

To the Division of the Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community ('SPC') Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC) notes the request for contributions to the Secretary General's Report on oceans and the law of the sea pursuant to General Assembly Resolution A/67/L.21.

We are pleased to offer below a note summarising the capacity-building initiatives and assistance we offer to the Pacific Islands aimed to assist these developing States to realize the benefits of sustainable and the effective development of marine mineral resources.

Please do not hesitate to let us know should further assistance or information from us be required.

Yours faithfully

Professor Michael Petterson

Director, SPC (SOPAC Division)

Pacific Deep Sea Minerals Project

Very few countries world-wide have policy and law in place to regulate deep sea mineral development. Recognising the particular commercial interest in seabed minerals, and related capacity gaps, in the Pacific Islands, a 4-year EDF 10 EU-funded Deep Sea Minerals ('DSM') Project based within the SOPAC Division the SPC was launched in 2011. The DSM Project provides technical advice and assistance to 15 Pacific States to develop national policy, law, and fiscal regimes, and to build technical capacity in-country, for their engagement seabed mining activities both within national jurisdiction, and beyond. It aims for responsible governance of seabed mineral developments across the region in accordance with international law, with particular attention to the protection of the marine environment, and securing reasonable and equitable arrangements for Pacific islands' people for the development of their deep sea mineral resources.

The DSM Project works regionally and bilaterally, and is implemented in-country via national focal points and multi-stakeholder committees. Activities include: the publication of a Regional Legislative and Regulatory Framework for DSM Exploration and Exploitation, a legal internship programme, a series of technical training workshops for government officials and civil society, the provision of legal drafting assistance and model regulatory law and policy documents, development of easy-to-read information brochures on a variety of topics related to seabed mineral developments, and funding for on-vessel or other capacity-building placements for Pacific Island nationals. More information about the DSM Project is available here: www.sopac.org/dsm.

Pacific Maritime Boundaries Programme

The Ocean & Islands Programme of the SPC, SOPAC Division also implements the Pacific Islands Regional Maritime Boundaries Programme ('MBP') which provides Pacific Island States with ongoing capacity building, legal and technical support, and training for maritime boundary mapping, delimitation and declaration solutions, and extended Continental Shelf claims. The MBP coordinates a consortium of international partners (Geoscience Australia, UNEP GRID Shelf Programme, Commonwealth Secretariat, Australian Attorney General's Office and the Forum Fisheries Agency) who combine resources and expert capacity to work in 14 Pacific Islands Countries delivering technical and legal assistance.

In 2012, following intensive and sustained efforts by the MBP and partners in building capacity within 14 Pacific Islands Countries.:

- the total extended continental shelf area under claim by Pacific Islands Countries stood at approximately 2 million square kilometres; and
- 7 bilateral treaties and 1 trilateral treaty were signed by Pacific Island Leaders bringing legal and geospatial certainty to these previously undefined boundaries.

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