comment regarding the wording in the strategic plan, and that ministers did in fact adopt wording that differed from that included in the strategic plan. There was some discussion following the ministers meeting as to how to incorporate the wording from the meeting. The programme felt that it should wait to hear comments from CRGA 32 before finalising the wording in the strategic plan.

121. In regard to funding, the Deputy Director-General responded that there had been no increase in the level of core budget funding for the last three years and that SPC contributed core funds to the programme through the organisation of the meetings of the Council of Pacific Arts. The Secretariat agreed that an effort should be made in this area.

122. The representative of French Polynesia commented that the model law is not sufficiently adapted to the culture of French Polynesia, in terms of traditional and customary ownership. She noted that some of the provisions in the model law had economic implications and that some of the legal requirements fell under the mandate of the French State rather than that of French Polynesia. She therefore requested SPC's assistance in conducting a cultural audit of the cultural specificities of French Polynesia. She further explained that French Polynesia's participation in the next Festival of Pacific Arts in Palau was conditional on an estimated allocation of 50 million CFP. She added that the timing of the Festival would also coincide with the very important *Heiva* celebrations in French Polynesia, and that there was therefore a need to coordinate this participation with the Ministry of Culture.

123. Responding to French Polynesia's remark regarding cultural differences, the Deputy Director-General noted that the approach supported by the Cultural Affairs Programme, namely the appointment of a

legal officer with possible funding support from WIPO, would allow SPC to study special cases such as the particular culture in French Polynesia.

124. The representative of Papua New Guinea expressed strong support for the model law, whose development was contributed to by two Papua New Guinea experts. He said that Papua New Guinea was happy to have been part of the process and hoped that the model law would be taken up at national levels. He thanked the section for explaining what remained to be done and expressed confidence that the Secretariat would identify funding support to implement the projects. He expressed concern that presentations by dancers, other performances or artworks, made outside of the region, could be used by collectors or others involved in commercial enterprises. He asked how these cultural assets could be protected, and if a programme could be developed as a result of these new developments on protection to assist in repatriating cultural items of significant historical value and heritage which had been taken out of the region.

125. The representative of Samoa asked whether the proposed legal officer for the cultural section would be on a full-time or consultancy basis. He asked whether there was a possibility of funding from other donors including the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, in providing legal assistance.

126. The Cultural Affairs Adviser replied that this proposal was at a very tentative stage, but that the intention was that this legal adviser would focus on copyright issues. She explained that the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat was asked by trade ministers in 1999 to look at protection of intellectual property, whereas the legal protection document focused on core intellectual property rights, an area that had been overlooked. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat had played a very supportive role in the development of the legal protection document, with SPC taking the lead role. The model law was developed to be used as a national law. There is no law existing at present that protects cultural intellectual property internationally, and the model law contains no reciprocal arrangements. The Cultural Affairs Adviser hoped the legal officer can work on facilitating reciprocal arrangements to contribute to the international protection of traditional knowledge.

127. The representative of Fiji Islands thanked the Cultural Affairs Adviser for her presentation, which provides a vision to preserve and protect culture. Fiji Islands said that it was pleased that culture was now coming to the forefront in SPC and other institutions, because of its key importance in the social and economic development of island countries, providing opportunities for improving the livelihood of island populations and developing ecotourism. He commended the model law, and added that Fiji Islands would urge SPC to further its work in valuing the economic contribution that culture makes in PICTs. He noted that the authenticity and variety in the cultures of member countries have proven to be important tourist attractions.

128. The representative of the Federated States of Micronesia registered strong support for all the programmes of the Social Resources Division, particularly the Cultural Affairs Programme. He also mentioned FSM's support for EpiNet, an initiative that FSM is following with particular interest.

129. The representative of the Marshall Islands requested clarification as to the relationship and linkages of the proposed SPC legal officer position with the existing position of legal adviser with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

130. The Cultural Affairs Adviser responded that SPC was aware there were some similarities in the work being done by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and SPC. She said that last week, CROP organisations met and developed a "mapping exercise" of who was dealing with what, and how the project will be going forward. She said that SPC would be passing the results of that exercise on to CRGA members very soon.

131. The representative of Samoa made the point that some cost saving could be achieved if legal assistance could be provided by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. He asked whether there was in fact a need for a full-time legal officer to be appointed as SPC could send the model law to countries for their Parliamentary Counsels to develop into national legislation.

132. The representative of New Zealand sought clarification on the funding being sought from WIPO and hoped that the appointment would be made on gender equal terms.

133. The Cultural Affairs Adviser responded that having this legal adviser within the SPC Cultural Affairs Programme would enable capacity building for PICT lawyers, and facilitate appropriate delivery of information to traditional owners of cultural property. SPC felt this money could be better spent in having an officer in SPC assisting countries with developing and implementing the model law, and in conducting a number of activities that cannot be done by one person in the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. The proposal for this position of legal officer had come about through discussions between SPC and WIPO in regard to the implementation of the model law. This was a delicate process and is still at an early stage, but WIPO had expressed interest in funding the position and appointing a Pacific Islander to this post; the appointment would also be made on gender equal terms. SPC was taking the lead in the legal protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture in the Pacific because of its wider membership.

134. The representative of Wallis and Futuna said that in reference to culture and cultural affairs, the most essential thing was to protect traditional knowledge and traditional expressions of culture, particularly at this time of globalisation. He concurred with the representative of French Polynesia that the project should take into account the idiosyncrasies of all countries and territories in the region and particularly of Polynesian countries. Wallis and Futuna, for example, had a kingdom structure, and he hoped that the model law would take into account these specificities.

135. **The Committee adopted the Cultural Affairs Programme strategic plan as a living document.**

136. The Women's Development Adviser presented the strategic plan for the **Pacific Women's Bureau** (PWB), and reported on the Bureau's outputs for the past year.

137. The representative of Tonga congratulated the new Women's Bureau Adviser on her appointment and the work done so far. Referring to points raised in the presentation, the representative of Tonga commented that in 1996, 13 areas in the Pacific Platform for Action (PPA) had been put together into 5 areas. She asked PWB to take this into account since much work had been done to put these 13 areas into 5 areas of focus. Secondly, the representative of Tonga commented on the fact that PWB's training workshops focused on countries that had ratified CEDAW. She said that the Bureau should include other countries that had not yet ratified CEDAW in order to draw them in, rather than appear to push them away. Her third comment was that SPC member countries had made significant advances in the area of women's issues, and SPC should look again at how it would build institutional strength. In conclusion, she remarked that Tonga looked forward to PWB's internship programme and hoped to be one of the first countries to participate. She commented that, other than receiving the PACWIN newsletter, Tonga has not received much information about PWB's activities.

138. The representative of Samoa asked for clarification on the slow ratification of CEDAW by SPC members and on the status of national legislation to advance the objectives of CEDAW.

139. The PWB Adviser stated there was a need to work with countries that had ratified CEDAW on reporting issues, but that PWB will also be working with other countries that have not yet signed the Convention. She indicated that PWB recognised different levels of development across the region, and was still working out how best to respond to the institutional strengthening needs of various members. She stated that CEDAW had just been ratified by Solomon Islands, and that it was not necessary for countries to have legislation in place prior to ratification.

140. The representative of New Zealand stated his country was committed to supporting the work of PWB, and commended SPC for the early appointment of PWB's Adviser. He expressed concern, however, with objective 1 of the strategic plan, as it was accompanied by outputs, the achievement of which were not within PWB's control, but instead, relied on the actions of national governments. He suggested that it might be appropriate to reword these outputs. He endorsed the need for national authorities to address these issues and recognised the value of PWB's electronic newsletter.

141. The representative of the United Kingdom mentioned that the Adviser had worked with Fisheries programmes and inquired if there was a wider role for the PWB Adviser to provide advice to other SPC programmes on the integration of gender concerns into their work programmes.

142. The representative of French Polynesia expressed pleasure at the appointment of the Adviser, and said she was delighted that the Adviser had recently visited French Polynesia. She indicated that French Polynesia had applied the principles of gender parity to politics, and supported and continued to implement CEDAW.

143. The representative of Tonga made reference to objective 2 of PWB's strategic plan and inquired if staff resources were sufficient to enable achievement of this objective and its related outputs as well as the other activities outlined in the plan. She stated that there would be duplication in the implementation of this objective with the role of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Gender Issues Adviser in her role of conducting gender mainstreaming in CROP Agencies.

144. The Chairperson, speaking as the representative of Solomon Islands, seconded the comments by the representative of the United Kingdom. He made mention of the importance of taking into account traditional societies' views of gender relations, and inquired how the issue of equality would be addressed within a traditional context.

145. The PWB Adviser acknowledged comments by the representative of New Zealand, and indicated PWB would be providing technical assistance and advice to assist members in strengthening their national institutions. She recognised that policy development is the responsibility of national governments, and indicated PWB is instituting a gender audit to determine how well countries have taken gender into account in their national policies. She remarked on PWB's close work with other CROP agencies, and indicated the programme was working collaboratively with SPC's Public Health and Statistics Programmes, and would be collaborating with other SPC programmes in the future. She assured the representative of Solomon Islands that PWB was aware of and sensitive to traditional cultural concerns, and that these were taken into account in PWB's work.

146. The representative of Fiji Islands expressed appreciation to PWB for its presentation and for taking the lead role on this issue in the region. He stressed the need to recognise the role and contribution of women to economic development. He underlined the importance of compliance, integration and strengthening the linkages between international conventions and regional and national policies.

147. The representative of Papua New Guinea commended PWB on its presentation and strategic plan, taking note of PWB's Adviser's response to representatives' comments. He indicated that Papua New Guinea was ready to adopt PWB's strategic plan, and made the observation that NGOs played an important role with regards to women's issues in many communities. He stated that Papua New Guinea would like to see more active support for the work of these community organisations.

148. **The Committee adopted the Pacific Women's Bureau's strategic plan as a living document.**

149. The Youth Development Adviser presented an overview of the **Pacific Youth Bureau's** (PYB) current activities, outlined the essential elements of its strategic plan, and summarised the activities planned for the coming year.

150. The representative of New Zealand commented on the potential for cross-cultural linkages, and inquired if PYB was collaborating with other SPC programmes in the course of its work.

151. The representative of Tonga asked what criteria were used to determine which countries PYB currently worked in, and how the programme planned to serve countries where it was not currently active.

152. The representative of Papua New Guinea remarked on the need for skills development among youth, noting the large number of youth graduating from the education system each year, both within Papua New Guinea and throughout the region. He inquired if PYB was exchanging information with youth programmes in other regions.

153. The Youth Development Adviser indicated that one of the requirements of the Small Island States Programme was that it addressed countries with populations below 100,000, which corresponds to 12 countries in the Pacific. He indicated that other PYB programmes were open to all SPC members, and that PYB commonly responded to requests from member countries for its assistance.

154. The representative of Tonga suggested that past agreements need not be strictly adhered to, and asked if consideration could be given to expanding the Small Island States Programme to countries with larger populations. She mentioned that Tonga's youth population comprised approximately 60% of its population, and indicated that one of the most significant issues for her country was the high dropout rate among senior high school males. She inquired if this issue could be examined by SPC, given the serious lifelong ramifications that would result.

155. The Youth Development Adviser took note of the issues raised by the representative of Tonga, and indicated that PYB had already received one request from Tonga for assistance, which would be given in early 2003. He indicated that PYB was actively in touch with other organisations outside the region, but that decisions on whether to adopt particular strategies were made by individual member countries.

156. The Deputy Director-General suggested that it would be worthwhile carrying out a regional study focusing on why Pacific youth were leaving school in large numbers.

157. **The Committee adopted the Pacific Youth Bureau's strategic plan as a living document.**

158. The **Community Education Training Centre (CETC)** Principal presented an overview of the Centre's strategic plan, indicating how it was related to the mission and goal of the Social Resources Division. She then described the Centre's outputs and accomplishments for 2002, and expressed appreciation to the donors and cooperating organisations.

159. The consultant who conducted the external review of CETC (Diane Goodwillie), presented a summary of the review process, during which 400 people were interviewed, and gave an overview of the review's findings. She made a number of observations and preliminary recommendations, which included the need to:

- determine the fundamental role of CETC;
- develop a national advisory role for CETC;
- revamp and revise the regional course;
- secure technical assistance;
- further develop funding and business plans;
- improve public relations, recruitment and selection; and
- develop bench-marks for follow up.

160. The Senior Deputy Director-General expressed his appreciation to the consultant and others who assisted her for their timely completion of the review. He remarked that the recommendations were worthy of further consideration. He indicated that SPC would carefully study the final report, undertake a "country mapping exercise" in 2003, and further explore the directions recommended by the review. He indicated that the CETC programme would continue in its current format for 2003, and that SPC would report back to its membership regarding SPC's response to the review.

161. The representative of Papua New Guinea acknowledged that the consultant had interviewed many people across the region, including a number of CETC graduates. He noted the accomplishments of CETC graduates in Papua New Guinea, including one who later became a member of Parliament. He made

reference to the CETC Principal's presentation, made two or three years ago, which included changes to the Centre, not unlike those being suggested by the consultant. He stated that he was among the delegates to CRGA who rejected those earlier recommendations, as he felt it would shift the focus of CETC from rural community education and outreach to tertiary education preparation. He recognised the need for changes in the curriculum — such as the introduction of computer and mass media training, which have already taken place — but indicated that the more fundamental changes recommended by the consultant would decrease the relevance of CETC to rural communities. He remarked that a number of short courses focusing on specific skills development were already available in many areas, but that CETC's focus — training people to go to remote village areas and assist those communities — was unique in the region. He stressed the importance of such training and development work across much of the region, and indicated the demand for placement into the CETC course was high. He regretted the loss of Commonwealth funding, and asked that donors seriously consider contributing to the important work of CETC.

162. The representative of French Polynesia expressed her country's keen interest and support for education, and reported that this was an area that had been overshadowed by advanced and technical training in the past. She made reference to a "reserve fund" in French Polynesia, which funds community projects, and suggested that CETC graduates had the skills needed to communicate effectively with rural communities, which is often not the case with middle- and high-level managers. She also praised the Centre for the training it provides women who then return to their countries motivated, saying these women then pass on this spirit to the community. She agreed that adjustments might be necessary, but stated that CETC had an important role to play in the Pacific community.

163. The representative of Tonga commended CETC for its excellent service to her country, and supported comments made by the representatives of French Polynesia and Papua New Guinea. She agreed that a change in CETC's focus to leadership development would not be beneficial to the region, particularly in light of PWB's increasing focus on policy and advocacy. She indicated CETC's community-focused training was still very much needed in the region, and suggested that management/leadership training should be offered as a component within the larger curriculum.

164. The representative of Wallis and Futuna echoed comments made by previous speakers and commended the Centre on its work, particularly the efforts made to understand the situation of French-speaking women and provide them with English language training prior to their arrival at CETC. She stated the Centre served as a link between French- and English-speaking countries, and thus aided in integration of the region. She stressed the need for such a community-focused curriculum. She suggested a possible change: using the holiday period to offer new courses, possibly focusing on men and women together. She stressed that she wished to see the Centre fully used, and reiterated her support for CETC, stating that "the Centre binds Pacific communities".

165. The representative of Fiji Islands congratulated the speakers and stated that Fiji Islands recognised the importance of community education, especially for women. He agreed with the Chairperson that the recommendations made by the review be given closer scrutiny, and suggested that through collaboration it might be possible to strengthen the contribution of CETC to national development. He suggested a tracer study be conducted of CETC graduates to provide a measure of the Centre's impact.

166. The representative of the Marshall Islands expressed his appreciation for CETC, and stated that the Centre's work is important for member countries. He suggested the formation of a working group, composed of SPC members, Secretariat staff, and CETC staff to examine the review's findings and to make recommendations.

167. The representative of Samoa concurred with the suggestion made by the Secretariat that the issue be examined again in 2003. He agreed with earlier comments regarding CETC's importance, but stated the need to look closely at the review's recommendations, and consult with women's experts in his country.

168. The representative of New Zealand recognised the value of CETC's work, and stated he was mindful of the findings of this and previous reviews. He indicated that New Zealand was supportive of CETC, to the



extent that additional funding might possibly be provided. He suggested “tagging”, rather than endorsing, the current CETC strategic plan with the understanding that the Secretariat would return to the membership with a revised plan. He emphasised the changing needs of the region, and indicated that while some courses remained relevant, others might need revamping.

169. The Senior Deputy Director-General thanked members for their clear and constructive comments, and stated that SPC would examine the recommendations in detail, update the strategic plan, and respond to members before the next CRGA. He suggested exploring the proposal by the representative of the Marshall Islands regarding a working group.

**170. The Committee noted CETC’s strategic plan, indicating the Centre’s activities in 2003 would proceed as planned and that a revised strategic plan would be brought before CRGA in 2003.**

171. The Senior Deputy Director-General indicated that a PowerPoint presentation of the **Regional Media Centre** (RMC) and its strategic plan and achievements for 2002 would be attached to the companion CD-ROM\* to this report, and invited CRGA to focus its attention on the recent review of RMC.

172. The Head of the Planning Unit presented the RMC review on behalf of the team leader, Mr Ashley Wickham. He informed CRGA that the review had been completed by a very high-calibre team. He said that the full report was currently being edited and would be available shortly after CRGA. He alluded to the dual function of RMC in currently providing media capacity building to the region as well as media production services to SPC’s programmes. The review determined that these services were of a high quality and that there was a clear need in the region for the media training and capacity building services of RMC. He also acknowledged the need and value of media production support to SPC programmes. Of major concern to the team, however, was the finding that this current dual role was affecting RMC’s effectiveness. The team also found that the effectiveness of RMC’s approach to training could be further improved and he made a number of recommendations to that effect. The review also agreed that efficiency of internal services could be further improved. The review therefore recommended that RMC be restructured into two separate units, using different business models. In terms of capacity building, the unit should coordinate training rather than attempt to have all expertise in-house. In order to improve effectiveness of training, the review recommended that more emphasis be placed on in-country training, if possible at the work place, conducted by qualified trainers, and that the type of training and target groups be more clearly focused. With respect to internal media services, the review recommended that the unit make greater use of outsourcing.

173. The Senior Deputy Director-General indicated that the Secretariat was reasonably comfortable with the recommendations and their capacity to improve the RMC’s capacity to fulfil both functions under the proposed new structure. He also informed CRGA that the Secretariat needed to consider more carefully the report and all its implications but was envisaging possible implementation later next year.

174. Responding to a request for clarification from the representatives of Papua New Guinea and Samoa, the Senior Deputy Director-General explained that the proposed restructuring would be cost-neutral and could take place within the existing RMC budget. The Secretariat would then report to the next meeting of CRGA on the implementation progress.

175. With respect to a question raised by the representative of France on the usefulness and future of the bilingual “Oceania Flash” news services, the Senior Deputy Director-General answered that the review had commented on the usefulness of this service. The review had, however, recommended that this service would be better based with another more appropriate media institution such as PINA or PIBA. He also pointed out that this service had, until now, been financially supported by the Government of France through its embassy in Suva, but it appeared that this funding would shortly cease and that the service might have to be terminated, in spite of its usefulness.

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\* CD-ROM available from the Secretariat on request.

176. **The Committee endorsed the review of RMC and adopted its recommendations. In doing so, the Committee agreed that the Secretariat could proceed with implementation of these recommendations and the proposed restructuring later next year, on the understanding that this would be cost-neutral and achieved within the existing RMC budget. The Secretariat would report to the next meeting of CRGA on implementation progress. The Committee further agreed to discuss possible longer-term budgetary implications of this implementation during the budget discussions at this meeting and invited the Secretariat to bring these to the attention of CRGA at an opportune time under that particular agenda item.**

177. The SPC Renewable Energy Adviser presented the final report of the **PREFACE** renewable energy project. This project, co-funded by France and Australia, is slated to come to an end in December 2002.

178. The representative of France praised the presentation by the Renewable Energy Adviser. He noted the fact that 70% of Pacific Island people were not connected to an electricity grid and said that in this era of the Internet, it was not acceptable for people to not have access to a sustainable source of electricity. He explained that it was for this reason that France had supported the PREFACE project, which he considered to be an exemplary project, one that had demonstrated the usefulness of renewable energy sources and how easy they are to use. He suggested it would serve as a model for other countries in the region to follow, and praised the exemplary cooperation between France, Australia, and SPC.

179. The representative of Papua New Guinea noted with pleasure that PREFACE made use of bicycles, rather than fossil fuel vehicles, and praised the collection of used batteries for recycling. He said that Papua New Guinea shared the concern of France that the majority of people were not connected to a grid. He stated he would be interested to know about sourcing and distribution of hardware for the project as the information might be useful for future projects. He said that as PIFS had given the mandate for energy development to SOPAC, it was now open for any SPC members to take part in SOPAC as associate members, and that it was up to members to make their positions known on renewable energy through SOPAC. He acknowledged that SPREP was engaged on a project funded by the Global Environment Facility and urged maximum use of regional resources through coordination of regional agency activities. He suggested that because SOPAC was given the mandate for renewable energy some years ago, it was up to members to urge it to continue with these projects.

180. The representative of Australia thanked the Renewable Energy Adviser for his presentation, and acknowledged the comments of France and Papua New Guinea. She said there were still some outstanding issues to resolve with the project, and observed that the meeting of the project coordinating committee this Friday would consider how to support ongoing activity in these areas. She concurred that it was necessary to be cautious about whose role it was in the region to support such projects.

181. The representative of Fiji Islands thanked France and Australia for supporting the project, and supported Papua New Guinea's position. He thanked all the speakers who had supported this project, and said there was a very real problem in the region in terms of meeting sustainable development goals. He said Fiji Islands would like to see similar projects implemented at the national level, with support from SPC.

182. The representative of the Marshall Islands expressed the gratitude of his country, as the Marshall Islands was one of the beneficiaries of the PREFACE project. He agreed that the responsibilities of various agencies with regards to renewable energy, needed clarification. He said that regional leaders, including Australia and New Zealand, recognised the importance of renewable energy to the region, and that member countries had mandated SOPAC to be the sole coordinator. He suggested it was not appropriate for members to undermine that mandate, which was given by the region's government leaders.

183. In summarising the discussion so far, the Chairperson said that CRGA noted the presentation and hoped for a positive outcome from the meeting on Friday. He also noted the decision of Pacific Island leaders, and the importance of consultation with other regional organisations.

184. The representative of Papua New Guinea noted that key donors to PREFACE were also associated through the Forum process with partners in the present dialogue, and suggested this provided an opportunity for consultation within the region. He said that having the responsibility rest with one organisation could avoid the problems that might arise when several organisations were involved.

185. The representative of SOPAC was invited by the Chairperson to speak. He agreed that SOPAC had the mandate to focus on renewable energy, but suggested that the debate should focus more on the importance of the renewable energy programme rather than the continuation or strengthening of an individual project. He also agreed with the importance of the Friday meeting, particularly given that 70% of Pacific Islanders still lacked access to an electricity grid. He said that when SOPAC asked islanders what they wanted, their first priority was electricity. He congratulated France and Australia for their support given so far. He said that the SOPAC governing council, though disappointed by the lack of a target emerging from World Summit on Sustainable Development, has set a target of 15% usage of renewable energy in the region by 2012.

186. The Chairperson invited the representative of SPREP to speak. Restricting his comments to SPREP's involvement in PIREP (the Pacific Islands Renewable Energy Project), he stated that SPREP would conduct a study, funded by the Global Environment Facility, on the barriers in the region to the use of renewable energy. He observed that the findings of the survey would lead to a hardware installation project, to be carried out by SOPAC.

187. The Chairperson summarised the discussion so far as providing encouragement and support for the continuation of the PREFACE work, and anticipated a supportive outcome from the Friday meeting. He thanked Australia, France and New Zealand for their funding support, and said that CRGA looked forward to their continued support for renewable energy through other organisations.

188. The representative of New Zealand said that a recognition of the role of renewable energy in development in the Pacific region was important, and he urged continued work in that area, whether through SPREP, SOPAC or other organisations. He encouraged continuing efforts to reduce the use of fossil fuels, which would enable financial resources to be deployed towards other sustainable development efforts.

189. The Director-General re-emphasised the critical importance that SPC, other CROP agencies, and donors placed on renewable energy for sustainable development in the region. She said the CROP organisations recognised each other's roles, and was pleased by the significant demonstration of commitment on the part of the regional organisations to renewable energy. She supported the Chairperson's statement regarding regional organisations speaking with a collective voice on the importance of renewable energy, and suggested there was a continuing need for collaboration by regional institutions on the issue. She expressed her personal congratulations to the PREFACE team for their excellent performance, and her thanks to Australia, France and New Zealand for their support and encouraging words.

190. The representative of Samoa asked for clarification as to what decision was required from the meeting on this project, as there was no figure in the budget for the continuation of PREFACE.

191. The Chairperson said that the meeting urged the continuation of the project and recognised also the need for regional cooperation in this area, in line with decisions made by government leaders in other forums.

192. The Director-General stated that the PREFACE project was earmarked to conclude at the end of 2002. The question that remained to be addressed by the project coordinating committee, at its meeting this Friday, was whether the project under SPC would end in December or be extended for a limited time to achieve the project's objectives, as recommended by the project review. She said the Friday discussions would look at the need to ensure continuing emphasis is placed on renewable energy within the region in the future, and she stressed that they would benefit from CRGA's input.

***Official signing of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Mangaia project in Cook Islands***

193. As part of the PREFACE renewable energy project, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by SPC and Société Vergnet for the supply and installation of a grid-connected wind generator in Mangaia Island, Cook Islands.

194. **The Chairman tabled the Information and Communication Technologies Section strategic plan, and the Committee adopted it as a living document.**

**AGENDA ITEM 3 – POLICY ISSUES**  
**AGENDA ITEM 3.1 – THE SPC CORPORATE PLAN**

195. The Director-General introduced the issue of the Corporate Plan and said the Secretariat looked forward to receiving feedback on the Plan from its members. She spoke briefly about the process of developing the Plan, which began with CRGA 31, and stressed that the process was as important as the final product.

196. The Head of the Planning Unit opened by stressing that the Plan was intended as a guiding document for the organisation, and as such should reflect the concerns and wishes of SPC's members. He then gave an overview of the Plan's structure and features, and presented the proposed vision, mission and guiding principles for the organisation. He also explained how the plan defined the Secretariat's core business, outlined the proposed corporate strategies for 2003–2005, and closed by explaining SPC's integrative approach to planning.

197. The representative of France thanked the Secretariat for its work on the Corporate Plan, and agreed with the broad principles put forth by SPC. He was especially supportive of the emphasis on poverty alleviation, which he said was at the heart of all development efforts. He also agreed with the importance placed on human resource development, and stated that France strongly supported improved communication, both within the region and outside, which he said was critical for attracting additional donor support. He supported the formation of effective partnerships, but requested clarification regarding the mandate and role of CROP. He stressed that it was important for CROP to ensure a better coordination of regional organisations' activities, but that this mechanism was not designed to become a new regional institution. He welcomed the emphasis on transparency and quality assurance, but stressed the need for a balanced approach that did not compromise the organisation's responsiveness in the region.

198. The representative of the United States of America expressed appreciation for a concise and effective presentation, and suggested that the Plan's mission statement be modified to include the concept of capacity building for implementation.

199. The representative of Australia agreed with the representative of USA regarding the earlier presentation and congratulated the Secretariat on its new Corporate Plan. She indicated Australia was particularly appreciative of the extensive consultations undertaken in developing the Plan, and acknowledged that the Plan incorporated significant findings from the recent SPC review. She stated that Australia would like to see the inclusion of specific outcomes and performance indicators in the Plan, and suggested it clarify how SPC planned to work in cooperation with NGOs in the region. She also inquired how the Secretariat planned to secure cooperation and support from other regional donors. Regarding the concept of "responding to needs", she stated that a move towards programme planning would allow for a more coordinated response, but suggested the phrase could be misinterpreted. She recommended that the emphasis of SPC activities be on meeting regional needs through well developed regional strategies.

200. The representative of the United Kingdom welcomed the focus on poverty alleviation, and suggested that SPC consider carefully how best to focus on the poorest and most vulnerable populations in the region.

201. The representative of Papua New Guinea expressed appreciation on the well presented Corporate Plan. He inquired about the focus on providing sectoral policy analysis and advice (discussed in section 4.3 of the Corporate Plan), agreeing that coordination and identification of expertise was an appropriate function for SPC, but suggested that a focus on policy development might conflict with the activities of national

policy planners. He asked for clarification on this issue. He supported previous comments regarding CROP. He asked for clarification on the interaction of MOUs between SPC and other agencies, and the bilateral MOUs between countries and those agencies. He closed by stating that Papua New Guinea was quite pleased with the Corporate Plan.

202. The representative of New Zealand applauded the work that had gone into the Corporate Plan as well as the various programme strategic plans. He suggested there was a need for a stronger statement in the Corporate Plan regarding cross-sectoral linkages between SPC's three divisions. He also observed that outcomes from the World Summit on Sustainable Development were not reflected in the Plan, and suggested they be included.

203. The representative of Fiji Islands expressed his appreciation to the presenter and seconded the call by the representative of USA for a more action-oriented mission statement. He suggested the Plan should clarify the linkages between SPC's divisions, as a lack of coordination could adversely affect the work of the organisation.

204. The representative of Tuvalu also commended the work done on the Plan. He emphasised the high relevance of alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development in the Pacific, and suggested that their importance should be better reflected in the Plan's guiding principles.

205. The representative of Samoa noted that the new plan was an improvement over the previous one. He urged caution in putting too much emphasis in the Plan on responding to global issues and improving the international profile of SPC through better strategic communication as this should not take place to the detriment of SPC's core function, which is to respond to the immediate needs of members.

206. Citing the Governor of American Samoa's letter of 31 October 2002 to SPC's Director-General concerning the issue of regional security, the representative of American Samoa noted that security issues and concerns cut across all sectors of development. He further stated that the lessons of 11 September 2001 clearly showed that to effectively counter terrorism, countries should include the development of first-response capabilities and consequence management within domestic preparedness programmes to contain collateral damage and ensure government continuity during an incident, He stated that fragile island economies can ill afford to sustain a direct terrorist assault should intelligence and law enforcement mechanisms fail. He further noted that several SPC programmes currently have built-in security components that network into Pacific countries and territories, and that SPC's service area provides comprehensive coverage of the Pacific. He stated that a proactive approach to regional security was required and requested that the SPC vision and mission include a reference to security, and that further dialogue to identify the appropriate organisation(s) and approaches to a comprehensive regional security programme be a topic for discussion at the next CRGA meeting. A detailed statement by American Samoa and the Governor's letter are annexed to this report as Annex 2.

207. The representative of New Zealand recognised the validity of the concerns expressed in relation to regional security response, and that this was an issue of concern to all countries. He noted that SPC had a clear technical mandate, and suggested that these concerns would be more properly addressed in the context of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

208. The representative of Samoa drew the attention of the Committee to the wording of some of the paragraphs in the draft document and suggested that the Secretariat tidy up some of the language used in order to improve further on the document.

209. The Head of the Planning Unit thanked all members for their valuable input. He reassured the Committee that all comments would be duly considered in revising the current text. He sought the approval of the Committee for the broad strategies contained in the new Corporate Plan and to allow the Secretariat to revise the wording to reflect some of the comments and concerns expressed around the table. In this respect, he suggested that the mission statement be amended to say, "Our mission is to help Pacific Island people

make and implement informed decisions about their future”. He stressed the need for the Secretariat to think more widely than just responding to requests and to bring major challenges to the attention of members.

210. The Director-General stressed the need to ensure that the Corporate Plan contain clear and focused objectives. She stressed the ability of SPC to respond to technical issues that are part of its mandate, but noted that the Secretariat must also be allowed to look at regional issues to ensure that it responds more efficiently and in a timely manner to the changing needs of the region. She said that SPC must be able to articulate the goals of the international community through its activities. She noted that SPC needed to do this in collaboration with its members and development partners, to ensure that the targets of its development work were relevant to the needs and priorities of the region. In relation to security issues, she agreed that there was a need to address these concerns through existing regional mechanisms, but stressed the importance of ensuring SPC linkages with these existing mechanisms. The purpose of the Corporate Plan was to ensure that SPC had a clearer and more focused path to follow in the future. She said that the Plan belonged to all members. She assured members that the revised Corporate Plan would reflect the comments and concerns raised by members and that the final printed document would include a statement by the Chairperson of the Conference of the Pacific Community to reflect the importance of the plan to the membership. She thanked all members for their valuable input.

**211. The Committee approved the Corporate Plan as a living document and endorsed the broad principles contained therein, on the understanding that the Secretariat would revise the current wording guided by the comments made at this meeting. The revised draft would be circulated to members within the next few weeks, for further consideration. Members would have until Christmas to provide further feedback to the Secretariat and the document would go to print soon after.**

### AGENDA ITEM 3.2 – REGIONAL POLICIES

212. The SPC Director of Marine Resources presented the Regional Policy paper, Working Paper 3.2. He pointed out that the paper was essentially an information paper to update members on several inter-regional agency sectoral policy support processes in which SPC is involved. He indicated that the Secretariat was, however, seeking guidance from members regarding the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy (PIROP) that was adopted by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat at its August 2002 meeting, with respect to inclusion of Pacific Island territories within its scope. He stated that CRGA has the following options: to leave the scope of PIROP to cover Pacific Islands Forum members only, to leave it to individual non-Forum PICTs to make their own decision as to whether or not to endorse the Policy, or to postpone a decision on the issue until all members have had a chance to discuss the document and reach a consensus. The Director of Marine Resources pointed out that the Policy is not a legal instrument and is not binding on a country; it is simply a basic statement of commonly shared principles in the region.

213. The Chairperson invited discussion, pointing out that since Pacific Islands Forum member countries have already adopted the Policy, it is an issue only for non-Pacific Islands Forum members.

214. The representative of France stated that France went along with the general principles set out in the Policy. He noted that the Policy was designed to cover the entire Pacific Island membership, including the territories. He said that France had two points it wished to raise. The first was that, even though the Policy is not legally binding, France believed the text must be completely consistent with other laws and conventions relating to the oceans including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This involves avoiding ambiguities that will lead to divergences in interpretation. He said that France strongly believed that the territories should also be included in the elaboration of this document and the formulation of the strategic stage of implementation of the Policy. Given these considerations, he said that France had no hesitation in subscribing to the contents of this document, which is more a starting point than a final result, and agreeing that the Pacific Community endorse and adopt this Policy.

215. The representative of the United States of America stated that USA supports regional approaches and partnerships in addressing environmental challenges and sees value and wisdom in PIROP; however, USA had very serious concerns with the language used in previous versions of the Policy. He said USA was

encouraged to see that the latest version of the Policy appears to have addressed these problems, including consistency with the rights and duties of all States parties as reflected in UNCLOS, and was studying this latest version. He said USA looked forward to working with partners in the Pacific Community to help implement the Policy's five guiding principles, but was not in a position to endorse it formally and completely at this time.

216. The representative of New Caledonia said that New Caledonia is ready to support the Policy in principle, but it needs to see a text in French before giving a definitive response.

217. The representative of Australia welcomed the comments from France and New Caledonia and acknowledged the comments from USA. He said that the Policy was never intended to include only the Forum members, and indicated that although it was not legally binding, the Policy was based on UNCLOS. He said that Australia supported the engagement of all governments and administrations in the region that wish to be engaged, and encouraged the participation of France, UK, USA and the French territories in the Regional Ocean Forum next year. He urged members that could accept the policy at this time to do so while others continue the process of consideration until they are ready to endorse the policy at a later time out of session. This would facilitate the organisation of the Ocean Forum next year.

218. The representative of France expressed concern that France and the French territories have this opportunity to catch up with the wording of the document and will then be in a position to express their thoughts at the Ocean Forum meeting next year.

219. **The Committee:**

- (a) **noted the information provided by the Secretariat on inter-regional agency sectoral policy support processes in which SPC is involved;**
- (b) **expressed its agreement with the general principles contained in the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy;**
- (c) **deferred the question of formal endorsement by non-Forum Pacific Community members until a French translation of the text of the policy became available and was circulated to French-speaking members;**
- (d) **agreed that, following this period, individual non-Pacific Islands Forum members would be able to associate themselves with the policy, by communication with the Secretariat out of session;**
- (e) **asked the Secretariat to keep all members fully informed about preparations for the proposed Pacific Islands Ocean Summit in 2003.**

### **AGENDA ITEM 3.3 – SPC REGIONAL SECTORAL MEETINGS**

220. The SPC Senior Deputy Director-General presented Working Paper 3.3, which contained proposals for a basic format, structure and funding formula for SPC regional sectoral meetings, which are held in order to provide guidance to programmes.

221. The Senior Deputy Director-General invited the meeting to endorse the four proposals in paragraph 19 of the working paper.

222. In the discussion that followed the following points were made:

- Meetings should not be held just for the sake of travelling to meetings.
- The number of meetings has been growing, with cost implications for SPC as well as implications for the ability of PICT administrations to service all of these meetings.
- SPC can only provide from its core funds around 50% of the costs of many of the meetings, and seeks donor funding to make up the difference. In this situation, potential donors have the task of prioritising meetings to be funded.
- The cost of a meeting held in Noumea is around 60,000 CFP units and not too much less in Suva.

- If a meeting is held in another country at the invitation of that country then the host country meets the extra cost involved.
- A joint meeting of Agriculture and Forestry would cut costs.
- SPC needs to explore how other agencies might help share the cost burden.
- Piggybacking with other meetings can provide a cost saving.
- Comparison with meeting schedules for other regional agencies might be informative, although SPC differs from the other agencies in being multifaceted, having more sectors needing to hold their respective meetings.
- The triennial timetable for meetings gives time to implement recommendations and then report on achievements at the next meeting.
- Between triennial meetings, technical staff have other opportunities to meet in the course of their work.
- However, some SPC programmes have found the need to meet more often than every three years, so have had meetings in between the triennial meetings. Meetings every two years would cost less than meeting every three-years plus another meeting in between.
- Meetings can be more effective when information is sent out early enough for delegates to be prepared. The CRGA timeframe of papers sent out six weeks should be adhered to.
- Papers should be short, in view of the resource limitations in smaller countries which have to read them.
- Briefing papers should list what was agreed to at the last meeting, achievements, failures and the challenges foreseen, so that discussion can be tightly focused.
- CRGA would be more effective if SPC presentations were shorter, giving more time for discussion.
- Consolidated presentations will be considered for next CRGA.
- The proposed reporting to CRGA by Chairs of sectoral meetings would reduce the need for lengthy programme presentations at CRGA.
- Informal discussion outside of formal meetings would be assisted if e-mail addresses of contact points could be listed with documents sent out.
- SPC needs to analyse the effectiveness of how this CRGA was conducted in order to shape a more effective format for the next meeting.

**223. The Committee (a) noted the concerns expressed, (b) noted the paper submitted by the Secretariat, and (c) further noted that the Secretariat would provide an update to next CRGA, following the 2003 technical meetings.**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4 – ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE**

##### **AGENDA ITEM 4.1 – THE NEW PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC AND THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**

224. The Deputy Director-General provided a brief overview on the negotiations process of a new agreement on the immunities and privileges of SPC in New Caledonia, to supersede the original 1953 Angamarre agreement. He acknowledged the presence around the table of Bernard Deladrière, Directeur de Cabinet of the President of the Government of New Caledonia. He highlighted the constructive and positive spirit of the negotiations conducted between New Caledonia and SPC and the full support of France. These negotiations have been conducted in a spirit of goodwill and cooperation in the same spirit as the original agreement. The document clarifies certain points to make the agreement less subject to interpretation. It contains a number of restriction on waiving privileges and immunities that, in the Secretariat's opinion, do not call into question the basic provisions of the agreement. The Secretariat believes that this new draft agreement allows SPC's headquarters in Noumea to enjoy conditions conducive to its development and makes it possible for the representatives of member countries and territories, staff members, experts and consultants to conduct their work in a favourable environment.



225. The representative of France expressed particular satisfaction at the spirit of goodwill and cooperation that had prevailed during the negotiations and warmly thanked New Caledonia and SPC. He stressed that the new draft agreement reflects the original spirit of the Angamarre agreement and takes into account the institutional evolution of New Caledonia, the host of SPC headquarters.

226. The representative of New Caledonia, speaking on behalf of the President of the Government, emphasised that New Caledonia's objectives during the discussion had been to update the original agreement without questioning previous privileges and immunities accorded to SPC. He expressed particular appreciation to SPC and France for these very constructive discussions. He invited CRGA to consider favourably the draft agreement, so that it could be presented to the Congress of New Caledonia for endorsement and for signature by the President of the Government.

227. The representative of New Zealand requested some clarification from the Secretariat on the proposed restrictions relating to waiving of some privileges and immunities of representatives of member states and territories in Article 13.1(a) "... in the event of a crime, as defined by the provisions in force in New Caledonia, or when pursued in the act of committing a crime." New Zealand had brought this up with the Secretariat as it considered that this was a narrowing of the definition and of the usual immunity granted to representatives of member States and territories for international organisations.

228. The Deputy Director-General indicated that the difficulty resided in a different semantic interpretation of the word "crime" in French- and English-speaking members.

229. The representative of France agreed to discuss this semantics problem with the representative of New Zealand, to attempt to reach an agreement on a suitable wording.

230. The representative of Samoa informed the Committee that Samoa needed time to study the draft agreement. He inquired whether the agreement would also cover SPC staff members stationed outside New Caledonia when they were in New Caledonia and whether a similar agreement would be negotiated with the Government of Fiji Islands in respect to the Suva Operations, to ensure that all SPC employees are treated equally.

231. The Deputy Director-General confirmed that the agreement with New Caledonia covered all SPC staff members when they were in New Caledonia, including those officially stationed in other countries.

232. The representative of France confirmed that all SPC employees would benefit from the same treatment in New Caledonia, whether they were visiting or stationed there.

233. The Senior Deputy Director-General explained that SPC was hoping to finalise the agreement relating to headquarters with New Caledonia, before embarking on similar negotiations with Fiji Islands in relation to the Suva operations.

234. The representative of Papua New Guinea commended the efforts of all parties in putting together this draft agreement. Given the positive and constructive approach, he was happy to give approval to the document in principle, pending official and legal advice from his government.

235. The representative of Australia said that Australia would be happy to endorse the document and suggested that those members not yet able to provide approval do so by communicating with the Secretariat out of session. This would allow the agreement to come into force as soon as possible.

236. **The Committee:**

- (a) commended the Governments of France and New Caledonia and the Secretariat for their very fruitful and constructive efforts in negotiating a new agreement on SPC privileges and immunities in New Caledonia;**
- (b) endorsed in principle the new draft agreement on privileges and immunities accorded to SPC in New Caledonia;**

- (c) **noted the concern expressed by the representative of New Zealand on the different semantic interpretation of one of the articles and thanked France and New Zealand for their attempt to reach a consensus on this issue;**
- (d) **urged all members to advise the Secretariat of their final approval by 15 December, to allow the Governments of New Caledonia and France to finalise the signature and ratification process with SPC. Should there be no formal approval by the set date, the Secretariat will assume that there is tacit approval.**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4.2 – SPC’S QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS**

237. The Head of the Planning Unit gave a brief overview of SPC’s quality assurance systems and commented that the implementation of these systems was partly in response to the AusAID-funded independent review of SPC in 2001. He stated that Working Paper 4.2 summarised the progress made in this area to date.

238. The representative of Tonga moved to adopt the Secretariat’s quality assurance systems.

239. **The Committee adopted the Secretariat’s quality assurance systems.**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4.3 – MULTI-YEAR OUTPUT-BASED BUDGETING AND FUNDING SECURITY**

240. The Director-General stated that like the quality assurance systems following the AusAID review, it was agreed that the Secretariat would look at output-based budgeting and funding security. She indicated that the Secretariat had accepted this recommendation and implemented it in the 2003 budget. She stated that a lack of funding security had been a significant constraint in long-term programme and budgetary planning, but noted that SPC was currently finalising agreement with Australia on funding for a three-year period, beginning in 2003. She asked CRGA to note actions taken by SPC and donor members as regards funding security.

241. The representative of the United Kingdom added his support for flexible funding arrangements for SPC and noted the need for a longer-term funding cycle, when addressing complex, long-term problems such as poverty reduction.

242. The representative of Australia clarified that although funding from Australia would now be implemented on a three-year cycle, SPC would be obliged to report regularly on outcomes and achievements. She indicated that the initial three-year period would constitute a period to allow development of this new approach. If results were positive this approach would continue and might be accompanied by an increase in programme funding.

243. The representative of New Zealand endorsed Australia’s comments and perspective, and stated that New Zealand is working towards a more programmatic budgetary approach, but that the ability to do this was dependent on a clear record of outputs and achievements.

244. **The Committee adopted the recommendations as presented by the Secretariat.**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4.4 – SELECTION OF SPC’S AUDITORS FOR FINANCIAL YEARS 2002–2004**

245. The Director of Corporate Services presented Working Paper 4.4, which discusses the appointment of auditors for financial year 2002–2004. He outlined SPC’s tender process, explained how it was implemented, reviewed the criteria used in the selection, detailed the bids, and presented the Secretariat’s recommendation.

246. The representative of New Caledonia indicated he could not support the recommendation, given that the selection process had not been properly followed. He suggested that approval of this recommendation be postponed for one year to allow for a new tender process.

247. The representative of Papua New Guinea acknowledged New Caledonia's intervention, and noted the delay that Papua New Guinea experienced in receiving the notice regarding the call for tenders. He made reference to the similar delay in receiving CRGA-related documents.

248. The representative of Australia expressed concern that problems had been experienced with the tender process, and also queried the Secretariat regarding the selection criteria. The SPC presentation implied that cost was a major factor. She observed that the three quotes were very similar in price and that one bid was referenced in US dollars, and made note of the risk of volatility of exchange rates. She requested additional information on the criteria for the selection process.

249. The Director-General reiterated the history of the tender process and the reasons it was extended, primarily due to delays in notification, resulting from electronic mail difficulties and a mail strike in Fiji Islands. Regarding the selection criteria she referred to Working Paper 4.4, and assured members that SPC was confident that all firms under consideration were professionally competent, capable of performing SPC's audit to international standards. She stated that the amount was fixed for the duration of the contract, and that the final contract would be in CFP.

250. A discussion ensued and further clarification was requested from the Secretariat regarding the annual cost of the audit.

251. The Director of Corporate Services stated that the quote from the recommended firm had been received in CFP, and the amount mentioned in Working Paper 4.4 was an annual price fixed for three years.

252. The representative of Australia requested that a system be introduced to avoid such a confusion over tenders in the future.

253. The representative of Papua New Guinea reaffirmed that as the official contact point, he did not receive notice of the extension for tenders until the day after the closing date.

**254. The Committee adopted the recommendation to appoint the firm of Deloitte Touch Tohmatsu to audit the SPC accounts for financial years 2002–2004, noting for the record the concerns from some members.**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4.5 – AUDIT REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR 2001**

255. The auditor from PricewaterhouseCoopers presented the auditor's report.

**256. The Committee accepted the auditor's report as presented.**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 4.6 – YEAR 2002 BUDGET REVISION**

257. The Director-General presented mid-year revisions of the 2002 core budget, which took place in June. She noted that further adjustments may be required, although none were forecast presently. She highlighted significant adjustments to core budget, which included:

- treatment of project management fees
- implementation of Phase II of the new CROP harmonisation package
- consolidation of similar budget items

258. She also made reference to savings in personnel costs resulting from delayed recruitment of positions.

259. The representative of the United States of America noted the revised budget with concern, stating that although technically authorised, he viewed the transfers as questionable, stating that they should have been foreseen. He asked the Secretariat to refrain from making such revisions in the future, except in truly exceptional circumstances.

260. The Director-General responded to USA's comments, indicating these budget items were previously approved as part of the non-core budget, and had been moved to the core budget for the sake of transparency and to implement a previous CRGA decision.

261. **The Committee noted the year 2002 core budget revision.**

### **AGENDA ITEM 5 – YEAR 2003 BUDGET**

262. The Director-General presented the year 2003 budget, making note of its improved output-based format. She noted that the budgetary pressures in the core budget meant that SPC remained very dependent on non-core funding in its new programme initiatives. She stated that the 2003 budget indicated a slight increase (7.4%) from 2002, and that it was developed in conformance with policy parameters set by CRGA/Conference last year. She noted that members' assessed contributions had not increased, and that the 2002 budget was balanced. She detailed the components of the core budget, which included assessed contributions, transfers from reserves, and a proposed 180,000 CFP units transfer from general reserves. The latter aimed to build capacity in programme areas. She stressed the budget followed the priority needs expressed by members, and that with the exception of an increase in assessed arrears, the organisation was in good financial health.

263. She referred members to the table on assessed arrears, noting that some arrears dated back to 1997. She described actions undertaken by the Secretariat to address the issue, and indicated the issue remained a high priority for the Secretariat and the Director-General personally. She welcomed a further discussion on this issue by members.

264. The Director-General reviewed a number of specific core and non-core budget items, noting that non-core funds included in the budget included only those to which donors had committed. She closed by asking CRGA to consider and approve the proposed 2003 budget.

265. The representative of Fiji Islands noted his country's arrears, and said his delegation would request the attention of the government to this to fully settle the arrears.

266. The representative of the Federated States of Micronesia noted his country's contribution, which he had brought with him, and questioned whether it was reflected on the sheet showing arrears.

267. The representative of French Polynesia announced her country would be providing an extra-budgetary contribution of 1.5 million CFP for the Pacific Youth Bureau. Another extra-budgetary contribution of 2 million CFP would be confirmed at a later date.

268. The representative of Samoa thanked the Secretariat for the balanced budget and keeping assessed contributions to the same level as last year. He asked that the Secretariat not use the surpluses shown against his country's assessed contribution. He asked for a working paper on arrears for next year's CRGA, and requested clarification on how the Secretariat offset those arrears. He noted the statement by the Secretariat regarding the transfer of reserve funds, and stated that the approval by CRGA last year was not intended to be a regular practice. However, he supported the Director-General's proposal regarding a possible allocation of reserve funds to the fisheries training programme. He added that if there is an excess of money, then assessed contributions could be reduced. Samoa proposed that the Secretariat not create any new positions

without prior endorsement of CRGA. This excludes new positions required as a result of new programmes, provided they are fully funded.

269. The representative of American Samoa said his country was committed to SPC and would be making its next contribution soon.

270. The representative of the United States of America complimented the Secretariat for incorporating objectives, outputs and performance indicators in the budget. He stated that USA policy was that any surplus of contributions be returned to the contributors.

272. The representative of Australia congratulated the Secretariat on the balanced budget, especially in the context of the CROP salary harmonisation exercise. Australia expressed concern that administration and salaries comprised 50% of SPC's budget, and noted this could have a long-term impact on the organisation's ability to serve its members. She asked that this issue be given consideration at the CROP triennial review of remuneration, scheduled for 2003.

272. The representative of Tuvalu commended the Secretariat on the balanced budget, and supported Samoa's remarks regarding the transfer from general reserves. He indicated his country's contribution would arrive next week at the latest.

273. The Chairperson, speaking as the representatives of Solomon Islands, apologised for his country's assessed contribution being three years behind, and stated that Solomon Islands remained committed to the organisation, and would make its contribution as soon as the country's economy permitted.

274. The Director-General stated that the decision to transfer funds from available reserves into the core budget was made by CRGA last year and approved by Conference. She commented that the Secretariat needed CRGA approval for such transfers, and requested CRGA approval to do the same again this year. She stated that SPC was very pleased that the level of reserves was at a comfortable level, enabling the organisation to decide on their best use. She reiterated that SPC assessed member contributions had remained at the same level, and that available reserves could be devoted to servicing member requests. However, she acknowledged that the assessed contributions needed to be reviewed periodically, indicating that the next review was scheduled for 2003. She stated that the level of arrears did not impact the budget, but did affect cash flow. She added that in addition to member contributions, the cash flow of the organisation benefited from programme funds and interest earned on funds, noting that SPC receives assessed contributions in advance from some members, which has assisted in managing cash flow. She commented that the development of SPC budgets was governed by policies adopted by CRGA, and that the policy guideline in relation to the core budget required a balanced budget. She stated that CRGA 31 acknowledged the need for the Secretariat to revise its budget from time to time within approved budget levels, and added that the surplus factors into SPC's ability to make revisions due to unforeseen needs during the course of the year. She addressed Samoa's concern regarding new positions, stating that the Secretariat needed management flexibility to ensure the delivery of those services approved during the budget process. She noted that SPC's management of the budget also affects its ability to address new concerns.

**275. The Committee approved and adopted the SPC budget for the year 2003, and also agreed that a paper on assessed contributions would be presented to CRGA next year.**

## **AGENDA ITEM 6 – THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY**

### **Venue**

276. The representative of Fiji Islands informed CRGA that his government was fully committed to hosting the Conference and CRGA in Fiji Islands and had already budgeted for these events, including allocation of contingency funds if necessary. He said his country apologised that the "Pacific Village" complex would not be ready in time for the Conference as originally planned. He reassured CRGA that a suitable alternative venue had been selected.

## **Theme**

277. The Director-General explained that the Secretariat was inviting CRGA to consider the suggestion of “Achieving the global community’s development goals in the Pacific” together with other possible suggestions by members, as the theme of the Third Conference of the Pacific Community, as set out in Information Paper 6. The Secretariat had consulted with the Government of Fiji Islands, host of the Third Conference, to develop the proposed theme. Development of the theme at this early stage would enable preparatory work to start well in advance of the dates and would facilitate a fruitful debate on the theme during the Conference. The Secretariat was not underestimating the amount of preparatory work needed but was expecting significant benefits from the debate. The Secretariat intended to involve closely other contributors in the development process of the theme, including the CROP agencies and UN agencies in the region.

278. The representative of the United Kingdom urged the Secretariat to liaise closely with the Pacific Islands Forum and UNDP as they were planning to hold a high-level officials meeting in March 2003 on the millenium goals.

279. The representative of New Zealand cautioned that the proposed theme was rather ambitious and broad in scope and appeared to focus mostly on the millennium goals. He noted that other relevant issues were also coming out of World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg) and the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, Mexico). He suggested that further consideration be given to the theme before the final selection.

280. The representative of Papua New Guinea suggested that the Committee should leave it to the Secretariat and the host country of the Conference to agree on a suitable theme.

**281. The Committee mandated the Secretariat and the host country of the third Conference of the Pacific Community to liaise together to finalise the theme of the Third Conference of the Pacific Community, taking into account comments made by CRGA members.**

### **AGENDA ITEM 7 – THE YEAR 2003 CRGA: VENUE, AND MEETING CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

282. **The Committee agreed that:**

- (a) **Fiji Islands will be the venue for the 2003 meeting of CRGA**
- (b) **Tokelau will provide the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson will be provided by Tonga, in accordance with CRGA Rules of Procedure.**

### **AGENDA ITEM 8 – OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **CRGA Report**

283. **The Committee agreed to discuss the policy of annexing statements to the report, at its next meeting.**

### **AGENDA ITEM 9 – ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

284. **The Committee formally adopted its report as amended.**

## CLOSING

285. The Chairperson congratulated CRGA members for a very fruitful and positive meeting. He thanked all members of the Secretariat for their valuable support in the conduct of this meeting, and particularly the Interpretation and Translation Section. He expressed particular appreciation to the hosts of the various functions, and specifically the SPC staff and families for the Island Night. He personally thanked the members of the Drafting Committee and its Chairperson, the representative of Tokelau, for having facilitated the work of the meeting. He wished all the participants “bon voyage”.

286. On behalf of all participants, the representative of French Polynesia expressed CRGA’s appreciation to the Chairperson, the representative of Solomon Islands, for having done an excellent job in conducting this meeting in a very efficient and friendly manner. She extended CRGA’s best wishes to SPC employees who would be leaving the organisation shortly and would not be present at the next CRGA meeting.

## DETAIL STATEMENT BY FRENCH POLYNESIA

### FRENCH POLYNESIA'S PRESENTATION ON THE MARINE RESOURCES SECTOR

French Polynesia is very satisfied with the fruitful collaboration which has existed for many years now with the Pacific Community in the areas of:

- direction exchanges between technicians and scientists on the scientific and technical aspects of programmes;
- participation in numerous symposiums, seminars and technical meetings on lagoon, coastal and oceanic fisheries resources and, more recently, in the area of aquaculture;
- participation in and organisation of specialised training sessions on topics such as fisheries statistics, fish processing, or fisheries resource assessment;
- French Polynesia's involvement in regional research projects, the most recent of which is the PROCFISH Programme.

In the area of **oceanic fisheries**, French Polynesia's priority is to successfully carry out its development plan, which has the following objectives:

- Catch 30,000 metric tonnes of fish inside the exclusive economic zone;
- Export 23,000 metric tonnes (mt) of fish, comprising 16,000 mt of frozen fish and 7000 mt of fresh fish.

These objectives were set by taking into account, on the one hand, the latest fisheries resource assessment, and, on the other, commercial fishers' ability to process and market this quantity of products.

In order to meet these objectives, several programmes are under way:

#### **The programme to build up a fishing fleet**

There are currently some 50 tuna boats operating and they produce slightly more than 8000 mt annually, i.e. a total of 10,000 mt (10,317 mt in 2001) when artisanal coastal and oceanic fishing is included.

**The on-shore equipment programme** which I will not go into further here.

#### **The training programme**

In this regard, French Polynesia has already implemented the standards set out in the SCTW Convention on training for commercial seafarers.

As far as fishing is concerned, although these standards are not yet in effect at the international level, the new Maritime Training Institute-Fisheries and Trade is already preparing to provide future fishing skippers training adapted to international standards for boat captains and engineers.



## Social welfare for oceanic fishers

### Technical assistance and monitoring fishing activities

The Fisheries Service provides technical assistance in the form of advice, in-field experiments and on-going information exchanges with commercial fishers. In addition, a programme to collect statistical data has been underway since 1990 in order to monitor fisheries activities and status.

On a more regional level, French Polynesia participates in the PROCFISH oceanic fisheries resource assessment programme, whose oceanic component in French Polynesia consists of putting scientific observers on board French Polynesian fishing boats, strengthening the in-port data collection programme and tagging tuna. This programme began fieldwork in the early part of the second half of 2002. There are also plans to begin a study on stock exchanges between the French Polynesian and adjacent zones.

French Polynesia wants to take this opportunity to congratulate SPC on the work that has already been carried out.

In the area of **artisanal coastal and oceanic fisheries**, e.g. *poti marara* speedboats and skipjack boats) the main issue is competition with longline fishing.

The main activities in this area consist of maintaining the commercial fishers' competitiveness with regards to longlining.

They comprise:

- the fish aggregation device (FAD) mooring programme whose objective is to maintain an on-going park around those islands where fishing is heaviest;
- improving fish packaging by setting up cold storage equipment and training sessions in processing techniques;
- training in the management of small-scale fishing firms;
- improving the marketing of fish by integrating them into the distribution channels open to tuna boats.

In the **lagoon sector**, the main priority is sustainable management and conservation of resources as both food sources and sources of income.

While official statistics show a decrease in the consumption of lagoon products within known distribution circuits, recent studies have a tendency to assess home consumption at much higher levels than the figures given up to now.

The main issue is, then, to obtain more precise information on catches taken in French Polynesian lagoons.

To this end, several research programmes conducted in collaboration with French agencies (CRIOBE [Centre for Insular Research and Observatory for the Environment], IRD [French Institute of Research for Development], UPF [University of French Polynesia]), and also as part of the "coastal resources" section of the PROCFISH Programme with SPC are attempting to assess the impact of human consumption on lagoon fish stocks.

In the **aquacultural sector**, the shrimp, giant freshwater prawn and sea bass farming programmes were largely transferred to the private section following privatisation of the Territorial hatchery in late 2001.

These programmes are in a routine production phase although research and development agencies in this area, such as the Fisheries Service and IFREMER (French Institute of Research for Ocean Development), still provide technical assistance to this sector's commercial fishers.

Introduction of the floating cage farming technique over the past few years has made it possible to begin another type of aquaculture based on local fish species.

These species present significant advantages over imported ones, e.g. they are adapted to local climate conditions, do not present any ecological risks should they escape, and they are already appreciated by the local community and so there is no problem marketing them. A family fish farming development programme, using floating cages and based on these species, has been under way since 2001. It is based on two different supply sources: collecting juveniles in the wild and mastering in-tank reproduction techniques which have already given very good results since more than 6000 "moi" (threadfish) hatched in tanks are being farmed in floating cages.

These are, then, the main directions which French Polynesia has taken with regards to fisheries and aquaculture.

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## DETAIL STATEMENT BY AMERICAN SAMOA AND THE GOVERNOR'S LETTER

### STATEMENT

**Presented by: Leialua Birdsall V. Ala'ilima, American Samoa**

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to speak before the CRGA on the important matter of regional security. I would like to state here that the issue of regional security was raised during an SPC in-country visit seeking input into the development of the corporate plan earlier this year with a follow-up to the Secretariat in a letter on October 31, 2002. To approach the subject of security, I have jotted down a few terms, themes, and goals of SPC programs that I have heard repeated several times throughout the various SPC presentations, which I would like to share with my colleagues.

advocacy, law reform, regional collaboration, information dissemination, improve food security, certification on bio-security, advisory/information services, sustainable management of crops, quarantine programs, decrease impact of natural disasters, sustainability, regulations and standards covering trade, collaboration and networking, germplasma backup facility, redundancy, integrated management, reduced reliance on imports, comprehensive coverage for the Pacific, unified approach, strategies and alliances, common interests and goals, flexibility, commitment, transportation security, port and cargo inspections, dangerous goods, convention for port and ship security, target mobile populations, progressive development, designed for sustainability, strategic partnerships, survival, maximum impact benefit, impact assessment, proactive challenge, economic cost, partnership of government, NGO and CBO, crosscut, risk related behavior, public health surveillance network, virtual multi-disciplinary outbreak response teams, national borders, compliment, management and implementation systems, communications.

The list of development terms goes on. However, these terms in whatever context they are couched in brings home the point that SPC is already working in the arena of security at the regional level. Keep in mind that security crosscuts all sectors of development – be it agriculture, information technology, transportation, health, education, etc. All development areas have a security component. If we learned anything about security in the post September 11 period it is that security is not just a law enforcement or intelligence gathering activity. It is also domestic preparedness and consequence management, which deals with the capacity of a community to respond to and recover from a catastrophic event, mitigate damages and as quickly as possible, return to normal.

In its truest sense, terrorism is an action seeking to instil fear into a community with the objective of disrupting the economy and undermining public confidence in governing institutions. Terrorism has a multitude of targets along with multiple methods of attack. If one acknowledges this basic description for terrorism, one must also look at countering terrorism by minimizing collateral damage, ensuring government continuity and addressing economic recovery. Suffice it to say “Security” is an elusive term, however, you will find it to be a component that crosscuts all development sectors. For example, in the wake of Sept. 11, the US federal government placed a focus on following key areas when dealing with response to terrorism: mechanical, biological, chemical, radiological, cyber-terrorism and agro-terrorism. They are currently making a substantial investment to ensure US communities are prepared to immediately respond to incidences within these six categories and minimize collateral damage.

In American Samoa, I am pleased to say we recently purchased \$1,000,000 of personal protective equipment (PPEs) and detection devices to deal with nuclear, chemical, radiological and biological outbreaks as well a fire. We conduct federal certification training of first responders for this equipment both in the US and American Samoa. We have also submitted our plan to inoculate the entire population within two days of a smallpox outbreak. We are currently building our local pharmaceutical stockpile and have access to the US national stockpile landed in American Samoa at our request within 12 hours. In the last major biological outbreak in Samoa, the influenza that swept through the country in the early 1900s killed one of every five Samoans. Truly, it was a horrible time of suffering in our history when one hears the tales of the survivors. In

the neighboring islands of American Samoa, however, not one life was lost to the outbreak as a result of the quick and strict quarantine regulations placed into effect by the naval governor of the time.

The recent statements from the leadership of APEC calling for regional security collaboration encourages us and we feel security should include consequence management designed to deliver effective first response services and to contain and mitigate the effects of an event within Pacific countries. There is no “one plan fits all” model for security. It is a process that needs to be developed by all stakeholders and account for the unique characteristics of the Pacific community. SPC is a dynamic development organization with wide Pacific membership, proven development processes and procedures as well as established networks into Pacific island countries and territories. Furthermore, it can draw upon the counter terrorism experiences and first response lessons learned from the larger member countries of France, Great Britain, United States, Australia and New Zealand. Their expertise would be of immense benefit in conducting risk and vulnerability surveys for the region and in the formulation of strategies and approaches to best protect the people of the Pacific, their property and their livelihood. The recent Bali incident once again clearly demonstrates that terrorism has no bounds and together with the recent rash of attacks in the Philippines brings such senseless destruction right to our doorstep.

At a dinner for the 2002 graduating class of West Point that I recently attended, former New York Mayor Rudolf Gulianni stated that the events of September 11 made America stronger. It lifted the veil of complacency that shrouded America’s outlook on the world and forced the United States to confront the hatred that is directed towards the free world. In doing so, America has and will be better prepared. It should be noted that to be complacent is to be reactive which is a costly burden most Pacific countries can ill afford to bear. A pro-active approach to regional and national security is definitely the better option. Keep in mind that as borders harden and new security measures are put in place in developed countries, terrorists will seek soft targets to make their statements. I certainly don’t want to come across as conjuring up doomsday scenarios to seek action. However, I think the simple questions that we need to ask ourselves is:

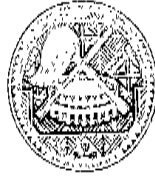
1. Are we able to detect and deter potential threats?
2. Are we prepared to manage and mitigate a terrorist incident?

As government officials, we all have the responsibility to our country and the wider community to answer these questions honestly. In his letter of October 31, 2002 to the Director General, American Samoa’s Governor Tauese Sunia looks to the SPC as the only regional outlet for US Pacific territories to express security concerns and to seek collaboration with neighboring countries to explore security activities relevant to the region. We request that the vision and mission of the new SPC corporate plan for the region be responsive to this need and include a reference to security. We suggest the vision read as follows:

“Our vision for the region is a secure and prosperous Pacific Community, whose people are healthy and manage their resources in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable way.”

From this vision, security related terms could be incorporated in various areas of the mission and guiding principles and expanded or incorporated into the many SPC program areas.

It is our hope that we will be able to dialogue with fellow SPC member countries to broaden the discussion on this important issue and identify the most appropriate vehicle(s) and effective approaches to ensure security in our region. In closing, Governor Sunia extends his warmest wishes to all the participants of the 32nd CRGA and hopes for a fruitful meeting.



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October 31, 2002

Serial: 0920

Ms. Lourdes T. Pangelinan  
 Director General  
 Secretariat of the Pacific Community  
 BPD5  
 98848, Noumea Cedex  
 New Caledonia

Dear Ms. Pangelinan,

This letter is to request your kind assistance in advancing the idea of SPC assuming a mandate for regional security. This is an idea American Samoa presented to SPC during their recent review of SPC's draft corporate plan several months ago.

As you may be aware, security spans all development sectors and can impact either positively or negatively on a community. For example, a terrorist incident would have a devastating effect on fragile Pacific economies, particularly those that depend heavily on the tourism market. By the same token, a secure region has much to gain in economic benefits. Forum Secretariat has a regional security mandate, however, membership is limited and security is most effective when it is seamless. US Pacific insular areas do not participate in Forum activities thereby leaving a security breach within the region. Following on the heels of APEC's statement advocating regional security cooperation, I feel it would be most appropriate to address the issue of regional cooperation and a possible role for the SPC. I feel it is important that our community takes a proactive role in this arena to avoid being identified as a soft target for terrorist activities that currently plague Pacific Rim nations.

I would like to request that we advance this discussion by placing regional security on the CRGA meeting agenda and gauge the interest of SPC member nations on this important matter. If the dialogue should indicate to the positive, I would like to suggest that the idea be explored in further detail and presented at the next SPC heads of government meeting next year.

In closing I would like to wish you and all the SPC member representatives to the CRGA a fruitful meeting.

Sincerely,

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**APPROVED BUDGET 2003**