

## SOPAC NewsUpdate 56, October 2010

### Final SOPAC Governing Council Meeting (39<sup>th</sup> Session) Special Bulletin

1. The Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) held its 39<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Nadi during 16-21 October. One of its key decisions during the meeting was that the meeting was the final meeting of the Governing Council of SOPAC. From 1 January 2011, the SOPAC work programme and functions will be administered under the auspices of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) in a new Applied Geoscience and Technology Division. This special issue of the SOPAC NewsUpdate is to update readers on other key decisions made in Nadi. If you will recall, we reported in Update 54 (August 2010) that the final Letter of Agreement (LOA) on the transfer and integration of the core SOPAC work programme was signed between the CEOs on 4 August 2010; and among matters dealt with by Council at the 39<sup>th</sup> Session was approving the first strategic plan for the newest division of the SPC. The meeting was chaired by Australia.
2. SOPAC Governing Council decided to suspend the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission effective 30 September 2011. Any Member who at any stage desires to resurrect the Commission would have to write to the Troika (defined in the LOA, see item 3 below) giving reasons and the Troika would coordinate Members' responses to the proposal to resurrect.
3. Given that the SOPAC 39<sup>th</sup> Session was its final meeting, the SOPAC Governing Council decided to delegate the role to oversee the closure of SOPAC to the Director General of the SPC with the assistance of a 'troika' comprising the past- (Vanuatu), current- (Australia) and incoming Chair (Cook Islands) of the technical advisory group that would take over the role of Members' oversight of the annual work programme accountabilities of the new division.
4. In conjunction with the delegation of authority above, Council also decided to extend the contract of the Interim Director, Dr Russell Howorth, to "undertake the dual roles of Director of SOPAC Commission; and Director of the new SPC Applied Geoscience and Technology Division to ensure the proper regulatory requirements for closure of the Commission's accounts and transfer of contracts were fully met in the transition period." Part of the "proper regulatory requirements" is to oversee the final audit of the Commission's accounts and ensure its approval by the Troika defined in paragraph 3 (above). The final audit of SOPAC accounts is expected to be completed around mid-year 2011.
5. Council approved the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan for the new Applied Geoscience and Technology Division of the SPC and recommended the plan to the SPC's Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations for its consideration and endorsement as the strategic plan for its newest division from 1 January 2011. Council considers the plan 'living' and expects that it will be reviewed within its lifetime as integration within the SPC progresses. The plan was endorsed as representing a bridge from the past to the future – from SOPAC "the Commission" to SOPAC "the division".
6. Council agreed to a Secretariat submission to dedicate the Proceedings volume to the late Philipp Muller, Director of SOPAC in the period 1992-1997, who passed away in New Zealand on 19 December 2009. Given the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the suspension of the Commission, Council Members also agreed that the final meeting Proceedings be dedicated as well to other SOPAC luminaries that have also passed on, who contributed to the Commission's evolution and history. The Proceedings of the final SOPAC meeting will be available in the public domain in early 2011; along with the final annual report of the SOPAC Secretariat.
7. Between now and the seasonal break at the end of the year, the major administrative task of preparing SPC contracts for all Secretariat staff will be undertaken and completed.

For further details please contact: [director@sopac.org](mailto:director@sopac.org)