

World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)



ESCAP



Task Force for the Preparation of WSSD in Asia and the Pacific

Meeting Report for Pacific Sub-regional Consultation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), 2002 Apia, Samoa 4 – 7 September

1. Reverend Fiti Aloali'i delivered a prayer at the beginning of the opening ceremony on 4th September 2001. Neva Wendt, on behalf of CROP, welcomed participants to the meeting. UNEP, on behalf of the Asia Pacific Region Task Force, provided an outline of preparations to date for the WSSD. The Pacific Region Multi-Stakeholder Consultation was then officially opened by Honourable Tagaloa Tuala Sale Tagaloa, Minister of Lands, Surveys and Environment, Government of Samoa (Annex 1).

Agenda

2. The meeting (Participants List, Annex 2) modified the agenda (Annex 3) to respond to developments over the course of the consultations.

Election of Office Bearers

3. Ms. Karibaiti Taoaba of Kiribati was nominated by Samoa and seconded by FSM to be the chair. Ms. Netatua Prescott of Tonga was nominated by FSM and seconded by WWF to be the rapporteur.

Preparations for WSSD

4. A presentation was given by the Secretariat on the objectives for the World Summit for Sustainable Development, preparatory events, and links to existing and planned regional programmes. The themes outlined were developed by CROP from previously agreed submissions. These included Oceans, Islands and People.

Objectives and process for the consultations

5. A presentation was given by the workshop facilitator on the objectives of the consultation and on the process to be followed during the meeting.

6. Participants noted that:
 - national assessments should form the basis of a regional submission document;
 - workshop themes of islands, oceans and people were different to the clusters agreed by the Asia–Pacific WSSD taskforce; and
 - the Pacific submission must reflect Pacific priorities and issues.
7. The Secretariat noted that the process of preparing the regional submission before the national reports are prepared was not ideal. However, the Secretariat furthermore noted that the consultation was only the beginning of the process and that a regional assessment would be refined later to reflect national reports as they are produced.
8. The representative of UNEP (Bangkok) provided an explanation of the Asia/Pacific taskforce themes and suggested that Pacific issues can be reflected within this framework (Annex 4).

National preparations

9. An update on national preparations for the WSSD was provided by Countries.
10. It was agreed that a time would be set aside to address the three key issues that were common to most countries:
 - funding for national report preparation;
 - structure of national assessments;
 - how to ensure that national reports feed into the regional submission.

Preparation of the submission

11. The meeting agreed to prepare a short submission to the WSSD.
12. Six working groups were formed to identify priority issues for sustainable development, along with the most important constraints to dealing with these issues and the key initiatives to implement them. The meeting was informed by the workshop facilitator that these priority issues would dictate the structure of the rest of the workshop.
13. Each working group presented their findings in plenary. These findings were then combined into a single text which is attached as Annex 5.
14. The meeting considered the combined list of priority issues and noted that the consolidated list was very similar to that already reflected in the 1997 Barbados Plan of Action, in the outcomes of the UN Special Session on SIDS in 1998 and subsequent regional submissions to the CSD.
15. Following a discussion on the general structure of the submission, participants also noted the need for a clear vision statement along with over-arching initiatives, objectives, or strategies for the Pacific Report.
16. To further develop the submission, there was general agreement by the delegates that working groups should focus on three key initiatives needed to deal with the priority issues. The working group findings regarding key initiatives were presented in a plenary session and then consolidated into one text. These initiatives fell under seven broad categories: Ocean management, Natural Resource management, Islands, Infrastructure, Quality of Life, Good Governance and Capacity Building. It was also agreed that the issue of climate change should also be a major issue in its own right. The full consolidated text is attached as Annex 6.
17. The meeting agreed to establish an intergovernmental group to develop the text for the draft regional submission on the basis of the results of the working groups. The drafting committee consisted of one nominated government representative from each country and other government representatives sitting as observers.

National Assessments

18. The Secretariat and the DESA SIDS Unit made presentations on the structure, financing and linkage arrangement of the national assessments with the regional submission. Some participants expressed confusion about the number of templates for reporting that are available from different agencies. DESA clarified by noting that their questionnaire would need to be answered but that their requirements were not for a rigid format. National reports should provide answers to five key theme areas required for the Secretary General's report, in a format that was acceptable to the Pacific. The Secretariat further noted that it was seeking guidance from PICs on their preferred report format. The meeting agreed that SPREP's composite template would be used, but that the two theme areas (IV and V) required by DESA but missing from SPREP's template, of a "Forward Looking" and a "Description of the Process followed for National Preparations" would be added to this template.
19. Brief statements on financing arrangements were made by UNDP, the Earth Council, AusAID and SPREP on behalf of CROP. UNDP informed the meeting that they were able to provide funds for national assessments, the Earth Council for multi-stakeholder consultations involving NGOs and AusAID, for technical backstopping through SPREP. The Secretariat noted that administration and logistics would be simpler if all funds for national assessment preparations were disbursed to countries from a single agency, rather than directly to countries from each donor. Many delegates asked how countries would be able to apply for funding. The Secretariat agreed to provide guidelines on how countries could apply for funding, along with the revised template format and some explanatory text to go with it (Annex 7).

Consideration of the Draft Submission

20. The meeting considered the draft provided by the drafting group. Ambassador Tuiloma Neroni Slade, as Chair of the Drafting Group, facilitated the further development and modification of the submission.
21. The meeting adopted the Pacific Submission to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Annex 8).
22. WWF, on behalf of the NGOs represented at the consultation, congratulated governments on the adoption of the submission and thanked the Secretariat and governments for engaging them positively in the consultations.

Next Steps

23. The Meeting agreed to transmit the Pacific Submission to the WSSD through the Meeting Chair to the Asia/Pacific Prepcop, the AOSIS inter-regional meeting, the CSD as the Preparatory Committee for the WSSD, national governments, civil society and the governing councils of CROP organisations.
24. UN ESCAP provided information to the Secretariat concerning the Asia Pacific Prepcop (Annex 9).

Close

25. Australia thanked all delegates for the compromise that was reached in discussions. The delegation agreed to relay to Canberra Tuvalu's concerns related to climate change.
26. Closing statements were made by the Chair, by Tonga on behalf of the participants and by SPREP, on behalf of the Secretariat. Special thanks were expressed to the hosts, the Government of Samoa, the UN family, Australia and New Zealand for their financial assistance and to the collective efforts of CROP organisations in preparing for this important event. Finally, a closing prayer was made by Fiji.

PACIFIC REGIONAL SUBMISSION TO WSSD

(7 September 2001)

VISION

Achieving measurable sustainable development in the Pacific region towards improving the quality life for all.

MISSION

Reinvigoration of the implementation of Agenda 21 to achieve priority outcomes, including from the WSSD that reflect and respond to the people, oceans and island dimensions of sustainable development in the Pacific region.

OBJECTIVES

- (a) To ensure the sustainable development priorities of the Pacific region are fully acknowledged and integrated in the World Summit on Sustainable Development process.
- (b) To secure and strengthen political support from the international community for programmes and initiatives that are essential to sustainable development of this region's people, their environment and natural resources.
- (c) To promote new and existing partnerships beneficial to sustainable development of the region.
- (d) To secure and mobilise resources to build capacity for sustainable development.

GENERAL STATEMENT

We, the Countries of the Pacific region, share a common unique identity, and have a responsibility for the stewardship of our islands and resources.

Our Ocean has supported generations of Pacific communities – as a medium for transport and as a source of food, tradition and culture. Our present, and future, well-being is dependent upon it.

Our ecosystems contain high biological diversity that has sustained the lives of Pacific communities, since first settlement. They contain the most extensive coral reefs in the world, unique landforms, globally important fisheries, significant mineral resources and high numbers of endemic species. They may also contain many undiscovered resources of potential use to humankind.

To safeguard Pacific communities and maintain the health of our ecosystems, in perpetuity, it is imperative that we apply the precautionary approach as outlined in the Rio Declaration, Principle 15.

Overcoming the well recognized vulnerability of island to the effects of global climate change, natural disasters, environmental damage and global economic shocks will be an essential element of sustainable development in our region.

INITIATIVES

Oceans

We are seeking:

1. A renewed international commitment to sustainable management of oceans;
2. More effective, prioritised and targeted cooperation and coordination among regional and international organisations with responsibilities for marine and oceans protection and management, and relevant national agencies.

3. Develop and implement regional and national oceans policies so as to enhance the sustainable management of the Pacific Ocean and its resources.
4. Promote total ecosystem marine resources management through capacity building and pollution control measures through further development of policy and program options to assist countries to sustainably manage their own marine and oceans jurisdictions.
5. Improved access to survey and monitoring technologies and the resulting products in order to ensure responsible and sustainable use of ocean resources and the completion of maritime boundaries delimitation.
6. The implementation of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and related conventions in an integrated manner, and support for the development of related national policies and legislation.

Natural Resources

To advance sustainable natural resource development and management we are seeking:

1. To further develop and implement legislation and policies at domestic, regional and international levels that promote sustainable management of natural assets, including enforcement, data collection, and ongoing assessment, evaluation and economic valuation.
2. Recognition of ownership and protection of indigenous practices and knowledge.
3. Access to appropriate technology, data management systems and research and educational capabilities.
4. A global initiative on freshwater to improve the quantity and quality of freshwater supply to all communities through better water resource catchment, watershed management, and improved and affordable technologies for desalination.
5. To sign, ratify and comply with existing natural resource conventions, such as those relating to biodiversity and land degradation.

Climate Change and Variability and Sea Level Rise

1. Encourage all Parties to ratify the UNFCCC Kyoto Protocol so that it comes into force, preferably in 2002. Its implementation is a significant first step towards achieving real and measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Increase international and domestic action in addressing adaptation to climate change, climate variability, sea level rise and other climate change impacts.
3. Call for further commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the future.
4. Develop and promote adaptation strategies.
5. Mobilise resources for adaptation.
6. Consider all the implications of all adaptation needs, options and requirements.

Islands Vulnerability

In the pursuit of sustainable development for island communities we seek the following:

1. Promotion of mutually supportive social, cultural, trade, investment, economic and environmental policies and goals in Pacific countries and the broader global community
2. Effective measures to address the vulnerability of island communities and their ability to adapt to the consequences of climate change, sea level rise and human-induced and natural hazards.
3. Further research and development on the environmental vulnerability index and its implications by the tenth anniversary of the Barbados Programme of Action.

Energy

We seek to promote sustainable energy development through:

1. Promotion of the development and use of renewable energy sources by removing distortions in energy markets.
2. Mainstreaming and commercialising the use of alternative renewable energy, which are more sustainable sources of energy, to reduce their cost.
3. Encouraging energy efficiency.

The People

The people remain at the heart of sustainable development in the region. Recognising social equity for all, including gender, we seek the following initiatives that are essential for their well-being:

Health

1. Prevention, control and eradication of threats to health such as dengue, malaria and non-communicable diseases in an environmentally safe way by 2020.
2. Effective reduction, prevention and control of waste and pollution and their significant health related impacts

Governance

To advance good governance in the pursuit of sustainable development we seek the following initiatives:

3. Promote good domestic governance through appropriate levels of transparency and accountability and strengthening policies that are proactive and responsive.
4. Improve partnerships at all levels especially with the private sector and civil society.

Capacity Building

Develop and implement a capacity building framework that is responsive to Pacific countries an integrated and participatory approach, that nurtures the wellbeing of individual, families, communities and society and encourages and empowers people to take ownership of processes that affect them. This framework would include the following critical elements:

- Raise public awareness
- Strengthening technical capacity
- Full participatory approach involving all stakeholders
- Strengthening of existing institutions where weaknesses have been identified
- Evaluate and mobilise human resources
- HRD Initiatives to alleviation of poverty and promote gender equity;
- Implement the Forum Basic Education Action Plan;
- Upgrade and extend infrastructural services such as transport and communication networks to facilitate sustainable development.

We seek the convening of a ten year review conference on the Global Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States adopted in Barbados in 1994.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Financial resources are imperative for the sustainable development of the region and in that connection we fully support the International Conference on Financing for Development as a key stepping stone to mobilise resources for sustainable development.