



## NATIONAL OZONE AWARENESS DAY



Your cooperation is necessary to improve our Monthly News letter, so please give us information about coming events and projects.

The Ministry and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) commemorated on the 28th February 2008 the National Ozone Awareness Day. The theme for the 2008 occasion is "Total Phase out of Ozone Depleting Substances". A series of displays regarding ozone depleting substances and from the different sections of the ministry were on show. This provided an opportunity for the public to learn more about these important concerns as ozone being one of the most important environmental issue faced by Samoa.

The guests were welcomed by the Ministry's Chief Executive Officer, Tu'u'u Dr. Ieti Taule'alo, followed by the encouraging words and opening prayer from Rev. Talalelei Tuafafo of the Congregational Christian Church at Mulinuu.

The key note address was conveyed by the Hon. Tapuai Sepulona Moananu, Associate Minister MNRE, highlighting the obligations of Samoa as a signatory of the Montreal Protocol as well as acknowledging the assistance provided by the United Nations Environment Program to the Government of Samoa to undertake its capacity building programs and monitoring of Ozone Depleting Substances importation.



Samoa Primary School students.

A consultation seminar was also held and was well attended by its key stakeholders, public and the ministry's sections which provided valuable input into its "Protection Ozone Layer Regulations 2006" especially of its licensing system. The participation of key stakeholders was well recognised with their input and comments. Samoa Primary School was commendably acknowledged with their attendance and commentary pinpointing on the issue of understanding the various gases and validating the strength of the Regulations in place to enforce the licensing system.

This seminar as well targeted its national stakeholders of refrigeration and air conditioning technicians, with the main aim to improve import control mechanisms, trade monitoring by custom

officers and training of refrigeration servicing technicians to achieve the total phase out of ozone depleting substances.



At the Opening Ceremony....

Presentations by the Samoan Refrigeration Association and National Ozone Unit discussed issues ranged from defining ozone depletion to action taken by the country to meet Samoa's obligations to the Montreal Protocol. The Association also highlighted their role as technicians in the implementation of the licensing system.

The Ministry obtained a positive outcome from the seminar in that it was able to draw the attention of the public to more detailed issues such as technical matters in order for them to be aware and feel safe with using machineries that has ozone depleting substances. It was also an excellent opportunity for the public to ask their concerns relating to its technical area.



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Notices

## "GEF SERVICES" - a new MNRE Division

"MNRE is in an excellent position to assist Samoa attain sustainability within the foreseeable future, taking advice from SPREP, our own SDS, other Ministries pushing Samoa towards sustainability, PIFS with its Pacific Plan, SOPAC and many other regional intergovernmental organizations.

With GEF's assistance, Samoa can now call-on a wider selection of GEF Implementing Agencies (IAs) to help us design and implement our 10 key projects expected to be funded by GEF over the next 5-10 years. IAs like UNDP, FAO, UNEP, ADB, World Bank and others are all now focusing on a new programme called the Pacific Alliance of Sustainability (PAS).

We'll all learn more about GEF-PAS or G-PAS over the next few months as the GEF Country Support Programme helps steer all sustainability stakeholders and partners 'in the same direction'.

Remember the Samoan proverb, something about 'all of us rowing our fautasi in the same direction'? Well, it's no different here on the G-PAS Programme. We need all players on the rugby field at once, all scoring tries, and no one sent off to the 'sin-bin' for spoiling the rules. Only difference is, we want all players, on both sides, kicking in only one direction. Guess who then the winners are!!



"Papapapaipaitai Falls flooding" as the complaints come flooding into the GEF Services Office - biodiversity eroding, urban areas flooding, pollution of Vaiusu Bay, loss of mangroves, fish stocks plummeting, human population expanding, climate change impacts, climate health concerns, loss of native forests, soil erosion, water catchments still degrading, .....you wonder why the kids are still smiling?"

Samoa has submitted its Country Priorities to G-PAS for consideration, approximately \$USD10million in total worth of projects, some national projects, some Multi-Country Projects, and some even Regional Projects. After all, this is a Pacific Alliance of Sustainability, and all Pacific cultures and Island Countries are expected to work together for the common good, not only regionally, but globally.

Next month (March) we'll hear exactly which projects were successful in getting funded and the amounts of funding expected.

Then, some detailed Project Design Documents will need to be prepared along with our selected IAs.

This is a new era for the Pacific. G-PAS may provide just the right formula to enable all PICs to assist each other attain sustainable livelihoods for all Pacific Islanders. However, at present, the Pacific is losing its sustainability skills overall, especially when you include some of those global impacts on our environment, societies and cultures.

My personal view is that "The palagi will get you" with his global climate change impacts, and his toxic chemicals now circulating the globe and entrenching themselves in our Pacific food-chains and stratospheres. And if that's not enough, the palagi will buy all your natural resources if you are willing to export all your future 'livelihoods'.

So, Samoa may soon have to think outside the box, calling on its Pacific brothers and sisters to help collectively repair this Planet, as an alliance (hence the "A" in PAS). To fully understand what this really means, [www.mnre.gov.ws](http://www.mnre.gov.ws) has hosted the latest G-PAS Program Framework and G-PAS Communications Annex, both well worth reading.

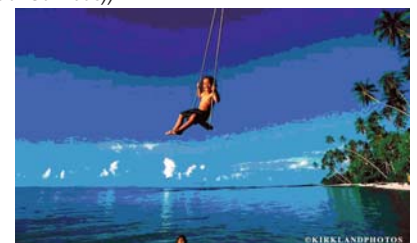
And finally, we take this opportunity to thank the GEF-PAS for approving \$USD32,000 to outreach the G-PAS messages to all stakeholders and partners. If you want to learn more, get involved, join the 'Alliance' or assist in any way possible, please contact the GEF Operational Focal Point for Samoa, Tuuu leti Taulealo, the CEO, MNRE on 22481, or contact the GEF Services Office, CEO's Office, Level 3 DBS Building on 22481, ext 13 or email Dr. Steve Brown, [steve.brown@mnre.gov.ws](mailto:steve.brown@mnre.gov.ws).

And to all those who have already received GEF funding and/or assisted in filling-out all the proposal forms, we are sure that you now realize the urgency in which we need to act. Samoa needs to build its capacity very fast, we need more highly trained technicians and, most of all, we need full cooperation within Parliament, between Ministries and amongst all stakeholders and partners in the GEF-PAS initiatives.

Good luck with all your efforts during 2008. But, just a word of caution: there are obstacles being recognized, unnecessary barriers to attaining sustainable development within Samoa and throughout the world. Many of these obstacles are based on the 7 ugly sins and we all know what they are. So, let's somehow, add a little spirituality to our lives, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Try it, it's not that easy."

*((by: Dr. Steve Brown (ACEO-Gef Services))*

"Checking on the Sea Level Rise" - Can G-PAS help combat climate change?





# Improving the value and marketability of coconut wood



Given the escalating shortage in supply of wooden flooring products for strong global markets, especially in the USA & Europe, the development of sustainable coco-wood processing industries for flooring products has great potential to utilise old palms, which are otherwise an agricultural waste product, to generate employment, export income & domestic products for Pacific Island nations.

There are 585,000 ha of coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*) planted throughout the Pacific Islands & approximately half of these are far past their optimum age for growing coconuts. The Food & Agricultural Organization of the United Nations estimates that more than one million old, unproductive palms per annum could be harvested from the region over the next 20 years & beyond.

A medium sized flooring factory is expected to process around 5000 coconut palms per year, yielding a gross wholesale value of almost \$1M for the Pacific Community. This revenue would be split along the value chain from the farmer to the contractor & factory operator, through to workers employed in transport & shipping industries.

In addition to flooring products, coco-wood has potential to provide raw materials for local furniture & building markets. Further benefits would also flow to coconut growers, who would receive income from old palms to support replanting, to ensure a sustainable domestic supply of coconut & enable producers to benefit from revitalized international coconut markets for bio-fuel, food & fiber products. Currently, the cost & palm disease implications of felling old palms are real impediments to replanting. Known as the 'Tree of Life' throughout the Pacific, coconuts produced by younger palm



palms provide nutritious foods for village communities & their livestock, as well as fiber products (e.g. coir), and export income from foodstuffs & oil for natural cosmetic products.

### Specific research activities:

- Characterization of Pacific coco-wood properties relevant to high-quality flooring products (e.g. hardness, stability, variation of properties within & between stems from different growing sites).

- Prevention of aesthetic degradates caused by fungal attack during air-drying, primary processing & shipping of partially dried products. Given the high moisture content of coco-wood & the humid conditions of Pacific nations, two to three months are required to air-dry coco-wood. In the absence of timber drying infrastructure (i.e. large capacity kiln for drying coco-wood), fast processing & the development of safe, environmentally sound methods to protect coco-wood during drying is a major challenge.

- Development of product specifications & suitable processing, grading & quality control systems (e.g. sawing technologies, seasoning conditions, planning & sanding techniques, stabilization & finishing systems). For acceptance by large international flooring distributors, it is essential to develop product standard specifications, grading rules & quality control procedures, & to promulgate these widely amongst coco-wood processors.

Whilst this work is the major focus of the project, thus also considering utilization options for more than half of every coconut palm trunk, which is not of suitable quality for flooring products.

## Meteorology

### Monthly Summary of Earthquake Events in Samoa

Table 1: Summary of earthquake events for the month of February 2008

Total number of earthquake events recorded:	5
Highest magnitude event recorded	6.4
Lowest magnitude event recorded	5.0
Average magnitude of events recorded	5.7

Table 2: Summary of individual earthquake events recorded at AFI AS095 February 2008

DATE	MAG	DATE/TIME (SAMOAN TIME)	LATITUDE / LONGITUDE	DEPTH (km)	REGION
04 <sup>th</sup> Feb	6.3	06:01:30(am)	20.020°S 69.839°W	35.1	Tarapaca, Chile
"	5.9	06:56:51(pm)	3.498°S 118.117°E	44.8	Sulawesi, Indonesia
11 <sup>th</sup> Feb	5.1	05:36:58(am)	16.223°S 177.784°E	35	Fiji Islands
12 <sup>th</sup> Feb	6.4	01:50:20(am)	14.409°N 94.165°W	99.6	Oaxaca, Mexico
"	5.0	11:32:15(pm)	23.838°S 179.860°W	474.9	South of the Fiji Islands

For more information, please contact the Geophysics Section or the National Disaster Management Section of the Samoa Meteorology Division.

## SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The Medium-Sized Project funded by GEF has now commenced with the implementation of project activities. The long term goal of the project is to contribute to the mitigation of land degradation, through capacity development and mainstreaming of sustainable land management (SLM). The project focuses on capacity development through various activities ranging from trainings, awareness programmes, scientific assessments, community-based pilot projects and etc. It comprises of 4 major outcomes and 12 outputs.



National Steering Committee meeting.....

The first meeting of the National Steering Committee was held on 30 January and was well represented by stakeholders. The main purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project to members and for the SLM Project Management Unit to present the Inception Report for endorsement.

## SOUTH PACIFIC YOUNG LEADERS TRAINING ON NATURE CONSERVATION

A training offered by the Government of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to improve management and protection of natural environment was conducted in Japan ((from November 26th to December 13th 2007)). This training was attended by Mr. Iosefatu Reti, Regional Assistant Forestry Officer, Forestry Division and Ms Susau Siolo, Senior Terrestrial Conservation Officer, Division of Environment and Conservation as their field of expertise is related to the issues targeted at this training.

The Training aimed to develop human capacity of the participating Pacific countries to set and achieve goals, to identify and resolve development issues on Environment conservation (Nature Conservation) in an integrated way within each country at all levels.



Participants..

## 2008 INDUCTION COURSE

The Capacity Building Section held an Induction Course for the Ministry's new recruits on the 29th February at the MNRE Conference Room - Floor 3 of the DBS building. The objectives of the training were to guide the new recruits in the execution of their duties and responsibilities as public servants. Furthermore, to understand the functions and operations of the Ministry in relation to their own area of work.

The content of the training mainly covered :



Some of the new recruits.....

1. MNRE Performance Management System (Corporate Plan, Management Plan, Capability Plan, Service Charter)
2. MNRE Structure
3. Working Conditions and Entitlements
4. Grievance Procedures & Promotional Appeal

A total of 35 new recruits attended the programme.

## NOTICE BOARD

### Promoted Staff

- Eti Malolo  
Senior Watershed Officer (Water Resources Division)

### Resignation

- Makereta Vaaelua (PUMA)