

19 November 2007

Mr. Kalemani Mulongoy,
Principal Officer – Scientific, Technical and Technological Matters

Ms. Junko Shimura,
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Re: Pacific input into CBD In Depth Review on Invasive Alien Species

Dear Mr. Mulongoy and Ms. Shimura,

Please find enclosed a joint submission from a number of organizations working cooperatively on invasive species issues in the Pacific for the upcoming in depth review on invasive alien species under the Convention on Biological Diversity. This letter responds to the Notifications sent out by the CBD Secretariat (20 October 2006 and 31 October 2007) as well as the Global Invasive Species Programme (11 June 2007).

The four key organizations working on invasive species issues in the Pacific are the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII) and the Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN). Their partners include Conservation International, IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Birdlife International, University of the South Pacific, USDA Forest Service, Palau Office of Environmental Response and Coordination, The National Park of American Samoa, IUCN Regional Office for Oceania and New Zealand's Aid and International Development Agency (NZAID).

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP): SPREP is a regional organisation established by the governments and administrations of the Pacific region to look after its environment. It has grown from a small programme attached to the South Pacific Commission (SPC) in the 1980s into the Pacific region's major intergovernmental organisation charged with protecting and managing the environment and natural resources. It is based in Apia, Samoa, with over 70 staff. The Pacific island governments and administrations saw the need for SPREP to serve as the conduit for concerted environmental action at the regional level. The establishment of SPREP also sends a clear signal to the global community of the deep commitment of the Pacific island governments and administrations towards sustainable development, especially in light of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in the form of the Plan of Implementation, the Millennium Development Goals and Declaration, the Barbados Plan of Action and Agenda 21

Secretariat of the Pacific Community: SPC is the oldest regional organisation representing 22 Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs) and 5 metropolitan countries (Australia, New Zealand, French, USA and until 2004 the UK). The SPC is a technical advisory and implementation organisation assisting the 22 PICTs to address their social, land and marine resource issues. SPC views itself as a highly professional and dynamic bilingual organisation helping Pacific Island people make and implement informed decisions for a secured and prosperous Pacific Community whose people are healthy and manage their resources in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable way (SPC Corporate Plan 2003-2005). Since the 1950s the Land Resources Division (SPC-LRD), through its Plant Protection Service, has been involved with the preparedness, prevention and management of exotic pests, many of which have caused significant harm to biodiversity along with socio-economic impacts. The SPC-LRD is aware that many forestry and agriculture issues are similar at global, regional and national levels, such as the need to fulfill obligations under the CBD, sustainable management, and biosecurity and trade issues. In 2004, as a result of increasing demands by PICTs to address trade related issues without compromising biosecurity for the countries, the SPC LRD mandates have been broadened to cover biosecurity and trade functions with an increased attention on preventing and mitigating the impacts of invasive alien species. The SPC has already developed generic emergency plans for PICTs to use when faced with new biosecurity threats. SPC is assisting PICTs to develop national biosecurity and quarantine laws, develop, maintain and disseminate information on pests. It has already developed the Pacific Pest List Database, and provides various levels of training to improve national capacities in many areas include detection, prevention and management of invasive species.

Pacific Invasives Initiative: PII was established in 2004 as the first regional program of the Cooperative Initiative on Invasive Alien Species on Islands (also referred to as the Cooperative Islands Initiative (CII)). CII was launched in April 2002 at the CBD COP-6 following calls from Small Island Developing States for a cooperative approach to address the impacts of invasive alien species on islands. PII is a partnership of eight organisations who contribute to the PII goal of protecting Pacific islands biodiversity and livelihoods from the harmful effects of invasive species by: 1) Building capacity of Pacific-based agencies and organisations to prioritise, plan, implement and assess the outcomes of invasive species management; 2) Increasing awareness of invasive species impacts on biodiversity and livelihoods; and 3) Facilitating Demonstration Projects. PII has developed processes and guidelines for assessing the feasibility, designing and implementing invasive species management projects. To date PII has supported Demonstration Projects in Micronesia (Palau, Pohnpei), Polynesia (Samoa, Tokelau, French Polynesia, Tonga, Kiribati, Cook Islands) and Melanesia (Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea), covering a range of invasive species (mosquito to myna, ants to feral pigs). In addition CII initiated the Pacific Ant Prevention Programme in 2003 and handed over the coordination role to SPC in 2006.

Pacific Invasives Learning Network: Launched in May 2006, PILN is a partnership of several national, regional and international organizations which serves teams from Pacific Island countries and territories. These national teams are made up of agencies responsible for invasives management, including agencies responsible for agriculture, international trade and other economic interests, as well as conservation and natural resource management. PILN's mission is

to empower effective invasive species management through a participant-driven network that meets priority needs, rapidly shares skills and resources, provides links to technical expertise, increases information exchange, and accelerates on-the-ground action. Founding teams come from all over the Pacific region, with representatives from all three sub-regions (Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia) and include: American Samoa, the Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawaii, Kiribati, Kosrae, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Pohnpei, Samoa and Yap. Participating teams determine the specific invasive species issues and activities that they will address through the network.

This submission reflects the priorities of the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Strategy currently being revised and led by SPREP, and builds on capacity building and demonstration projects facilitated by PII, the long term efforts of SPC to improve biosecurity in the region, and the development of a network of invasive species teams across the Region by PILN. Representatives from these organizations met most recently at the 8th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas (October 2007, Alotau, Papua New Guinea) and at the PILN 2007 annual meeting (September 2007, Mo'orea, French Polynesia). Participants from 13 Small Island Developing States and close collaborators attended the Mo'orea meeting, while the Alotau conference saw the revival of the Invasive Species Working Group of the Pacific Roundtable for Nature Conservation. At both meetings identifying priority issues for invasive species management was a major theme.

Hopefully, this submission will be useful in developing Pacific regional and island country invasive species priorities, for consideration by the Ninth Conference of the Parties.

Regards,

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Jill Key, Pacific Invasives Learning Network
Warea Orapa, Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Alan Tye, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme

Pacific Submission for the In Depth Review on Invasive Alien Species by the Convention on Biological Diversity

The following sections are arranged according to the draft structure of the new Pacific Regional Invasive Species Strategy (RISS), and include priorities for invasive species work, highlighting activities in which regional partners and national or island teams will be involved. Hopefully, this priority listing will be useful for other island regions facing invasive species problems as well as for the international and donor communities in allocating resources.

Key areas for invasive species management in the Pacific (and elsewhere) are summarized by the Lines of Action of the RISS, as follows:

A. Foundations for Invasives Management

- 1. Support** - Communicating risks, impacts (on biodiversity, economy, health) and management possibilities, at all levels, thereby generating international, political and community support.
- 2. Capacity** - Developing people, labs, reference collections, taxonomy, information management and sharing, technical support, linkages, networks and exchanges.
- 3. Legislation and Protocols** - Establishing, strengthening, harmonizing and promoting best practice, compliance and enforcement.

B. Problem Definition and Decision-making

- 4. Baseline and Monitoring** - Producing checklists, surveys and inventories, detecting change in range and impacts.
- 5. Prioritization** - Risk assessment.
- 6. Research** - Understanding priority invasives and developing effective control techniques.

C. Management Action

- 7. Biosecurity** - Prevention, detection and rapid response.
- 8. Management of established invasives** - Selecting and implementing management options, including eradication, containment, exclusion, site-specific control and biocontrol.
- 9. Restoration** - Restoring native biodiversity after managing invasives.

Key priority activities under the RISS:

1. Support

- Develop awareness-raising materials and programmes for key audiences including government officials, donors and the public.
- Gather existing public awareness materials in Pacific countries and territories related to invasive species, and distribute through CD-ROM, the Internet and hard copy.
- Develop new materials for emerging issues and existing threats using these models and information from authoritative sources such as the Global Invasive Species Database.
- Use two countries – one with an agricultural export base and one with a tourism base – to develop model awareness packages for marketing bio-security to politicians and sectors, including economic impact assessments.

- Provide support and mentoring for funding applications and proposal writing, including better access to donor databases, improved understanding of project and budget needs, and development of donor relation skills.
- Support training and access to experts in social marketing (e.g., through RARE trainings).
- Provide support for production aspect of designing public awareness materials.
- Initiate in-flight videos on invasive species for the region, working with the International Civil Aviation Organization and the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration.

2. Capacity

- Improve use of identification keys and online resources for invasive species identification.
- Develop an annotated list of resources for plant identification including directions on how to collect and preserve specimens.
- Identify and provide resources for and access to new and existing training courses relevant to invasive species management (e.g., quarantine, weed management, database development).
- Adapt and run course on invasive plant management (as developed by the New Zealand Department of Conservation), with a focus on design of successful projects.
- Provide training on data management systems (e.g., GIS mapping, data capture and analysis). Convene workshop on the development and application of guidelines for road construction and maintenance crews with a focus on training the trainers (in e.g. monitoring, plant identification, sampling, basic GPS and mapping, databases, relaying information, training manuals).
- Support a travelling roadshow/workshop on parataxonomy and monitoring.
- Expand the Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN) to incorporate all Pacific countries and territories.
- Establish invasive species coordination mechanisms for Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia, to facilitate dissemination of regionally and internationally available information; identify needs and sources of support; support coordination of activities, funding grants, etc. within the sub-region; and facilitate communication with other sub-regions and regional organizations.
- Facilitate technical exchanges between Pacific island and other specialists (e.g. from Australia, New Zealand, the U.S.) to foster skill-sharing and on-the-job learning.
- Develop mechanisms for arranging and supporting skill-sharing specific to rat eradication and control that build on existing projects (e.g., Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Palau) and include prioritization methodologies.
- Provide technical advice, specialist assistance, quality control and peer review, training and skill-sharing and assist with project planning via institutions such as the Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII).
- Provide information on and support for the use of available or pending technical manuals and relevant sources of information such as the Global Invasive Species Database and other online resources.
- Compile available information and expertise on rat management (e.g., reports, training manuals, guidelines, biosecurity and prevention protocols) and make it available via a thematic database and in other formats.
- Collate information about existing and potential future invasive species threats to the region, focusing on priority groups such as marine species, including information about their ecology

and impacts, and past, present and future initiatives to address them, and disseminate this information in the Global Invasive Species Database (GISD) and otherwise.

- Develop a thematic database that would share high-level information in areas such as management methods, economic and risk assessment methodologies and available expertise, to complement existing species-specific information tools (e.g. Global Invasive Species Database and Global Registry of Invasive Species).
- Increase the number of fact sheets on invasive species in the Global Invasive Species Database and other regionally available information sources.

3. Legislation and protocols

- Disseminate and incorporate model biosecurity legislation developed by SPC for the Pacific Island countries.
- Support development of regulations and protocols under the legislation in relation to environmental threats (by SPC, SPREP and individual states and territories).
- Support development of regional model regulation and integration of national protocols on ballast water as contained in the SPC model biosecurity legislation.
- Consider a regional convention or resolution on biosecurity, led by SPC, that endorses the RISS.

4. Baseline and monitoring

- Carry out additional weed surveys to add to what has been done by SPC and the Pacific Islands Ecosystems at Risk (PIER) Project.
- Carry out baseline surveys of invasive marine species in Pacific island countries and territories.

5. Prioritisation

- Finalize the Pacific Regional Invasive Species Strategy as a tool for prioritisation, monitoring and gap analysis.
- Develop regional risk assessment systems for invasive species taxonomic groups (weeds, pests etc).
- Develop processes and guidelines for determining project priorities, assessing feasibility, designing and implementing invasive species management projects.
- Carry out a pathway analysis for marine invasives, to identify threats, particularly at the regional level; develop risk assessments and a white list for the most common aquatic commodities (e.g., related to sea food companies/ships, fisheries) and identify the top 15 worst marine invasive species for the Pacific.

6. Research on priority problems

- Research the ecology of invasive birds, especially mynas (dispersal and impact studies).
- Research the impacts of invasive species management projects on native ecosystems.

7. Prevention

- Support SPC in leading a programme to harmonise quarantine systems in the Pacific island countries and territories, starting with countries serving as major transport and trade hubs.

- Develop a regionally usable certification system for quarantine staff with levels and performance standards.
- Identify and build capacity for monitoring, compliance, outreach and research on impacts of pathways associated with hull fouling and ballast water.
- Support the establishment of a regional marine biosecurity position within SPC, analogous to the SPC Land Resources Division's Biosecurity Officer or Plant Protection Officer (PPO).
- Support regional species-based prevention programmes like the Pacific Ant Prevention Programme.
- Develop and disseminate rapid-response tools and strategies for new introductions, including marine invasive species.
- Develop training in identification and survey techniques for community-based early detection of key invasive species.

8. Management of established invasives

- Develop a range of demonstration invasive species management projects in a range of countries and territories in the region, including eradication, containment, exclusion, site-specific control and biocontrol projects.
- Investigate the feasibility of outfitting a ship ("the good ship Restoration") with appropriate equipment and vehicles to serve as a mobile eradication and restoration unit to build on economies of scale in launching multiple, coordinated invasive species management efforts on islands.
- Support a regional workshop on biological control and initiate new projects against major invasive weeds such as African tulip.
- Develop projects to manage invasive birds (e.g. Mynas).