

**Report of the
Fourth Oceania Regional Meeting for
COP10 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
Held in Apia, Samoa
10-11 April 2008.**



**A preparatory meeting for the 10th Meeting of the Conference of
The Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands,
Changwon, Korea, October 2008**

1. Introduction

The 4th Oceania Regional Meeting was held at the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) in Apia, Samoa from 10-11 April. Funding assistance was made available by the government of Australia, through their Department of Environment Water, Heritage and the Arts, to help organize the meeting. SPREP also provided financial support towards the meeting.

The final agenda for the meeting is given in Annex 1, the final list of participants in Annex 2.

1.2 Representation

Contracting parties represented included Australia, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea and Samoa while Kiribati attended as a non-party observer. The Ramsar Convention's International Organization Partners were represented included Wetlands International Oceania and IUCN Oceania. Observers from the University of the South Pacific (USP) and Conservation International Pacific Islands Program also attended. Secretarial support was provided by SPREP, including the Ramsar Secretariat's out-posted Oceania officer, Vainuupo Jungblut.

1.3 Background

The meeting built upon progress that has been made in the region on wetlands wise use and conservation since the last regional meeting and CoP9 in 2005. Such advancements include the approval of the Oceania regional support initiative under the framework of the Ramsar Convention; the continuation of the regional Ramsar support officer position based at SPREP; The accession to the convention of Fiji since the last COP; the signing of a new SPREP-Ramsar Memorandum of Cooperation in 2006 and progress made by other Pacific Island Countries towards accession to the Convention, notably Kiribati and Nauru.

This report reflects key outcomes of the meeting and is provided for the information of interested organizations and stakeholders including the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (COP).

1.4 Meeting Objectives

The objectives of the Fourth Oceania Regional Meeting were:

- To discuss and share experiences on issues, priorities and challenges currently faced by the Ramsar PIC Parties (Fiji, Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa) in the conservation of their wetlands.
- To consider proposals/draft resolutions from the region to be presented at Ramsar COP10.
- To enable PIC Ramsar parties to participate meaningfully in the Ramsar COP and ensure that their issues are voiced.
- To gauge the progress of the national implementation of the Ramsar convention since the last COP (COP9) in November 2005.
- To identify new Oceania representatives to the Ramsar STRP and Ramsar Standing Committee.

1.5 Meeting Outcomes

All five objectives of the meeting were met as participants discussed progress, priorities and challenges faced at the national and regional levels over the last three years. Although not all of the draft resolutions for COP10 were available for discussion at the time the meeting was held, discussions were held on those draft resolutions coming out of the STRP relevant to the region, specifically on climate change, human health and extractive industries. The main product of the meeting is a statement of key messages and recommendations, which will be highlighted at the at the 37th meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee in early June 2008. The meeting also agreed to several tasks that SPREP would undertake in the lead up to the COP, including the preparation of a regional brief, to assist Oceania contracting parties with their preparations.

2. MEETING RECORD

DAY 1 Thursday 10 April 2008

2.1 Official Opening

The Fourth Oceania Regional Meeting for COP10 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was officially opened with a prayer by Susuga reverend Lotu Uele and welcoming remarks by SPREP and the Ramsar Secretariat.

2.1.1. Ramsar Secretariat

The Vice Chair of the STRP representing the Ramsar Secretariat, Ms. Rebecca D’Cruz, welcomed the participants to the meeting on behalf of the Secretary General of Ramsar Secretariat. She further thanked The Government of Australia and SPREP for funding and organising the meeting.

2.1.2 SPREP

SPREP Director, Mr. Asterio Takesy welcomed delegates from the region and beyond. He outlined the critical importance of wetlands and their various functions and services to the peoples of the region. He expressed thanks to the Government of Australia for kindly funding the meeting.

2.1.3 Participant introductions

The SPREP Secretariat invited participants to introduce themselves to the rest of the meeting. Accordingly, the participants went around the table for their introductions.

2.1.4 Election of Chair

The SPREP Secretariat invited nominations for chair from the floor and mentioned that originally Samoa had been requested to chair the meeting, although other nominations were invited. In response, the delegate from Samoa nominated Papua New Guinea to chair the meeting. The Papua New Guinea delegate accepted chairmanship of the meeting and was elected unopposed.

2.1.5 Adoption of Agenda

The Chair noted the importance of keeping to the agenda given the volume of tasks to cover in the allocated time and suggested that the meeting consider adopting the agenda for Day 1. The Chair further noted that the agenda for Day 2 would be considered on the second day of the meeting when the progress from Day 1 was apparent.

The SPREP Secretariat noted the following changes to the agenda, specifically on page 3 of the programme for Day 1:

- The Healthy Wetlands Healthy People (LMMA) session has been moved to Session 6 of Day 2
- The session on Participation in COPs originally scheduled for Session 6 of Day 2 has been moved to the slot vacated by the LMMA presentation in Day 1.
- The Presentation by Professor Randy Thaman during lunch hour on Day 1 has changed its name to: “Wetlands – The Heart and Kidneys of Our Islands, Ocean and Cultures: A Plea for Awareness and Conservation of Wetlands as a Foundation for Sustainable Life in the Pacific Islands”.

Australia asked where in the agenda was an opportunity to discuss the regional initiative.

The SPREP Secretariat confirmed that the regional initiative would be discussed in the presentation on Activities under the Pacific Islands Wetland initiative – *update of part of the Oceania Wetlands Directory 1993* scheduled during session 3 in the afternoon of Day 1.

The Chair asked that the agenda be adopted and the agenda (as it was revised) was adopted unopposed.

2.2 Session 1 - Overview of meeting objectives and statements

2.2.1 Objectives of the Fourth Oceania Regional Meeting

The Chair introduced each of the meeting objectives and asked the participants to consider and adopt the objectives. All 5 objectives were unanimously supported.

2.2.2 Introductory statements:

The Chair invited participants to make introductory statements

Ramsar Secretariat

The representative of the Ramsar Secretariat, Rebecca D’Cruz reiterated the meeting objectives stressed to the meeting the critical importance of working together as a region in the lead up to COP10.

Contracting Parties

The Contracting Parties in Oceania were then given the floor for their introductory statements

Samoa (In capacity as the regional Ramsar Standing Committee representative)

The Samoan delegate, Nanai Tony Leutele, in his capacity as the regional Standing Committee representative for Oceania, stressed to participants the need to work together more effectively. He thanked the Australian delegation for providing important and useful information to support wetlands work in the region. He reinforced the need to work together and hoped that the meeting would enable the region to develop a useful paper to progress at Ramsar COP10.

New Zealand

The New Zealand delegation, Andrew Bignell and Richard Suggate, thanked the SPREP Secretariat for bringing the region together and further thanked Australia for providing funding to enable the meeting to proceed. They stated that there has been additional funding in New Zealand to manage wetlands since the last COP meeting in 2005, which has assisted them in progressing national wetland initiatives. They encouraged all PICs to become parties to the Ramsar Convention and mentioned that New Zealand intends to participate at COP10 in Korea; Lastly, they stated that New Zealand are looking forward to an Oceania voice being developed over the next two days and being taken into the COP.

Samoa

The delegate from Samoa, Nanai Tony Leutele, stated that while the Ramsar convention was new to Samoa, the activities associated with wetland conservation were not new. He further stated that the definition of Ramsar hasn't been clearly defined in terms of the holistic environmental management from mountains to coasts. He noted that tapping into the Ramsar Convention would enhance current efforts to manage wetlands. Lastly, he outlined that the protein obtained from wetlands is critical for providing a source of sustenance to the community.

Palau

The delegate from Palau, Collin Joseph, expressed his thanks to the Australian Government for funding the meeting. He also thanked SPREP and the Ramsar Secretariat for pulling the meeting together. He mentioned that he was filling in for the usual delegate from Palau.

Marshall Islands

The Marshall Islands delegate, John Bungitak, joined others in thanking SPREP and the Ramsar Secretariat for the meeting. He agreed that more cooperation is needed to move forward to provide a voice for Oceania.

Fiji

The delegate from Fiji, Eleni Rova Tokaduadua, stated that Fiji is the newest member to the Ramsar Convention, having joined in 2006. She added that a lot has happened in the interim within Fiji including the development of a lot legislations and policies such as the Environment Act, which assists Fiji to progress the implementation of the Ramsar Convention. Lastly, she stated that she was looking forward to hearing the experiences of the other participants.

Australia

The Australia delegation, Deb Callister and Ian Krebs, expressed pleasure in being able to provide funding assistance to allow the meeting to proceed. They further added that these meetings are important to develop stances and assist new Ramsar member countries in the region. They stated that the meeting was a good chance to learn of initiatives in the region. Lastly, They gave thanks to the Associate Ramsar Officer (ARO) and SPREP Secretariat for pulling the meeting together.

Papua New Guinea

The delegate from Papua New Guinea, James Sabi, thanked SPREP and the Ramsar Secretariat for the invitation to attend the meeting. He noted that as a big country, Papua News Guinea has a lot of wetlands although there are also many pressures against these wetlands that will be discussed in more detail throughout the meeting.

Ramsar International Organisation Partners statements

Wetlands International Oceania (WIO)

The representative of WIO, Aaron Jenkins, mentioned that over the past 6 or 7 years WIO has assisted a number of parties attending the meeting to accede to the Convention. He stated that this region holds about 25% of the coral reefs of the world, although there is only one coral reef nominated in the region. He further added that we also need to nominate more mangrove areas as Ramsar sites. He mentioned that WIO is here to assist PICs to identify and nominate new sites and to assist in developing a regional voice. Lastly, he noted the connectivity in the Pacific and applying the 'Ridge to Reef' approach, which would assist in the conservation of wetlands.

IUCN Oceania

The representative of IUCN Oceania, Dr. Philippe Gerbeaux, thanked Australia for the funding to get participants to the meeting and noted that it was important to have meetings like this one. He further noted that IUCN is a new presence in the Pacific and the recent identification and development of strategies for the region has been an interesting experience. He mentioned that water and marine are two key strategic areas. Energy (another key strategic area) also has implications with water, and species (another key strategic area) also has direct relevance to water. He further mentioned that freshwater fish species are one of the issues in the Pacific where we have close to a full species list. He summarised that all IUCN key strategic priorities for the Pacific have direct relevance on water and wetlands and highlighted the IUCN 2020 challenge, which can actively raise the profile of the Pacific region.

Non-party statements

Introductory statements were made the delegate from Kiribati and the representative of the University of the South Pacific, based in Suva, Fiji.

Kiribati

The delegate from Kiribati, Ratita Bebe, thanked the SPREP and Ramsar Secretariats, and Australia for organising the meeting. She mentioned that she is looking forward to learning from the meeting.

University of the South Pacific (USP)

The representative from the USP, Professor Randolph Thaman, Thanked IUCN for getting USP here and the SPREP Secretariat for inviting them here and agreed that the real way forward is through collaboration. He stated that the engagement of governments and local users is critical in the conservation of wetland areas in the Pacific. Lastly, he noted that the lack of capacity is the biggest issue in the region with limited capacity in-house in the countries, with retention of staff being one of the biggest issues.

Conservation International (CI)

The representative of CI, James Atherton, thanked SPREP and Ramsar Secretariat for the invitation to participate in the meeting. He stated that the focus of CI work is the conservation of species and the areas in which they are found. He noted that while this is not directly related to wetlands, they are interested in learning more about wetland conservation and identifying how this links to CI's work.

SPREP Island Ecosystems Programme (IEP)

The manager of the SPREP IEP, Stuart Chape, thanked Australia for its contribution in making this meeting happen. He mentioned that it was great to see everyone at the meeting, which was reflective of the increasing interest in the Ramsar Convention in the region. He further mentioned that when he started working in the Pacific in Fiji in 1989 there was limited wetlands work, and it has taken quite some time to get to this point. Lastly, he pointed out that a priority for the meeting should be updating the Pacific wetland inventory.

2.3 Session 2 - Regional policy context & reporting

2.3.1 Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Oceania region: update and progress since COP9

The Associate Ramsar Officer (ARO), Vainuupo Jungblut, carried out a presentation on the implementation of the Convention in the region since the last COP, for the information of participants.

Following the presentation, the Chair invited participants to raise questions

Issues arising:

The Marshall Islands asked what the status of the Cultural Working Group was. In response, the ARO responded that he was not sure, although there have been some meetings in recent years.

IUCN Oceania pointed out that if the working group have been meeting then they need to communicate progress better to members. In response, Vai mentioned Samoa was still the Oceania representative and that the working group reported to SC35 and would be reporting to COP10.

The Ramsar Secretariat asked if we could get more information on any recent meetings of the group. In response, Vai stated that he would look into it.

Australia mentioned that there would not be a draft resolution submitted to COP10 from the working group, and added that this remains somewhat a contentious issue, particularly in what advice should be provided or not from the working group, although they believed that the work of the Cultural Working Group should continue past COP10.

USP stated that the importance of the Cultural Working Group was critical

Wetlands International Oceania asked what the history was behind the resolution relating to cross Biome management of wetlands. In response, Vai clarified that the draft resolution was put forward by WWF and endorsed by Samoa at the last regional meeting in 2005, and that a trial of the resolution, to his knowledge, was supposed to be conducted in Palau.

The Ramsar Secretariat mentioned that perhaps we should come back to this issue later as it will be picked up in a presentation later in the day.

IUCN Oceania mentioned that there were also many other projects that address what the resolution was aimed at other than the WWF trial.

No further questions were received.

2.3.3 Relevant Outcomes of the 36th Standing Committee Meeting

The delegate from Samoa, and also the regional Standing Committee representative for Oceania, Nanai Tony Leutele, gave a brief verbal report on relevant outcomes of the 36th meeting of the Ramsar Standing Committee (25-29 February 2008).

In his report, Mr. Leutele mentioned that all the participants had information on the outcomes of the 36th Standing Committee meeting. He further mentioned that a key issue raised at the 36th meeting was the most effective use of the regional budget and whether it should be used to appoint more staff in the region. He pointed out that a decision wasn't reached on this issue yet and that the consideration of the most effective use of the regional budget is ongoing. Lastly, he reiterated the need to cooperate to enable the Oceania representative to the Standing Committee to communicate a common voice from the Pacific.

Following the report, the Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues arising

No questions were received.

2.3.4 Report on Relevant Outcomes of the 14th Meeting of the Ramsar Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP-14)

The representative of IUCN Oceania and also the regional STRP representative for Oceania, Dr. Philippe Gerbeaux, gave a report on relevant outcomes of the STRP 14 meeting (28 January – 1 February). In his report, Philippe requested that the regional Standing Committee representative continue to pursue the most effective use of the regional budget.

Following the presentation the Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues arising:

Marshall Islands asked if in attending the meetings, if briefings were developed that were circulated to the Pacific Members.

IUCN Oceania responded that he generally worked with the ARO to circulate information on the meetings, and that the meeting proceedings were available on the Ramsar website. However, he noted that communication on these meetings could certainly be improved. He also noted that the turnover of staff in PICs is an issue in knowing who to engage in communication. He reiterated that the Ramsar Secretariat was the most appropriate to circulate meeting proceedings.

Samoa added there are difficulties in the consistency of people who attend these meetings (changing from one meeting to the next), and in fact there are many focal points that do not attend the meeting. He suggested that perhaps we could rely more on regular email communication.

IUCN Oceania responded that the right contacts within PICs really need to be carefully considered and appropriately identified by PIC governments. He further added that perhaps he could send only information to PICs that is of interest to them. He highlighted that there should be better sharing of information within PICs.

The Ramsar Secretariat mentioned that there was a draft resolution that could help address some of these issues and that this draft resolution would be discussed in more detail during day 2 of the meeting.

Australia added that the STRP meeting was a little overwhelming in the volume of products that were being developed and put forward and suggested that perhaps IUCN Oceania could add value to this volume in providing advice to the Pacific about which products were relevant.

Conservation International asked what funding mechanisms are currently available. In response, Vai mentioned that the only one he was aware of was the Small Grants Fund (SGF) under the Ramsar Convention.

IUCN Oceania added that there were some regional funding mechanisms, although not many.

Wetlands International Oceania asked what regional networks were operational that assisted PICs in understanding and using products from the STRP meetings.

In response, IUCN Oceania responded that once we know the themes that the STRP is going to consider, these themes can be circulated to the PIC focal points also requesting that they nominate the appropriate people in their jurisdictions that could assist the development of input into that particular theme. He admitted that perhaps this could be done more effectively than

is currently the case and perhaps we could ask the STRP Chair to add these people in the PICs to a list so they can be targeted to assist the discussion of a particular theme.

The Ramsar Secretariat responded that this was the intention and added that having only one person as an STRP focal point was a bit restrictive given the broad range of themes discussed, and encouraged PICs to see if the focal point could in fact be part of a larger network in a country.

Fiji asked if legislative frameworks and communications strategies had ever been discussed in STRP.

In response, IUCN Oceania mentioned that Christine Prietto was tasked to develop a communications strategy that this was being progressed. He also added that he wasn't sure if the issue of legislative frameworks had been discussed and progressed in the past, but noted that if Fiji felt this was particularly important, then he could raise it in the future.

The Ramsar Secretariat mentioned that guidance had been provided on reviewing legislative frameworks, as it's difficult to be prescriptive of what legislation is appropriate for each country.

IUCN added that SPREP Legal Advisor was assisting this issue to be addressed.

New Zealand asked when the new modalities were coming out. In response, the Ramsar Secretariat mentioned that the new modalities were coming out in the next few weeks and would be discussed at the next Standing Committee meeting on the 7th June 2008.

The Chair then asked members to make brief reports on recent progress, issues and key forthcoming events.

2.3.5 Country Reports

Australia

Background:

- Australia has 65 Ramsar sites ranging from alpine, arid inlands, coastal and offshore islands on coral atolls, and even in the middle of major cities including Sydney and Melbourne.
- There is one new listing (Paroo wetlands) in September 2007, and one boundary alteration since the last COP meeting.

Issues and challenges:

- Most of the issues and challenges, relate to water availability, weeds and pests, acid-sulphate soils, water quality, and urban development.
- A major water reform agenda is underway in Australia in response to the ongoing major drought. The water reform agenda is in the order of several \$AUD billion.

Progress:

- Recent progress includes:
 - Developing a framework for describing the ecological character of wetlands.
 - Updating Ramsar documentation (RIS, ECDs, management plans), which is quite a challenge with 65 sites.
 - Developing and implementing a better Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system.
 - Progressing the three bilateral migratory birds agreements (JAMBA, KAMBA, ROKAMBA)

- Added that the national report was vastly improved from the recent format (much shorter), although there is still some of the difficulty in acquiring information to fill it out. One issue was that you are not able to copy the text of the report questions when circulating to other stakeholders.

Kiribati

Background:

- Kiribati is not yet a party to Ramsar but is hoping to in the near future.
- SPREP and the small grants scheme have provided assistance in progressing wetlands conservation.
- The first proposed Ramsar site is in North Tarawa and that 33% of the 45,000 people who live in Tarawa are in North Tarawa, which is known as a rural area. Tarawa is one of 33 islands in Kiribati and 21% of the 270Ha of mangroves in Kiribati are found in North Tarawa.
- The reasons for making North Tarawa the first Ramsar nomination is that it contains a wide range of habitats, is connected to high biodiversity

Progress:

- Some tasks are completed such as consultations with local communities, planting of mangroves, and household surveys for collecting information about the Noto village for contribution to the RIS.
- Some tasks are still outstanding
- North Tarawa is also known as a Conservation Area under the GEF-SPREP SPBCP and that Kiribati is also conducting turtle monitoring in North Tarawa.

Issues and challenges:

- A community based conservation project is a challenge, which is partly due to a limited understanding of not of what conservation is, but how it should be applied in the sense of the Convention.
- The budget is also an issue, although some support has been provided through the small grants.
- Voluntary participation at grassroots level in community-based conservation is very limited and/or non-existent.

Forthcoming events:

- Stocktaking and getting more information for the RIS.
- Finalising mapping.
- Finalising the project for endorsement by Cabinet.

Fiji

Acknowledged the commitment and efforts of NGOs in the countries in progressing wetlands initiatives.

Background:

- In March 2005 Cabinet approved Fiji's ascension to the Convention, which was finalised in 2006.
- Currently in the process of nominating a site has involved a lot of effort across many stakeholders. The development of a Wetland Steering Committee has assisted with the consultative process.
- Studies have been undertaken to identify flora and fauna in many wetlands in Fiji. NGOs and academic institutions largely undertook this work.
- The Fiji Ramsar site is called the Upper Navua Conservation Area, and is currently under a conservation list and is a well-established eco-tourism area. Before this site was recommended to be the first Ramsar site, Rivers Fiji had been undertaking eco-tourism

activities there since 2000. Rivers Fiji has retained sole management of the area under the lease conditions.

- The site is a 200m buffer around the Upper Navua River.
- The site has many attributes that make it an appropriate Ramsar site, and also has many cultural values.
- There is a management plan that focuses on the sustainability of eco-tourism in the area.
- The site contains around 17 endemic species of birds and the endangered Fiji Banded Iguana and the vulnerable Samoan Flying Fox.
- Endangered flora includes the sago palm and five globally threatened plants including a plant found only in Fiji.
- The site includes breeding populations of two species of vulnerable freshwater fish.
- The site contains at least 25% of the fresh water fish species found in Fiji.
- Rivers Fiji has constructed some buildings as part of their eco-tourism initiatives, which has provided training and employment.
- However, there has recently been an encroachment of 150m into the site by logging, which was approved by the local landowners. Rivers Fiji has been trying to resolve this issue, and it was recently discussed at the Ramsar Steering Committee Meeting. The Fiji Environment Department has identified immediate actions that should be taken to maintain the Ramsar site and have agreed that maintenance of the site was important and that rehabilitation of the logged areas was a priority.
- There is an absence of monitoring processes by government in the Ramsar site.

Partners' commitments:

- Wetlands International Oceania is currently doing an inventory of freshwater wetlands and major wetlands in Fiji.
- Mareqeti Viti (a locally based NGO) are progressing initiatives to save the endemic and endangered sago palm.
- WWF have many ecosystem-based projects on the island.
- Birdlife International is continuing with rat eradication.
- USP/ICM is providing a very supportive role in much of the conservation work in Fiji.
- FLMMA is working in partnership with stakeholders to develop management plans, skills development etc in marine managed areas.

Issues and challenges:

- Lack of human resources does not enable full and effective implementation of the international environment agendas.
- Lengthy processes to obtain funding for particular projects are an issue.
- Lack of capacity building / training programmes.
- Lack of awareness of the importance of wetlands.
- Lack of legislative frameworks and institutional arrangements to support conservation initiatives.
- Lack of a holistic management plan for the Ramsar site (the current one is focused on eco-tourism).
- A suggestion is to streamline the implementation of the Ramsar Convention to enable countries with limited resources to be able to meet requirements.

The Chair called for a lunch break at 12:58pm.

The SPREP Secretariat reminded participants of the special presentation during the lunch break by USP and also asked that the meeting resume at 1:50pm

The meeting resumed at 1:58pm with the continuation of Country reports.

Marshall Islands

Background:

- The Jitoken Atoll contains some conservation areas that are closed and can only be opened with permission from the traditional chiefs, which they only do for subsistence reasons, although it is generally very rare for a Chief to allow harvesting in a closed conservation area. Other areas within the atoll are available for commercial use.
- Buoys delineate the two areas.
- There are many mangroves in the area that are owned by the communities; so working with the people is essential to conserve these sites.
- There have been a number of public awareness and community information initiatives.
- In 2007, with the help of SPREP, Marshall Islands held a conservation workshop with participants from eight atolls.
- Updates on initiatives and status are provided to the local councils and landowners.
- An environmental health programme is operational in one of the high schools, and their activities include rubbish removal. There have been five eco-tourism guesthouses established on one of the atolls, which the school students are invited to each year to help maintain the site. These guesthouses also provide income and employment for the local community.
- There are many WWII relics on the atolls.
- There are a lot of sharks in the atolls.
- A lot of locals use traditional canoes for transport.

Forthcoming events:

- Marshall Islands are developing a nomination for Namdrik Atoll.
- Marshall Islands have also been approached by the leaders of the Majuro Atoll to establish a conservation site following the launch of the 2008 Year of the Coral Reef.

Palau

Background:

- There is one Ramsar site in Palau, which is on the largest of the 500 islands in Palau.
- The Ramsar site is called Lake Ngardok Nature Reserve and is the largest freshwater lake in Micronesia, and is the largest freshwater resource for the state of Melekeok (one of 16 States in Palau).
- The watershed area was set aside as a reserve in 1997.
- The site meets the criteria for a natural world heritage area.
- The site is home to many endemic species of birds, plants and reptiles.
- There are also multiple habitats in the reserve.
- A nature trail has been built to access a number of the different habitats in the reserve.
- The conservation area is a strictly no-take zone and people require a permit to enter the reserve.
- The reserves governance is subject to a Management Act that was developed in 1999.
- It costs \$5 to visit the reserve for foreigners, and this money contributes to the management of the reserve.
- There is a Management Board and there is a reserve manager.
- Achievements to-date include protection of the watershed, trail development, use as an education site, grading of the parking lot, and training and capacity building for reserve managers.
- Areas in the reserve are prone to erosion that has been exacerbated by burning, road construction and deforestation.

Samoa

Background:

- Samoa consists of 8 islands.
- There are a number of designated national parks in Samoa, although there is only one Ramsar site.

- 85% of the total land in Samoa is customary owned and the Government is trying to promote conservation of the reserves through the communities.
- The Government has completely banned logging, although some logging still exists in plantations.
- The Ramsar site is on Upolu in the Lake Lanoto'o Reserve. A second site is planned for Savai'i.
- Lake Lanoto'o is 11 hectares in size and the national park it is in is 470 hectares. 74% of the reserve is government land and the remainder is customary land.
- The first national park in Samoa was declared in 1975 and Samoa joined the Ramsar Convention in 2004.
- Samoa also has two MPAs that were established in 2000 involving 20 villages from two districts and a number of NGOs.

Issues and challenges

- A major issue in the Ramsar site is encroachment and the Government is working with the local people to practice conservation.

New Zealand

Background:

- New Zealand has six Ramsar sites extending back to 1976.
- Farewell Spit is an 11,388 hectare site (designated in 1976), which is mostly a dune complex with mudflats and has a management plan implemented.
- The Firth of Thames is a 7800-hectare site (designated in 1990) and is quite a rare geological formation. There is regular monitoring in this area, which has indicated an increase in the area of mangrove.
- Kopuatai Peat Dome is a 10,201Ha site (designated in 1989) and has a number of important bird and plant species. Baseline vegetation mapping is now complete, although it doesn't have an implemented management plan.
- Whangamarino is a 5923-hectare site (designated in 1989) and management has changed in recent years following a Government initiative to improve management of the site (and one other Ramsar site). An operation plan has been prepared and weed control has commenced.
- Manawatu River Mouth and Estuary is a 200-hectare site (designated in 2005) that has a management plan. This is also part of the Government initiative to improve management noted in the above point.
- Waituna Lagoon / Awarua Wetland is a 2556 hectare site (designated in 1976) and was increased to 19,500 hectares in 2008. Most of the site is conservation land owned by the Government, although there is also some private land.

Issues and challenges:

- National challenges include the intensive land use throughout the country being resulting from high commodity prices driven by the dairy industry.
- It's also a challenge to get a national picture of wetland status to achieve better prioritisation and decision-making.

Success stories:

- Extension to the Awarua wetland.
- Manawatu wetland designation.
- Arawai initiative.
- Mapping and inventory, particularly developing a comprehensive national classification system across biodiversity sites.
- Increased community engagement.
- Conduct of a wetland conference every two years to share knowledge and experiences.
- Agreed the new template for the national report was easier to work with, and

encouraged better coordination with stakeholders.

Questions:

USP asked if New Zealand was staying close to the original definition of wetlands, and if so, have they deliberately restricted their definition of wetlands to not include marine, coastal etc. New Zealand responded that some of the site nominations were developed using traditional criteria and perhaps they need to consider a broader array of wetlands given that there are many exceptional areas that could be considered.

New Zealand added that they do not have layer on layer of protection for conservation areas, that is, if something is already protected then they generally won't include it as protected in another way.

Papua New Guinea

Background:

- There are 18 provinces and five million people in PNG.
- There are currently two Ramsar sites, one, which is important to migratory birds, and one, which has many species of endemic fish. Both sites are protected areas.
- There is work being undertaken to nominate another site.

Issues and Challenges:

- Development pressure is one of the main challenges, particularly relating to petroleum exploration and urban development.
- Another issue is the influx of exotic species into PNG, including fish and weeds.
- Some challenges faced by the environment department include mainstreaming biodiversity issues.

Forthcoming events:

- PNG is currently preparing its national report.

2.4 Session 3 – Progress on Ramsar-related activities in the region

2.4.1 Pacific Island Mangrove Initiative proposal

A presentation was given by IUCN Oceania (Philippe Gerbeaux) on the concept proposal for a Pacific Island Mangrove initiative, which is spearheaded by IUCN.

Following the presentation the Chair invited participants to raise questions, although asked that we keep this session to five minutes.

Issues arising:

USP asked why the emphasis was on PNG and Solomon Islands, and not some of the smaller PICs that may not have the extent of the mangroves but may rely on their mangroves more.

IUCN Oceania responded that the plan was still in draft and that feedback and information that could assist the most effective deployment of funds would be welcome. Added that the initiative would focus on the complete range of mangrove management.

Conservation International asked what the timeframe was for the SPREP wetlands plan and does it require review now.

The SPREP Secretariat responded that it would be reviewed every five years, although it hasn't been reviewed since 1999 and added that he mentioned that Dr Joanna Allison of the

University of Tasmania started a review of wetlands conservation in the region last year.

Fiji mentioned that they have management plans and if the review process could assist them with refining their management plans it would be welcomed.

IUCN Oceania responded that this was discussed as part of the initiative planning last year.

No further questions were raised

2.4.2 Participation in COPs

SPREPs legal Adviser, Mr. Clark Peteru, gave a presentation on the process of participation at Conferences of the Parties to MEAs.

Following the presentation the Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues Arising:

The Ramsar Secretariat clarified that there are six Ramsar regions of which Oceania is one. She also clarified that the official languages for Ramsar are English, French and Spanish.

Fiji asked if SPREP offered training or workshops on COP participation.

Clark responded that workshops are held occasionally.

No further questions were raised.

2.4.3 Activities under the Pacific Islands Wetland Initiative – *Update of part of the Oceania Wetlands Directory 1993*

A presentation was provided by the ARO (Vai) on progress to date of activities under the Pacific Islands Wetlands Initiative.

Following the presentation the Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues Arising:

Australia asked if the funding that they had now was sufficient to run the workshop.

Vai responded that they still needed about another US\$23K to supplement the US\$39K they had now. He further added that one of the reasons they delayed the workshop was to try and source complementary funding.

Australia asked if the funds that were approved for the regional initiative for the next financial year were new funds.

Vai mentioned that yes, they are new funds, and the intention was to use these funds to go towards the workshop as one of the objectives of the workshop was improved site management, which is in line with the funding tags.

Australia said we it may be useful to give consideration to the use of these funds to ensure they are most effectively applied.

IUCN Oceania added that it would be useful to learn where the key needs of the PICs are in terms of Ramsar issues as that could potentially direct future funds.

Wetlands International Oceania added another issue relates to tenure, and that management plans should be targeted community-implementation actions.

Conservation International asked if the pilot update of the directory was still going to be available in April.

Vai responded that the expected completion date for the pilot update was the end of April.

The Ramsar Secretariat mentioned that the general consensus was that they couldn't be too descriptive in the guidelines that they generate as they are intended for use by all members. She advised that the guidelines are not rocket science, and are a logical and a fairly simple framework. She suggested that perhaps we should look at what the management issues are in the Pacific and build our training around those needs.

IUCN Oceania added that participants should use meetings such as this to build a picture of what the needs of the Pacific are relating to site management.

No further questions were raised.

The Chair called a break for afternoon tea at 3.53pm and asked participants to return after 5 minutes.

2.4.4 Project to streamline reporting by Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to MEAs

A presentation was given by Australia on progress of the project to streamline reporting by PICs to Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) implemented by the Australian Department of Environment, Water, Cultural Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA).

Following the presentation the Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues Arising:

No questions were raised.

2.4.5 IUCN Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) Project

A presentation was given by IUCN Oceania (Philippe Gerbeaux) on progress to date of the IUCN Water and Nature Initiative Project (WANI).

Following the presentation the Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues Arising:

No questions were received.

2.4.6 Global Environment Facility – Pacific Alliance for Sustainability (GEF-PAS)

The SPREP GEF Support Adviser, Mr. Joe Stanley, gave a presentation on the GEF PAS.

Following the presentation the Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues Arising:

Wetlands International Oceania noted that for Fiji they assisted in developing a proposal and requested where the proposal was at as it took about a year to develop. It was called a 'National system for protected areas'.

Joe responded that it was caught in the pipeline, and if it wasn't included in the PAS then it wasn't classified as a priority by the PIC.

No further questions were raised.

2.4.7 Update on the Pacific Year of the Reef (PYOR) 2008 Campaign

The SPREP-based PYOR Campaign coordinator, Ms. Sereima Savu, gave a presentation on the progress of the campaign in the region.

Following the presentation the Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues Arising:

Australia raised the Coral Triangle initiative and that the Australian Government was looking to hold a workshop later in the year as part of that initiative.

Joe added that PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are also part of the Coral Triangle Initiative.

No further questions were raised

2.5 Session 4 - COP10 Agenda, Ramsar Strategic Plan & Issues Arising

2.5.1 Outcomes of the Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting for Ramsar COP10 (14-18 January 2008, Bangkok)

The Ramsar Secretariat gave a presentation on relevant outcomes of the Asian Regional preparatory meeting for COP10.

Following the presentation the Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues Arising:

No questions were raised.

The Chair called for an end to the day and mentioned that the outstanding items from session four of day 1 would be carried over for discussion on the morning of day 2. The Chair also asked that the meeting reconvene at 8:45am on the morning of day 2.

2.5.2 Housekeeping announcements

The SPREP Secretariat reminded participants of access to the Internet in the computer lab and also asked anyone that had documents they wanted to share to pass them on for inclusion in the CD for participants. The SPREP Secretariat also reminded participants of the cocktail function at the SPREP fale that evening at 6:30pm.

Day 1 of the meeting came to a close at 5:41pm.

DAY 2 Friday 11 April 2008

The meeting reconvened at 8:54am.

A revised agenda for day 2 was circulated to participants.

Session 4 (continued) - COP10 Agenda, Ramsar Strategic Plan and Issues arising

2.5.3 Report on the development of the new Ramsar Strategic Plan (2009-2014) – Key issues for the region

A presentation was given by Australia (Deb Callister) on progress of the development of the draft Ramsar Strategic Plan for the period 2009-2014.

Australia (Deb) pointed out that the draft strategic plan is available on the Ramsar website, although participants should note that this document version is currently under review.

Vai added that the draft strategy would be included on the CD for participants.

Following the presentation the Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues Arising:

Vai asked if there was any experience from the Asia region on how the strategic plan would be 'operationalised' at the regional level.

The Ramsar Secretariat responded that to date Asia had pretty much just discussed some of the issues in the Strategic Plan (similar to the presentation by Deb), and that the general intention was how to implement at the national scale. The Ramsar Secretariat admitted that it's too early in the development of the plan to start operational planning, and added that we should start thinking about what the priorities for the region are, and to retrofit these into the plan to ensure they are captured.

Australia pointed out that members would likely focus on particular aspects of the strategic plan and not the plan as a whole. This could send a key message to the Ramsar Secretariat that if there are aspects of the plan that are not being addressed then whether Ramsar needs to do more to assist implementation, or the strategic plan needs adjusting.

USP mentioned that the general strategies tend to reflect a western aspect to the conservation of wetlands, and don't really address the sustainable food, health and economic production aspects.

Australia responded that she had only presented nine of the 25 strategies, although it is likely that the points raised by USP would be included in these nine strategies if they were going to be included at all.

The Chair suggested this topic could be discussed in more detail in the breakout sessions.

2.5.4 Presentation of the COP10 agenda, key issues and discussions

The Ramsar Secretariat gave a presentation on the programme and agenda for Ramsar COP10.

Key points raised in presentation:

- There will be opportunities for the regions to meet during the COP and participants should start thinking about how and when they want to meet during the COP. The first

opportunity is on the morning of the 29th Octobers.

- Meeting as a region enables us to look at the draft resolutions as a region. It also provides an opportunity for the regional members to get together, which doesn't happen very often, and can be used to discuss positions/representation etc.
- The first part of the agenda is mainly reporting, and is followed by a discussion of the draft strategy.
- The main part of the COP (the development of the draft resolutions) is next and it's difficult to predict how long this will take, although members should be prepared to work long hours.
- Ramsar COP10 doc2 and doc3 are both documents that should be read in advance in particular doc3, which describes how the draft resolutions will appear at the COP.
- All COP documents are available on the Ramsar Secretariat website, although at this stage the side events are still being developed.
- There are three different types of papers that will be issued as part of the COP – draft resolutions, information papers, and technical papers:

1. *Draft resolutions*

Substantive (new) resolutions:

- Wetlands and human health
- Wetlands and highly pathogenic avian influenza: scientific and technical guidance – will be a look at what we should be doing on this issue with guidance from the STRP. This is a major concern for Asia.
- Wetlands and climate change – not sure what this will involve although an STRP group is looking into it.

Possible resolutions:

- Conservation and management of Urban Wetlands – mainly being driven from Africa.
- Changwon Declaration – Korea, as host, working on this now and will be developed sometime prior to the COP.
- An additional 10 'Short resolutions to adopt the annexed guidance' were also discussed.

2. *Information papers*

- The second category of papers you will see at the COP are the information papers. These will appear at the COP, although they won't be discussed. The purpose of these is to provide context to the issues that are being discussed.
- Information paper #11 (Wetlands and extractive industries) may be of particular interest to the region, although not sure if it includes coral mining. However, this is still in draft form and can be added to over the coming period.

3. *Technical reports*

The final category of papers are the technical reports. These will be available either before or after the COP and we should keep an eye out for them.

- The two resolutions that are of particular importance to the region are:
 - Draft Resolution 9. Wetlands and human health.
 - Draft Resolution 13. The role and importance of different wetland types in carbon storage and sequestration. This is a bit of a first cut on where we are heading on the climate change issue.

The Chair invited participants to raise questions on either of the presentations discussed.

Issues Arising:

Wetlands International Oceania asked where the '6 metre' definition came from, as it makes more sense to go with a depth of 150 feet as this is the degree of light penetration, which is

more relevant to coral reefs.

The Ramsar Secretariat responded that it's difficult to get background on this, although she believed it was something to do with the depth that ducks dive to. She suggested that it hasn't been changed as the 'tag on bits' allow for greater depths in the wetland definition, and it was probably decided not to go back and try to change the original description.

Australia (Deb) commented that she believed Australia had sites deeper than 6 metres as they generally follow protected area boundaries.

Marshall Islands asked how financial information is presented at the COP

The Ramsar Secretariat responded that the resolutions have operative paragraphs that describe how an issue will be addressed. These operative parts are specifically targeted at engaging organisations to address issues. Financial systems are included as a single resolution.

Marshall Islands mentioned there needed to be more information on atolls in particular the pressure of commercial development.

The Ramsar Secretariat pointed out that it is limited what the Convention can do to address this, as it clearly recognises the sovereign rights of countries and that this is an internal issue. However, she suggested that we could endeavour to get some rules and regulations built into the resolution on extractive mining, which could be used to influence development.

The Ramsar Secretariat added that there is a proposal to ask the Council (?) to develop an independent financial mechanism, which we should think about.

New Zealand (Andrew) asked if thought was given to how this mechanism might operate.

The Ramsar Secretariat said no, that they were looking at how financial mechanism for other Conventions, and that it's very much in the early days.

Vai asked if the GEF has been approached to provide a financial mechanism.

The Ramsar Secretariat responded that Ramsar and CBD had a joint work programme, which was aimed at CBD recognising that Ramsar was the lead in wetlands. This joint work programme would lead to wetlands projects being funded by GEF. However, this hasn't really materialized the way the Ramsar Secretariat hoped it would. It is hoped in the future that GEF will set aside financial resources specifically for wetlands projects, rather than just saying 'please be aware of impacts on wetlands'.

Wetlands International Oceania pointed out that participants should be proactive on this issue with communicating the priority of wetlands.

New Zealand (Richard) asked if we were going to consider which resolutions we should support based on our regional priorities at any stage in the meeting today.

The Chair replied that this is an important issue and that it would be discussed under Session 6.

Australia (Deb) mentioned that this was a bit of a tricky one in terms of this meeting as draft resolutions must be finalised by 22 April. As this is the case, most of the resolutions haven't been circulated in detail and as we only know the resolutions in broad detail it may be difficult to discuss our position on them in detail.

New Zealand (Richard) responded that even given this we should consider what are the priority resolutions for the region based on the information we had.

The Ramsar Secretariat agreed this would be valuable as we could establish what is important in relation to particular resolutions to ensure that these are included when the detail of the resolutions are circulated.

Wetlands International Oceania asked if we should get greater engagement of public health organisations by riding on the awareness provided through the avian flu issue, as there this would provide us with potential access to significant sources of funding. Added that the next few years is the time to progress this.

The Ramsar Secretariat has a copy of the latest Wetlands and Human Health draft resolution and asked Vai if we could get these circulated to participants, to which Vai answered yes. The Ramsar Secretariat added that the resolution puts more onus on the wetlands people to establish contact with the health sector. Also added there is a fundamental issue in that we don't have a lot of information on how wetland services impact on human health, and developing a greater understanding in this area is a priority as the onus is on the wetland sector to progress. At the end of the day we need to engage more effectively.

USP (Randy) mentioned that he keeps hearing about water-borne diseases, and the biggest issue in the Pacific is non-communicable diseases, and that maybe we need to consider a resolution that the big link for health here is related to wetlands, which provide a large portion of sustenance.

The Ramsar Secretariat commented that the definition of health uses the WHO definition, which is very broad.

USP added that with so many traditional owners across many atoll sites could complicate the human health issue.

The Ramsar Secretariat mentioned that it's important that we look at the draft resolution on this issue to make sure that the Pacific human health aspects have been adequately captured.

IUCN mentioned that the theme of the COP (healthy wetlands, healthy people) suggests this will be addressed in detail.

New Zealand (Richard) mentioned that he hoped that there would be a positive spin on the health issue and the benefits a healthy wetland can provide, and not necessarily just the negative impacts they can have on human health.

IUCN Oceania pointed out that at the last regional meeting, participants had all the draft resolutions in front of them, and if this was the case in future preparatory meetings then we could achieve much more.

The Chair called for a morning tea break at 10:20am.

The meeting resumed at 10:26am.

2.6 Session 5 – Regional priorities for the next triennium (2009-2011)

2.6.1 Presentation – Improving networking between Ramsar National Focal Points in the region

IUCN Oceania (Philippe Gerbeaux) gave a presentation on improving networking between national focal points in the region.

Key points raised in presentation:

- He encouraged participants to read the brochures that were included in the information pack and discussed the brochures in detail. Of interest may be the global triennial processes included in the brochure that sets out the series of meetings over the course of a 3-year cycle.
- He Stated that the STRP representative need not be a focal point, and that ideally the representative would be part of a network in a country to enable them to tap into the relevant expertise within a country. It's paramount that the representative is highly motivated and interested in wetlands to maximise chances of positive impact on the STRP process.

The Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues Arising:

Australia (Deb) commented that when Australia nominated their STRP representative (Deb) that the information didn't seem to get through to the Ramsar Secretariat, even though the information was sent. Suggested that perhaps we should review the list of STRP representatives to ensure they are the current country representatives.

IUCN Oceania added that there is a document that describes a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the STRP representatives.

The Ramsar Secretariat mentioned that there was a resolution that said members should nominate their representatives. There is an amendment to this resolution at the COP10 that refines the guidelines for what the ToR is and it is hoped that this will ensure that country representatives are the most appropriate. It is important to emphasize that the representative should ideally be part of a network of experts within a country whose knowledge can be accessed to provide input.

IUCN Oceania pointed out that once an STRP representative has been nominated they get access to the STRP website, which is password protected. This website includes thematic information and is a valuable communication mechanism. Philippe took the participants through aspects of the website.

IUCN Oceania suggested that counties should include a number of people who can access the website to ensure that the right people are able to contribute to the information on the site. However, also noted that the Ramsar Secretariat must approve all nominations to access the site.

New Zealand (Andrew) asked why it was a restricted site if it was such a valuable source of information.

IUCN Oceania responded that this was done to ensure that the site wasn't over complicated with information. However, we need to identify how we can open access to this site a little more.

The Ramsar Secretariat added that the support service was originally set up of a way of communication between meetings. Over the course of time the Secretariat's recognised that there are additional people that could add value to the site. However, when it was opened further then there was a flood of emails (hundreds in a very short time) leading to complaints. The Ramsar Secretariat is developing public access to information on the website where people can access information although will not be able to contribute to the site. We have to recognise that the Ramsar Secretariat also maintains the Ramsar forum and we don't want to duplicate information sources, as it would create a work burden on the Ramsar Secretariat.

IUCN Oceania added that you only get emails from the thematic areas that you're registered for.

IUCN Oceania pointed out that we will now have the breakout sessions and invited Kate Brown (SPREP) to describe how the sessions would run.

2.6.2 Open discussion – Facilitated breakout groups

Kate mentioned that the sessions were targeted at ways of improving collaboration between countries and that there would be three questions the breakout groups should consider:

1. What sort of interaction do you have with National Focal Points (NFPs)?
2. How could the NFPs be better supported by government?
3. What help do you/NFPs need from?:
 - Ramsar officer and SPREP
 - STRP representative for Oceania
 - Ramsar Secretariat
 - Other Oceania countries
 - Other organisations

Kate said the first two questions are brainstorming and the last one is looking more for ideas.

Kate said that we had from now (10:53) until 11:50, when each group would be required to provide a 5-minute presentation to the rest of the group.

Participants were then grouped into two groups to consider the questions.

Kate and Philippe facilitated the sessions.

The groups were then asked to report back to the meeting, noting that not all points would be read out. Participants were encouraged to read through the post-it notes that were developed for Question 3 during the day.

The detailed responses to Question 3 are contained in Annex 3. Participants prioritised the support they require from the Ramsar Secretariat as:

1. Coordination
2. Funding
3. Materials
4. Management
5. Training

Group 1 report

Group 1 response to Question 1: what sort of interaction do you have with NFPs:

- NFP is not recognised in Fiji
- Secretariat is outside the government
- There is a need to reconfirm who the NFPs are

- There is a need to get the ToR from SPREP
- Advice is needed from the Ramsar Secretariat on the time commitment in being an NFP
- There is a need to assess reactions of NFPs
- There is a need to establish a national Ramsar committee
- Meetings need to be included in the ToR
- Another one or two officers need to be part of the distribution list

Group 1 response to Question 2: how could the NFPs be better supported by government:

- Cabinet decisions relating to wetland conservation
- Ministerial decisions relating to wetland conservation
- Prioritising within the Convention and across Conventions
- Reviewing corporate plans of other Departments
- Integration into agency corporate plans
- Development of a calendar of meetings etc
- Financial support

Group 2 report

Group 2 responses to Question 1: what sort of interaction do you have with NFPs:

- Mostly strong interaction through national wetland committees where they are in place.
- NFPs generally call meetings

Group 2 responses to Question 2: how could the NFPs be better supported by government:

- In most cases it is one person that is all NFPs (Ramsar, STRP), so there is a need to spread responsibilities a bit further.
- STRP NFPs are not meant to speak on behalf of Government, as they are only acting as experts.
- We need to look at this in a case-by-case, however, for STRP the bottom line is getting an expert
- We need to attach other names to the NFP (concept of a focal panel)
- We also need commitment needed from parties (namely the ones identified in the brochure presented this morning by Philippe).

The information developed in response to Question 3 is detailed in **Annex 3**.

Kate invited participants to continue contributing to the messages on the board throughout the day.

The session ended at 12.09pm.

The Chair called a break for lunch at 12.10pm. Participants were asked to return at 12.55pm.

2.6.3 Housekeeping

Vai mentioned that Randy would continue his presentation at lunch, and further added that all participants were invited to the SPREP bar this evening.

The meeting resumed at 1.13pm

2.6.4 Healthy wetlands, healthy people – case study – contribution of the LMMA programme in the region to the COP10 theme

A presentation was given by Wetlands International Oceania (Aaron Jenkins) on the Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA) programme in the region as a case study that demonstrates on the ground implementation of the COP10 theme.

Key points raised in presentation:

Key points from Madang, PNG case study

- Documented increases in fish abundance, diversity and tourism in Madang, PNG.
- Significant increases in both clam harvesting and household incomes within 3 years after establishment of Verata, Fiji.

The Chair invited participants to raise questions.

Issues Arising:

The Ramsar Secretariat asked if the Ramsar technical report relating to wetland benefits is missing something that is reflective of the Pacific and asked if the WIO representative would mind being approached to include information in the report in terms of the benefits of wetland conservation. If there were facts and figures available that support the benefits in the region it would provide a powerful message.

Wetlands International Oceania agreed and reiterated that there was a range of useful information on the website.

No further questions were raised

The session ended at 13:22.

2.7 Session 6 – Priorities relating to COP draft resolutions

The session started at 13:22.

The Chair asked New Zealand (Richard) to lead this discussion.

New Zealand (Richard) stated that the session was aiming to identify what the key issues are that are facing the region, and to develop ideas of how we can cooperate to progress these issues in the lead up to COP10.

Richard asked if Vai had any guidance on how this session would best unfold.

Vai responded that he was aiming to develop a regional brief for COP10 and that we would need to establish the timelines that are necessary to achieve this.

Australia (Deb) asked if we would include information on what has been happening in the region.

The Ramsar Secretariat responded that there are two products:

1. What has been happening in the region, which will be developed by the Ramsar Secretariat based on the National Reports, and
2. Additional information for the COP10 (so we need to think about what we will include in this report).

The Ramsar Secretariat suggested that participants would need to refer to the budget for the region – is it appropriate? etc, which will need to be determined prior to the COP at SC37.

Samoa agreed that finance was a key issue, as was the development of some regional initiatives.

Australia (Deb) added that an Australian delegate attended SC36 and agreed that funding will be a key issue at SC37. A priority for the region is the continuation of the Associate

Ramsar position based at SPREP, which is included in the SC37 agenda. Deb also added that there would likely be more work on the resolutions, particularly the extractive industries resolution and that we should push for the inclusion of coral extraction in this resolution.

Vai added that he is usually given an opportunity to provide input into the Secretary General's overview, which he can use to communicate regional perspectives.

New Zealand (Richard) then requested that the meeting discuss the regional priorities. He mentioned that some of the priorities we have heard in the past days are included in the draft resolutions, but we need to be sure.

Richard invited participants to record their priorities, which are summarised in **Annex 4**.

USP added that climate change is where the world's focus is now and it's where the money is, however the loss of biodiversity is probably a much more critical issue. The islands critically rely on biodiversity for just about everything.

WIO mentioned that coral reef management is failing in many areas because of a failure of land management.

IUCN mentioned that the four key issues are:

1. Limited awareness and support for wetland conservation and management at government and community levels.
2. Insufficient knowledge on which to base wetland conservation and management decisions, and limited access to existing knowledge. IUCN added that we need to identify wetlands types where people are having similar issues as this will enable better progress towards their management and we will be better able to understand the impacts of actions such as logging and development on wetland health.
3. Limited ability of local communities to influence and control the wise use of their wetlands, although believes that this has improved in recent times. Samoa said we should change the wording to recognise that many local communities have a good ability and that we should be focusing on 'strengthening' the ability of local communities.
4. Inadequate policy and institutional framework for biodiversity and natural resource management (including wetlands). Australia (Ian) added that its not only integration with NRM and development, but also with human health as we've heard over the past couple of days.

IUCN mentioned that in returning to the draft resolutions we can see that wetlands and human health (Draft DR#1), and effects of climate change (draft DR#3) are reflected in our priorities. Data and information resolution (draft DR#8) is also represented in our priorities as the developing a wetland inventory (draft DR#9).

USP asked if our highest priority was in fact the training of people in wetland management and use.

New Zealand (Richard) clarified that resolutions only come up when there needs to be changes in policy or procedure. Processes that are in place (such as those relating to training) don't have a resolution as they already have an article that reflects its priority.

USP reiterated that the region needs to start training people in the conservation of wetlands.

Wetlands International Oceania asked if the budget allocation was representative of the number of wetlands in the region.

Australia (Deb) responded that some strong interventions (including Australia and Samoa) were made to increase the allocation of the Pacific region, which was an argument they didn't win.

New Zealand (Richard) asked the Ramsar Secretariat what was the most effective way to increase funds.

The Ramsar Secretariat responded that we take a message from this meeting to the next SC meeting that budget allocation is a significant issue for the region. If we are coordinated and speak with a strong voice at the SC and COP that budget is an issue that needs addressing we will improve our chances of increasing our regional budget.

Australia (Deb) pointed out that we need to be strategic in our approach, that is, to clearly define what we would spend money on, and make sure that we spend the funds we get (noting that we didn't last time). Perhaps we could come up with an 'action strategy' that describes our priorities and where funds would be most effectively applied. The amount of funding from the Ramsar Secretariat is relatively small and so we should consider how best to use these funds to attract more funds, such as developing an 'action strategy'.

IUCN Oceania supported the comments, but added that we need to balance the need to actually do things on the ground with the development of the high-level planning and prioritising documents. Added that we could have a strategy developed by the COP.

Samoa mentioned that the fact that we didn't use all of our last allocation would make it difficult to argue for more funding.

Fiji added that it's important that we fully utilise funds that are allocated to the region.

The Ramsar Secretariat commented that in developing/updating our regional plan that we link it to the Ramsar strategic plan.

Wetlands International Oceania pointed out that developing the action plan may be a waste of time as no one reads it anyway and it doesn't assist work on the ground.

IUCN Oceania mentioned that it's not necessarily the intention that it assists work on the ground, but rather that it could be used to attract funding at higher levels.

Australia (Deb) stated that a document on regional priorities would assist in attracting funds.

There was general agreement that we needed to develop a regional strategic plan based on the priorities discussed here that is linked to the Ramsar strategic plan. There was agreement that we also need a long-term budget plan for the region with funding priorities.

IUCN Oceania mentioned that we could consider developing a regional technical working group, although this is like to come out of STRP, and further pointed out that meeting hadn't really considered COP draft resolution #7.

Australia (Deb) added that there was already Ramsar information available on a strategic approach to nominating Ramsar sites. She further added that a point that is important to Australia relates to COP draft resolution #9, to ensure that the approach is applicable to different countries with different access to resources. This is important to Australia and they were involved in the development of the resolution.

2.8 Session 7 – Next Steps

Vai asked participants as to what timeline they wanted in terms of getting the meeting report back to them for comment. Vai suggested that a draft report could be circulated in 2 weeks, and the participants could have a further 2 weeks to provide comment.

Vai that the priorities discussed in Session 6 could be referred to in the meeting report, but the detail would be provided in an annex.

Vai asked what items participants would like to have in the regional brief and when they require the a draft brief. Vai further mentioned that he would seek guidance from the Ramsar Secretariat on what to include in the regional brief. He pointed out that participants would need to wait until we a full list of draft resolutions was available before the regional brief would be finalised.

Australia (Deb) asked what the capacity was to provide support to participants from PICs attending the COP.

Vai responded that the Ramsar Secretariat would be providing funding for one person from each member PIC to attend the COP.

Vai mentioned the regional brief wasn't a necessity under the Convention, but that it would be useful to assist PICs with dealing with the issues. Vai further mentioned that the intention of the regional brief is to ensure PICs are aware of issues and decisions that may affect them and to provide the potential for regional positions that PICs could consider supporting.

New Zealand (Andrew) added that the regional brief could be used to supplement their own briefs, or that it could form the basis of the country brief itself.

Samoa agreed that we have done a lot of research etc, and now it's about time to focus on on-the-ground implementation.

USP asked if there was access to funding to attend the COP for Kiribati.

The Ramsar Secretariat responded that Kiribati could make an application to the Ramsar Secretariat to attend as a non-party observer.

Vai mentioned that Fiji attended last time as a funded non-party observer, and he will be looking into it again this time.

The session ended at 15:11.

2.8 Session 8 – Oceania reps for the next triennium

The session started at 15:11.

Vai called for nominations for the Oceania representative on the Ramsar Standing Committee, which is changed every three years. Vai added that Oceania had only one representative on the Ramsar Standing Committee as we have less than 12 parties to the Convention.

The Ramsar Secretariat added that the official election of regional representatives was held at the COP, although the regional meeting was a good chance to put forward a candidate. The Ramsar Secretariat added that it was the country not the person that was nominated.

New Zealand (Andrew) stated that Samoa had done a fine job as the representative over the past year and also added that PNG would be a fine representative.

USP mentioned that it would make sense to rotate the representative, and with PNG, Samoa, New Zealand and Australia having been represented and the fact that maybe Fiji is not quite ready, then perhaps it is the time for Marshall Islands or Palau to be our regional representative.

Palau mentioned that it would be a great opportunity for Fiji.

Fiji responded that she wasn't sure if she could accept on behalf of the NFP.

Australia (Deb) suggested that perhaps the Fiji participant could ask their NFP if they are prepared to accept the nomination.

USP reiterated that he believed Fiji was not ready to accept the invitation and that perhaps Palau would like to consider representation.

Palau responded that perhaps Palau could be the 2nd option if Fiji were not willing to accept the nomination.

Samoa nominated Marshall Islands.

Palau seconded the nomination.

Marshall Islands was elected unopposed as the Oceania representative.

Marshall Islands thanked the meeting for placing trust in Marshall Islands and said that he would try his best to represent the region.

The Chair formally thanked Samoa for the contribution they have made over the recent years as the Oceania representative. This appreciation was warmly supported.

The session ended at 15:28.

The Chair called for afternoon tea and asked that the meeting resume at 3.40pm.

The meeting resumed at 15:55.

2.9 Session 9 – meeting closure

The session started at 15:55.

The Chair thanked the meeting for the opportunity to be Chair, and thanked SPREP for their hospitality and entertainment.

The Chair asked contracting parties to make remarks or statements in closing.

2.9.1 Closing Statements

Australia

The Australian delegation thanked the Chair for a sterling job and echoed sentiments in thanking SPREP for excellent hosting of the meeting. They stated that they were pleased with the fruitful discussions over the past two days and were pleased to be able to support the meeting. Lastly, they mentioned that they were looking forward to ongoing and useful discussions in the lead up to the COP and looking forward to seeing the participants in Korea at COP10.

Fiji

The Fijian delegate thanked the Chair, SPREP and the participants. She mentioned that she had learned a lot from the meeting and looks forward to more consultations and learning more.

Marshall Islands

The Marshall Islands delegate joined others in thanking the Chair. He expressed appreciation to SPREP for their support. Lastly, he mentioned that from the bottom of their hearts, they would like to thank everyone for their support in putting this meeting together.

Palau

The Palauan delegate thanked the Chair for doing a remarkable job and extended a mighty appreciation to the Australian Government for enabling the meeting to happen, and to SPREP for their valuable contribution.

Samoa

The Samoan delegate reiterated thanks to the Government of Australia and SPREP for bringing the meeting together. He also thanked the Ramsar Secretariat representative for her great contribution. Lastly, he thanked the USP representative for his work in providing information in presentations over the past two days.

New Zealand

The New Zealand delegation echoed thanks to the Chair for a remarkably good job. They also thanked SPREP for pulling the meeting together. They gave further thanks to the Ramsar Secretariat and IUCN Oceania for their valuable knowledge. Lastly, they thanked the Marshall Islands in taking up the regional representative for Oceania on the Standing Committee, and mentioned that what participants have discussed over the past two days would be useful in the times ahead.

The Chair then invited the non-contracting parties for comments.

USP

The USO representative echoed New Zealand's comments and thanked the Ramsar Secretariat and IUCN Oceania for attending and bringing their expertise and knowledge. He reiterated that we must continue to train people in wetlands conservation.

Wetlands International Oceania

The WIO representative also echoed the thanks that have been expressed. He stated that participants should keep in touch more often, through establishing a network.

IUCN Oceania

The IUCN Oceania representative thanked the Chair for the good job, and thanked all the participants. He noted it was a highlight to see the presentations from the countries and in doing so recognised that he can only do his job properly if he can connect with these places. Lastly, he stated that he believed that what the participants have discussed at the meeting would be important on the way forward.

The Ramsar Secretariat

The Ramsar Secretariat representative echoed all the thanks from other participants, and on behalf of Ramsar Secretariat, thanked Vai for all the work he has done in the region. She further thanked IUCN Oceania for representing the region very well. Lastly, she gave thanks to the Australian Government for their funding to enable this meeting to take place. She stated that she was looking forward to inter-regional meetings with Asia as the two regions share many common issues.

Kiribati

The Kiribati representative thanked Vai and SPREP for this meeting. She also thanked the Ramsar Secretariat and all the participants. She pointed out that it was important for her to hear everyone's experience. She further thanked the Australian Government for enabling the meeting, and Samoa for hosting the meeting. Lastly, she gave thanks to the *rapporteur*, and to Theresa for organising the logistics of the meeting.

SPREP

The SPREP Island Ecosystems Programme Manager reiterated thanks from all others to Australia for the funding, and thanked the Ramsar Secretariat and IUCN Oceania for their technical backstopping during the meeting. He gave thanks to Vai and the rest of the SPREP staff who have supported the meeting and thanked the *rapporteur*.

He stated that after 20 years of working in the environmental area and the development of MEAs in countries he has become very cynical of their value. He pointed out that the MEAs that are of value are site-based as they are more clearly defined and deal with a range of more clear-cut benefits. Ramsar is clearly in this order and has great value, similar to the World Heritage Convention. He further pointed out that he wished the region could achieve more concrete things in the CBD as the achievement of targets keeps slipping. He stated that it was heartening to see the continued involvement of the Pacific region in the Ramsar Convention and hopes that in the future there would be more sites nominated in the region. Lastly, he wished delegates the best of luck at the COP later in the year.

Chair

Thanked everyone and wished all participants a safe return to their homes.

The Chair asked Samoa to provide the closing prayer, to which the delegate from Samoa provided the closing prayer.

The session ended at 4.17pm.

2.9.2 Housekeeping

Vai reminded all participants that they were invited to attend the Deputy Directors farewell drinks at 5pm after the meeting closed, and further reminded participants that the computer lab was still open if participants wanted to check their emails prior to 5pm.

MEETING CLOSED AT 4.18PM

Apia, April 2008

Meeting report and photos prepared by the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

List of Annexes:

Annex	Title
1	Final Meeting Agenda
2	Final List of Participants
3	Summary of feedback for Question 3 (from session 5)
4	Table 1: Priority issues and their relationship to the COP agenda (from Session 6)



Australian Government
Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts



4th Oceania Regional Meeting of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (ORM-4)

Oceania Regional Preparatory Meeting for the 10th Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran 1971)

Apia, Samoa
10-11 April 2008

FINAL AGENDA

Time	Day 1: Thursday 10 April	Notes
8.00-8.45am	Registration	SPREP
9.00am – 9.30am	Official Opening Opening Prayer Welcoming Address Opening Remarks	Susuga Rev. Lotu Uele SPREP Director, Mr. Asterio Takesy Ramsar Secretariat
9.30am – 10.00am	MORNING TEA & GROUP PHOTO	All
10.00am-10.20am	Participant introductions, Election of Chairman, adoption of the agenda & housekeeping matters	All
	Session 1: Overview of Meeting Objectives & Statements	
10.20am-10.25am	Overview of Objectives of the 4 th Oceania Regional Meeting for Ramsar COP10	Chairman
10.25am-10.55am	<i>Introductory Statements:</i> Ramsar Secretariat Oceania Standing Committee Representative	Secretariat representative Mr Nanai Tony Leutele Oceania regional representative on the Ramsar Standing Committee.

	Contracting Parties (As appropriate) Ramsar International Organization Partners Non party Observer states Regional organisations/Academic institutions	Country representatives Wetlands International Oceania, IUCN Oceania Kiribati Conservation International, University of the South Pacific
	Session 2: Regional policy context & reporting	
11.25- 11.40am	Implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Oceania region: Update & Progress since COP9	SPREP
11.40- 11.55am	Report on relevant outcomes of the 36 th Standing Committee meeting (February 2008, Gland, Switzerland)	Mr. Nanai Tony Leutele,
11.55am- 12.10pm	Report on relevant outcomes of the 14 th meeting of the Ramsar Scientific & Technical Review Panel (STRP), 28 January- 1 February 2008.	Mr. Philippe Gerbeaux, Oceania regional STRP representative
12.10- 1.10pm	Country Reports – COP10 national reports, where countries are at, issues & challenges faced?	Country representatives
1.00pm- 2.00pm	LUNCH BREAK (Lunch hour event: Presentation "Wetlands - The Heart and Kidneys of Our Islands, Ocean and Cultures: A Plea for Awareness and Conservation of Wetlands as a Foundation for Sustainable Life in the Pacific Islands".	Prof. Randy Thaman, USP
2.00pm – 3.00pm	Continuation of country reports (Session 2)	Country representatives
	Session 3: Progress on Ramsar-related Activities in the region	
3.00pm- 3.17pm	Pacific Islands Mangrove Initiative proposal	IUCN Oceania
3.17pm- 3.20pm	Discussion	All
3.20pm- 3.35pm	Participation in COPs	Clark Peteru, SPREP
3.35pm- 3.37pm	Discussion	All

3.37pm-3.50pm	Activities under The Pacific Islands Wetland Initiative - <i>Update of part of the Oceania Wetlands Directory 1993</i>	Vainuupo Jungblut, SPREP
3.50pm-3.55pm	Discussion	All
3.55pm – 4.11pm	AFTERNOON TEA	
4.11pm-4.23pm	Project to streamline reporting by Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs)	Ian Krebs, Australia
4.23pm – 4.37pm	IUCN Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) project	Philippe Gerbeaux, IUCN Oceania
4.37pm – 5.04pm	Global Environment Facility – Pacific Alliance for Sustainability (GEF-PAS)	Joe Stanley, SPREP
5.04pm – 5.12pm	Update on the Pacific Year of the Reef (PYOR) 2008 Campaign	Sereima Savu, SPREP
	Session 4: COP10 Agenda, Ramsar Strategic Plan and Issues arising	
5.12pm-5.38pm	Outcomes of the Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting for Ramsar COP10 (14-18 January 2008, Bangkok)	Ramsar Secretariat
5.41pm	END OF DAY 1	
6.30pm	Cocktail Reception (SPREP Fale)	
	Day 2 – Friday 11 April	
	Session 4: continued from day 1	
8.55am-9.11am	Report on the development of the new Ramsar Strategic Plan (2009-2014) – Key issues for the region.	Deb Callister, Australia
9.11am – 10.20am	Presentation of COP10 agenda, key issues & discussions	Ramsar Secretariat, All
10.20am-10.26am	MORNING TEA	
	Session 5: Regional Priorities for the next Triennium (2009-2011)	
10.26am-10.50am	Improving networking between Ramsar National Focal Points in the region	Mr. Philippe Gerbeaux, Oceania regional STRP

10.50am-12.09pm	Facilitated break out group session– potential regional collaboration on wetland issues	representative Kate Brown (SPREP), Philippe Gerbeaux (IUCN Oceania)
12.10pm-1.13pm	LUNCH BREAK – continuation of Randy Thaman’s presentation from Day 1	
1.13pm-1.19pm	<i>Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People</i> – Case study – contribution of the LMMA programme in the region to the COP10 theme	Aaron Jenkins, Wetlands International Oceania
1.19pm-1.22pm	Discussions	All
	Session 6: Priorities relating to COP draft resolutions	
1.22pm – 3.00pm	Plenary discussion on identification of key issues facing the region and how to best cooperate as a region to progress these issues in the lead up to COP10	Lead by Richard Suggate, New Zealand
	Session 7: Next Steps	
3.00pm - 3.11pm	Follow up actions –ORM-4 report, regional brief for COP10, SC-37 issues and approval of COP documents	Ramsar Secretariat, SPREP
	Session 8: Oceania reps for next triennium	
3.11pm-3.28pm	Nomination of new Oceania representatives to the Ramsar STRP and Standing Committee	Ramsar Secretariat, Samoa
3.28pm – 3.55pm	AFTERNOON TEA	
	Session 9: Meeting Closure	
3.55pm-4.17pm	Closing Statements & Prayer	All, Samoa
4.18pm	MEETING CLOSURE	



Australian Government
Department of the Environment,
Water, Heritage and the Arts



4th Oceania Regional Preparatory Meeting for Ramsar COP10 (ORM-4)
10 – 11 April 2008

Final Participants List

Australia

Ms. Deb Callister
Director
Wetlands Section
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Phone: 612 6274 1955
Fax: 612 6274 2322
Email: deb.callister@environment.gov.au

Mr. Ian Krebs
Assistant Director
Wetlands Section
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Phone: 612 6274 2526
Fax: 612 6274 23222
Email: ian.krebs@environment.gov.au

Kiribati

Ms. Ratita Bebe
Ag. Biodiversity & Conservation Officer
Environment & Conservation Division (EDC)
Ministry of Environment, Lands & Agriculture Development (MELAD)

Phone: 686 28000
Fax: 686 28425
Email: ratita.ecd@melad.gov.ki or taibwa@gmail.com

Fiji

Mrs. Eleni Rova Tokaduadua
Senior Environment Officer
Department of Environment
Ministry of Lands, Mineral Resources & Environment
PO Box 2109
Government Building
Suva
Fiji

Phone: 679 3311699

Fax: 679 3312879

Email: etokaduadua@govnet.gov.fj

Marshall Islands

Mr. John Bungitak
General Manger
RMIEPA
PO Box 1322
Majuro
Marshall Islands 96960

Phone: 692 625 3035

Fax: 692 625 5202

Email: eparmi@ntamar.net

New Zealand

Mr. Andrew Bignell
Manager International Relations
Department of Conservation
PO Box 10420
Wellington
New Zealand

Phone: 644 471 3191

Fax: 644 381 3057

Email: abignell@doc.govt.nz

Mr. Richard Suggate
Principal Business Analyst
Department of Conservation
PO Box 13049
Christchurch
New Zealand

Phone: 643 3789515

Fax: 644 381 3057

Email: rsuggate@doc.govt.nz

Palau

Mr. Collin Joseph
Conservation Coordinator
Palau Conservation Society – Terrestrial Programs
PO Box 1811 Koror
Palau 96940

Phone: 680 488 3993

Fax: 680 488 3990

Email: pcs@palaunet.com

Papua New Guinea

Mr. James Sabi
Manager
Biodiversity Assessment
Department of Environment and Conservation
PO Box 6601
Boroko
National Capital District
Papua New Guinea

Phone: 675 323 0279/325 0195

Fax: 675 325 0182

Email: jamesabi@hotmail.com

Samoa

Nanai Tony Leutele
Assistant CEO
Forestry Division
Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Meteorology
Private Bag, Apia Samoa.

Phone: (685) 22481, 22729, 20599

Fax: (685) 23176

Email: Tony.Leutele@mnre.gov.ws

Mr. Afele Faiilagi
Principal Terrestrial Conservation Officer
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
PO Box Private Bag
Apia
Samoa

Phone: 23800/31197/31198

Fax: 23176

Email: afele.faiilagi@mnre.gov.ws

Tolusina Pouli
Principal Research & Utilisation Officer
Forest Research and Development Section
Forestry Division, MNREM
Vailima, SAMOA

Phone: 21054, 22729, 20599

Fax: 23176

Email: sprig@samoa.ws; tpouli@yahoo.com

Conservation International – Samoa

James Atherton
Conservation Outcomes Manager
Conservation International
PO Box 2035
APIA,
Samoa

Phone : 685 21593

Fax: 685 28570

Email: jatherton@conservation.org

IUCN Oceania

Dr Philippe Gerbeaux
Chief Technical Advisor
IUCN Regional Office for Oceania
5 Ma'afu St
Private Mail Box
Suva
Fiji

Phone : 00679 3319084

Email :

Email: philippe.gerbeaux@iucn.org

Ramsar Secretariat

Rebecca D'Cruz
Vice-Chair, Scientific and Technical Review Panel
Convention on Wetlands
18 Jalan Urat Mata
Tabuan Jaya
93350 Kuching, Sarawak
Malaysia

Phone: +6082 428 004

Fax: + 6082 424 084

Email: aonyx@po.jaring.my or dcruz.rebecca@gmail.com

USP – Suva, Fiji

Dr. Randy Randolph Thaman
Professor of Pacific Islands Biogeography
University of the South Pacific
P.O. Box 1168
Suva
Fiji

Phone: (679) 313 900 Ext 2546 or 2542

Fax: (679) 301 487

Email: thaman_r@usp.ac.fj

UNEP - Samoa

Dr. Suresh C. Raj
Regional Representative/Programme Officer
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
c/- SPREP Headquarters
P.O. Box 240, Apia, Samoa

Phone: +685 66264

Fax: +685 20231

Email: sureshr@sprep.org; suresh.raj@undp.org

Wetlands International Oceania

Aaron P. Jenkins
Senior Program Officer
Wetlands International-Oceania
c/o Faculty of Islands and Oceans
University of the South Pacific
Laucala Campus, Suva, Fiji

Phone: 679 925 5425

Fax: 679 332 2413

Email: apjenkins@connect.com.fj

SPREP SECRETARIAT

Po Box 240
Apia
Samoa

Phone: 685 21929

Fax: 685 20231

Stuart Chape
Island Ecosystems Programme Manager
Email: stuartc@sprep.org

Chris Derrick
Strategic Programmes Advisor (DEH Australia)
Email: chrisd@sprep.org

Vainuupo Jungblut
Associate Ramsar Officer
Email: vainuupoj@sprep.org

Clark Peteru
Legal Adviser
Email: Clarkp@sprep.org

Joe Stanley
GEF Support Adviser
Email: Joes@sprep.org

Kate Brown
Action Strategy Adviser
Email: Kateb@sprep.org

Theresa Fruean-Afa
Programme Assistant
Email: theresaf@sprep.org

Summary of feedback for Question 3 (from Session 5)

This Annex describes the detail of Question 3, Session 5 that was developed by participants.

Question 3 asked:

What help do you/NFPs need from?:

- Ramsar officer and SPREP
- STRP representative for Oceania
- Ramsar Secretariat
- Other Oceania countries
- Other organisations

Participants ranked their priorities from the Ramsar Secretariat as: coordination, funding, materials, management and training.

1. What help do you/NFPs need from the Ramsar Officer & SPREP?

Management help

- Technical advice, management and training or workshops
- Developing management plan
- Preparing Ramsar site listing
- Updating information and other relevant information for Ramsar
- Guidance and toolkits

Coordination

- Monitoring or follow ups on regional actions
- Improving communication from parties
- Developing regional activities for the year
- Updating information/ meeting papers and other information papers
- Providing documents for Oceania Ramsar sites
- Improving network between NFPs for Oceania region
- Providing technical assistance and funding opportunities, including securing funding
- Providing regional coordination for COP and other meetings
- Identifying priorities on Ramsar issues across the region

Materials and information

- Assisting the World Wetlands Day Campaign
- Identifying case studies to share among parties
- Developing question and answer information papers for Cabinet endorsement

Training

- Facilitating country exchange programs e.g. 6 months
- Developing capacity building through training or workshops

Funding

- Providing information on funding issues so we can look at the government funding options e.g. ODA agencies
- Securing funding assistance
- Writing proposal on new project sites / fundraising options
- Fundraising-fundraising-fundraising training and communication

2. What help do you/NFPs need from the STRP Representative

Management

- Providing information and reports for parties of any requirements of STRP
- Monitoring NFPs and be more involved with them

Coordination

- Planning activities from NFP in regional Planning calendar

Materials

- Updating Oceania members
- Encouraging and monitoring

3. What help do you/NFPs need from Ramsar Secretariat

- Motivating material for NGO engagement in implementing the convention
- Planning Calendar of due reports/activities
- Funding, specifically for updating of RIS for Ramsar sites
- Allocating appropriate funding for Oceania / approve requests for funding
- A clear concise guideline of the Administrative Authorities responsibility under the Convention on:
 1. Focal points
 2. Reporting
 3. Meeting attendance
 4. Site management
 5. Annual and triennial calendar.
 6. A better, easier to use website

4. What help do you/NFPs need from Oceania

Australia / New Zealand

- Communication resources – computer / Internet

Other Oceania

- Establishing a discussion forum and website for the region
- Sharing information on challenges, solutions, new ideas in development of Ramsar sites
- Sharing issues challenges and success stories
- Communicating more often with each other
- Knowing who the focal points are and possibly other government officers with them
- Sharing experiences and information
- Providing technical assistance and financial assistance such as training/workshops
- Engaging via email to discuss/comment/help on Ramsar issues.
- Networking for information updates
- Fundraising

Help offered by Australia

- What work have we done that other Oceania countries might find useful (e.g. mapping ECDs).

5. What help do you/NFPs need from other organizations

- NGOs – updating of RIS if projects are around the Ramsar sites
- An NGO representative to be focal point to work with government to facilitate processes
- Sharing data (harmonizing) to save resources and time
- Being more proactive on reporting requirements to the NFP e.g. preparatory meeting for COPs, annual reports
- Fundraising

6. What help do you/NFPs need from the Standing Committee representative

- All comments issues, new challenges to voice in SC meeting
- Give activities to include in regional planning calendar
- Provide comments in the lead up to SC meetings on key Oceania issues.

Table 1: Priority issues and their relationship to the COP agenda (from Session 6)

Raised	Priority	R/s to resolutions
USP	The major issue is to facilitate the engagement of Ramsar activities and principles for all of our countries, and to more strongly engage countries that have ratified the Convention to promote the appreciation and critical importance of wetlands, rather than focusing on the addition of sites. Added that Ramsar is such a wonderful initiative that it just shouldn't be about a site recognition it should be about site appreciation	Not relevant to COP draft resolutions
WIO	Three main issues: 1. For high islands (in Pacific) the connection between freshwater estuarine and marine systems is very close, so connectivity is very important.	Draft Resolution #4 and those relating health and climate change
	2. Connections between environmental management and public health are also an important issue, as there are very small feedback loops on small islands.	Draft Resolutions relating to health and climate change
	3. There are so few of us that are working on wetland conservation and there aren't enough people actually working on the ground, which requires additional funds and training.	Not relevant to COP draft resolutions
Samoa	Two main issues: 1. Coordination is a key issue for Ramsar and other organisations. There needs to be better coordination in exchanging and harmonizing data, which if achieved will provide more effective work on the ground.	Draft Resolution #8
	2. We need more funds for the region. We need 2 or 3 regional meetings to bring NFPs together to share experiences and knowledge.	Draft Resolution relating to budget
PNG	Extractive industries are the main issue for PNG, as it's difficult to compete against industries.	Related to a potential draft resolution being developed by Africa
Palau	Funding is the main issue. We need money to support putting people on the ground. So the Convention needs to look at developing a funding mechanism.	Related to possible draft resolution being developed by Korea on self-sufficient funding mechanism
Marshall Islands	Promotion of cultural knowledge and methods to reactivate the way sites are managed are priorities. If we can change the behaviours of the people to look after their environment then they will be able to provide more effectively for their livelihoods. This is fostering self-reliance and the need to document and share experiences. Perhaps we could also have some sub-regional meetings, as the issues in sub-regions are very similar.	Related to the draft resolution on health, although there won't be a cultural resolution, as one has already been passed

Raised	Priority	R/s to resolutions
Fiji	Four priority issues:	
	1. Limited resources that NFPs have access to is an issue that could be assisted through streamlining reporting	Not relevant to COP draft resolutions
	2. Another issue is the lack of an inventory to enable the formulation of government policies.	Not relevant to COP draft resolutions
	3. Connectivity of wetlands is also an issue – in Fiji the most vulnerable wetlands are in the marine and mangrove areas at pressure from development and it would be beneficial to highlight connectivity to make sure development consequences are understood.	Not relevant to COP draft resolutions
	4. An inventory of wetlands is also important for decision-making and planning [Relates to COP resolutions 8, 9 and mapping resolution]	Relates to draft resolutions 8 and 9, and the mapping resolution
5. Coral reefs and mangroves – critical ecosystems – need to highlight importance of integrated planning processes	[Not recorded]	
Kiribati	We need coordination and the network to be active, as a meeting like this is very expensive and access to information and technical resources are very important. Suggested that perhaps we could establish a more active network to share experiences and knowledge without the need to wait for a meeting similar to this. The Ramsar Secretariat asked if we should be providing more assistance for countries considering joining Ramsar such as Kiribati, as there are some parts of the world that have very poorly represented in the membership? Kiribati responded that it was more that they need access to information to be able to prepare nominations. WOI said that this would be important so that countries learn from the experiences of others. Kiribati agreed this is what was important. USP suggested that maybe we could have a regional or sub-regional LMMA to facilitate the exchange of information. Marshall Islands said that maybe we could have site visits.	Not relevant to COP draft resolutions
Australia	Three key issues:	
	1. Climate change, with obvious interest in the Pacific and we should need to caucus before the COP.	Related to draft resolution on climate change
	2. Human health.	Related to draft resolution on health
	3. Extractive industries will have implications for the region.	Related to a potential draft resolution being developed by Africa
New Zealand	Climate change is the key issue from a NZ and Pacific view and a strong stance by Ramsar would provide a powerful message.	Related to draft resolution on climate change

Raised	Priority	R/s to resolutions
IUCN	Five priorities: 1. The need for a wetlands inventory.	Not relevant to COP draft resolutions
	2. The need to highlight coral reefs as a very high priority particularly as it's the YOOCR, it's related to climate change, we have 25% of the world's coral reefs in our region, and they are such an important source of livelihoods.	Related to draft resolutions on health, climate change, and #4, #9 and #10.
	3. IUCN added that integrated catchment management is a key issue	Related to draft resolution on climate change, #9 and #10.
	4. Invasive species	Related to draft resolutions on health, climate change, #9 and #10.
	5. Roll of integrated catchment management	Related to many draft resolutions
USP	Capacity building and training	Related to draft resolution on the budget and DR#10.