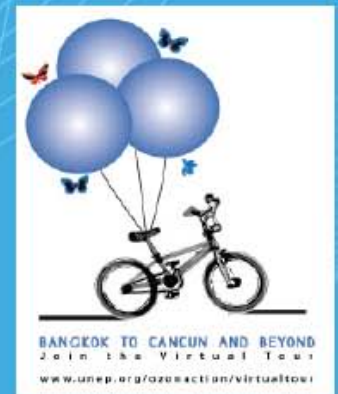




DEPARTEMENT OF ENVIROMENTAL PROTECTION & CONSERVATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

PSC submission February 2011



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Department of the Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC) would like to thank the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, those organizations and government departments who have closely collaborated with the DEPC in the previous years and this year again 2010 for accomplishment of its many activities as set out in its Business Plan and as well as realizing its mission and vision. Without your continuous support and working together with DEPC we would not get to where we are now and in particular the achievements that are mentioned in this report. We would like to mention the following organizations:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Department of Forest | Department of Fisheries |
| Department of Provincial Affairs | Vanuatu Quarantine and Inspection Services |
| Department of Energy | Department of Health, Environmental Health Section |
| Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta | Department of Geology Mines & Water Resources |
| Lands Department | Meteorological Department |
| Department of Finance | Department of Strategic Management & Aid Coordination |
| SHEFA Province | VANGO & GEF/UNDP Small Grant Programme |
| Department of Ports and Harbour | Port Vila Municipality |
| SANMA Province | PENAMA Province |
| TAFEA Province | MALAMPA Province |
| Live & Learn | Wan Smol Bag |

And to all the staff of the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation that contributed to the compilation of this annual report, thank you all.

The department also acknowledged the assistance of many other organizations and individuals of whom are not mentioned here but have helped in many different ways. The regional and international organizations that have provided financial and technical support with the MEAs programme and projects through DEPC, your assistance are also appreciated.

We look forward to working with you all again in the coming years.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| AYAD | Australian Youth Ambassador for Development |
| BECON | Bani Environmental Consultant |
| BMU | German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Strategy |
| CA | Conservation Area |
| CCA | Community Conservation Area |
| CFCs | Chloroflorocarbons |
| CITES | Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna |
| CMS | Convention on Migratory Species |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| COTs | Crown of Thorns |
| COWRIE | Coastal and Watershed Restoration for the Integrity of Islands Environment |
| DBC | Division of Biodiversity and Conservation |
| DCO | Development Committe of Official |
| DEC | Department of Environment and Conservation |
| DEPC | Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation |
| DG | Director General |
| EA | Environmental Assessment |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| EMC | Environmental Management and Conservation |
| EPC | Environmental Protection and Conservation |
| EPDC | Environmental Planning and Development Control |
| ExCOM | Executive Committee |
| FSPV | Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific Vanuatu |
| GEF | Global Environmental Facility |
| GIS | Global Information System |
| GTZ | German Technical Z..... |

| | |
|--------|---|
| HFCs | Hydrofluorocarbons |
| HCFCs | Hydrochlorofluorocarbons |
| HPMP | HCFC Phase Out Management Plan |
| IMPCOM | Implementation Committee |
| IS | Institutional Strengthening |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature (World Conservation Union) |
| IWRM | Integrated Water Resource Management |
| JBERG | Justis Blong Evriwan Reference Group |
| JICA | Japan International Corporation Agency |
| MBC | Ministerial Budget Committee |
| MBN | Michael Bue Nataniel |
| MEA | Multilateral Environmental Agreement |
| MESCAL | Mangroves Ecosystem for Climate Change Adaptation and Livelihood |
| MLF | Multilateral Fund |
| MPA | Marine Protected Area |
| MOP | Montreal Protocol |
| NACCC | National Advisory Committee on Climate Change |
| NCC | National Country Coordinator |
| NGOs | Non Government Organizations |
| NOO | National Ozone Officer |
| NOU | National Ozone Unit |
| NPPs | New Policy Proposal |
| NSWMS | National Solid Waste Management Strategy |
| NZAid | New Zealand Agency for International Development |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| ODS | Ozone Depletion Substances |
| OECC | Overseas Environmental Cooperation Centre, Japan |
| OEWG | Open Ended Working Group |
| OLP | Ozone Layer Protection |

| | |
|-------|---|
| PAs | Protected Areas |
| PAS | Pacific Alliance for Sustainability |
| PAYT | Pay-As-You-Throw |
| PCM | Project Cycle Management |
| PEA | Preliminary Environmental Assessment |
| PICs | Pacific Island Countries |
| PICTs | Pacific Island Countries and Territories |
| PLA | Participatory Learning and Action |
| PMU | Project Management Unit |
| PoWPA | Programme of Work on Protected Areas |
| PSC | Public Service Commission |
| PWD | Public Works Department |
| PVMC | Port Vila Municipality Council |
| REDD | Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation |
| REDD+ | Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries-plus 1 |
| SCPRC | Steering Committee of the Pacific Regional Centre |
| SEPDC | Sustainable Environmental Planning and Development Control |
| SHEFA | Province name comprising of the islands of the <u>S</u> hepherds, <u>E</u> pi and <u>E</u> fate |
| SLO | State Law Office |
| SLR | Sea Level Rise |
| SPC | Secretariat of the Pacific Community |
| SPREP | Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme |
| STAC | Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCBD | United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEO | United Nations Environmental Organization |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| USP | University of the South Pacific |

| | |
|-------|---|
| VANGO | Vanuatu Association for Non Government Organizations |
| VBRMA | Village Based Resource Managed Areas |
| VEU | Vanuatu Environment Unit |
| VIDA | Volunteering for International Development from Australia |
| VKS | Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta |
| VQIS | Vanuatu Quarantine Inspection Services |
| WOS | Waste Operations and Services |
| WSB | Wan Smol Bag |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2010 was one that DEPC was very active in its efforts to ensure that Vanuatu continues to maintain its credibility to manage its natural environment in the face of climate change, economic development pressure and stretched financial resources.

One of the major highlights for the DEPC in 2010 is the fact that Vanuatu continues to be on the Blacklist for being in non-compliance with the Montreal Protocol on the control of substances that deplete the ozone layer. This was a direct result of the Vanuatu's government failure to provide adequate resources to the custodian of the Montreal Protocol, DEPC in ensuring that the country has systems in place to regulate and control the imports of the banned substances, CFC (Chlorofluorocarbons) from 1995 onwards to 2008.

This situation demonstrates clearly that once the country commits itself to being party to any multi-lateral environmental agreements (MEAs), financial and technical resource allocations must be made to fulfil the obligations under the MEAs in order to capitalize on the opportunities provided within treaties.

Secondly the DEPC was able to develop and submit to the last parliament in November 2010 at least four (4) environmental bills:

- Amendment to the EMC Act Bill No. of 2010
- Ratification Bill for Montreal Amendment No. of 2010
- Ratification Bill for Beijing Amendment No. 2010
- Ozone Layer Protection Bill No. 2010

More controls with respect to development, controlled substances and also allowed for the establishment of a trust funds or a DEPC Account within the Ministry of Finance and Treasury.

Of the 5 bills developed only the Waste Services and Operators Bill did not go to parliament and may go into parliament in March 2011.

In terms of human resources, the DEPC has grown from strength to strength as now has a total of 9 permanent and 6 project staff. This is a marked improvement and one that the Government especially the Public Service Commission (PSC) must be commended for. The DEPC structure is currently being revised and will be submitted again for PSC consideration in 2011.

This restructure will see the DEPC evolve into 5 distinct Divisions dealing with finance and administration, sustainable environmental planning and development control, biodiversity and conservation, climate change adaptation and environmental protection, scientific environmental research and information and environmental compliance and monitoring.

Lastly DEPC operated with VT754,000 in 2010 in its recurrent and this has not changed in 2011. There were at least 3 NPPs that were submitted in 2010 but all got knocked off due to the short fall in revenue collection by government last year.

Table 1: Excerpts from the DEPC Business Plan for 2010-Environmental Management, Research and Extension Services

| Planned Activities for 2010 | Objectives of the Action | Status | Remarks |
|--|---|--------------|--------------|
| Compliance with the Environmental Management and Conservation Act. | The DEPC ensure that the conservation Act No.12 is being implemented | Yes | Achieved |
| Registered community based conservation area on Tanna, Malekula and Efate. | Community based conservation area | Yes | Achieved |
| Resource Management demonstration sites established on Tanna, Gaua, Santo and Efate. | Not reported | Not reported | Not reported |
| Number of extension activities completed. | Not reported | Not reported | Not reported |
| 100% government's commitments under the regional and international | Compliance with Montreal Protocol and Vienna Convention on the protection | Yes | Achieved |

| | | | |
|--|--|--------------|--|
| environmental treaties and Conventions. | of the Ozone Layer (ODS) and Stockholm Convention to protect human health and environment from persistent organic pollutant- | | |
| Community and cross-sectoral training on Tanna, Malekula and Efate. | Not reported | Not reported | Not reported |
| Five types of training materials produced. | Not reported | Not reported | Not reported |
| Produced reports of number of research papers including number and percentage of recommendations implemented. | -42 EIA reports -31 PEA reports | Yes | Achieved but The numeric data has to be specified in the performance indicator. |
| Four guidelines each for EIA, Conservation, Bio protecting, Foreign organism imports produce. | Not reported | Not reported | Not reported |
| One National report produced on State of Environment. | Not reported | Not reported | Not reported |
| Quarterly reports on training, awareness programs. | Not reported | Not reported | Not reported |
| Quarterly report produced on PEA, EIA, CITES on development projects and export and import permits on species. | Not reported | Not reported | Not reported |
| Statistical report on data entered into the database produced. | Not reported | Not reported | Not reported |
| Five trainings on compliance to the Environment Act. | Not reported | Not reported | Not reported |

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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

Prepared by Albert Williams, Director

1.0 Background Information

The Department of Environmental Protection & Conservation or DEPC (formerly known as Vanuatu Environment Unit) until the end of 2009) was established in 1986. Since its establishment, it has undergone a very slow progress in terms of resource allocation, both financial and human resources. Since its establishment, it only had a maximum of 3 technical people working with the office and had an operational budget of less than a million vatu. Financially this situation has not changed as currently it is operating with less than one million vatu or approximately VT754,000.

In the late 1980s to early 2000 the VEU was only playing an advisory role with respect to sustainable development until Government enacted the Environment Management and Conservation Act (EMC Act) No.12 of 2002. The enactment of resulted in the establishment of the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC) and this law, the EMC Act underwent an amendment last year 2010 and is now called the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act No. Of 2010.

Now the Department has a more broad and legislative function to protect and conserve the environment of Vanuatu for the current generations as well as the future generations. The vision and mission statements for the Department demonstrate this broad role and mandate that it has to safeguard the current environment for future generations.

1.1 Vision

The Department of Environmental Protection & Conservation's vision is to become a leader in climate change adaptation, pollution prevention, species protection and sustainable development control.

1.2 Mission

To ensure that the quality of environment is maintained; through the sustainable management of Vanuatu's natural and man-made resources for the betterment and social security of present and future generations of ni-Vanuatu.

The sections that follow in this report provides a summary of the activities that were planned and implemented within the core programmes of the DEPC in 2010 to meet the above vision and mission statement for the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation.

DIVISION OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Prepared by Primrose Malosu, Finance & Administration Officer; and Albert Williams, Director

2.0 Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC) Administration

This section tries to highlight the administrative, institutional, legal, human and financial aspects that are in place or being developed to ensure that environmental protection and conservation strategies are made available, anywhere, anytime and all the time in communities in Vanuatu.

2.1 DEPC Finance and Budget

When the Department was established as a Unit in 1986, the core funding for its work program and activities have been met by bilateral and multilateral agencies. The Vanuatu government has had very little financial support to this important Millennium Development Goal (MDG 7) ensuring environmental sustainability. As such much of planned activities in its Business Plan were either not met at all or met through projects.

This situation continues to be even though Vanuatu is party to more than 10 multilateral environmental agreements. It is against this backdrop that our vulnerability especially to natural disaster risk reduction and climate change is becoming more and more critical. In 2010 the Department received a total grant for VT18,437,395, of which VT12,764,951 was for salaries, Vt4,000,000 was used for a new double cabin truck, VT740,000 for new computers and laptops, and VT754,000 for operations. The Department needs more financial resources to conduct risk assessments through the preliminary environmental assessments and ecological assessments for the better management of the country's natural resources.

2.2 Institutional Strengthening and Human Capacity Development

The Department has undergone some major improvements in 2010 especially as it undertook an in-house review of its main legislation, the Environment Management and Conservation Act (Cap 283) and also developed a number of other legislations including the Ozone Layer Protection (OLP) Act, and the Waste Services and Operations Bill. The EMC Amendment and the OLP Bills were passed in Parliament in November 2010 along with ratifications Bills for the Montreal Amendment and the Beijing Amendment to the Montreal protocol. These are discussed in more detailed in Section 2.3. The legislative frameworks will add a lot of value in strengthening the efforts of the Department in environmental protection and conservation.

In terms of human resources, a number of key positions within the department were filled and include that of the Director, Principal Environment Officer, Senior Waste and Pollution Control, Compliance Officer, Sanma Environmental Extension Officer and Driver. This brings the total of permanent staff members to 9, while approximately 6 other technical experts are supported by projects dealing with ozone layer protection, climate change adaptation, climate change mitigation (bio-fuel) and species protection and protected areas management.

A revised organizational structure was developed and is being finalised for submission in 2011 to the Public Service Commission for approval. This will see approximately 5 different divisions; each dealing with specific national commitments under the amended Environmental Protection and Conservation Act and Ozone Layer Protection Act as well as other regional agreements and multilateral environmental agreements.

Over the last 12 months the Department was very grateful to AYAD for providing one of its volunteer to work with its environmental law reform programme. Ms Magdalena Paszkiewicz has been very instrumental in liaising with the State Law Office (SLO) to formulate regulations and the amended EPC Act, which was passed in November 2010. Details of her work with the Department are outlined in section 2.3. Her contract was supposed to end in November 2010 but was renewed to April 2011 to continue to work with the DEPC Team to develop guidelines and regulations to give teeth to the main legislations, Environmental Protection & Conservation Act (EPC) and Ozone layer Protection Act (OLP).

The Department submitted at least 3 New Policy Proposal budget (NPPs) to the Ministerial Budget Committee (MBC) but none of them was approved. This meant that most of the activities that were planned for 2011 had to be removed in the 2011 Revised Business Plan.

2.3 Environmental Law Reform

Prepared by Magdalena Paszkiewicz, Australian Youth Ambassador for Development (AYAD) and Volunteering for International Development from Australia (VIDA) programs

2.3.1 Overview

The year 2010 saw the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation introduce a number of key legislative instruments for adoption by the Vanuatu Parliament.

Environmental law reform was identified as a priority action item for the Department in 2010. Objectives 2 and 3 of the 2010 Business Plan for the Department of Environment and Conservation (now, Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation) outlined the objectives and corresponding strategies and actions needed to progress the legislative reform goals of the Department. These are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Objectives, Strategies and Actions of the 2010 Business Plan relevant to Environmental Law Reform

| Objective | Strategy | Action |
|---|---|---|
| Objective 2: The compliance and enforcement of the Environmental and Management Act of 2002 | Strategy 1: To enforce and comply with the (Environment Impact Assessment) EIA provisions | Action 3: Develop regulation for fees for administration of EIA process |
| | | Action 4: Develop guidelines/schedule fees for EIA |
| | Strategy 2: To facilitate the biodiversity provisions | Action 3: Finalisation of regulation for Community Conservation Area (CCA) under EMC Act |
| Objective 3: Develop and finalise environmental legislation and policies (Objective 3) | Strategy 2: To draft a new waste legislation | Action 2: Drafting of the Waste Management legislation |
| | Strategy 3: To finalise scientific research council and biodiversity advisory council Bills | Action 2: Contract a lawyer to finalise draft Scientific research council and biodiversity advisory council Bills (2 separate Bills currently in draft) |

In addition to the 2010 Business Plan, the Department identified a number of additional environmental law priorities for immediate action in 2010:

- Amendment of the Environment and Management Conservation Act of 2002, following a review of the Act conducted in 2009;
- Ratification of the Montreal Amendment 1997 and the Beijing Amendment 1999 to the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the Ozone Layer 1987 in order Vanuatu to return to compliance with the Montreal Protocol; and
- Adoption of the draft Ozone Layer Protection Bill to assist Vanuatu to return to compliance with the Montreal Protocol by providing a framework for the control of ozone depleting substances in accordance with the country's obligations under the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol.

With the assistance of the Vanuatu State Law Office and a volunteer placed with the Department under the Australian Youth Ambassador for Development (AYAD) and Volunteering for International Development from Australia (VIDA) programs, the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation worked diligently to draft all the legislative instruments identified for action in 2010.

- In November 2010, the Vanuatu Parliament discussed and adopted a number of key Bills introduced by the Department, being the:
- Bill for the Environmental Management and Conservation (Amendment) Act of 2010;
- Bill for the Montreal Amendment (1997) to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987) (Ratification) Act of 2010;
- Bill for the Beijing Amendment (1999) to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987) (Ratification) Act of 2010; and
- Bill for the Ozone Layer Protection Act of 2010.

The Department is hopeful that the outstanding legislative instruments drafted in 2010 will be finalized in early 2011 and adopted by Parliament, or in the case of regulations under existing legislation get Ministerial approval.

2.3.2 Details of environmental law reform activities undertaken in 2010

In December 2009, with the assistance of the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP), legal consultant Graham Powell undertook a general review of existing Vanuatu laws concerning waste management and the control of ozone-depleting substances in accordance with the country's international obligations. Graham facilitated consultations with government stakeholders and drafted the Ozone Layer Protection Act, the Waste Operations and Services Act, the Environmental Protection and Conservation (Litter and Waste Control) Regulations and the Environmental Protection and Conservation (Pollution Control) Regulations.

Early 2010 saw the Department of Environmental Management and Conservation (now, Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation) working in-house with the assistance of the Department's AYAD volunteer to review the draft legislation prepared by Graham Powell and prepare a number of additional Bills and regulations to address the environmental law reform priorities of the Department. These are outlined in greater detail in Table 2 below.

In July 2010, SPC-GTZ funded an internal retreat to mainstream climate change into the Environmental Management and Conservation Act 2002 and associated regulations. The retreat was held at Bluewater Resort, Efate on 26-27 July 2010 and attended by officers of the Department of Environment and Conservation, and representatives of the Vanuatu State Law Office and SPC-GTZ. The participants successfully reviewed the existing environmental legislation and the Department's proposed draft legislative instruments to incorporate climate change into the amendments of the Environmental Management and Conservation Act and its associated regulations.

In August 2010, SPC-GTZ further funded a public consultation workshop to garnish comments from stakeholders on the proposed amendment Bill to the EMC Act, regulations addressing pollution, waste and litter control, the proposed Waste Operations and Services Bill and the National Scientific Research Council Bill. The workshop was held at the Vanuatu Cultural Centre on 31st August 2010 and was attended by representatives of Government departments and not-for-profit organizations.

Figure 1. Director, DEPC project officer and AYAD volunteer at climate change mainstreaming retreat in July 2010



Figure 2. DEPC staff at public consultation workshop in August 2010



In October 2010, the Department held an awareness and information workshop to garnish support from Members of Parliament for the four environmental law Bills scheduled for the Parliament sitting. The briefing was held at the Melanesian on 29th October 2010 and was attended by over 9 Members of Parliament from constituencies around Vanuatu. In November 2010, the Vanuatu Parliament discussed and adopted the four environmental law Bills that were listed for the Third Extraordinary Session of Parliament held from 1st – 12th November 2010. The adopted Bills are awaiting gazettal in early 2011.

The status of the Department's environmental law reform activities at the year end of 2010 is shown in Table 2 below.

2.3.3 The Road Ahead in 2011

The Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation is hopeful that 2011 will see the adoption of all of the outstanding draft Bills and regulations prepared by the Department in 2010. It is hoped that:

- The four Bills adopted by Parliament in November 2010 are gazetted without delay;
- The five draft regulations prepared by the Department in 2010 will receive Ministerial approval in early 2011 and be gazetted without delay; and
- A further five Bills scheduled to be considered by Parliament in its next sitting will be discussed, adopted and gazetted without delay. In addition to the Bills for the Waste Operations and Services Act and the National Scientific Research Council Act, the Department will also be introducing a number of ratification Bills in line with international agreements and conventions.

Table 2. Summary and current status of environmental legislative instruments prepared by the DEPC in 2010

| Type of legislative instrument | Name of legislation | Purpose of legislation | Current status (as at 2010 year end) |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Bills | Bill for the Environmental Management and Conservation (Amendment) Act of 2010 | To amend the Environmental Management and Conservation Act to streamline the environmental impact assessment process, establish an Environmental Trust Fund, allow for on-the-spot fines to be issued for offences and increase prescribed penalties. | Adopted by Parliament <i>Official gazettal has been done in January 24 2011</i> |
| | Bill for the Montreal Amendment (1997) to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987) (Ratification) Act of 2010 | To ratify the Montreal Amendment (1997) to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987) | Adopted by Parliament <i>Official gazettal has been done in January 24 2011</i> |
| | Bill for the Beijing Amendment (1999) to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987) (Ratification) Act of 2010 | To ratify the Beijing Amendment (1999) to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987) | Adopted by Parliament <i>Official gazettal has been done in January 24 2011</i> |
| | Bill for the Ozone Layer Protection Act of 2010 | To control and manage the importation and usage of ozone depleting substances in accordance with obligations under the Vienna Conventions for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol | Adopted by Parliament <i>Official gazettal has been done in January 24 2011</i> |
| | Bill for the Waste Operations and Services Act of 2011 | To define and allocate the regulatory functions relating to waste management, and provide for waste management operations and services. | To be discussed by Parliament in next sitting |
| | Bill for the National Scientific Research Council Act of 2011 | To create the Vanuatu National Scientific Research Council to regulate and manage scientific research and act as an advisory body to the government on scientific research matters. | To be discussed by Parliament in next sitting |
| Regulations | Environmental Protection and Conservation (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 | To streamline and provide guidance to the preliminary environmental assessment and environmental impact assessment process. | Awaiting State Law Office review and Ministerial approval |
| | Environmental Protection and Conservation (Pollution Control) Regulations 2011 | To control the discharge of wastes and pollutants and create offences for polluting activities that cause harm to human health or the environment. | Awaiting State Law Office review and Ministerial approval |
| | Environmental Protection and Conservation (Litter and Waste Control) Regulations 2011 | To restrict littering and unauthorized waste disposal, including burning and dumping activities that cause harm to human health or the environment. | Awaiting State Law Office review and Ministerial approval |
| | Environmental Protection and Conservation (Community Conservation Areas) Regulations 2011 | To provide guidance for the registration and management of community conservation areas and recognise the community alternative dispute resolution process in dealing with offences against community conservation areas. | Awaiting State Law Office review and Ministerial approval |
| | Environmental Protection and Conservation (Environmental Protection Fee) Regulations 2011 | To introduce an environmental departure tax on all persons travelling overseas to be used for environmental protection and conservation purposes. | Awaiting State Law Office review and Ministerial approval |

DIVISION OF BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION

Prepared by Donna Kalfatak, Terrestrial Biologist; Vatu Molisa, Marine Biologist and Touasi Tiwok, Principal Environment Officer

3.0 Introduction

The Division of Biodiversity and Conservation (DBC) is set up to fulfill the vision and mission of the department through execution of the provisions of the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act No.12 of 2002 [CAP 283]. The DBC mainly deals with protection, conservation and management of biodiversity through the national biodiversity strategy action plan, a national environmental policy, other relevant procedures, and regulations that are in place.

The DBC currently has three staff, one permanent known as the Principal Environment Officer and two project staff contracted through the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) Project, the Marine and Terrestrial Biologists.

DBC undertakes the following activities and strategies to realize the vision and mission of the Department:

- Coordination of the Community Conservation Areas' (CCA) registration as regulated under the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act [CAP283] and other required activities such as monitoring and assessment of the registered CCAs to ensure their management plans are being implemented.
- Facilitation of scientific and bio-prospecting researches in country either conducted by local and/or foreign researchers/institutions.
- Management, control and eradication of introduced and foreign species and modified species that is potential to become invasive to Vanuatu's native biodiversity.
- Provide technical advice and support to relevant natural resource management sectors, provinces and local communities on issues and/or activities relating to biodiversity conservation and management.
- Conduct research, assessment and monitoring of biodiversity.
- Raising awareness of biodiversity, its values and provisions of environmental and natural resource legislations.
- Participation of local communities in the management of biodiversity.
- Management of biodiversity and important ecosystems.
- Implementation of relevant policies, programmes and projects that deals with biodiversity conservation and management.
- Support effective traditional resource management systems.
- Management of Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES) daily exportation permits and other related issues.
- Facilitation of the country's commitment and obligations under MEAs such as UNCBD, CITES and RAMSAR Convention on wetlands.

3.1 Community Conservations Areas

One of the important roles of this Division is to closely work with local communities by providing technical support for conservation and protected areas. Due to lack of sufficient financial support by the Department this role are accomplished with limited funds from outside donors through projects. Unfortunately such funds only support a few of the chosen Conservation or Protected Areas. In year 2010 the Division mainly provides financial support to five Community Conservation Areas (CCAs) under the Programme of Work on Protected Areas that are mentioned below. Other Conservation Areas are supported in collaboration with other relevant natural resource sectors such as the Dept of Geology Mines and Water Resources, Dept of Fisheries, Dept of Forests, Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP) Vanuatu, SHEFA Province and New Zealand Royal & Birds Society through their sectoral programmes or outside funds that came through them. Some of these community conservation initiatives are mentioned below.

The Landholders Conservation Initiatives (LCI) Project being funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) from year 2006 to 2009 has worked with Gaua, Santo and Tanna communities by providing support to strengthen and build capacity of the local communities to conserve and manage their resources. Gaua has six (6) Marine Conservation Areas, Santo with three conservation areas (3) and Tanna with four (4) conservation areas. Both Santo and Tanna their CAs are all terrestrial and freshwater. At end of LCI project all conservation areas mentioned have draft management plans that this Division is reviewing to finalize them and have them registered under the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act No.12 of 2002 [CAP 283].

Currently there exist many CCAs or Protected Areas throughout the country that urgently needs this Division's support of which we hope to find resources in the future to help them following their requests to DEPC. Over the last 12 months or so the DBC through PoWPA Project has worked with the AYAD Legal Assistant drafted the CCAs registration regulation that is currently with the State Law Office (SLO) that once signed by the Minister responsible will allow community group, family, landowners and individuals to register their conservation or protected Areas. A national environment registry prototype was created this year, 2010 and was circulate for comments. Comments received mainly from this Division contributed to its update. It is anticipated that the current updated version will be presented in early March 2011 to the department staff prior its final completion.

3.2 Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA)

The project was developed following a funding window under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Programme of Work on Protected Area (PoWPA) to address CBD PoWPA Activities especially the following: 3.1.1 Identify and address legislative and institution gaps and barriers that impede the effective establishment and management of PAs and 3.2.1 Complete PA capacity needs assessments and establish capacity building programmes on the basis of capacity needs assessments.

Table 3 summarizing Activities Implemented in 2010 in the 5 Priority Conservation Sites.

| | Activity | Time Frame |
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| Outcome 1 a) Consensus between institutional stakeholders on: removal of policy inconsistencies; standards for recognition of PAs within a national PA system; and adoption of a strategic national approach to protected area identification and management. | Workshop to draft Epau Conservation Area (Efate) Management Plan | 10-12 March 2010 |
| | Meetings with AYAD Legal officer to discuss Community Conservation Area (CCA) registration regulation | March-April 2010 |
| | Workshop to review Existing Vatthe CA Management Plan (Santo) | 2nd wk April 2010 |
| | Review Draft Management Plan for Penoru CA (Santo) | April-June 2010 |
| | Mere-Sauwia CA Management Plan Review Workshop | 1st wk June May 2010 |
| | Remapping of Vatthe CA Boundary | 4th Wk June 2010 |
| | Final review of the Vatthe CA Management Plan | 2nd wk July 2010 |
| | Awareness on draft Community Conservation Area (CCA) regulation and CCA registration process | 2nd wk July 2010 |
| | Community Meeting at Matantas to discuss final remapping of the CA | 2nd wk December 2010 |
| Outcome 2 Members of the indigenous landholder families, Chiefs and other villagers who are responsible for 5 PAs have capacity to plan, establish and manage their PAs to the level expected for registration under the EMC Act or equivalent. | Epau CA river Freshwater Fishes and Crustaceans Research | 3 February 2010 |
| | Coconut Crab Monitoring Training with Epau CA community | 1 wk March 2010 |
| | Monitoring of chemical applications on <i>Merremia peltata</i> (Big Lif) with Vatthe CA Area Community Field Officer and Matantas Primary school | 3rd wk May 2010 |
| | Rapid Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment of Epau CA | 1st wk May 2010 |
| | Rapid Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment of Penoru CA | 3rd wk July 2010 |

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| | Nguna Project Development Workshop at Mere-Sauwia CA community | 4th wk October 2010 |
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On the ground level DEPC uses this funding opportunity to reduce the implementation gaps for management systems of Protected (or Conservation) Areas to: i) work at a national level to strengthen cross sectoral cooperation, to remove policy and procedural inconsistencies, and foster a strategic national approach to PA identification, recognition and management and ii) build the capacity of the landholders and supporting agencies of at least 5 locally managed PAs that address national biodiversity targets so that the PAs can achieve legal recognition and registration.

The project formally commenced in August 2009 but due to delay in receiving its first cash advance field work just began early 2010. The project is coordinated by the DEPC former Biodiversity Officer now the Principal Environment Officer.

The project is working with ten (10) Protected (Conservation) Areas with five priority sites namely, Penoru Conservation Area on NW Santo, Vatthe Conservation Area on NE Santo, Epau Conservation Area on East Efate, Mere-Sauwia Conservation Area and Unakap Marine Protected Area both on Nguna Island, north of Efate. Other five sites that PoWPA provides ad hoc assistance to are Loru Protected Area on East Santo, Takara Marine Protected Area, Moso Marine Protected Area and Undine Bay (Siviri) Marine Protected Area.

Both PoWPA project Biologists were involved in a Freshwater and Crustaceans research of Epau River following request by the Terrestrial Biologist to the French Natural History Museum to assist the project conducting this study. The result indicates an endemic fish species, *Schismatogobius vanuatuensis* first record for Efate Island but has been recorded in many islands in the north of Vanuatu.

PoWPA Project Marine and Terrestrial Biologists conducted a three day community workshop in early March 2010 at Epau village where 30 community participants came together discussing the issues that needs to be covered in the Epau CA draft management plan following the national PA system standard management plan. In the afternoon of the second day of the workshop the participants were also trained on how to monitor the Coconut Crab, *Birgus latro*.

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| Director of DEPC receiving his gift after officiating the opening of the Epau CA community three days workshop in March 2010 | Participant of the Epau CA workshop in group discussions | Mrs. Rolenas Baareleo demonstrating to Epau CA workshop participants how to lay transect for Coconut Crab Monitoring |


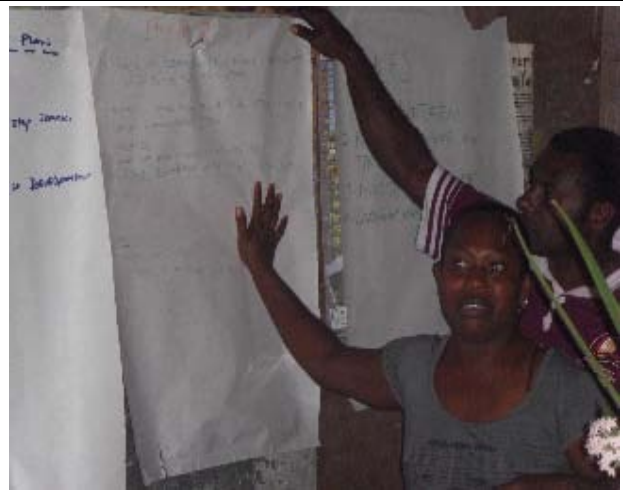
A three days community workshop took place at Matantas village taking participants from both Matantas and Sara villages to review the existing Vatthe CA management plan. The review was made in order to amend the management plan so to follow the new national CA standard management. The outcome of this workshop was a draft updated management plan. The Director opened this workshop an opportunity for him as well to meet both communities that are involved in this CA and as well as responding to questions relating to conservation issues that are linked to conservation of Vatthe and other environmental issues. The workshop was facilitated by the PoWPA project Terrestrial Biologist, DEPC Compliance Officer and DEPC Admin & Finance Officer.

A final review of the Vatthe CA took place in June 2010 where the community mainly discussed the amended management rules and their penalties. A session during this final review workshop also included the DEPC Compliance Officer going through the draft regulation outlining the process for registering, cancelling the Community Conservation Area (CCA) and penalties for breaking CA management rules as regulated under the Environmental Protection and Conservation (EPC) Act of 2010. Again the final review was facilitated by the same officers who conducted the review workshop.

Mere-Sauwia CA community also worked with the PoWPA project team in amending its existing management plan also to fit the new management plan standards through a workshop that was conducted by PoWPA Marine Biologist and the Manager for Mere-Sauwia CA.

Initial discussion on the development of CCA registration regulation was made by the Senior Information Officer and PoWPA Terrestrial Biologist with the AYAD Legal Assistant in early 2010 followed by a couple more of meetings later during the year. Following these discussion meetings the AYAD Legal Assistant developed the CCA registration regulation amongst others.

PoWPA Marine Biologist met with the GIS officer at the GIS section of Department of Lands to discuss development of the Environment Registry for DEPC. A draft was submitted to him in mid 2010. The draft was circulated in August 2010 to all staff for comments.




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| <p>Mere-Sauwia CA Manager facilitating the Management Plan Review Workshop</p> | <p>Workshop Participants in group 2 presenting their group activity</p> |

The project Terrestrial Biologist also reviewed the draft management plan for Penoru CA that was drafted by the Landholders Conservation Initiatives (LCI) project.

In June 2010 the Ministry of Lands IT section also assisted the project in remapping the Vatthe CA boundary. Since the registration of Vatthe CA in 2003, some development activities have taken place in the CA thus there is a need to remap the area.

The project through its Terrestrial Biologist also used the 'Big Lif' Control Project of Vatthe CA, the GEF/UNDP small grant funding opportunity in discussing the issue of bush clearing in the Vatthe CA reserve area with the Matantas community and especially the family who are directly involved in the said activity in December 2010. This has led to the meeting asking the project to do another remapping exercise to expand the gardening areas into the CA following the need of all affected families who do not have sufficient land for gardening.

Three rapid terrestrial biodiversity assessments were conducted for Mere-Sauwia, Epau, and Penoru Conservation Areas this year as indicated on the above table. The assessments were conducted in collaboration with the Department of Forest through its Assistant Herbarium Curator and Conservation Officer who is responsible for the Entomology researches. These assessments allowed the project and the department to learn of different fauna and flora species and different important ecosystems that exist in the CAs so to develop conservation and management measures for the species with communities concern.

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| <p>Penoru CA, NW Santo research team taking off from the village to the Conservation Area on 19 July 2010</p> | <p>Entomology Study at Epau CA by Mr. Presley Tovo, Dept of Forest. Collecting insects from light traps at night during the Epau CA biodiversity</p> | <p>Epau CA Management Committee members (Wilie Kai-I and Nixon Joseph -r) with insect Pannel trap. Both assisted the Epau CA biodiversity rapid assessment from 5-7 May</p> |

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| | rapid assessment from 5-7 May 2010 | 2010 |
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The project was also part of the *Merremia peltata* (Big Lif) chemical application trial monitoring activity through the Terrestrial Biologist in May 2010 in collaboration with Forests and Birds Society of New Zealand. This is to know the strength and effectiveness of different chemicals on the invasive rope over a time period so as to confirm which poison to use in two future projects to be funded by GEF/UNDP Small Grant Programme and GEF PAS funding windows.

PoWPA also assisted the Epau conservation area discussing development of their CA sign boards as requested during the management plan drafting workshop.

The project officers were also involved in many other national, regional and international workshops and meetings over the year 2010 as indicated below.

3.3 Integrated Water Resource Management Demonstration (IWRMD)

The IWRMD project is executed by the Department of Geology Mines and Water Resources but its sub activity of Protected Area establishment under the Sarakata Watershed Management Plan component is implemented by DEPC.

The PoWPA Project Terrestrial Biologist and DEPC Admin & Finance Officer were part of its first communities' consultations in July 2010 to learn of the 6 villages within the Sarakata Watershed interests in setting up the Protected Areas. The second activity was conducting an environment and conservation awareness workshop with key representatives of the six communities and confirming their interests to work with DEPC to establish the PAs. This workshop was facilitated by DEPC Senior Education and Information Officer with the DEPC Admin & Finance Officer in September 2010. This awareness workshop confirmed communities that are interested to set up Protected Areas as part of an activity for the Sarakata Watershed Management Plan.



IWRMD project environment and conservation awareness workshop facilitators and participants, August 2010, Fanafo, SE Santo

A site inspection of the Sarakata River particularly area of Sarakata, Pepsi, Pump Station and Wong Sze Sing land close to Monexil village were conducted by the consultation team during the same period of the community consultation to learn of developmental activities affecting the watershed and the river itself.

3.4 Coastal and Watershed Restoration for the Integrity of Islands Environment (COWRIE) Project

This project worked with the Epau Community to restore and protect their watershed. The Biodiversity and Conservation Unit officers were part of this project through participation of its meetings. The former Biodiversity Officer and PoWPA Project Marine Biologist were involved in its field activities in February and October 2010. The February activities included a community meeting with project national stakeholders and USP (its regional implementing agency); visited the project site, mapped the watershed area and made some replanting. Another visit was made to the community in September 2010 to follow up with the community to see if they have developed their work plan. The other activity that was carried out at the same time is replanting by members of national stakeholders such as Dept of Forestry, DEPC, Dept of Fisheries and SHEFA Province.

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| <p>The Epau Community Nursery the nursery manager explaining his tasks to the SHEFA Province Councilors'</p> | <p>The opening of the Epau Community Nursery by the SHEFA President</p> |

3.5 Meetings and Conferences

3.5.1 National Conferences and Meetings

The PoWPA project Marine Biologists attended the following meetings and workshops:

- Crown of Thorns (COT) Research Findings conducted by a PhD Researcher Mr. Patrick Albers on 10 February 2010 at the Peace Corp Building conference room. The research was conducted at Unakap and mainland Efate reefs. His researched showed that there is still a high number of COT at the sites studied. The meeting also provided valuable information on best methods to control and eradicate the COTs. This meeting saw participation of the target research site communities.
- Marine Invasive Species Meeting from 12 to 13 February 2010 at the Department of Fisheries being organized by Dept of Fisheries and Waikato University, NZ. This meeting took together representatives from DEPC, Dept of Fisheries and VQIS. The meeting is purposely to train the relevant agencies' technical person with scientific methods on how to collect invasive marine species (barnacles, bivalves, sea anemone and algae) found on the wharf infrastructures.
- Coastal and Watershed Restoration (COWRIE Project) meeting held on 23 February 2010 at SHEFA Province conference room being organized and convened by USP and IUCN, Fiji Office. It was an inception meeting to make the national stakeholders aware of the project.
- Tagabe River Catchment Management Committee meeting on 24 February 2010 at the SHEFA Province conference meeting being organized and convened by SHEFA Province. A regular committee meeting that discusses issues relating to the catchment area.

- A mangrove project meeting on 6 February 2010 at the Cultural Center being organized and convened by VKS to make the stakeholders aware of the MESCAL project that is coming to Vanuatu.
- UNDP/IUCN Mangrove Project Mangrove Ecosystem for Climate Change and Adaptation (MESCAL) Project meeting on 26 February 2010 at the Cultural Centre being organized and convened by VKS purposely to collect ideas from relevant stakeholders to develop its work plan.
- World Water Day Awareness Program activities from 23 to 24 March 2010 at the Sea Front being organized and convened by the Department of Geology, Mines and Water Resources. The Marine Biologist took turns with other DEPC staff to look after the DEPC awareness part of this program.
- Forestry Policy Management Plan Review Workshop from 16 to 19 April 2010 at the Vanuatu Institute of Technology being convened and organized by the Department of Forestry. This workshop reviewed the existing policy for the Forestry Dept.
- Port Vila Urban Development Project (ADB PPTA) on 9 July 2010 at the Melanesian Hotel being organized and convened by Port Vila Municipality.
- GEF/UNDP Small Grant Programme meeting on 20 July 2010 at the DEPC & Energy Dept conference room. Awareness by the Small Grant Vanuatu Coordinator on GEF focal areas that this programme covers and also invited the DEPC to submit project proposals.
- VBRMA & Reef Check Meeting on 7 September 2010 at Peace Corp conference room. Meeting was organized and convened by Dept of Fisheries. Purpose of the meeting is to introduce the Coordinator for VBRMA and updating the relevant stakeholders on reef checks and associated activities done to date.
- North Efate Community Based Marine Managed Areas Learning & MPA Effectiveness Workshop from 15 to 16 September 2010. The workshop is organized and conducted by Reef Check Vanuatu team. The objectives of the training workshop are to gather local MPA managers or initiators to share their experiences on how they managed their MPAs and to share some lessons learnt.
- Coastal and Watershed Restoration for the Integrity of Island Environments (COWRIE) Project Meeting on 17 September 2010 at SHEFA conference room. The meeting is organized and convened by IUCN Fiji and USP purposely to present to the national stakeholders the remaining budget and the activities that are yet to be implemented in the last remaining 12 weeks of the project.
- "Justice Blong Evriwan" Reference Group (World Bank) Awareness (JBERG) workshop from 25 November to 4 December 2010, Lenakel, and around Tanna Island. Workshop is organized and convened by the World Bank in collaboration with Reserve Bank of Vanuatu. The objectives of the workshop are to make Tanna communities aware of the JBERG team initial research findings that were conducted earlier on in the year and also explain Land Lease and EIA process and procedures.



BERG Awareness team during the Tanna workshop



DEPC giving awareness on EIA process and procedures

- Invasive Species Project Inception Meeting of GEF PAS on 7 December 2010, DEPC & Energy Dept conference room. This meeting is conducted by SPREP Invasive Species Programme Officer, Mr. Alan Tye with DEPC, Vanuatu Quarantine Inspection Services, Dept of Fisheries and Dept of Forests were all present, and were made aware of what it covers in the project document especially its budget, time frame and activities.
- “Justice Blong Evriwan” Reference Group (JBERG) Policy Discussion Meeting on 13 December 2010 at Chantilly’s conference room. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the JBERG research team research findings and see where possible to incorporate into appropriate existing national policies.

3.5.2 Regional Conferences and Meetings

The PoWPA Marine Biologist also attended the following regional meetings and workshops.

- Regional Dugong Meeting from 11 to 14 April 2010 at GHD Conference room, Brisbane, Australia. This regional meeting is organized and convened by SPREP and Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The objectives of the meeting are to learn of the different member country reports and develop a standardized dugong questionnaire to undertake survey in the PICTs. See meeting report at http://www.cms.int/species/dugong_noticeboard.htm
- CITES meeting from 17 to 19 May 2010 at Mendana Hotel, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Workshop was organized and convened by SPC. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Jayven Ham of the Dept of Fisheries with PoWPA Project Marine Biologist. The workshop saw country presentations on non-detriment findings for Marine Listed Species. A couple of consultants provided training at this workshop on how to conduct non-detriment Marine species survey. Such survey findings help to determine whether to include or not include the species into CITES listing.



• CITES meeting participants



• PoWPA Project Marine Biologist at the ICLARM rearing tanks, a field visit during the CITES meeting, Honiara, Solomons

- Regional Training on Mangrove Monitoring in the Pacific, Sea Shells Resort, Nadi, Fiji from 9 to 11 November 2010. The training was organized and convened by SPREP, University of Tasmania and WWF Southwest Pacific. The purpose of the training is to build and strengthen the capacity of the PICTs to monitor the health of their mangrove ecosystems so be able to tell if there are changes taking place.





• Mangrove Monitoring Training Participants



• Weighing dried mangrove leaves to know its biomass

- The Senior Biodiversity Officer also attended the Ramsar meeting in Noumea this meeting allowed Vanuatu to also participate in communicating its interest into becoming a party to this convention as it is yet to become a party. A highlight to this regional workshop was also to review the implementation processes of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands for contracting parties and accession procedures for non-contracting parties.
- The Senior Biodiversity Officer also attended the preparatory meeting for the region to prepare itself the Nagoya meeting. This meeting was held in Nadi Fiji held from 16-18 August 2010.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramsar Participants in Noumea | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A negotiating exercise during the Preparatory COP meeting in Nadi Fiji |

3.5.3 International Conferences and Meetings

The PoWPA Marine Biologist also participated in the UNEP and Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Dugong Meeting from 2 to 6 October 2010 at Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The meeting is organized by UNEP and CMS. Its objectives are to See meeting report at: http://www.cms.int/species/dugong/meeting_of_sigsl.htm

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| <p>PoWPA Project Marine Biologist and Mr. Jay Ven of Fisheries Dept in front of the meeting sign</p> | <p>Meeting participants in discussion groups</p> |

The Senior Biodiversity Officer attends the Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on behalf of Vanuatu. This is an international meeting which focuses on biodiversity issues in the world. This year for the Pacific region our voice was made collective through the regional assistance of SPREP as well as other collaborative partners such as WWF, IUCN and other local NGOs present within the region.

The meeting was held in Nagoya, Japan during 18th-29th October 2010. During that meeting there were several opportunities for the Pacific to work together for the region as well as diplomatic relations to be made in order to foresee many issues within the Pacific to be acknowledged by the developed countries. One main issue is the fact that as island nations we tend to be more vulnerable to a lot of these issues and therefore we require a lot more assistance which was our main message as the Pacific voice. Vanuatu participated not only in the negotiations it also assisted in several side events to which allowed Vanuatu lessons on conservation to also be displayed and learned.

3.6 Biodiversity Training and Capacity Building


a) The PoWPA Marine Biologist attended the Regional Training on Mangrove Monitoring in the Pacific, Sea Shells Resort, and Nadi, Fiji from 9 to 11 November 2010 kindly sponsored by the government of Australia and Taiwan. It was carried out to: i) strengthen the capacity of the Pacific Island countries and Territories (PICTs) to monitor the health of mangrove ecosystems and; ii) increase the understanding of the crucial role that monitoring plays in enabling better management and ID of climate change impacts on mangroves.

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| <p>PoWPA Project Marine Biologist during the Regional mangrove monitoring training exercise</p> | <p>PoWPA Project Marine Biologist receiving his certificate after the training</p> |

The Marine Biologist's assistance in facilitating CCA's management plan development workshops allowed him to learn of how Participatory Learning and Action Plan (PLA) approaches are used to involve communities to provide information as well as helping the locals to develop community action plan to help them address their environmental issues and problems.

The PoWPA Biologists being part of the rapid biodiversity assessment especially in areas those skills are lacking on, especially the Entomology study component has contributed to the Terrestrial Biologist's knowledge in identifying different order groups of insects.

The Big Lif (*Merremia peltata*), invasive vine training on chemical applications and monitoring training has helped the Terrestrial Biologist knowing the application techniques and monitoring the effectiveness and strength of the chemicals.

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| <p>Vatthe CA Project Field Officer injecting of chemicals into the <i>Merremia peltata</i> rope</p> | <p>Monitoring of the vine after few months of chemical application</p> |

The Senior Biodiversity Officer was part of a course on Ecosystem Based Management Course that was run by the University of Queensland, 25- January -5 February 2010. This enabled participants to enhance their capacity in understanding the interconnectivity of ecosystems and the involvement of different stakeholders in conservation management.

The course covered many different aspects of the ecosystem from the ridge to the reef focusing on the interconnectivity of impacts and the need to encompass the problem from many angles including involving the many stakeholders in the management of the ecosystem.

3.7 South-South Cooperation- American Samoan Government Research

In October 2010 a project took place in Vanuatu, this project was supported solely by project funds of the wildlife division of the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (American Samoa Government).The research team was given approval by the Department of the Environmental Protection and Conservation.

The project was based on vector-borne parasite of birds it is part of an on going project in the south pacific region.

The purpose of the research is to:

- 1) Determine diversity and prevalence of hematozoan parasites of birds in the south pacific region, with particular interest in malaria parasites; and
- 2) Conduct preliminary screening for birds' ectoparasites to determine diversity and potential vectors of diseases.

The Department contracted a student to assist the team in order to build the capacity of the student as well as assist the research team on field.

3.8 Financial Assistance for Biodiversity Conservation

PoWPA project is funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other projects. All other projects that the Biodiversity and Conservation Division team are involved with its implementation are funded by outside donors. No direct funding is provided from the government to carry out field or community initiatives on conservation or other biodiversity related activities on the field.

3.9 CITES Authority

The DEPC is the Vanuatu government authority is overseeing the implementation of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES). It is responsible for day to day issuing of exportation certificate of species under the CITES listing. All details of issued certificates are entered into a database of which at the end of each year, an annual report is prepared for both CITES secretariat and DEPC. The reports state total number of species being exported each year.

This year the DEPC participated in one regional meeting at Honiara Solomon Islands and its international Conference of the Parties (COP 14) meeting at Qatar Nigeria.

3.10 Challenges faced in implementing Biodiversity Conservation initiatives in Vanuatu

Some of the challenges and difficulties that the Biodiversity Section are facing include the following:

- Many biodiversity conservation initiatives managed through traditional management systems are not being respected for so many reasons. Therefore there is a need for the national government to legally support it. This has been addressed by developing Community Conservation Area (CCA) registration regulations under the Environmental Protection and Conservation (EPC) Act of 2002 this year. The challenge is that the regulation is yet to be discussed by DCO and later signed by the Minister so enforcement is not yet possible.
- Communities that have their areas set aside for conservation purposes would like to have sustainable income - generating activities that should be facilitated and supported by the Department while having their forest and land under conservation. Those that have eco-tourism as part of their income - generating activities always complain that the income produced by the activities are not sufficient and sustainable to support all families in their community.
- Another challenge that link to point c) is that the department and its project funds would not be able to support other income - generating activities that do not support sustainable environment management and conservation. This takes time and effort to find funding opportunities that would support such needs.

- CA communities that do have an interest and self motivated local person assisting with their conservation activities and as a focal point for DEPC and projects to work with will see that project would fail in some ways with its implementation at the community level at times.
- CA management committees really need some capacity building training that will help them be effective in managing their conservation initiatives.
- Working with communities that are weak in community governance system is a challenge to effective implementation of projects at the community level.
- There is a need for establishment of Environment Extension Officers at the provinces in order to implement biodiversity and environmental work programmes at the community level. Their existence will also help the Division to provide long term support to any future community conservation initiatives or activities that are initially set up or supported by donor funding agencies.

DIVISION OF CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Climate Change Adaptation Programme

Prepared by Rolenas Baereleo, National Country Coordinator, MESCAL Project Vanuatu



4.0 Introduction

Over the past two decades or so, climate change has dominated all global agenda and it is critical that the Department of Environmental Protection & Conservation and the Vanuatu Government through the National Advisory Committee of Climate Change (NACCC) embarks on national capacity development to manage adaptation and mitigation measures to prevent the adverse impacts of climate change on the biodiversity and the livelihoods of all communities in Vanuatu.

There are numerous climate change related projects implemented by various government agencies (PWD, Forestry, Meteorological services, Fisheries, Health & Agriculture etc) and others with Non-government organizations (NGO's) and there will be more to come. One is for sure, the country needs to build its capacity to manage these projects and the impacts of climate change so biodiversity resources that all ni-Vanuatu's rely on for their livelihoods are sustainable.

The Mangroves Ecosystem for Climate Change Adaptation and Livelihood (MESCAL) is a new Climate Change Program under the Department of the Environmental Protection and Conservation which has been operational since October 11 2010. MESCAL project recruit its (National Country Coordinator) NCC on the 8th of October 2010 and she begun working on the 11th /10/10. It is a research and development project that will work with two communities in Vanuatu as pilot sites for 3 years from 2011-2013. There are five potential sites for this project. Those sites will be assessed and reduce to two pilot sites.

This report will initially introduce the MESCAL project, it will also be reporting on the meetings and the activities that has been done since October 2010.

4.1 Mission for MESCAP Project

MESCAL works with communities to safeguard the mangroves for climate change adaptation and livelihoods maintenance.

4.2 Objectives of the MESCAL Project

The overriding goal and objective of MESCAL is to increase resilience to climate change for the people of the Pacific Island countries through adaptive co-management of mangroves and associated ecosystems, in each of the selected countries.

There are several objectives that the Project wants to achieve within its three years implementation in Vanuatu as listed below.

- Improve livelihoods and conserve biodiversity
- Empower communities to make informed decisions relating to mangrove management.
- Increase institutional and technical capacity for improved environmental governance at all levels of government and communities
- Promote community based on the ground in mangrove management for improved resilience to climate change

- Improve baseline knowledge about biological economic, social and cultural aspects of mangrove resources and uses in each country, and in the link between healthy mangroves and disaster risk reduction, for informed adaptation to climate change at the national and community level.
- Increase awareness at all levels of the role of mangroves and associated ecosystems in providing resilience to the impacts of climate change
- Investigate the feasibility for obtaining carbon credits for mangrove protection and reforestation, in the context of REDD and REDD+ and participating in the global carbon markets.

4.3 MESCAL Project Administration and Finance

The project funds are allocated bimonthly from the project management Unit (PMU) which is under the ICUN regional office in Fiji; Funds are released after submission of bimonthly forecast of activities by the NCC. Since the Financial agreement is not yet signed project funds are transferred directly into the NCC account as agreed by the PMU until such time that financial contract is signed between the Vanuatu Government and IUCN, and then the money will be send through the government system. It is assumed that the financial contract between the PMU and the Vanuatu government should be ready and signed by February 2011.

4.4 Regional Conferences and Meetings

The NCC attended her Induction in Suva Fiji from October 27-30. The purpose of this workshop is an opportunity to bring together all the National Country Coordinators and Project Management Unit of the MESCAL project to meet and discuss:-

- Progress at the country level.
- The in country audit and its findings to develop the country based three year work plan.
- Further develop ideas and understanding of the way forward.
- Prepare for the inception meeting to be held in Vanuatu.
- Finalize administrative issues.

There was a field trip that was organized for the NCC at the same time with this meeting. This field trip was organized to help the NCCs have a picture of what the communities are doing in terms of mangrove management and also learn of the benefits of mangrove to the community.



The Community Governance Officer, NCC's and the Project Manager Mr. Tim Nolan , Photo: IUCN

The team visited two villages along the coral coast in western Fiji. At one site the NCCs have the chance to speak with youth reps, who are involved in mangrove rehabilitation in the coral coast with help from Fiji Dive Resort owners. Another rehabilitation programme is at one of Fiji's potential sites. At this site we had the chance to meet the village leaders who shared their experiences about the benefits they get from Mangrove ecosystem.

The induction workshop helped the NCCs to meet each other and exchange ideas and also share experiences. It was an opportunity to meet the IUCN regional staff and also talk and share experiences with each one.

Another regional meeting/ workshop attended is held in Vanuatu from the 6-9 of December 2010. The purpose of this workshop is an opportunity to bring together all participants to meet and discuss the necessary processes and approaches required to develop a Plan of Implementation for the period 2011-2013 that address the needs and priorities of the MESCAL participating countries, and aligned with the context of technical and financial requirements of the BMU/IUCN Project Document

The NCC presented the results of the Audit of past current and future mangrove management program which helped the NCC to identify and develop way forward for MESCAL Vanuatu Project. An important output in this meeting is the mapping of the audit findings into the Vanuatu Country Implementation plan for 2011-2013 with the help of the Vanuatu Working Group and technical

input from Tim Nolan, the Project Manager, Etika ICUN staff and Emma Wangi the IUCN /MESCAL Legal Officer. There were also presentations from SPREP, IUCN, and WWF.

4.5 A summary of Activities done from October 11th to December 31st 2010

The recruitment of NCC on the 8th of October 2010 and began working on the 11th October 2010. NCC familiarization of project document planned activities and project goals and objectives were done from period 11-26th October. An induction meeting for all NCC was held in Suva at the project management unit from the 27-30th of October 2010.

Site assessments of 4 sites were done in November and early December 2010, namely at Crab Bay, Port Stanley Malekula on the 17th December. Since Crab Bay is an existing Conservation Area, the NCC had an informal meeting with the Fisheries extension Officer for Malampa, and committee members of Amal Crab bay Conservation Area. This helped the NCC to create a site profile for the Site.

Took a visit to Malekula on the 16th November 2010 and met with Mr. Kevin Morris, the Fisheries Extension Officer who is based at Lakatoro. Mr. Morris provided the NCC with information relating to the Crab Bay Conservation Area to put in its profile as it is a potential site for the MESCAL project. On the 17th, the NCC accompanied by Mr. Morris travelled down to Lamap, South of Malekula and went across by boat to Maskylyne Islands which is also one of the project's potential sites. The NCC meets with the community Vanuatu-tai resource monitors and some communities leaders and introduced the project to them. The next day the team visited the mangrove sites of Maskelyne islands by canoe.



Mangroves in Maskylynes Photo: RB



Impacts of SLR on the mangrove ecosystem on Akhamb Island. Photo RB



Mangroves forest, Paunagisu, N. Efate

On the 20th of November Kevin and the NCC travelled to Akhamb to visit the mangroves and go information on the impacts of climate change as claimed by the communities. They also had a meeting with the community at the community hall on Akhamb at night; this meeting helped us to gather information to put together a project profile for Akhamb as well. We visited their site and have seen the mangrove ecosystem and how they were affected by Sea Level Rise (SLR).

On the 3rd of December 2010 a site visit was made to Paunagisu – Baufatu on north Efate. A meeting was arranged with the Vanuatu –tai resource monitors. The NCC was able to collect information from the Monitors to put together a profile for that site. The NCC took pictures of the mangrove ecosystem on Kakula Island and along the coast at Paunagisu.

A working group was recruited which consisted of members of environmental NGO and government departments. A meeting was convened on the 3rd of December 2010 where an executive was elected, Albert Williams the director of Department of Environment is the Chairperson and vice chairperson is Jayven Ham from Fisheries department.

4.6 Challenges

There is really not much challenge being faced for this project since October despite the fact that the NCC has been there for sometimes before settling in with a desk in a small space. There is no proper data base of information on mangroves therefore the NCC has to liaise with a lot of different people to collect some information for the project.

4.7 Conclusion

To conclude it has been the most interesting 3 month of work for MESCAL in Vanuatu. Collecting all information from everywhere, putting them together to make an audit of mangrove programs in Vanuatu was interesting too. This has helped the NCC increase her knowledge capacity on mangroves and knowing the needs for protecting mangroves ecosystems in Vanuatu.

I would like to thank the department for all its support towards MESCAL in the last three months of work.

DIVISION OF CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The National Ozone Unit & Ozone Layer Protection Programme

5.0 Vanuatu as Party to the Montreal Protocol

Vanuatu has been a party to the Montreal protocol in the mid 1990's amid global concerns for the hole in the ozone layer that was being caused by chlorofluorocarbons or what is known as CFCs. Since then the country has had very little success in terms of controlling the importation of CFCs or even their alternatives such as Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and the demand for these ozone depleting substances (ODS).

In 1995 Vanuatu as a party to the Montreal Protocol agreed with all other countries in the world that it will no longer import CFCs or appliances that used CFCs. Since the Vanuatu Environment Unit (VEU) back then did not have enough resources, that global commitment at the national level was had to be made. This resulted in the country being put on the blacklist for continuing to import CFCs into the country and the listing still stands as at February 2011.

The Director as the National Focal Point was requested by the Implementation Committee (IMPCOM) to present Vanuatu's Action Plan to Return to Compliance with the Montreal Protocol in June 2010 in Geneva and subsequently the Meeting of the Parties where Vanuatu also participated. While legislations have been passed to help Vanuatu, it is work in progress that will be evaluated again in 2011.

Since 2010, the DEPC has also established the National Ozone Unit (NOU) and recruited a National Ozone Officer (NOO) to ensure that the country's obligations under the Montreal Protocol are managed and sustained.

5.1 Objectives of the National Ozone Unit (NOU)

Vanuatu first went into non-compliance in 2008 when it was discovered that the country was reporting a usage of CFCs; a refrigerant that she should have ceased using some years ago. Efforts on this regard were made such that by the time it came to reporting our annual data to the MLF and the Ozone Secretariat, Vanuatu was back in compliance. However it was then discovered that since we had not ratified two Amendments to the Protocol, Vanuatu was once again in non-compliance. A visit by representatives of UNEP to the Minister and the President of the Republic highlighted the importance of our return to compliance, as no immediate action would have serious trade repercussions.

During the visit of the UNEP personnel, an Action Plan was devised to give Vanuatu some direction on the proper course to take to try to return to compliance. The following is an extract of the Action Plan, showing only the strategies and the time-frames proposed.

Figure 1. Strategies and Timeframes of Action Plan To Return To Compliance

| Strategy | Time frame | Status & Means of Verification |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Government will strengthen its control on ODS import and export | 1 March 2010 | |
| Government to have licensing system in place for the import of ODS of Annex C Group 1, and Annex E | July 2010 | |
| Training of Border Control/Customs Officers | March 20-30 2010 | |
| Technician Training in refrigeration servicing with focusing of retrofiting of CFCs based equipment to hydrocarbons and HFCs alternatives | June 2010 | |
| Establishment of a National Ozone Unit (NOU) within the Department of Environment and Conservation | Mid-March 2010 | |
| Develop and implement an education and awareness program on ODS and the Montreal Protocol | March 2010- onwards | |
| Develop appropriate policies to ratify the Montreal and Beijing Amendments to the Montreal and Beijing Amendment by July 2010 following the parliament session in | Parliament session ; May 2010 Ratification by July 2010 | |
| The draft ODS Act is being finalized, and would be submitted to the May 2010 Parliament for review and final endorsement. Currently with State Law for review / DEC | Parliament session: May 2010. With Ratification by: July 2010 | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
|--|--|--|

A Ministerial Order was signed by the then Minister for Finance and Economic Development. This Order came under the Customs Act and was adopted as a Licensing System as such, because it banned the import and export of all CFCs and CFC-based equipment, and regulated the use of HCFCs and HCFC-based equipment. It was signed on February 18, 2010.

March saw a training workshop run by our counterparts in Fiji. Customs Officers, Airport Vanuatu staff, Air Vanuatu staff, and representatives from customs agents attended the training workshop that ran for 3 days. The information covered included basic awareness on the ozone layer, the Montreal Protocol and our obligations, the role of the border control people, equipment that would be used, how to recognize different types of refrigerant bottles, etc. During this month, the DEPC ran advertisements on the position for the National Ozone Officer.

Several questionnaires were sent out to companies in Vila, to begin the collection of information in preparation for the submission of our yearly reports to UNEP and the MLF. The majority of these were not returned.

In June, a National Ozone Officer was recruited. For the next two months, the main tasks at hand were the data collection for our reporting requirements, developing the licensing system, finalizing the legislation and working towards the ratification of the Montreal and Beijing Amendments.

The Pacific Island Countries (PICs) Network Meeting was held at the Coral Coast in Sigatoka, Fiji, from July 28 to July 30. During this meeting, Vanuatu had to present information on any progress made so far in its attempts to return to compliance. This included data collected so far from the Customs Department and the refrigerant importers, any legislation we are working on (explanation on its parameters), any work done on licensing system, and the position of the National Ozone Unit within the Department (the purpose of this information was to determine how close each Ozone Officer is to the decision-making people in the government. In this case, the NOO reports directly to the Director, who reports to the DG, who in turn reports to the Minister).



Figure 2 NOO with David Haynes during a mock exercise in Sigatoka. July 2010

This month, the Director attended Montreal Protocol's OEWG meetings in Geneva, Switzerland where he went before the ExCom to explain the country's position and introduce its Action Plan.

Much of the month of August was spent waiting for the release of HPMP and IS funds so that activities such as the HPMP data collection, awareness meetings etc could begin. The final draft legislation, the Ozone Layer Protection Act was finalized during this month. This was achieved with the help of our Australian volunteer, Magda, who is an environmental lawyer, here to help the DEPC update its legislation. The policy papers for the two Montreal Amendments were also developed during this month. Meetings with the Minister, with the DG, with the DCO were also carried out in August.

achieved with the help of the DEPC's Waste and Pollution Control Officer. During this time, they held an awareness meeting which was very poorly attended despite the efforts made to get the stakeholders to attend the meeting.

In September the National Ozone Officer visited our northern town to begin carrying out the HPMP data collection. This was

In October, the NOO attended a training and capacity building workshop in Suva, Fiji that was organized by the UNEP and the Fiji's National Ozone Unit. HPMP preparation was the main agenda of the training workshop. However other issues, such as the licensing system, legislation, the running of the NOU, and decisions of the various Montreal Protocol committees such as the MOP, OEWG, ExCom were discussed.



On her return to Vanuatu, the National Ozone Officer, once again with the help of the Waste Management and Pollution Control Officer continued with the HPMP

Figure 3 NOO from various PICs during Training and Capacity Building Workshop in Fiji, October 2010.

data collection. This time however, the resorts, hotels and restaurants outside of Port Vila were surveyed. In preparation for the November parliament sitting, where the OLP Bill and the two Amendments were going to be tabled, the DEPC organized a meeting with the Members of Parliament to explain the Montreal Protocol, the ozone layer, the OLP Act and the two Amendments.

In early November, Trinison Tari, a senior DEPC officer left the country to attend the Montreal Protocol's MOP meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand. The parliament sitting in November saw the tabling of the OLP Bill, and the Montreal and Beijing Amendments as Ratification Bills. All bills were tabled, discussed and passed! The NOO, with the help of a DEPC Officer visited the northern town once again to complete the HPMP data collection. During this trip, the major resorts outside of Luganville and households within Luganville were surveyed.



On their return, volunteers that had been previously contacted were brought in to complete the HPMP data collection within Port Vila. During this time, the volunteers were divided into groups of 3 or 4, and in some cases in pairs, and sent out to different areas within Port Vila. In these areas, they visited shops, office buildings, clinics, households; essentially any structure that had the potential to use an air condition unit or a fridge

Figure 4 Director, Finance and Admin Officer and Compliance Officer at the Ratua Private Island Resort during the site visit for the HPMP data collection. November 2010

and collected information on what kind of refrigerant gas

was present in the unit, along with how much of the gas was supposed to have been in the unit when it was first purchased.

on the back of a refrigerator, although in most cases now, this information can be found on the inside of the fridge. The information required during the survey is the type of refrigerant gas (R134a) and the amount (160g).

Once the information had been collected, an HCFC survey report was written and submitted to the UNEP offices in Bangkok.

During December, a consultant attached with the UNEP visited several PICs to help with any tasks pertaining to the production of an HPMP. Mahmood Riyaz visited Vanuatu from the December 21st -24th. During this time, various site visits were conducted to verify data that Mr Riyaz would need to write our HPMP. Before her returned to Bangkok, Mr Riyaz forwarded a draft HPMP to the NOO and the Director for review.

Of the eight (8) strategies in the Action Plan, it is safe to say that we have achieved 6 of the strategies. The second and the fourth have not been achieved as yet because:

- We need to wait for our Act to come into effect to implement the licensing system
- The Technician's Training will not be possible until March next year (2011) due to time constraints and prior commitments on the trainers' part (We are enlisting the Fiji Ozone Unit's ODS Inspector to come to Vanuatu to run this training).

Although there does not seem to be as much awareness as previously planned, there have been several articles in the local paper, a radio interview as well as awareness to individuals during the HPMP data collection. In addition, the main focus of the NOU so far has been to push through the legislation, ratification of the amendments, and data collection for the HPMP to meet the December 31st deadline. For these reasons, the focus on awareness has not been as much as previously planned. The NOO anticipates that since these major tasks have been achieved, much of the strategies that are in the Action Plan that were not achieved can be done.

The figure to the right shows the information on a sticker found typically



Figure 5 Label on refrigerator with information required for HPMP survey

5.2 Meetings and Conferences

5.2.1 National Meetings and Conferences

There were two meetings that the NOO held. Both meetings were a combination of awareness on the Montreal Protocol and the ozone layer, and awareness on the HPMP and the Licensing system. The first of these meetings was held in Santo. The second was held here in Vila. In both meetings, letters were sent out a week in advance to request the participation of representatives of stakeholder companies. Although the original idea was to hold the meeting for industrial stakeholders, by the second meeting, government stakeholders were also included. Attendance to the meetings was not as good as anticipated.

5.3 Regional Meetings and Conferences

5.3.1 PICs Network Meeting, Fiji, July 2010

The PIC Network meeting was a three-day event that saw the gathering of Ozone Officers, some Heads of Departments of various PICs and representatives from The Ozone Secretariat, MLF, UNEP, SPREP, representatives from the Australian government and the New Zealand government(Resource People). During the meeting, each PIC was expected to present a report on their country's progress with regard to phasing out of ODS as well as their progress on their HPMP. The representatives from the stakeholder organizations also carried out presentations on their roles and what was expected from each of the PICs with regard to the organization that each of the representatives were there on behalf of. The MLF representative for instance covered the new format of the country report forms. He gave the NOOs their country's usernames and passwords so that we could access our records on their website. He also gave out valuable information such as the need for co-financing with other organizations to help the Ozone Units with their activities. During the final day, a mock exercise was carried out in which the Ozone Officers carried out a mock HPMP survey using the questionnaires that the Fiji Ozone Unit had developed.

5.3.2 NOO Training and Capacity Building Workshop, Fiji, October 2010

This meeting was very informal. It consisted of just the Ozone Officers with Shaofeng Hu, the UNEO representative for the Pacific Region. As mentioned briefly earlier, the main issue discussed was the HPMP; however there were other issues and topics that were covered during the training workshop. The workshop was divided into session times, with each Ozone Officer being

responsible for a two hour slot of presentation on a topic of their choosing. Vanuatu's NOO chose to present on the Licensing system; what chemicals it is supposed to cover, kinds of permits and licenses to have, which legislation and Amendment makes it a requirement in order to be in compliance, the various government departments involved and their roles.



Figure 6 NOO from Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Is, Tonga and Tuvalu during the first day. October 2010

International Meetings and Conferences

There were two international meetings that DEPC people attended on behalf of the government. They were the MOP Meeting held in Geneva in July 2010 and the MOP, held in Bangkok in November 2010.

5.4 Project Finances

There is a lot of money that is available for this project. There are two main areas that money is being given to the country for. The Vanuatu Institutional Strengthening funds are funds that are for

the administration of the National Ozone Unit, which at the moment includes the NOO's salaries. The HPMP funds are ones that come into the country for the purposes of financing the HPMP activities; its preparation and its implementation.

5.5 Challenges

The main challenge this year was the delay in the availability of the funds. Funds were forwarded in time from the organizations overseas, however the government system, especially that of having the funds released by the aid coordination unit under the Prime Minister's Office, was too slow. Much of the time forms were misplaced, and/or individuals responsible for releasing the funds were unavailable. Because the activities under this Unit are project funded, it meant that none of the activities such as awareness, data collection, and meetings could be carried out without money available. It is the NOO's opinion that the data collection could have been started as early as August, and the HPMP would have been ready as late as November, because there would have been time for consultation meetings with the industrial and government stakeholders.

5.6 Conclusion

The last seven months have been very hectic. However considering the amount of tasks we have carried out, it has been a productive seven months! This New Year will bring many more new challenges, but I believe that if we can achieve what we have achieved in the last few months then bring it on! God has been good to the DEPC this year. As long as we continue to acknowledge Him and give Him His just dues, then He will certainly see us through next year and beyond.

5.7 Words of gratitude

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Michel Leodoro, Primrose Malosu, Wycliff Bakeo and last but not least, Magda P! I couldn't have done all of the above without you all. Tabeara kaivua ngo Supe enga sikotimu always.

DIVISION OF CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WASTE MANAGEMENT AND POLLUTION CONTROL PROGRAMME

Prepared by Michel Leodoro, Contracted Waste Management Officer and Carol Rovo, Senior Waste Management & Pollution Control Officer

6.0 Introduction to the Waste Management and Pollution Control Programme

6.1 Objectives of the Pollution Prevention Programme

6.2 Current Status of Waste Management and Pollution Control

The waste and pollution sector within the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC) was a new addition to the department in 2010. The Waste Management and Pollution Control Officer is the officer responsible for this sector. Waste management is an important issue that is affecting the environment and putting risk to the livelihood and health of the people. Improper waste management can result in contamination of the soil, water sources (i.e. rivers, lakes and ocean), air pollution and increase in diseases. Pollution and improper waste management are correlated thus have a great effect on the environment and people if no actions are taken to address them.

The main tasks of the DEPC in addressing this issue on waste management and pollution control are:

- Developing national strategies and policies.
- Developing national legislations (i.e. regulations and bills for Parliament).
- Providing information and conducting awareness.
- Assisting the communities, municipalities and provincial governments to address the issue through technical support.
- Monitoring and assessments.

Vanuatu has been grateful to donor agencies for the past years for helping the country address the issue of waste management. The Japan International Corporation Agency (JICA) has been a major agency in assisting the country providing assistance through technical personnel, providing training opportunities, and financial donations such as the upgrade of the Bouffa Landfill. The New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAid) has also been helpful in assisting the country through non-government organizations (NGO) to undertake awareness programs concerning waste management. Also in 2010, the New Zealand Aid agency was generous enough to finance the PAYT (Pay-As-You-Throw) program which the Port Vila Municipal Council (PVMC) is currently implementing throughout its municipality.

The national government was fortunate enough to have technical support from the South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP). SPREP set aside various thematic areas to work towards for the next five years and waste management was included thus the Pacific Regional Solid Waste Management Strategy was developed. Each member country had to develop their own national strategies thus in early 2010, after various consultations, a National Solid Waste Management Strategy was developed and finalized; the strategy is pending approval.

Regarding waste legislations, Vanuatu has no national law that specifically covers waste management or pollution control besides are few by-laws of the municipalities. The Waste Operations and Services (WOS) bill was finalized late 2010 and should be tabled at the next Parliament session this year. Besides this WOS bill, the DEPC has developed two regulations concerning litter control and pollution control; all three of these legislations are expected to be approved and be in force by the end of 2012.

6.3 Programme Activities Undertaken in 2010

The main task undertaken in 2010 was for the development of waste legislations, both the WOS Bill and the two Regulations; also the final consultation for the finalization of the National Solid Waste Management Strategy (NSWMS). The DEPC appreciates the continuous assistance of SPREP in providing technical support for the development of these legislations.

Other activities include:

- Assisting DEPC team conduct site visits.
- Assisting National Ozone Officer conducting workshops and surveys in Port Vila and Luganville.
- Conducting awareness programs in primary and secondary schools with NGO's and other government departments.
- Assist DEPC team write up project proposals.
- Participating and assisting in the World Water Day, World Meteorological Day, World Environment Day and Clean Up the World Day.

6.4 Meetings, Workshops & Trainings

There have been various national workshops, meetings and trainings which I have attended with other DEPC members including a regional meeting and an international training program:

6.4.1 Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee of the Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Islands Countries of the Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes July 2010

Attended the STAC 3 and SCPRC 2 Meeting in Apia, Samoa. The full detailed minutes from the meeting can be accessed on the SPREP website: <http://www.sprep.org/legal/Waiganimeetings.htm> The STAC 3 Meeting convened at the SPREP Headquarters in Apia (SAMOA) to discuss issues concerning the Waigani Convention and the work which the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are undertaking to comply with the convention. The meeting further discussed the work programme for 2011-2012.

This is the first time Vanuatu has attended the STAC Meeting as a participant, as the last two STAC Meetings Vanuatu attended as an Observer. This is because Vanuatu has just recently ratified the Waigani Convention in 2008. The meeting of the Parties discussed mainly around the work programme and budget for 2011-2012.

6.4.1.1 Way Forward for STAC 3

Vanuatu needs to verify its focal point and competent authority and submit details to SPREP. The focal point will be the link between SPREP and Vanuatu regarding issues with hazardous waste and the Waigani Convention.

Vanuatu needs to utilize the resources available at SPREP, especially requesting for national trainings and workshops concerning the Waigani Convention and hazardous wastes.

Trainings can be conducted only if Vanuatu submits an official request to SPREP.

Vanuatu needs to utilize funding opportunities available to them at the bilateral and global levels, with assistance from the Secretariat where needed.

The minutes from the STAC 3 meeting are attached; and can also be downloaded from the SPREP website at: <http://www.sprep.org/legal/Waiganimeetings.htm>

6.4.2 Second Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Pacific Regional Centre (SCPRC) for Training and Technology Transfer for the Joint Implementation of the Basel and the Waigani Conventions in the South Pacific Region July 2010

The SCPRC 2 meeting followed the STAC 3 meeting. The main agenda of discussion was the proposal by Tsinghua University (China) to become the coordinating centre for the Asia-Pacific Region. A decision will be made at the COP 5 meeting in Madang (PNG) later this year. The work programme for 2011-2012 is almost similar to that from the STAC 2 meeting but with changes to the budgets.

The minutes from the SCPRC 2 Meeting are attached; but can also be downloaded from the SPREP website at: <http://www.sprep.org/legal/steeringcommittee.htm>

6.4.2.1 Way Forward for SCPRC 2

Submit official requests to SPREP for national trainings and workshops. The Vanuatu Government can also request consultants to provide assistance.

6.4.3 Waste Reduction Training, Japan, November –December 2010

5.4.3.1 Training Summary

The program objective was for the participants to draw up a promotion plan of waste management with 3Rs (Reuse, Reduce and Recycle) and put it into practical use in their duties and operations. The training was the second phase of a three (3) year training course. One very vital tool acquired during the training was understanding the process of 'Project Cycle Management' (PCM). The PCM was developed by the Japanese for drawing up project proposals and is commonly used by various international organizations.

The training included field visits to:

- Incineration plants
- Disposal site (i.e. landfill)
- Plastic recycling facilities
- Paper recycling facilities
- Metal recycling facilities

Lectures were conducted by various personal from various organizations and an action plan was developed at the end of the training and will be implemented with the technical assistance from JICA later in 2011.

6.4.3.2 Way Forward for Waste management and Pollution Control

The DEPC team members need to review the action plan and make changes where necessary before implementing the action plan. JICA is expected to review the progress of the action plan by mid-March 2011.

6.5 Challenges

The challenge for the DEPC throughout 2010 is undertaking the tasks and responsibilities assigned for the DEPC regarding waste management and pollution control. There has been complaints received by the DEPC regarding improper waste disposal and pollution but the DEPC can only provide recommendations to the polluter on how to address the issue and not cause a nuisance to the people. The DEPC at this stage can only undertake assessments and provide recommendations but has no power to neither issue an abatement notice nor stop work notice yet as there is no law that gives mandate to the DEPC to issue such notices. The main services which the DEPC has been providing to the people regarding waste management and pollution control are providing information, awareness and assisting people address specific issue of waste management and pollution control; in reality the DEPC can only talk and not do work i.e. regarding waste management and pollution control.

6.6 Recommendations

The way forward for the DEPC in tackling the waste and pollution issue is ensuring that the tasks and responsibilities are carried out without any obstacle. Also the DEPC must work closely with non-government organizations, private sector, and other government departments such as Public Health department, Vanuatu Quarantine and Inspection Services (VQIS) and Municipal Councils. The following activities are the main tasks which the DEPC is planning on undertaking for waste management and pollution control:

- The National Solid Waste Management Strategy (NSWMS) must be endorsed.
- The Waste Operations and Services (WOS) Bill should be approved and tabled at the first Parliament session this year.
- Waste and Litter Control Regulation should be approved.
- Pollution Control Regulation should be approved.
- Develop more project proposals regarding waste management and pollution control.

- Conduct more awareness workshops.
- Training opportunities for DEPC Officers regarding waste management or pollution.

DIVISION OF SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (SEPDC)

Prepared by Mr. Reedley Tari, Senior Environmental Impact Assessment Officer

7.0 Introduction

This Division of Sustainable Environmental Planning and Development Control is established within the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC) to execute and fulfil the vision and objectives of the Department and the provisions and functions of the Department as mandated for in the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act (CAP 283) (formerly called the Environmental Management and Conservation (EMC) Act No.12 of 2002).

The EPDC Section deals with the management of the Environment via planning mechanisms, processes, systems, frameworks and strategies to sustainably protect the environment for the benefits of present and future generation of Vanuatu. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a principle mechanism utilized in this section to help maintain environmental quality in Vanuatu.

EIA is a process or system used to determine the effects and impact a development proposal will have on the natural environment and the social/custom system and to put into place management measures to minimize possible impacts and to make reports, planning documents and recommendations that set conditions that the development has to follow to stop negative effects on the environment.

It is a legal requirement under the EPC Act that all projects, proposals or development activities that impact or are likely to impact on the environment of Vanuatu must comply with the provisions of undertaking an EIA.

Within this division of the Department, there are currently 2 permanent staffs namely the EIA Officer and the Compliance Officer whose overall responsibilities are for the coordination and implementation of the EIA processes and procedures and the enforcement of environment policies, and the EPC Act, including other related national environmental pieces of legislations to ensure an ecological sustainable development in Vanuatu.

There is also an Extension Officer, the Sanma Environment Extension Officer based in Sanma Provincial Government, Luganville, Santo to execute the functions of the Department and is responsible in particular to carry out the programs under this division to ensure the provisions of EIA are implemented and enforced in the northern region of the country.

Overall, this Division oversees and administers the following important areas of responsibilities;

- ❖ The overall coordination and effective implementation of the EIA processes and procedures in the Country; and
- ❖ The overall implementation and enforcement of environment policies, and the Environmental Protection and Conservation Act (CAP 283), including other related national environmental pieces of legislations

7.1 Overall Activities Undertaken in 2010

The activities undertaken under this programme includes, but is not limited to:

- Continuous field assessment work and inspection upon request and EIA applications of development proposals that are subjected to provisions of EIA
- Production of Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) reports of development projects with recommendations
- Improvement and implementation of EIA processes and procedures
- Awareness on EIA processes and procedures with government agencies, private sectors & local authorities in Luganville, Santo and also a community-based awareness on Tanna
- Awareness on EIA processes and procedures through talkback shows on radio
- Appraisals of EIA reports and recommendations referred to the Minister responsible for Environment for decision
- Ongoing & effective compliance and monitoring work on development projects to enforce EPC Act and inspection on ongoing development activities under construction and those in full operation to check for compliance of environmental terms and conditions
- Continuous updating and maintaining of the Environment registry for the number of appraised project proposals requiring EIA, the number of PEA reports produced, number of Environmental Impact Statements received and appraised, number of EIA reports approved, those rejected, appraisals of Environmental Management and Monitoring Plans, stop work notices served by the DEPC and the registration of EIA Environmental Consultants
- Development of EIA regulations and guidelines
- Attending national, regional and international meetings, conferences, trainings and workshops
- Frequent Internal meetings with departmental staff members including the Director and occasional meetings with Ministerial staffs including the Director General and the Minister responsible for Environment
- Working very closely with other Departmental divisions such as Division of Biodiversity Conservation, Division of Protection and Division of Environment Research & Information

- Working very closely with other government departments and local authorities of each provinces on programs relating EIA
- Enforcement of other environment related policies, laws & by-laws
- Recruitment of the Sanma Environment Extension Officer based in Sanma Province, Luganville, Santo for effective service delivery in the northern region
- Assisting with the amendments of the EMC Act which is now called the EPC Act (CAP 283) and
- Dealing with complaints lodged relating EIA issues

7.2 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The sections that follows below reveals the outcomes and outputs for which this division is responsible to put forward;

7.2.1 Number of Preliminary EA & EIA Reports produced

EIA Applications: The total number of appraised EIA applications received this year 2010 about 50 for different development project proposals on Foreshore Developments, Tourism Projects, Quarries/Excavations, Commercial Infrastructure Constructions, Subdivisions and so on.

PEA Reports: Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) in 2010 has been undertaken and PEA reports produced by various relevant authorities/agencies including Government Departments, Municipal and Provincial Councils. However most of the PEAs have been undertaken by DEPC. There are about 38 PEA reports produced in 2010 compared to that produced in 2009 about 31 PEA reports.

NB: Under the amendments of the Environment Act, PEAs will now only be undertaken by the Department of Environmental Protection & Conservation and not by any other Government departments, Municipal or Provincial Council.

EIA Reports: In 2010, DEPC has received and reviewed about 12 EIA reports. Compare with 2009, DEPC has received and appraised about 9 EIA reports.

EIA Reports Approved by Minister: About 10 EIA reports approved by the Minister responsible for Environment in 2010. Some EIA reports have been deferred for additional information by the Minister concerned.

EIA Applications Rejected: No EIA applications rejected by the Department or the Ministry of Environment in 2010

Registered EIA Consultants: There are 4 approved and certified EIA consultants to do EIA consultancy work in the country namely, BECON-Bani Environmental Consultants (registered in 2007), Downer-EDI Works Vanuatu (registered in 2010), MBN-Consulting Engineers (registered 2010) and Environment Frontier Consultancy Services (registered 2010).

7.3 Development of EIA guidelines

The following EIA materials have been developed as guidelines in improving the EIA processes and procedures for effective implementation includes;

- The EIA application form
- The Environmental Management & Monitoring Plan template
- The EIA Consultants registration form and
- The EIA rehabilitation guideline

More EIA guidelines and materials will be developed in the future to enhance effectiveness in the implementation of the EIA processes and procedures.

7.4 New EIA Regulation Developments and Achievements

With the assistance of an AYAD Ambassador, a new EIA regulation has been drafted and is in the final stage to be processed for approval.

The new EIA regulation will enhance enforcement of the EPC Act and gives more power to the Department to effectively execute its functions.

7.5 In-country EIA Training & Awareness

There was no In-country EIA training conducted in 2010 and little awareness is done.

On the 8th of April 2010, the Director & the EIA Officer have conducted a stakeholder's consultation meeting with private sectors, government agencies & local authorities on the processes and procedures for EIA and the Ministerial Order for Ozone Depleting Substances in Luganville, Santo.

There was also a community-base awareness raising on the EIA processes & procedures conducted by one of the Project Staff Mr. Vatu Molisa (Marine Biologist) in six different communities/villages on the island of Tanna. It was a week awareness workshop starting on the 28 November 2010 – 4 December 2010.

This awareness activity is to enhance the knowledge of the local communities on the related EIA provisions under the EPC Act. Given Lenakel is now declared a municipal area, it will attract more developments into the area hence this early awareness is undertaken to enlighten their understandings of the EIA provisions for a sustainable development into the future.

7.6 Meetings and Conferences

The Officers have also represented the country in some regional meetings and conferences and have as well participated in national meetings and conferences not only with EIA related issues but participating in meetings relating other program of activities of the Department.

7.7 Environmental Planning, Development Control Training & Capacity Development

7.7.1 EIA in Official Development Assistance (ODA) Projects Training Workshop

EIA training has been organized and implemented by JICA on June 28th to the 23rd of July 2010 in Japan to train EIA administrative Officers in-charge of EIA screening and the Officers in-charge of public works. This Training has been very useful and productive as it helps administrators of EIA understand and enhance their efforts in EIA works. Below is a brief descriptive report of this EIA training 'The EIA in Official Development Assistant (ODA) Projects':

7.7.2 Overview of Training

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in Official Development Assistant (ODA) Projects is a training and dialogue program organized by JICA and implemented by the Overseas Environmental Cooperation Centre, Japan (OECC) based on bilateral agreement between the Government of Japan and our Government.

EIA is widely adopted and practiced in many countries in the world and is used as one of the tools for preventing negative environmental impacts in development process and promoting sustainable environmental management.

With the rapid increase in economic growth, many developing countries are facing the challenges of serious environmental problems and natural destruction, both at local and global levels. With this, the need for appropriate implementation of EIA as a tool for sustainable development, remain extremely high.

This training program is design to assist and support administrative officers in charge of EIA in developing countries by introducing various institutional systems, procedural and technical aspects and cases of EIA. Moreover, this program is anticipated to enhance the understanding on Japanese Official Development Assistant (ODA) requirements based on JICA Guidelines for environmental and social considerations.

The number of participating countries participated in this training added up to 18 countries from around the world from Africa, Middle East, Asia, Pacific Islands, and Latin America.

The participants have the opportunities in this training to enhance their understanding and knowledge on EIA for large-scale development projects (including ODA projects) through lectures, exercises, discussions and field trips.

At the end of the course, the participants have worked in groups to formulate group project plans incorporating the key issues and lessons acquired during this program.

7.7.3 Objectives of Training

This program aims to promote capacity development for:

- Administrative Officers in charge of EIA screening; to enhance their capacity to examine & review EIA reports and their competence to improve the EIA systems in their countries and;
- Administrative Officers in charge of Public Works Projects; to improve their skills and performance in conducting EIA for large-scale development projects in a more effective way in national & local government.

7.7.4 Expected Outcomes of Training

The expected outcome of this training includes:

- To be able to explain the basic concepts of EIA, necessary procedures and the differences in the EIA systems between Japan and one's country at the end of the training course. Also to be able to understand the efforts of international aid agencies for environmental considerations and to explain the requirements expected in the development projects.

- To be able to explain necessary points of the EIA examination and necessary technical methods to conduct EIA at the end of the training course.
- To be able to explain the process to conduct EIA smoothly and communication methods with residents/the public.
- To be able to suggest specific points of EIA examination, process, communication methods, items and methods of investigation/forecast/evaluation, and environmental measures, based on concrete case studies. Also, to be able to suggest the improvement of the EIA system etc. in one's own country within 6 months after the training course.
- To hold some lectures or give presentations on the outcome of the training course within 6 months after returning to his/her country and diffuse their knowledge or experiences learned from this training course

7.8 Financial Assistance for Environmental Planning & Development Control

There was no financial assistance provided externally to support this unit to implement its responsibilities and tasks. Conversely, only the recurrent budget of the Department was utilized to support works of EIA in 2010.

However, EIA fees will be applied in the process once EIA regulation is passed that will aid in the implementation of EIA provisions in the country.

7.9 Challenges

1. Budget Constraints resulting in the following outcomes and outputs not met;
 - No In-country EIA trainings and Workshops
 - Very limited compliance work in the outer islands of Vanuatu
 - No EIA awareness materials developed
2. Limited staff to effectively implement EIA processes and procedures in the various parts of the country
3. Gaps in the Environment Act that weakens enforcement of the EIA provisions

7.10 Future Outlook

With the amended Environmental Protection and Conservation Act and the Revised Organizational Chart, the following could be accomplished within the next few years:

- Increase human resources within the Division to effectively implement the EIA processes & procedures
- With the amended Environment Act, EIA fees will be introduced and collected;
- Processes will be strengthened via more EIA guidelines and awareness materials developed
- Collection of fees to facilitate the implementations of EIA provisions in the country
- Increase enforcement of EIA provisions both in urban & rural areas
- Increase human resource capacity development & trainings for Officers within this Division to enhance capacity, skills and performance

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE MONITORING

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE MONITORING PROGRAMME

Prepared by Mr. Wycliff Bakeo Junior, Compliance Officer

8.0 Overview

A substantial component of the Compliance Divisions' work is the routine monitoring of resource (EIA-development) consents. Some minor activities only require a completion inspection, while significant operations may require frequent inspections, sampling and analysis of data.

The purpose of environmental monitoring is to gather data on the performance of the operation and determine the need for improvements or additional mitigation measures in order to achieve the assessment criteria for the operation.

The assessment criteria have been established under the Development Consent, the Environmental Impact Assessment of which are provided in the various assessments (EIA or Environmental Management Plan).

However, the Environmental Management Strategy caters for any future changes in these criteria by providing a process for review.

In order to determine compliance, the Environmental Management Strategy provides for ongoing environmental training, reviews of the management plans and auditing.

In addition, the Compliance Division responds to public complaints involving matters pertaining to the environment and is responsible for pursuing the prosecution of offences against environmental laws. The Compliance division also assists the EIA division with the conducting of assessments such as Preliminary environmental Impact Assessments

8.1 Legislation

Enforcement of the 'Environmental Management & Conservation Act No 12 of 2002' since the legislation came into effect in 2003 has been somewhat lacking or poor due to gaps identified and exploited by non-compliant personnel within the legislation.

Poor compliance of environmental law has also been the result of poor coordination between inter-governmental agencies and conflict in the jurisdiction of mandated legislation.

With the aid of a legal advisor (Australian Youth Ambassador volunteer), gaps identified within the existing legislation of the "Environmental Management & Conservation Act No 12 of 2002" have been identified and the appropriate amendments have been made to strengthen enforcement provisions. These provisions include granting of powers to conduct site inspections, enter premises, collection/sampling/evidence and to pursue prosecution of offences. All new amendments have been through consultation to avoid overlapping and therefore harmonised with other existing legislation in other departments or sectors.

The 'Environmental Protection & Conservation Bill' passed in November 2010 therefore encompassed all amendments made to the Environmental Management & Conservation Act of 2002 and was later gazetted in January 2011.

Appropriate regulations have also been developed under the new amendment- 'Environmental Protection Act' to clearly outline certain provisions (EIA, Community Conservation Areas) and associated processes and to aide in pursuing prosecution of offences within these provisions.

Other relevant legislation to which enforcement would be vital:

-Ozone layer protection Layer Act (passed in parliament November 2010, gazetted January 2011).

MOU with the Department of Customs in border control to monitor the import and export of 'controlled substances' or 'Ozone depleting substances' under the Ozone layer protection Act.

-Waste Management Operations Bill (still in consultation with all relevant stakeholders to be finalised)

8.2 Environmental Compliance Monitoring Activities in 2010

Due to community awareness of environmental protection and conservation through education by all environmental organisations such as Live & Learn, Wan Smol Bag and other government agencies such as the Department of Forestry, Department of Geology

& Mines, Department of Fisheries as well as the publicity of the Department's work through the local media, it is agreed that the public now has a much better understanding of what is or is not acceptable when it comes to environmental issues.

It is quite clear that the public will no longer tolerate the adverse actions of environmental destruction. Public awareness has undoubtedly contributed to an increase in complaints directed to this division this year. At current the Compliance Division provides a reasonable response to public complaints involving matters pertaining to our environment.

With the aid of a legal advisor (Australian Youth Ambassador volunteer), Legislation drafting to strengthen enforcement in the various environmental legislation has also been one of the departments key activities.

A total of 5 Notices of 'Stop Work' have been served this year to non-compliant developers. Notably notices have been served under EIA provisions to where site-inspections have confirmed mal-practice of development or failure to follow the EIA process and procedures.

Officers of the Department issuing a 'stop wok notice' on a foreshore development



Photo source: DEPC Compliance Division

More than one of the stop work notices issued were utilised in a newspaper article to generate awareness to the public, investors and developers of the likely implications faced in neglecting and not complying with the Departments procedures, processes and environmental legislation. These articles have led to deterrence and a decrease in non-compliant developments with more concerned developers inquiring with the department before attempting any development proposal or project.

Site inspections have also been conducted on a regular basis to monitor conditions of EIA and PEA approvals with inspections around Efate Island occurring every 2 months. Site inspections of development activities have also occurred on Santo with the DEPCs Santo extension officer submitting reports of inspections conducted in Santo.

On the outer islands inspections have been conducted mainly in relation with other environmental programmes or projects such as community conservation areas (CCAs) with the aid of project funding.

Other environmental incidents requiring the department's intervention include the Percy Jean Wreckage in Lenakel, Tanna. Two joint-site visits were conducted on the 13/10/2010 and the 28/10/2010 with the Department of Ports & Harbours, Vanuatu Maritime Authorities and the Department of Fisheries to confirm leakage of oil/fuel, conduct a preliminary assessment, and to inform provincial authorities, chiefs and communities of environmental issues associated with wreckage and the process towards salvaging of the sunken ship. Samples were collected and tested by BP in Australia for fuel/oil residue and drinking water contamination. Fuel/Oil and Percy Jean salvage was successful with no significant impact on the environment. Report produced by the department was compiled with other departments' respective reports to finalise council paper for emergency salvage operations of Percy Jean.

Sampling and assessment of Percy Jean Wreckage, Lenakel, Tanna, Tafea Province



Photo source: DEPC

Under the management of Director, our dedicated staffs have worked well to keep on top of all issues regarding environmental compliance considering financial constraints to implement compliance activities.

8.3 Challenges faced in Compliance Monitoring in 2010

The granting of consent for any project imposes a number of conditions on the development and operation of the quarry. These conditions include assessment criteria covering air, water and noise emissions, environmental management planning and reporting requirements.

Compliance monitoring is undertaken by conducting on-site inspections. Compliance monitoring activities therefore rely on staffing and financial resources for travel expenses. Currently the Department's compliance monitoring activities are limited by short-staffing as well as financial constraints for travel purposes. Compliance monitoring in 2010 was therefore conducted mainly around Efate Island, where routine compliance monitoring was conducted once a month. Other ad-hoc inspections occurred in response to complaints, reports by other government agencies and complaints by the general public or concerned residents of environmental incidents.

Environmental compliance inspections of developments on the outer-islands was lacking in 2010 due to budget constraints. Inspections were conducted mainly on Santo Island with the aid of project funds (Programme of Work on Protected Areas; and Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment (PEA) inspections). However there is a need for increased financing and personnel to the Department in order for compliance monitoring to be undertaken in outer islands other than Efate and Santo Island.

Challenges to monitoring and compliance in 2011 are of the implementation of recently gazetted legislation and new regulations to be developed with fewer staff personnel.

8.4 Future Outlook for Environmental Compliance Monitoring in 2011 and Beyond

With only one existing compliance officer in Compliance Division and budgetary constraints, enforcement of legislation has been one of the many short-comings of the department. The mission statement for the Department is to enhance effective environmental service delivery. In the Compliance Division it would mean that the following are taken into consideration for immediate action:

Increase the number of staff or compliance personnel within the Compliance division.

Gazetting of authorised officers (enforcement) to enforce environmental control and environmental provisions.

Development of prosecution guidelines for prosecution of miscellaneous acts within all existing environmental legislation.

Liaise or employ an environmental lawyer to conduct all prosecution cases for non-compliance.

Integrate environmental performance into the management and operation of all companies, industries and core businesses.

8.5 Environmental Policy

It is a long-term vision that each company undertaking development work and/or each development activity that is likely to impact on the environment (e.g. quarries) to develop a company environmental policy.

At current there is no environmental policy developed for quarries or for any development or industry for that matter. All new companies whom regular activities are subject to EIA provisions (such as sand mining or foreshore developments) and ongoing or lengthy developments will develop an environmental policy for a more environmental oriented approach.

The Environmental Policy and objectives will be endorsed by the management of any company either a Company's Board of Directors & executives, landowners or resource owners and the relevant authorities (DEPC, Geology & Mines, Physical Planning Unit...etc) and therefore commit the Company to achieving its objectives of environmental excellence.

8.6 Environmental Strategy

In observing operations and development with EIA or development consents around Efate, it is common that most developments are non-compliant with some recommendations outlined in development consents. It is therefore essential that any future large scale development have an Environmental strategy to meet and fulfil conditions upon which approval was granted.

The Environmental Management Strategy provides the framework for Environmental management, limiting and mitigating the impacts of developments on the surrounding environment both in the present and the future, and outlines the methods for demonstrating compliance with the conditions of consent and relevant legislation.

The principal components of this framework:

- describes the overall environmental management system to be utilised
- Includes the individual strategies or plans (eg. covering Flora and Fauna and Habitat Protection, Air Quality, Noise, Management, Blasting Management, Water Management, Erosion, Sedimentation Control, Waste management, etc.
- provides details of Monitoring work and reporting functions in response to the various Management plans or strategies in a single, concise document.

8.7 Environmental Monitoring & Surveillance

Another step would be the introduction of environmental compliance management with assigned personnel to submit reports on environmental compliance and monitoring of the development activities to the compliance division (once every quarter or monthly as appropriate). The compliance division and relevant government authorities will then inspect the sites with briefings from the environmental compliance managers or assigned personnel to inform the inspection team of the compliance of the development to the environmental measures & recommendations made by the Department of Environmental Protection & Conservation and other relevant authorities.

One company in particular undertaking the Undine Bay Marina has its own monitoring program with its respective environmental manager submitting quarterly reports to the Compliance Division for review and comment. This practice works well for the Department requiring only on-site inspections on average of once a month to verify and cross-check environmental compliance reports.

However once the compliance division has increased its personnel, develop proper, standard monitoring guidelines and surveillance programs then sound development control can be managed in Vanuatu.

DIVISION OF SCIENTIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH & INFORMATION

By Trinison Tari, Senior Environmental Education & Information Officer

9.0 Introduction

According to the revised structure of the Department of Environmental Protection and Conservation (DEPC), the Division of Environmental Research and Information is one of the important divisions of the Department. This Division deals mainly with the research activities of the Department, and make the information available to the government, educational institutions, local communities and the general public.

9.1 Scientific Environmental Research

One component under this Division is the Scientific Environmental Research. Since the establishment of the Environment Unit in 1986 until present (2010), there was very little scientific environmental research undertaken by the Department. This was due to mainly very limited number of staff and financial resources including lack of appropriate equipments to do field work. During this period, there was very little scientific environmental research undertaken by visiting scientists, researchers and university students, mainly on a few animal and plant species found in Vanuatu. These studies usually covered a short period of time, ranging between 1 month to 6 months only based on a few islands and locations, and therefore the findings do not necessary represent the picture of the whole country . Here are some examples of research work undertaken within the DEPC in the past years:

- The Mangroves of Vanuatu: mangrove species study undertaken in the 1990s on Malekula, Santo, Vanua-lava, Efate, Shepherd islands and Aniwa
- Contributions to the flora of Vanuatu 1998: Tsukuba Botanical Garden, National Science Museum, Japan
- Freshwater species survey 1997-1998, National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP) project – based on the islands of Santo, Tanna, Gaua, Maewo, Malekula, Epi, Ambae, Pentecost and Maewo
- Biodiversity survey on certain species during the NBSAP project (1997-1998) such as butterflies, lizards, bats and birds
- Freshwater species detail survey 2006-2010: Friends of Natural History Museum, Paris
- Mount Tabwemasana (Santo) floral survey 2002: National Science Museum, Japan
- Santo Expedition 2006 (marine and terrestrial survey) by French Scientists
- Invasive Species (marine and terrestrial) Survey: Santo Expedition 2006 by French Scientists
- Biodiversity assessment at a site in Wunpuku, N.W. Santo, 2009
- Biodiversity assessment at a site in Penoru, N.W. Santo, 2010
- Biodiversity assessment in Tasmate, West Coast Santo, 2010
- Biodiversity assessment at a site in Epau, Efate, 2010
- Monitoring trial of chemical poisoning of the invasive big leaf (meremia) at Vatthe Conservation Area, Santo, 2010.

During the period of 1986 to present, there was almost no scientifically environmental research carried out by the DEPC in the areas of climate change and sea-level rise, ozone layer, air and water pollution, oil spill effects, municipal waste disposal, chemical and hazardous waste, invasive species, bio-safety issues, coral reef ecosystem, coastal ecosystem, and many marine and terrestrial species.

However, despite the above comments and during the same period as mentioned above, the only two areas which have received quite a thorough scientific study on, are bird and freshwater species. This is because visiting scientists came as a team for each of the bird and freshwater species study areas, spending more time visiting most of the islands to undertake their studies in a more detail approach using appropriate equipments. As a result there is adequate information available on bird and freshwater species in Vanuatu at the moment.

It is also important to mention that other government departments dealing with natural resource management such as Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries have undertaken some research work in the past particularly on some of our terrestrial and marine species. Some research work on certain species have been thoroughly carried out and the reports are available within these departments. Some examples are: root crops (such as taro, yam and kumala); timber species (such as mahogany, white wood, kauri and sandalwood); and some marine species (such as reef fishes, sea cucumber, coconut crab, trochus, green snail and aquarium species).

Because of the absence of detail scientific environmental research in Vanuatu, the DEPC creates a division of scientific environmental research within the department to coordinate all research work in Vanuatu. This will avoid duplication, inconsistencies, crooked dealings and by-passing the formal system, and will expand on those areas which very little research have

been undertaken on them. This division is planning to recruit more technical staff in the future, and liaise more with technical experts and funding agencies to assist and expand in undertaking research work in the country.

9.2 Environmental Information Production and Disseminations

The other component of this division is production and dissemination of environmental information. Since 1990s until present, much of the activities of this department (formerly known as Environment Unit) have been centered around education and awareness both in the urban and rural areas. The education and awareness programme covered a range of important environmental issues such as climate change and sea-level rise, pollution, waste disposal, ozone layer, chemicals and hazardous wastes, biodiversity, land degradation, marine and terrestrial species, integrated coastal management, environment legislations and many more. The programme was carried out in three components. Firstly, by using the environmental information collected from field research and community awareness workshops and consultations, this division produces environmental education and awareness materials and disseminate them in the form of brochures, leaflets, posters, booklets and reports. Secondly, the environmental information is passed through other media outlets such radio, television and newspapers. Thirdly, environmental information is passed through community workshops, meetings, which includes visiting and talking to schools and village communities mainly on Efate and Santo, with a few opportunities on other islands such as Malekula, Tanna, Gaua, Pentecost and Ambae. However, this programme has not covered the whole country, and is quite difficult to do so because of the isolation of our islands and the high costs to travel including a very tight budget normally faced by the Department.

Some of the environmental information resources produced in the past includes: coral reef poster, bird poster, water resource poster, forest poster, mangrove poster, invasive species poster, Endangered species poster, waste management poster; booklet on a simplified version of the 'Environmental Management and Conservation Act No.12 of 2002; booklet on endangered species of Vanuatu plants and animals.

In 2010, nothing much have happened in regards to resource material production, mainly due to lack of specific fund for such an activity. However, a waste management booklet was produced and circulated widely in 2010 especially among the schools in Port Vila and Luganville.

It is hoped that more resource materials will be produced by this division in 2011, and awareness raising activities will be increased once funding for this activity is made available through submission of proposal to potential aid donors.

A National Environment Week (NEW) was organized by the DEPC coordinated (under this division) which was celebrated from 3-5 June 2010 with the local theme being '3,720 animals and plants, 83 islands, 1 country, 1 future'. The theme relates to the World Environment Day (WED) theme ' Many species. One Planet. One Future', and also the celebration of activities marked the International Year of Biodiversity. The local theme highlights Vanuatu's biodiversity with the number of plant and animal species currently available in the country. The three days of celebration includes activities such as a parade across the street of Port Vila with banners highlighting important messages about the protection of biodiversity and the environment, an exhibition by various government departments and NGOs, a clean up campaign within Port Vila town area and school artwork and essay competitions. The three days of celebration was a very successful event. The NEW is annual event by the DEPC and is usually celebrated with a specific local theme related to the WED theme.

A national workshop on improved information management and utilization was organised by SPREP in collaboration with the DEPC (Education and Information Division), which was conducted in Port Vila from 20-21st October 2010. About fifteen participants representing government departments, NGOs and schools participated in this workshop. There is a wealth of environmental information already posted into the SPREPs information website. The workshop trained participants how to explore or access these environmental data and information online from information sources available nationally and regionally via local information centres and via SPREP. The workshop also discussed the national priorities, issues, challenges and opportunities for managing information in Vanuatu, including the best practices in information management. Participants learned a lot from this workshop, and the school representatives expressed that the use of accessing information from the different information sources, such as via SPREP's website, will be very useful to the students to assist them in their studies. Government representatives and NGOs also indicated the usefulness of the system.

This division (Education and Information) assisted the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) project based at the Lands Department, to conduct the Project's Planning and Awareness Raising Workshop from 6-8th December 2010 at Lagatava village, North Pentecost. Lagatava village is the project's demonstration site. Government departments represented at the workshop includes Forestry, Agriculture, Livestock, National Planning Office, Lands and DEPC. About a total of 30 participants attended the workshop, mainly people from neighboring villages. The workshop went well which government representatives had to talk about the different programmes and activities undertaken within their departments that help address land degradation issues. Forestry conducted practical sessions by learning participants how to set up a good nursery and plant the seedlings of timber species such as Mahogany and white wood, including coffee seedlings. Agriculture also conducted practical trainings on how to marry two taro flowers to produce new seeds, which you can then plant and come up with new taro varieties. The participants expressed that they have learned a lot of information from the workshop and would start their own nurseries at their communities and plant out the timber species seedlings to help address land degradation issues. They were also interested in the hybrid varieties of taro, kumala and yam.

As part of the GEF funded Sarakata Water Catchment Project based with the Department of Water Resources, this division (Education and Information) assisted the project in conducting the Sarakata Water Catchment Community Environment Awareness Workshop at Fanafo village, Santo, from 23-25th August 2010. This community workshop allowed for six different communities representatives located around the Sarakata river. The workshop aimed at raising awareness amongst these six communities to manage and protect the Sarakata river catchment which is the main water source for the population of Luganville town. The workshop also aimed at encouraging these communities to identify any area within their forest that they can establish as community conservation areas (CCA) which can also help towards the protection of the Sarakata river catchment. All communities found the workshop interesting and informative and two communities (Nabauk and Butmas) indicated at the workshop their interest to protect and establish some parts of their forests as CCAs. There will be more follow-up awareness raising meetings and workshops with these six communities in 2011.

9.3 Meetings and Conferences

9.3.1 National Conferences and Meetings

I had attended numerous national meetings in 2010, mainly in Port Vila covering areas such as climate change and sea-level rise, forestry, fisheries, integrated coastal management, Sustainable Land Management (SLM) project, water resource, biodiversity, land issues, waste management and pollution, community environment awareness raising etc..

9.3.2 Regional Conferences and Meetings

9.3.2.1 Regional Integrated Environment Assessment (IEA) Training & Pacific Environment and Climate Change Outlook report Planning Workshop, 15-19th February 2010, Tanoa Hotel, Nadi, Fiji

This meeting was organized by UNEP in collaboration with SPREP. It provides a regional training on the UNEP Global Environment Outlook (GEO) IEA methodologies for the State of the Environment (SoE) reviews and to plan in detail the activities and responsibilities for producing the next regional State of the Environment Review or the Pacific Environment and Climate Change Outlook Report using a customized form of the UNEP GEO IEA process. Training modules provided covering the GEO Approach to IEA. Currently, there is no specific funds available with SPREP to implement the IEA in the countries, but SPREP will seek for funding opportunities. Vanuatu can hold its first IEA National workshop once funding is made available.

9.3.2.2 Pacific Regional Energy Policy Meeting, 11-13th May 2010, Noumea, New Caledonia

This regional meeting was held for member countries to meet and review the existing 'Pacific Islands Energy Policy (PIEP 2004)'. A number of key areas highlighted and discussed during the meeting and agreed to be in the revised report were: i) leadership, governance, coordination and partnerships; ii) energy planning, policy and regulatory frameworks; iii) energy production and supply a) petroleum and alternative liquid fuels b) renewable energy; iv) energy conversion (electric power); v) end-use energy consumption a) transport energy use b) energy efficiency and conservation; vi) energy data and information; vii) financing, monitoring and evaluation. The report has been finalized after this meeting, with the title 'Framework for Action on Energy Security in the Pacific'.

The process was coordinated by SPC with oversight and advice from the Pacific Islands Energy Advisory Group. The framework is designed to provide guidance to PICTs to enhance their national efforts to achieve energy security and, in line with the principles of the Pacific Plan, and to clarify how regional services can help countries develop and implement their national plans.

9.3.2.3 Meeting on the Development of the 2011-2015 SPREP's Strategic Plan, 24-25th May 2010, Nadi, Fiji

SPREP member countries met together in Nadi from 24-25th May 2010 to discuss and finalise the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. The meeting reviewed the old SPREP's Strategic Plan and came up with a revised plan for 2011-2015 with the following priority areas in the order of importance: 1) Climate change and sea level rise; 2) Research and Information; 3) Energy security; 4) Biodiversity and Conservation; and 5) Waste management and pollution prevention. Member countries discussed around many issues and finally came up with five priority areas as the 2011-2015 strategic plan. They also felt that SPREP as a regional environmental organization should begin to include scientific research and technology in its future strategic plan, and to move away from its traditional focus on biodiversity and conservation.

9.3.2.4 Roundtable meeting on Nature and Conservation in the South Pacific, 5-9th July 2010, Apia, Samoa

Countries in the region met at the above 13th annual meeting and discussed around important issues affecting nature conservation in the Pacific region. Important areas covered in the discussions include: the current GEF Programme of Work on Protected Areas (POWPA) project implemented in the region, the Coral Triangle Initiative which is the process to begin in some countries; Pacific

Invasive Species Partnership; Marine Sector; Protected Areas; and Resource Environment Economics Initiative. The meeting allowed the participants to identify the achievements made in the past years, the constraints and options. It was emphasized in the meeting that more effort should be done by the countries to promote the work on nature and conservation in the region. A report on this meeting has been produced and circulated through email among member countries.

9.3.2.5 Regional Lands Consultation Meeting, 13-15th July 2010, Apia, Samoa

This meeting brought together participants in the region to discuss around land issues that affect countries in the region. The meeting was organized and funded by FAO, aimed at enhancing tenure systems and policies for the use of land and other natural resources, which are crucial factors that underpin food security, a fact recognized by the Pacific Food Summit Meeting in Vanuatu in 2010. FAO and other development partners are working together with countries to prepare Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance that will provide practical guidance to states, civil society, private sector, donors and development specialists on the responsible governance of tenure. By setting out principles and internationally accepted standards for responsible practices, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure and Land and other natural resources will provide a framework and point of reference that stakeholders can use when developing their own policies and actions. A draft report on the Voluntary Guidelines was produced in 2010 and will be finalized and endorsed in 2011.

9.4 International Conferences and Meetings

9.4.1 CITES COP 15: 13-25th March 2010, Doha, Qatar

The fifteen Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), known as COP 15, was held in Doha, Qatar from 13-25th March 2010. The DEPC and Department of Fisheries represented Vanuatu at this meeting. CITES deals with international trade of endangered species of wild fauna and flora. CITES has the list of endangered species in three appendices: Appendix I (trade in the species is restricted); Appendix II (trade in the species requires proper certification); Appendix III has the list of species that are controlled or regulated by each member country

Vanuatu signed CITES in 1989. Currently the DEPC is the CITES management authority in Vanuatu while the Fisheries Department is the Scientific Authority. During the COP 15, there were 42 proposals tabled by member countries to be included in the CITES list. A few of the proposals were approved at the meeting while most of them were rejected. There were also few proposals on marine species tabled at the meeting which includes: Scalloped Hammershead shark (*Sphyrna lewini*); Oceanic Whitetip Shark (*Carcharhinus longimanus*); Porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*); Spiny Dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*); Northern Blue-finned tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*); and Red Coral (*Corallium* spp and *paracorallium* spp). None of these was approved at the meeting except the Spiny Dogfish. Vanuatu's position during the COP15 was that we opposed the above six proposals based on the Fisheries Department's advise. The decision was mainly based on economic, scientific and political reasons. It is best to have two or more country representatives in the future for the COP meetings so that our participants can attend to all the side events that are happening at the same time along with the COP meeting.

9.4.2 Water Crisis and Choices Meeting, 11-15th October 2010, ADA Headquarters, Manila, Philippines

This meeting was held specifically for the Asia and Pacific regions and was funded by ADB and Partners. The meeting brought together participants from Asia and Pacific region and discussed around issues affecting the usage and management of our water. There were also lectures and presentations that have included topics like: Cites and water – solutions for efficiency; Water in food – productivity gains; Clean water – a question of quality; Basin level management – how can integrated water resource management (IWRM) deliver solutions?; Opportunities and solutions to address water and wastewater challenges in Asia; partnerships in water – leveraging expertise and resources; science, water and society; water scarcity; business in water; science in water; Governance in water; Gender, water and utilities, etc.. There were a lot of discussions after each presentation. ADB also had the opportunity to hold a meeting with the Pacific delegation to discuss their funding opportunities in the area of water resource development and management in the Pacific region.

9.4.3 MOP 22 (Montreal Protocol), 8-12th November 2010, Bangkok, Thailand

The Twenty-Second Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (MOP 22) was a great opportunity for all member countries of the Montreal Protocol to meet and discuss around issues relating to the ozone depleting substances (ODS). It was mentioned during the meeting that the Montreal Protocol is working and it is by far the most successful UN convention implemented in the world today. Most member countries have put much efforts in reducing their green house gas emissions into the atmosphere, by banning the use of those ozone depleting substances identified by the Montreal Protocol. Scientists have the evidence that the ozone hole created in the Southern Hemisphere in the past years have been reduced in size, due to the efforts in the

reduction of green house emissions by many countries. Few proposals were put forward on new substances to be included in the ODS list of which some were approved at the meeting while a few were rejected. The MOP meeting is held every two years. Vanuatu is a party to the Montreal Protocol and is obliged to implement the Montreal Protocol at the national level. In 2010 an ozone unit was established within the DEC to coordinate ozone activities in Vanuatu. A new national Ozone Layer Protection Bill was passed in Parliament in 2010, and it will be gazettted in 2011.

9.5 Training and Capacity Building

In 2010, the Division of the Environmental Research and Information did not receive any specific training or capacity building programmes within this division, except the workshop on improved information management and utilization conducted by SPREP in Port Vila from 20-21st October 2010.

Of course there were very few trainings undertaken in other divisions of the DEPC like: reef checks, biodiversity assessment, SOPAC's training in undertaking vulnerability study and collection of data on buildings in Port Vila, Luganville and Tanna, that might be affected by hurricanes and earthquakes in the future. It is hoped that more opportunities in training and capacity building programmes will be made available in 2011.

9.6 Financial Assistance for Environmental Research and Information

In 2010, there was no financial assistance received from donor agencies nor from the recurrent budget of the DEPC for implementing the division's activities due to the department's very tight budget. There was some changes in staffing within the DEC as well which affected the work programme and activities under this division. It is hope that funds can be made available in 2011 through submission of proposals to potential donor agencies, so that activities under this division can be implemented, expanded and improved.

9.7 Challenges faced in implementing Environmental Research and Information in Vanuatu

There are several challenges faced in the implementation of activities under this division. Firstly, the very tight budget of the DEPC do not allow for specific fund allocated towards the implementation of activities under this division such as production of awareness materials (e.g poster). Secondly, lack of someone within this department or division with specific computer skills in using the most latest publishing programmes to develop resource materials. Thirdly, the isolation of the islands make it very costly to travel to the islands to conduct environmental awareness meetings, research work and other activities; Fourthly, lack of specific research officers to coordinate research activities in Vanuatu; Fifthly, lack of office space to accommodate everyone within this division, including the DEPC's library; Sixthly, lack of specific national legislation to control and regulate research work in Vanuatu; and finally, lack of coordination between the relevant government departments to control environmental research undertaken in Vanuatu.

10.0 Future Outlook

Over the last 12 months there has been a lot that the Department of Environmental Protection & Conservation (DEPC) has planned to do and accomplished while at the same time, there has been a lot that it could not do due to many circumstances. Nonetheless the future outlook is a positive one. The following highlights the positive outlook:

- *The main strength that the DEPC has is a major review of the EPC Act in 2010, which was also passed; as it paves the way for revenue generation as well as more control on developments, ozone, research, species conservation and pollution prevention*
- *There has been more recruitments done in 2010 to increase the workforce at the Department*
- *There has been a review of the Organization Structure for PSC Consideration in 2011 with revised job descriptions and the possibility of establishing 5 key distinction Divisions; and*
- *There is more collaboration between agencies and non government organizations (NGOs) especially those dealing with developments such as Physical Planning, Mining, Forestry, Fisheries, and local authorities and conservation NGO's such as Live & Learn, Wan Smol Bag Theatre, and VANGO.*

In short to summarize the work undertaken by the team members of the DEPC, there is a good team spirit and there is certainly areas of work in the various programmes that will need to improve. Otherwise 2010 has been a great year with the details in this report.