

**CROP TASKFORCE ON INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY
FOR
OCEAN EVENTS IN 2020 – 2021**

Draft Terms of Reference (TORs)

1. Background

The Blue Pacific, through their Leaders, have traditionally demonstrated strong leadership on oceans issues at various global fora. This year 2020, was initially anticipated to be a “super year” for the ocean and for the Blue Pacific. A range of global events as below were planned, however, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, most of the events have been postponed to either late 2020 or 2021:

- Fourth Intergovernmental Conference to finalize the agreement governing Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ);
- the 2nd UN Ocean Conference (UNOC) to support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14;
- the 7th session of Our Ocean Conference to be ever hosted in the Pacific by Palau;
- COP15 on Biodiversity in Kunming, China, with the expiration and review of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity; and,
- UNFCCC COP26 in the United Kingdom and the convening of the newly added ocean-climate dialogue.

Despite the setbacks brought forth by COVID-19 globally, it is anticipated that returning to normalcy would see an influx in ocean events, particularly those that have been postponed. The accomplishments of the Blue Pacific in past years provide a particular impetus for the region to still go ahead to prepare in advance of these events, drawing on the successes and experiences of previous regional events such as the regional preparations held in Suva, Fiji from 15 – 17 March 2017 in preparation for the 1st UNOC.¹

In this regard, the establishment of this timebound Taskforce is in response to the call by the FOC Sub Committee on Forum International Engagement and Advocacy at its meeting 3 June 2020, for work to be undertaken on international engagement and advocacy and also emphasising the need to strengthen CROP and OPOC coordination for an integrated regional approach on ocean issues.

2. Purpose

To provide technical advice that will inform strategic engagement and advocacy messaging to Forum Members’ in preparation for, and participation at, the 2nd UN Ocean Conference and other ocean-related events in 2020 and 2021. This includes supporting the proposed drafting of a Forum Leaders’ 2020 Blue Pacific Oceans Declaration. The work of this current Taskforce aligns with Forum Foreign Minister’s decision to prioritise international advocacy and engagement on sustainable ocean management, use and conservation, in addition to climate change advocacy.

¹ Outcome of the Regional Preparation as led by Fiji with Support from the Forum through the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner (OPOC): *“Pacific Regional Platform for Partnerships and Action on Sustainable Development Goal 14”*

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Taskforce will:

- Prepare a work programme allowing it to effectively coordinate its support to Members' attendance at key global ocean events in 2020 – 2021.
- Support the drafting of the proposed Forum Leaders' 2020 Blue Pacific Ocean Declaration in addition to advocacy messaging, briefing notes and Member statements for key global ocean events.
- Coordinate Member preparatory meetings ahead of key global ocean events, and de-briefings following.
- Provide regular information updates to Members on key global ocean events and opportunities to engage.
- Report regularly to CROP Heads and the FOC Sub-Committee for Forum International Engagement and Advocacy.
- Undertake regular consultations with regional ocean stakeholders.

4. Membership

Given the inclusive and collaborative nature of the work of the Taskforce, its membership will be constituted of senior representatives from OPOC and CROP agencies, specifically:

- PIFS
- SPREP
- SPC
- FFA
- USP
- SPTO

Each CROP agency will determine their representative and inform OPOC accordingly. Members are to be nominated by their agencies based on their positions and experience; engagement in national, regional and global processes for the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, Framework for Pacific Oceanscape and other regional ocean frameworks.

5. Governance

Chairing arrangements

The Taskforce will be co-chaired by the Pacific Ocean Commissioner and a nominated CROP agency representative. OPOC will provide secretariat support to this CROP Taskforce.

Modalities

In view of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that the majority of the work of the Taskforce will be facilitated virtually through (teleconference, videoconference) meetings.

Formal communications of the Taskforce including meeting notifications will be sent through the designated Secretariat through official email of members.

The Taskforce will hold at least one face-to-face meeting, to finalise all the preparations, including the engagement and advocacy message briefs for key global ocean events for 2020 to 2021. This meeting can be done at a mutually agreed venue or at an alternative venue in the margins of key relevant regional meetings, to save cost and reduce time spent travelling for its members. Those not able to participate in the face-to-face meeting will be able to join through teleconference or teleconference.

The Taskforce will meet in accordance with its devised work programme and as agreed to during the meeting. The frequency of the Taskforce meetings will also be dependent on the deadlines set by the FOC Sub Committee on Forum International Engagement and Advocacy.

Term

This is a timebound Taskforce to operate until March 2021 or until such time all envisaged tasks are completed. The FOC Sub Committee on Forum International Engagement and Advocacy may also choose to extend the term of this Taskforce.

Reporting

This Taskforce will report on the progress of its work through the FOC Sub Committee on Forum International Engagement and Advocacy, and to CROP Heads, including intersessionally where there are substantive progresses made or where further guidance is sought from Forum Members.

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