



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

February 2019





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Introduction

This weekly update aims to highlight recent news on climate change, migration, and the Pacific Island Countries and Territories.

Prepared as a part of the CLI_M_CO2 project, undertaken at the World Trade Institute, University of Bern, Switzerland.

01-08 February 2019

Organisations update

UNFCCC

World Meteorological Organisation confirms that 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 have been confirmed as the four warmest years on record. The global average surface temperature in 2018 was approximately 1.0° Celsius (with a margin of error of $\pm 0.13^\circ\text{C}$) above the pre-industrial baseline (1850-1900). It ranks as the fourth warmest year on record. The year 2016, which was influenced by a strong El-Niño event, remains the warmest year on record (1.2°C above preindustrial baseline).

IPCC

The IPCC notes that news articles have appeared citing a draft of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC). The IPCC recently circulated the Second Order Draft of the report, including a first draft of the Summary for Policymakers, for Expert and Government Review. This review ran from 16 November 2018 to 11 January 2019. Draft reports are provided to reviewers as working documents. They are not intended for public distribution or to be quoted or cited.

James McCarthy, former IPCC Working Group II Co-Chair, has been awarded this year's Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement together with Paul Falkowski. James McCarthy and Paul Falkowski have been given the Prize "...for their decades of leadership in understanding – and communicating – the impacts of climate change" according to a press release from the University of Southern California who administer the Prize.

The Tyler Prize was established in 1973 by the late John and Alice Tyler to recognise individuals who have contributed in an outstanding manner to the scientific knowledge and public leadership to preserve and enhance the environment.

UNISDR

Organisations working on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) have started to log their voluntary commitments in support of the Sendai Framework - the global roadmap for reducing disaster losses by 2030 - in a new online platform <https://sendaicommitments.unisdr.org/>

More than 50 users have registered in the first few weeks of operation. In addition, the platform has already received the first submissions of voluntary commitments by organizations working in DRR. In close coordination with these organizations, UNISDR reviews the submissions before publishing them in the platform.



ILC

Open letter from the Chair of the ILC regarding the arrest of Prof. Maurice Kamto (former member of the Commission):

"...The members of the United Nations International Law Commission are deeply concerned about the arrest of the former member, Chair and Special Rapporteur of the Commission, Professor Maurice Kamto, in Cameroon on Monday 28 January 2019..."

http://legal.un.org/docs/?path=../ilc/documentation/english/ilc_letter_31_january_2019.pdf&lang=E

ILO

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder marks the start of the ILO's second century of service to the world of work by recalling its first 100 years and pointing to the challenges that face us all in shaping the future of work we want. The video is available at:

https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/video/institutional-videos/WCMS_657746/lang--en/index.htm

IOM

Training, Innovation and Exchanges Keep Australian Pre-Departure Programme on Track: For over 15 years the Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) programme has played a key role in preparing Australia-bound refugees and humanitarian entrants for a new life down under. A pre-departure orientation programme delivered by IOM trainers and administered from Bangkok, AUSCO is a 5-day cultural orientation course that prepares people mainly from the Middle East, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Africa, for life in Australia.

PIFS

This week sees the beginning of the Pacific Islands Forum's programme of Regional Policy Consultations for 2019. The programme running through February to the end of April will see discussions held in the 18 member countries involving Leaders and Ministers, senior officials, civil society and the private sector.

PSIDS Opening Remarks delivered at the Opening of the BBNJ (marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction) Pacific Workshop:

"...We did not shy away from discussions at the 1st Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) held last year in New York. In fact, our collective voices helped reinforce key principles that we as large ocean States have always advocated for when envisioning an international legally binding instrument (ILBI) on BBNJ namely:

- Protection and preservation of the marine environment
- Maintaining the rights and obligations of States
- Cooperation and coordination amongst States
- Common Heritage of Mankind
- Intra and intergenerational equity
- Special case or 'circumstances of SIDS
- Adjacency



Precautionary principle/approach
Polluter pays principle
Transparency
Peaceful purposes
Reciprocal principle of duty not to transfer damage or hazards or transform one type of pollution into another
Best available scientific information including traditional knowledge
Ecosystem-based approach

The international legally binding instrument (ILBI) needs to be flexible to take into consideration the evolving situations of SIDS and avoid disproportionate transfer of burden of conservation on SIDS..."

<https://www.forumsec.org/bbnj-pacific-workshop-opening-remarks-by-fiji-as-psids-chair/>

Pacific Island Countries & Territories news update

Australia

A proposed coal mine's future greenhouse gas emissions have been used as grounds to reject it by a NSW court. Justice Brian Preston on Friday dismissed Gloucester Resources Limited's appeal of the Department of Planning and Environment's 2017 decision to not approve the mine in the NSW Hunter.

Justice Preston said the Rocky Hill coal mine would increase global greenhouse gas emissions "at a time when what is now urgently needed ... is a rapid and deep decrease in GHG emission".

https://www.sbs.com.au/news/judge-rejects-nsw-coal-mine-citing-climate-change?fbclid=IwAR1swH67j5C7z2sRzCht0A6M07TEZe8NhMNyX1qxV8tS_0X4Y6A-u1hxTA4

Samoa

Samoa has become the latest Pacific island country to enforce a ban on single-use plastics in a bid to address the growing issue of plastic pollution.

The Waste (Plastic Ban) Management Regulation 2018 was officially endorsed by Cabinet of the Government of Samoa in 2018 to manage the plastic problem in Samoa with commitment to protect the country's oceans and marine environment.

The ban prohibits the import, manufacture, export, sale and distribution of plastic shopping bags, packing bags and straws effective from 30 January 2019.

<https://www.sprep.org/news/samoa-joins-the-fight-against-plastic-pollution>

Pacific

Research published in the journal Nature found variable weather could increase due to the combined melting of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets. New Zealand's Victoria University



Antarctic Research Centre is part of a global scientific research team modelling how polar ice melt will disrupt Earth's cooling mechanisms. Nick Golledge said the gravitational field of polar ice caps diminishes as they melt and shrink, which enhances the effect of the earth's rotation to push water to the equator. He said mixed with glacier melt and other factors means an average sea-level rise of 0.8 of a metre.

"Which would translate to something like 1.2 metres in the Pacific so quite a substantial sea-level rise by 2100."

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/382058/tropical-pacific-could-experience-enhanced-sea-level-rise>

The research paper is available at:

Pattyn, F., Ritz, C., Hanna, E., Asay-Davis, X., DeConto, R., Durand, G., Favier, L., Fettweis, X., Goelzer, H., Golledge, N.R., Munneke, P. K., Lenaerts, J.T.M., Nowicki, S., Payne, A.J., Robinson, A., Seroussi, H., Trusel, L.D., van den Broeke, M., (2018). The Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets under 1.5 C global warming, *Nature Climate Change*, 12 November 2018, doi:10.1038/s41558-018-0305-8

11-15 February 2019

Organisations update

UNFCCC

World's First "Climate Positive" Feature Movie: Motion Blur Films has made a bold statement about its commitment to climate action by taking actions to avoid greenhouse gas emissions and then offsetting double the number of unavoidable emissions associated with the production of its latest movie, "Amundsen". Motion Blur joined the UN's Climate Neutral Now initiative, which means that "Amundsen" will not only be "climate neutral", but "climate positive". This outcome was achieved through one of the main sponsors of the movie, the Norwegian content and telecom company Get, who purchased UN-certified credits via the Norwegian company CHOOOSE.

The trailer of the film "Amundsen" is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRIhTAsBX1Y>

The UN Climate Change Conference COP24 in 2018 in Katowice, Poland marked the half way point of the two-year UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (GAP) adopted by countries in November 2017. To mark the occasion and to highlight action taken to implement the GAP in 2018, the call to #ActOnTheGAP was launched during COP24 in Katowice.

The UNFCCC GAP is available here:

https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/cp23_auv_gender.pdf



SPREP

Tuvalu will have improved capacity in environmental data management under the Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Environment (MNREE) with the establishment this week of the national environmental data portal. Developed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) through the regional UN Environment implemented GEF funded Inform project executed by SPREP, the Tuvalu environment data portal will help address the on-going challenge of accessing available data and information to support environmental planning and decision making.

SPC

SPC's Deputy Director-General, Cameron Diver, shares perspectives on the Pacific Community-SPC, and some of the issues discussed with French authorities and partners in support of Sustainable Development in the Pacific region.

The interview is available in French here:

<https://www.spc.int/updates/blog/2019/02/cameron-diver-the-pacific-community-improving-the-well-being-of-pacific-people>

ADB

ADB President Mr. Takehiko Nakao and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Mr. Shinichi Kitaoka opened the "ADB-JICA Meeting on Achieving Universal Health Coverage in Asia and the Pacific" in Tokyo. Ensuring universal health coverage (UHC) is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets under ADB's Strategy 2030. In his opening remarks, Mr. Nakao said, "Under our new long-term Strategy 2030, in response to Asia and the Pacific's growing needs for health services, ADB is scaling up our health sector operations with a focus on UHC."

An ADB study of skills mobility in the ASEAN Economic Community concluded that several technical and political barriers at national and regional levels impede professionals from moving and practicing their profession in other ASEAN countries. Overcoming these impediments could yield real benefits.

The study is available here:

<https://www.adb.org/publications/achieving-skill-mobility-asean-economic-community>

Australia's Pacific Labour Scheme kicked off in July 2018 to allow citizens of Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu to take up low and semi-skilled work opportunities in rural and regional Australia for up to three years. The scheme will be expanded to more Pacific island countries as Australia hopes to fill labor gaps in towns and on farms, and in the process stimulate greater economic activity away from the major coastal population centers.

<https://blogs.adb.org/blog/migration-asia-where-everybody-going>



Pacific Island Countries & Territories news update

Pacific

The Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations (PIANGO) has called on regional governments to recognise the risks of seabed mining. The call comes as Pacific governments met in Tonga this week to discuss their hopes of exploiting minerals on the ocean floor.

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/382609/piango-pans-seabed-mining>

The World Bank's vice president for East Asia and the Pacific says there is enough room for China and western countries in the Pacific. Victoria Kwakwa was in New Zealand to discuss the bank's partnership with that country on development projects in the region. The Pacific Islands region is increasingly seen as a contested space for competing geopolitical interests. Ms Kwakwa said the development challenges that Pacific countries face are enormous and there is room for more actors in this space.

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/382554/pacific-big-enough-for-china-and-the-west-world-bank>



18-28 February 2019

Organisations update

UNFCCC

Take a closer look at the Katowice Climate Package:

<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/katowice-climate-package#eq-1>

SPREP

Palau is in the process of developing its 2019 State of Environment (SoE) Report. Data and information collected during the SoE process will be stored on the portal and will provide useful input for future SoE reports. Similarly, the portal will also help Palau in developing its Sixth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which Palau is a party to.

The four-year regional Inform project (2017-2021), managed through the Environmental Monitoring and Governance Programme of SPREP is funded through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by UN Environment. It is executed by SPREP in the 14 Pacific island countries of the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

An Ecosystem and Socio-economic Resilience Analysis and Mapping (ESRAM) assessment undertaken by the Pacific Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change Project (PEBACC) in the Solomon Islands has been presented with the 2018 Sustainable Management Award in the Internationally Funded Category by the Australia and New Zealand Institute for Sustainable Management (ANZISM).

PIFS

Keynote address by Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary General "The China Alternative: Changing Regional Order in the Pacific Islands":

<https://www.forumsec.org/keynote-address-by-dame-meg-taylor-secretary-general-the-china-alternative-changing-regional-order-in-the-pacific-islands/>

MSG

Ambassador Amena Yauvoli, the DG of the MSG today signed an MOU with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) which is an inter-governmental organisation that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. IDEA International is headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden with offices in the Hague; Brussels and New York. Its regional



offices are located in Chile; the Caribbean; Addis Abbas with the Pacific Office in Canberra, Australia. IDEA also has country offices with its first Pacific office based in Suva, Fiji.

Pacific Island Countries & Territories news update

Solomon Islands

An environmental disaster is unfolding in Solomon Islands, on the island of Rennell, with tonnes of oil spilling into an internationally-significant marine reserve. Efforts to refloat the ship, chartered by bauxite miner Bintan Mining Corporation, have been hampered by poor weather and Rennell's remoteness.

<http://www.pina.com.fj/index.php?p=pacnews&m=read&o=954252285c75eb85ed6e8829de0983>

PNG

Twenty-two Manus Island refugees left Papua New Guinea yesterday to be resettled in the United States. The refugee advocate Ian Rintoul said the departure brings the number of refugees from Manus to be accepted by the US to just 189.

He said including about 300 refugees from Nauru, a total of about 500 from Australian offshore detention have so far been resettled in the US, under a deal struck in 2016 to take up to 1250.

Mr Rintoul said the US deal is "glacially slow" with about 1000 people still left on Manus and Nauru without a future after almost six years. He said scores of the refugees are suffering serious mental health problems after being held in indefinite detention without trial for so long.

The opposition Labor party in Australia has committed to accepting New Zealand's offer to take 150 of the refugees each year, if it wins this year's general election.

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/383460/more-manus-refugees-bound-for-the-united-states>

Pacific

The Cotonou Agreement was the instrument that channelled economic assistance to countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific from the European Union for the last 20 years and a new agreement should take effect in 2020. However, the EU had attempted to split up the regions in future dealings with the EU and the Pacific had made it known that it was standing together as a region in negotiations for the new agreement. The head of the EU's international cooperation and development unit, Domenico Rosa, said the new deal would prioritise climate change, ocean governance, resource management and human security.

<http://www.pina.com.fj/index.php?p=pacnews&m=read&o=275303935c75ba8b95e5ea3d6de8ab>