

Memorandum of Cooperation

Between

The Ramsar Convention Secretariat

And the

**Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme
(SPREP)**

Preamble

Since its inception in 1971, the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) has provided the most important intergovernmental forum on wetland conservation issues;

According to the Convention's mission statement, the Contracting Parties commit to "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

The Convention is founded on three pillars: promoting wise use of wetlands, developing a network of Wetland sites of International Importance and developing international cooperation.

SPREP is an intergovernmental organisation having the mandate to promote cooperation in the Pacific region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations;

SPREP has the roles of secretariat for the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region and related protocols 1986 (the SPREP Convention) and secretariat for the Convention on Conservation of Nature in the South Pacific 1976 (The Apia Convention);

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme share similar conservation and management goals and positive cooperation between the two institutions to date has been expressed through mutual recognition by our respective governing bodies.

SPREP and the Ramsar Convention have actively collaborated through their first Memorandum of Cooperation and associated Joint Work Plans, particularly in the areas of promoting the wise use of wetlands, Wetlands Communication -Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) activities, Policy and programmatic synergies, and information exchange, among others;

Therefore, the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (known hereinafter as the 'Ramsar Secretariat') and the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (known hereinafter as 'SPREP') agree to the following:

Article 1 Policy Compatibility

- 1) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will cooperate to the extent practicable in the preparation of mutually relevant documents for each other's major meetings, such as the Ramsar Conference of the Parties or the Meeting of the SPREP Governing Council and their subsidiary bodies.
- 2) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will liaise on key issues to promote the compatibility of their respective policy decisions, particularly in relation to other MEAs, IGOs and NGOs.
- 3) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will coordinate on matters relevant to their administrative and programmatic relationships with relevant agencies of the United Nations.

Article 2 Institutional Cooperation

- 1) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will maintain a collaborative programme for sustainable wetland and water resource conservation and management by continuing to increase current consultation and cooperation between their organisations.
- 2) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will inform their National Focal Points at the regional and national levels of their cooperative activities.
- 3) In cases where the Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP have different National Focal Points, they will seek to promote consultation and cooperation between these focal points.
- 4) For general matters, the focal points for the Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP are respectively the Secretary General and the Director, or their assigned delegates.

Article 3
Joint Activities

- 1) Common areas for joint conservation activities, as identified in the Annex to this Memorandum of Cooperation, will be reviewed annually or at the request of either party.
- 2) The Ramsar Secretariat will communicate agreement on common areas within their respective networks, and SPREP will endeavour to mobilise the expertise available on wetlands and water resources within its organisation in support of these activities.
- 3) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will provide each other with details of their annual work programmes to ensure harmonisation of activities at global, regional and country levels.
- 4) SPREP will promote accession to the Ramsar Convention and seek to promote implementation of the Convention among its member countries.
- 5) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will endeavour to coordinate their activities in research, training and public awareness.
- 6) The extent to which the collaborative programme and the joint conservation activities are implemented will be subject to the availability of resources.

Article 4
Consultation, Reporting and Further Guidance

- 1) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP shall institute measures to consult on the implementation of this Memorandum of Cooperation. They will report accordingly to their respective governing as well as advisory bodies and seek further guidance on new areas of cooperation and action.

Article 5
Exchange of Experience and Information

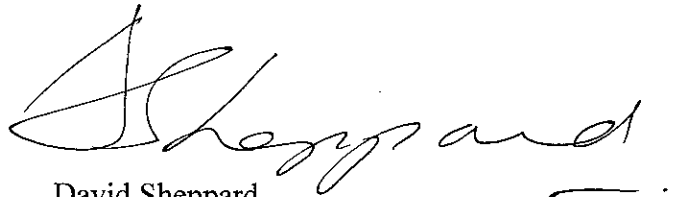
- 1) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will regularly exchange information of mutual interest.
- 2) The Secretariats shall establish links between their respective Internet sites.

Article 6
Obligation, Review and Termination

- 1) This Memorandum of Cooperation constitutes an expression of a shared objective and vision. However, each party's actions will be considered to be that party's sole and separate action, for all purposes, neither party shall claim to be acting on behalf of, or as agent for the other party.
- 2) The term for this Memorandum of Cooperation is four years. The agreement may be reviewed at the request of either party (usually annually) and may be terminated by either party by giving six months notice in writing.



Anada Tiega
Secretary General,
Ramsar Secretariat



David Sheppard
Director,
Pacific Regional Environment
Programme

Date...02-11-2009

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ANNEX

The Joint activities outlined below contribute to the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012, the SPREP Action Plan 2010 - 2014 and Ramsar Resolution VIII.42 on ‘Small Island Developing States in the Oceania Region’ approved at COP8 of the Ramsar Convention.

1. The Wise Use of Wetlands

1.1 Distribution of the Ramsar ‘wise use’ toolkit to PICTs and SPREPs regional partners

1. The Ramsar Secretariat, with SPREPs assistance, will continue to provide copies of the updated “Wise Use” toolkit to all Pacific Island countries and territories (hereafter, PICTs) and other relevant bodies and organizations in the region in English and French as appropriate.
2. The Ramsar Secretariat will seek to provide this toolkit on CD-ROM to reduce the distribution costs and for ease of portability.

1.2 Capacity building for wetland wise use

3. SPREP, with assistance of the Ramsar Secretariat, will seek to secure funds to plan and carry out capacity development workshops on wetland wise use for PICTs based on current regional wetland conservation priorities.

1.3 Mainstreaming wetland wise use

4. The Ramsar Secretariat, with the assistance of SPREP, will consult with and assist PICTs with a view of encouraging them to integrate the conservation and wise use of wetlands into their national strategies, plans or programmes.

1.4 Regional input into the guidance of the Ramsar Convention

5. SPREP will assist the Ramsar Secretariat, the Standing Committee and the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (whichever is appropriate), to identify individuals and organizations within the Pacific region with relevant expertise that can provide input and be involved in the development of guidance relating to implementation of the Convention.

1.5 Access to global and regional expertise in wetland management

6. The Ramsar Secretariat, with SPREPs assistance, will facilitate increased access by PICTs to Ramsar's established mechanisms for sharing information and expertise on wetland conservation and management.
7. SPREP and the Ramsar secretariat will work together to facilitate the sharing of experiences and lessons learnt on wetland management among practitioners within the Oceania region through existing networking mechanisms.

1.6 Communication, Education and Public Awareness

8. The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will exchange information, experiences and lessons learned on their respective activities within the broad area of wetland education, communication and public awareness.
9. The Ramsar Secretariat with SPREP's assistance will facilitate the regular distribution of its education and awareness resources (in English and/or French as appropriate) across the region. SPREP will operate as a regional 'clearinghouse' for such materials and facilitate distribution in an on-going capacity.
10. SPREP and the Ramsar Secretariat will work together to promote suitable celebrations for World Wetland Day (2 February) in the region.

1.7 Improved understanding of wetland resources to guide planning and management

11. SPREP and the Ramsar Secretariat will work together to update and maintain the Oceania Wetlands Directory and also, encourage the involvement and contribution of national governments, international and national NGOs, academic institutions as well as other partners.

2. Wetlands of International Importance

2.1 Guidance for the identification of wetlands of international importance

12. Both SPREP and the Ramsar Secretariat will provide, as their resources allow, advice and guidance to PICTs in identifying their potential Wetlands of International Importance. The Ramsar Secretariat will invite its International Organization Partners to support these efforts.

2.2 Resourcing for the designation of Wetlands of International Importance

13. The Ramsar Secretariat will seek to identify funds to assist PICTs to identify and designate and manage appropriate sites as wetlands of international importance. This applies only to those states that are Ramsar parties or considering such action.

3. International Cooperation

3.1 Promoting international and regional cooperation

14. The Ramsar Secretariat shall provide, as appropriate, to SPREP the details of its scientific bodies' respective work programme.
15. The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will invite one another to be represented regularly in meetings of each organization, and as appropriate, other meetings covering matters of mutual interest.
16. The Ramsar Secretariat will identify the possibilities of its subsidiary bodies (whichever is appropriate) to participate at the annual meeting of the SPREP Governing Council, and, where appropriate, invite the chairpersons or representatives of these Ramsar Subsidiary bodies to participate at this meeting as observers.

4. Implementation Capacity

4.1 Assistance with resourcing for capacity building

17. SPREP, with the assistance of the Ramsar Secretariat, will seek to implement Ramsar Resolution VIII.42 and will seek to leverage additional financial resources for capacity building activities from bilateral donors or other sources
18. The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will make all necessary efforts to assist PICT Ramsar parties to streamline national reporting processes, drawing upon experiences to date of the pilot project for approaches to rationalizing national reporting requirements under biodiversity-related conventions as well as those of other parallel initiatives aimed at harmonizing national reporting processes.
19. SPREP, with the assistance of the Ramsar Secretariat, will seek to implement the outcomes of the regional capacity building Workshop on wetlands wise use for PICTs as they relate to increasing implementation capacity.

5. Increasing membership to the Ramsar Convention

5.1 Seeking to support the expansion of Ramsar membership in the region

20. SPREP and the Ramsar Secretariat will cooperate to provide Pacific Island States, which are considering accession to the convention on Wetlands, with support, information and advice on relevant procedures, benefits, and obligations that are entailed in accession to the Convention. As part of this action, the Ramsar Secretariat will make available to those countries considering accession, the updated 'Ramsar Accession kits' to provide clear guidance with respect to the procedures required.
21. The Ramsar Secretariat will seek to identify funds, either through donors, the developed countries of the region, or those with dependent territories to provide assistance and guidance to Pacific Island contracting parties as well as non-contracting parties to proceed towards accession.
22. SPREP, with the assistance of the Ramsar Secretariat, will pursue mechanisms to build high-level political support for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and the Ramsar Convention among PICTs, such as through the annual SPREP meeting of officials.
23. SPREP and the Ramsar Secretariat will cooperate to identify funding and co-organize and implement the fifth Oceania Regional Meeting (ORM-5) to prepare Pacific Island Contracting Parties in the region for Ramsar COP11.
24. The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP, where appropriate, will seek to provide support to the current and future Oceania representative on the Ramsar Convention's Standing Committee to fully execute their obligations and responsibilities on behalf of the Oceania contracting parties.