

## 31<sup>st</sup> SPREP MEETING OF OFFICIALS

5, 6, and 7 September 2023, Apia, Samoa

### **Agenda item 9.3.1: Aspirations for a Cleaner Pacific 2035: New Cleaner Pacific 2035, New PACPOL 2035, Review of Pacific Marine Litter Action Plan 2018-2025**

#### **Purpose of paper:**

1. To seek support and endorsement of the meeting for:
  - (i) Development of a new Cleaner Pacific 2026-2035;
  - (ii) Development of a new PACPOL 2026-2035 addressing the Regional Oil Spill Response Mechanism; and
  - (iii) Review of the Pacific Regional Marine Litter Action Plan 2018-2025.

#### **Background:**

2. The Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy 2016-2025 (Cleaner Pacific 2025) endorsed during the Twenty-sixth SPREP Meeting in Apia, Samoa, is the second iteration of the Pacific's efforts on managing waste on a comprehensive and long-term basis. It envisions moving to a cleaner Pacific environment by implementing practical and sustainable solutions for preventing and managing waste and pollution in the region. In order to initiate regional and national cooperation, a Clean Pacific Roundtable (CPRT) was identified as a major activity to be organized to facilitate networking and dialogue, improve donor coordination, mobilise technical and financial resources, and develop monitoring and reporting methods to monitor the progress of the Cleaner Pacific 2025. Noting that the Cleaner Pacific 2025 will be ending soon, it is crucial to start with the development of a new Cleaner Pacific 2026 to 2035. The new Cleaner Pacific 2035 will continue the great effort and work that will contribute to the improvement of managing waste and pollution in the Pacific region.
3. The marine pollution components of the Cleaner Pacific 2025 are the Pacific Ocean Prevention Programme (PACPOL) 2015-2020 which covers four priority areas including the Pacific Islands Regional Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN), and the Pacific Regional Marine Litter Action Plan (PMLAP) both nest within the under the framework of the Cleaner Pacific 2025. The PACPOL Strategy 2015–2020 was developed by SPREP, in partnership with IMO, and endorsed by the 26<sup>th</sup> SPREP Meeting in 2015. Further improvements to this policy and regulatory framework were provided within the following suite of actions – especially for Take Away Food and Beverage Containers. Equally importantly, continued effort is required to implement and enforce these various existing policies and regulatory instruments as is the case with the fishing industry.

4. The DFAT-funded PACPLAN Resilience 2021-25 project has begun engagement with the six participating countries (Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu), relevant to their status and needs over late 2022 and early 2023. Each in-country programme has assessed local needs on convention, legislative, policy, planning, administration, and training. Each will have an agreed local delivery project, with capacity-building and staffing, and funding support arrangements. For each participating country the expected 2025 outcomes are a full and complete legislative and regulatory suite, a National Contingency Plan (NatPlan), a training and exercise plan to develop a competent workforce, access to regional and international expert services and support, and confidence they can successfully execute spill response, consistent with the risk and capability. This is all to ensure that participating countries have an improved means to mitigate the risks of a spill, recover response and impacts costs, and secure funding and actions to rehabilitate for economic, financial, social, cultural, and environmental damages. During 2024, proposals for future change in PacPlan organisation, governance, structure, delivery, support, and funding will be explored, developed, and consulted on, with member countries. IMO Regional Activity Centres and UNEP Regional Seas models that deliver elsewhere will be assessed for application within the Pacific. Beyond 2025, further planning, regional funding and support will be necessary for the growth and gains of the project to be sustainable.
5. The PMLAP was developed in 2018 with funding support from the UN Environment Programme Regional Seas Programme Clean Seas Campaign. The PMLAP is an outcome of the framework of the Cleaner Pacific 2025 as well as the Pacific Oceans Prevention Pollution Programme (PACPOL) 2015-2020. The PMLAP covers 11 pillars that include legislative instruments, prevention of shipping and terrestrial pollution, management of transboundary waste, behaviour change, and disaster waste management.
6. The PMLAP midterm term review is underway to develop an updated framework that is inclusive of the INC plastic pollution process. This is aligned with the UNEA5.2 resolution “End Plastic Pollution: Towards an International Legally Binding Instrument” and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC). The first INC meeting occurred late in 2022 in Uruguay and the second INC in Paris, France in May 2023, with PICs attending with funding support from Australia DFAT.

**Recommendation:**

7. The Meeting is invited to:
  - 1) **Endorse** the development of a new Cleaner Pacific 2026-2035;
  - 2) **Endorse** the development of a new PACPOL 2026-2035 as it presents a significant opportunity for Pacific Island countries to continue to take major step forward to protect our ocean from marine pollution; and
  - 3) **Encourage** Members to participate and contribute to the Pacific Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter 2018-2025 mid-term review and provide their objectives and expectations of relevant targets whilst keeping a watching brief on the INC plastic pollution process.

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13 June 2023