

SOPAC NewsUpdate #011, 17 October 2002

1. SOPAC 31st Session Concluded in Suva

Nauru hosted the SOPAC 31st Session at the Forum Secretariat in Suva, Fiji, from 25 September to 2 October 2002. Its companion scientific meeting of the Science, Technology and Resources Network (STAR) was held in the first two days at the University of the South Pacific, with the theme "Geoscience and Sustainable Development in Pacific Island States, 2002-2012." The choice of the STAR Session theme and the timing of the publication of the SOPAC Sustainable Development Strategy view were to take full advantage of the year of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The SOPAC membership recognised both the need to work together to address issues advocated by them, but not adequately addressed by the WSSD; and the vital role played by science and technology in progress and development. See the next *SOPAC News*, 2002 (3), for full coverage of the meeting. §

2. SOPAC Welcomes American Samoa into Membership

American Samoa's application to become the newest associate member of SOPAC was tabled and welcomed at the 31st Session. The Chief Operation Officer of the American Samoa Power Authority (ASPA), Perelini Perelini, represented the country and stated that ASPA was the national SOPAC focal point in American Samoa. The Membership of SOPAC now stands at sixteen full members and three associate members. §

3. Workshop on Potential Applications of Ocean Observations for the Pacific

A week-long meeting on Potential Applications of Ocean Observations for the Pacific (PAOOP), was held immediately after the SOPAC 31st Session at the Mocambo Hotel, in Nadi, Fiji, from the 4th to the 7th of October 2002. The PAOOP meeting discussed the applications that can be derived from the use of scientific data from long-term ocean observation systems that can be of benefit to Pacific Island countries [PICs] in an effort to establish linkages between the developers, the creators and the "Pacific Island" users of products and services. A diverse range of potential applications such as seasonal to inter-annual forecasting, monitoring and predicting sea level change, marine pollution and coral reef health and, modelling fisheries populations as well as modelling for marine search and rescue were discussed. Through intensive working group meetings, a regional initiative for a Pacific Island Ocean Information System that will provide products and services at the regional and local level, to enhance the capacity of PICs to address important environmental, resource, coastal management and public use issues was developed. Its further development will need to be carried forward by key stakeholders both from within the Pacific Island Region and their external partners. §

4. EU Commissioner Opens New Office Building

The EU Commissioner, Poul Nielson, opened a new office building donated as part of the new EU/SOPAC project on vulnerability reduction in ACP states. The EU Commissioner during his first visit to the region, and while in Fiji to personally sign the 9th European Development Fund and its Pacific Regional Strategy Paper, opened the new office complex at the SOPAC Secretariat on Saturday morning, 5 October. See the next *SOPAC News* for photos. §

5. King George V & Elaine Bernacchi School, Kiribati Wins Regional Competition

The "Energy Wizards of the 21st Century" regional competition organised by the Secretariat, in conjunction with the Earth Day 2002 (April 22), was won by the King George V and Elaine Benacchi School of Kiribati. The prize money was AU\$830. The i-Kiribati secondary school also won the Kiribati national winner's prize of AU\$400. A presentation of the prize monies was organised at the SOPAC 31st Session in Suva early this month, where Maruia Kamatie, Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources Development in Kiribati accepted the prizes on behalf of the school. §

6. Latest issue of *SOPAC News* covering period April-June out

For the latest and all the back issues of *SOPAC News*, check our website <<http://www.sopac.org>>. The latest issue, 2002(2), is out, see <<http://www.sopac.org.fj/Data/virlib/reportsindex.html?ss=type&vv=SN>>. §

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