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**FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS**  
(5–6 November 2024, Papeete, French Polynesia)

## Information Paper

**INFORMATION PAPER NO. 2: UPDATE FROM SECTORAL MINISTERIAL AND HEADS OF MEETINGS  
CONVENED BY SPC**

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

### Paper summary

1. The Pacific Community (SPC) is navigating a pivotal moment as it confronts the myriad challenges posed by climate change, environmental degradation and socio-economic disparities facing the region. Considering these pressing issues, this interactive session represents a strategic opportunity to foster collaboration among sectoral ministerial chairs. This session aims to stimulate catalytic conversations that align with the goals of the 2050 Implementation Plan and Regional Collective Actions (RCAs), emphasising the importance of inclusive practices and regional cooperation. By focusing on sectoral ministerial meetings convened by SPC this year – youth, gender equality, fisheries and culture – this dialogue seeks to build shared understanding across key sectoral priorities and challenges. It also presents an opportunity for engagement with the sectoral chairs, amplifying key sectoral issues for Pacific Leaders' attention.

### Key points

2. The interactive session aims to facilitate meaningful dialogue between Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials and sectoral ministerial chairs, ensuring that diverse perspectives—especially those from Smaller Island States—are considered in shaping regional strategies, actions and decisions. The discussion questions are attached as Annex 1.
3. This exchange will focus on aligning sectoral strategic actions with the 2050 Implementation Plan and RCAs to enhance multi-sectoral cooperation and develop cohesive responses to ongoing challenges in the Pacific.
4. Recognising culture as a vital enabler of resilience and a driver for sustainable development in the region, this session will emphasise the importance of protecting, safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage, Indigenous and traditional knowledge, and the cultural and creative industries.

5. Emphasising the necessity of empowerment for youth and women, the session will highlight the priorities for youth and women, advocate for increased investment in leadership development and opportunities, noting the potential role women, girls and youth can play in driving and realising the ambitions of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (2050 Strategy), and discuss a governance mechanism for youth development in the region.
6. Recalling sustainable fisheries management as a priority, the session will underscore commitments from member states that aim to balance people's livelihoods with economic viability and environmental stewardship for future generations.

## Background

7. SPC serves as a key regional science and technical institution, fostering sustainable development and promoting cooperation among Pacific Island countries and territories. SPC works in over 20 sectors and is lead technical and science provider for many of these. On an annual basis, SPC is responsible for convening various sectoral heads of and ministerial meetings. The outcome and priorities put forward by our members during these meetings inform the strategic direction and work programmes of the divisions and of the organisation as a whole.
8. In a region increasingly challenged by global issues such as climate change, environmental degradation and socio-economic inequalities, SPC's sectoral ministerial meetings have become instrumental platforms to address development challenges facing the youth, gender, culture and fisheries sectors.
9. This year marks a significant milestone: the 54th Committee Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) meeting will incorporate an interactive session with the chairs of this year's sectoral ministerial meetings for the first time. This session is specifically designed to discuss outcomes, mechanisms and processes from the convenings, which could potentially promote a more inclusive dialogue among participants and discuss opportunities for elevating key sectoral priorities for Pacific Leaders' consideration.

## Analysis

10. The interactive session aims to facilitate dynamic discussions that enable representatives to explore tangible strategies. These strategies will align with the overarching goals of the 2050 Implementation Plan and RCAs, ultimately aimed at enhancing regional cooperation. Additionally, the session intends to identify effective engagement pathways, particularly concerning Smaller Island States, ensuring that inclusive practices are woven throughout the decision-making processes at all levels.

### ***Key outcomes from ministerial and heads of meetings:***

11. **Fisheries:** The meeting addressed key regional issues related to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, focusing on climate change impacts and the use of innovation and technology for improved data management. Key endorsed work programmes included SPC's role in developing members' observer programmes through the Regional Observer Cost-Recovery fund, the need to develop a coastal fisheries and aquaculture climate change plan and prioritising the review of the Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Pacific Fisheries, the New Song for Coastal Fisheries and the five-year extension of the Framework for Action on Scaling-up Community-based Fisheries Management.
12. **Youth:** With youth representing a substantial demographic in the Pacific region, the focus is on developing the new 10-year regional strategy to achieve the aspirations of Pacific youth in the priority areas they have identified (education, employment and economic pathways; health and well-being; climate change, disaster risk reduction and biodiversity; Pacific identities and heritages; human rights, peace and security; connectivity, information and privacy; and leadership and governance) as well as a governance mechanism for the effective implementation of the strategy.
13. **Gender equality:** Ministerial discussions have underscored the importance of promoting gender equality and cultural heritage. Commitments have been made to increase women's representation and leadership in various sectors, with a distinct focus on integrating gender

considerations into decision-making processes. Commitments were also made in continuing the implementation of the Pacific Platform for Action on Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights (PPA), with a particular focus on the specific recommendations on addressing the health of women and girls, gender responsive climate justice and the prevention of gender-based violence.

14. **Culture for development:** Ministers recognise culture as a stand-alone development priority and as an enabling cross-cutting priority for sustainable development. They called for a coordinated approach to the regional cultural architecture, guided by the Pacific Regional Culture Strategy (PRCS), and discussed several key issues: safeguarding of Indigenous/traditional knowledge, climate finance, mainstreaming culture, integrating Pacific languages and arts into education, promoting sustainable tourism, Indigenous/traditional knowledge and conservation, strengthening the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC), and ensuring Pacific representation in international forums that address Indigenous issues, culture, and the cultural and creative industries.

***Opportunities for cooperation and collaboration:***

15. The dialogue is designed to identify synergies among member states and partners. There is a growing recognition of the unique challenges faced by Smaller Island States, and collaborative initiatives that harness local knowledge and resources can lead to impactful results.

***Key strategic actions contributing to the 2050 Implementation Plan:***

16. Establishing and strengthening existing mechanisms, processes and tools to facilitate opportunities to align sectoral investments and actions to the 2050 Strategy outcomes and the Regional Collective Actions.
17. Investment in empowering and building capacity of youth, women and marginalised groups will bolster leadership skills, expand professional opportunities and enable these demographics to contribute to outcomes of the 2050 Implementation Plan.
18. Co-designing policies and plans using participatory approaches and tools that reflect the interconnectedness of various sectors—especially youth, gender, fisheries and culture—will foster a holistic approach to sustainable development.

**Conclusion**

19. The interactive session is pivotal for sharing and documenting key milestones and results, while addressing ongoing challenges. By highlighting key outcomes and strategic actions from the Fisheries, Youth, Gender, and Culture Ministerial meetings, members will build a shared understanding of regional priorities and opportunities for engagement and bringing visibility of key sectoral issues to Pacific Leaders.
  20. Participants are encouraged to engage with the outcomes actively while recognising the unique positions of Smaller Island States. The collaboration and knowledge sharing during this session will contribute to advancing the ambitions and outcomes of the 2050 Strategy.
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**Annex 1: Discussion questions for the session**

1. What key lessons learned from the recent Heads of Fisheries meeting can be applied to enhance cooperation among Pacific Island nations for sustainable fisheries management?
2. What innovative approaches can be implemented to effectively engage youth in leadership and decision-making roles, especially in the priority areas they have identified, to ensure they have an active voice in shaping their communities' futures?
3. What specific strategies can be deployed to support the implementation of policies that promote gender equality and enhance women's participation in economic and political spheres?
4. In what ways can we leverage cultural heritage to drive economic growth while preserving the unique identities of Pacific Island communities? How can we strengthen efforts to support and grow the cultural and creative industries?
5. How can regional frameworks/strategies be improved to foster better collaboration with Smaller Island States, ensuring that their unique challenges and contributions are recognised?
6. How can we effectively build and sustain partnerships among governments, civil society and the private sector to create more comprehensive programmes that support youth and women in the Pacific region?