



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 has provided the most important intergovernmental forum on wetland conservation issues.

According to the Ramsar 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 Ramsar Convention's fourth Strategic Plan (2016-2024) has as its vision that "Wetlands are conserved, wisely used, restored and their benefits are recognized and valued by all"

The Ramsar Convention is founded on three pillars: promoting wise use of wetlands, developing a network of Wetlands of International Importance and promoting international cooperation to enhance the implementation of the Convention.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (known hereinafter as 'SPREP'), is an intergovernmental organization 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).

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

SPREP and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat have actively collaborated since their first Memorandum of Cooperation and associated Joint Work Plans, particularly in the areas of promoting the wise use of wetlands, wetlands Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) activities, policy and programmatic synergies, and information exchange, among others.

Climate change and disaster risk reduction are strategic issues for the Pacific Islands region and hence areas on which SPREP and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat will seek to collaborate more closely in the coming years. Coastal wetlands such as mangroves and coral reefs help to buffer the impacts of climate-related events such as storm surges and cyclones. Inland wetlands also mitigate the impacts of natural disasters, both floods and droughts. The role of wetlands in integrated water resources management in the Pacific Islands is vital and needs further recognition.

Mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass are the most critical coastal and marine wetland types for the Pacific Islands region given their significant contribution to livelihoods, maintenance of biodiversity, climate regulation, traditional practices, ecotourism and economic development. A greater emphasis on collaboration to enhance the conservation and/or restoration of these wetland types will be a key focus of the SPREP-Ramsar partnership for the next three years.

Therefore, the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (known hereinafter as the 'Ramsar Secretariat') and 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, synergize their strategies and facilitate harmonized reporting at the national level, particularly in relation to other biodiversity-related MEAs, and in consultation with relevant 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 collaborate on sustainable wetland and water resource conservation and management initiatives by continuing to increase current consultation and cooperation between their organizations.
- 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 General, or their assigned delegates.

Article 3 Joint Activities

- 1) The extent to which the collaborative programme and the joint activities are implemented will be subject to the availability of resources.
- 2) Common areas for joint conservation activities shall contribute to achievement of the *Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016-2024*, the *SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026*, *The Regional Wetlands Action Plan for the Pacific Islands 2011-2013*, Ramsar Resolution VIII.42 on 'Small Island Developing States in the Oceania Region' approved at COP8 (2002) of the Ramsar Convention, and the Pacific Regional Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2014-2020.
- 3) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will communicate agreement on common areas within their respective networks, and endeavour to mobilize expertise available on wetlands and water resources in support of these activities.
- 4) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will share relevant information about their annual work programmes to maximise synergies between their respective activities that relate to wetlands conservation and management in the Pacific region.
- 5) SPREP will promote the values and benefits of the Ramsar Convention and its implementation among its member countries.
- 6) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will endeavour to coordinate their activities in research, training and public awareness, continuing the collaboration on inland and coastal wetland conservation and restoration, including mangroves, and developing a special emphasis on coral reefs and seagrass.
- 7) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will further collaborate where possible, subject to availability of resources, on the following thematic areas:
 - strengthening the whole-of-island (source to sea) approach to wetland and water resources management in the region, including both water quantity and quality as well as solid waste management.
 - strengthening monitoring of wetland extent and condition in the Pacific Islands region, for contribution to the CBD Aichi targets and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets.
 - promoting the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction measures in wetland management plans, and promote the integration of ecosystem-based management, in particular relating to wetland and water management, in the national development plans, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies of the Pacific Island Countries.

Article 4
Consultation, Reporting and Further Guidance

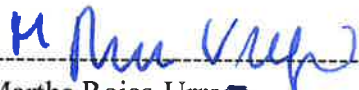
1) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP shall consult regularly on the implementation of this Memorandum of Cooperation. They will report accordingly to their respective governing as well as advisory bodies and seek further guidance on new areas of cooperation and action.

Article 5
Exchange of Experience and Information

- 1) The Ramsar Secretariat and SPREP will regularly exchange information of mutual interest.
- 2) The Secretariats shall maintain links between their respective Internet sites.
- 3) The Secretariats will undertake mutual efforts to promote each other's visibility, wherever possible.

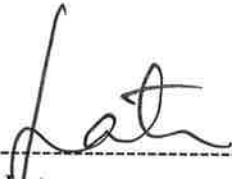
Article 6
Obligation, Review and Termination

- 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 will extend until 31 December 2018. 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.



Martha Rojas-Urrego
Secretary General
Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands

Date



Kosi Iatu
Director General
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment
Programme



Date