



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

March 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 March 2019

Organisations update

UNFCCC

Fiji has submitted its long-term climate action plan under the Paris Agreement to the secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Fiji aims to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 across all sectors of its economy.

The plan is available at: <https://unfccc.int/process/the-paris-agreement/long-term-strategies>

ILO

Work-related gender gaps have not seen any meaningful improvement for 20 years, but a new ILO report says that the path to progress is clear. The report is available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_674831.pdf

WB

Growth among advanced economies is forecast to drop to 2 percent this year, the January 2019 Global Economic Prospects says. With a specific section on East Asia and the Pacific, the report is available at:

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31066/9781464813863.pdf>

Pacific Island Countries & Territories news update

Vanuatu

The Government of New Zealand intends to increase its assistance to Vanuatu, in terms of policing and security.



NZ High Commission has initially announced that NZ Government will provide Vt540 million (US\$4.7 million) in policing supporting, including the deployment of the three officers to advice on community and preventative policing, road policing, prosecutions and investigations.

<http://www.pina.com.fj/index.php?p=pacnews&m=read&o=10173081925c8859cd7bc1b7dc706b>

Marshall Islands

The Marshall Islands is gearing to release a digital currency this year, although officials acknowledged Friday there is much work still to be done to alleviate concerns of United States financial regulators.

The launch date of the currency, known as the "SOV," has yet to be decided.

Pacific

The European Union has added Fiji, Vanuatu and the Marshall Islands to an extensive tax blacklist. The 28-nation list was set up in December 2017 in a bid to crackdown on tax avoidance by corporations and wealthy individuals. Tax jurisdictions alleged to be not complying with EU regulations face restrictions on transactions with the bloc and reputational damage. The Pacific countries which were given a year to change their tax rules, join Samoa, American Samoa and Guam on the blacklist.

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/384636/fiji-vanuatu-marshall-islands-added-to-eu-tax-blacklist>



11-15 March 2019

Organisations update

SPREP

Two programmes (the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus – Scaling-up Pacific Adaptation programme (GCCA+ SUPA), worth EUR 14.89 million and the Pacific–European Union Waste Management Programme, worth EUR 16.5 million) amounting to almost EUR 32 million were signed by the European Union (EU) Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica on the occasion of his visit to the Pacific. The programmes will seek to promote sustainable waste management and support adaptation efforts to the effects of climate change. They underline the EU's strong commitment to the Pacific region, as well as reinforcing the strong cooperation between the Pacific region and the EU.

Under the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus – Scaling-up Pacific Adaptation programme (GCCA+ SUPA), the EU will allocate EUR 14.89 million to help the region adapt its plans and strategies towards climate change. It will be implemented in partnership with SPC, SPREP and USP.

The Pacific Community (SPC), Director-General, Dr. Colin Tukuitonga said: “Continuity of development support is essential for long term sustainable change in the Pacific and SPC together with our partners are especially grateful to the European Union for entering into this second phase of the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Action, so that the Pacific islands can continue to build resilience to climate change.”

<https://www.sprep.org/news/the-pacific-and-the-eu-sign-programmes-worth-almost-eur-32-million-for-waste-management-and-climate-change-adaptation>

PIDF

The Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) Charter mandates the organisation to play the role of the Pacific regional platform for the South-South and other international groupings. This was highlighted by the Forums Secretary General, François Martel during the official launching of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation In Action publication, a collaborative effort between PIDF and the United Nations Office of South-South Cooperation(UNOSSC), at a special side event at the BAPA+40.

The publication is available at: http://pacificidf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/UNOSSC-PIDF_web.pdf

Pacific Island Countries & Territories news update

PNG

Politicians in Papua New Guinea are ratcheting up their support for a new foray into coal mining and power generation, even as neighboring states call for a global reduction in carbon emissions to stave off a catastrophic rise in the sea level.



<http://www.pina.com.fj/index.php?p=pacnews&m=read&o=13547843805c8882de8f52a3b33f80>

Tonga

Australia has announced Tonga has officially joined its Pacific Labour Scheme. The government said Tonga's entry into the scheme will provide more Tongans access to skills development opportunities, while also helping fill labour shortages in rural and regional Australia. Tonga has participated in the Seasonal Worker Programme for a number of years, providing almost half of the 31,000 workers since 2012. Tonga will now join Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu in the revamped Pacific Labour Scheme. Workers can undertake non-seasonal work in rural and regional Australia for up to three years. The Pacific Labour Scheme started last July. The government said the scheme is now uncapped and will be expanded to include more Pacific countries and Timor-Leste in the future.

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/384546/tonga-joins-australia-s-pacific-labour-scheme>



18-22 March 2019

Organisations update

WB

10 Years of Green Bonds: Creating the Blueprint for Sustainability Across Capital Markets

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2019/03/18/10-years-of-green-bonds-creating-the-blueprint-for-sustainability-across-capital-markets>

PIFS

A practical resource for countries dealing with the escalating impacts of climate change and disasters from natural hazard risks has been launched by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. The Pacific Experiences with Options relevant to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Finance booklet explores the experiences of Pacific Island countries in implementing various climate change and disaster risk finance options. It is designed to provide real-world lessons for other countries to learn from and potentially adapt to their national circumstances.

This publication documents the following case-studies from the Pacific:

- Tuvalu's Climate Change and Disaster Survival Fund and the Fiji Green Bonds as examples of innovative approaches to generate financing for climate change and disaster risk reduction.
- The Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) and the Papua New Guinea Climate Change Act are presented as examples of policy and legislative frameworks that guide the implementation of climate change and resilience initiatives.
- The cases of the Micronesia Conservation Trust attaining Regional Implementing Entity (RIE) to the Global Climate Fund (GCF) and National Implementing Entity (NIE) to the Adaptation Fund and Vanuatu's National Advisory Board on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction are highlighted as good practice examples exemplifying institutional strengthening and coordination for climate change and disaster risk reduction.
- Experiences of the University of the South Pacific's (USP) Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PaCE-SD) and the Regional Technical Support Mechanism (RTSM) show examples of regional capacity building for climate change.
- Public Financial Management (PFM) is an integral part of accessing and managing climate change finance and ensuring robust and credible PFM systems is important. The booklet features PFM reforms in Kiribati and Samoa and internal audit strengthening in Tuvalu and shares these experiences to enable increased and direct access to climate change finance.
- Ensuring the effectiveness of climate change and resilience programmes leads to greater impacts. The Choiseul Integrated Climate Change Programme (CHICCHAP) in Solomon Islands and the Joint Work planning and missions approach to project implementation undertaken by the DFAT/GIZ Climate Finance Readiness of the Pacific Project and the USAID/SPC Institutional Strengthening of Pacific Island Countries to Adapt to Climate Change (ISACC) Project highlight ways of ensuring greater harmonisation and effectiveness.
- The Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit and Gender sensitive budgeting in Vanuatu are presented as examples of gender mainstreaming in climate change.



The publication can be accessed from: https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/PIF-Vol-3_Pacific-Experiences_FINAL.pdf

SPREP

Combating climate change by increasing Pacific access to climate finance: A few regional Direct Access Entities include SPREP, MCT (Micronesia Conservation Trust), and newly accredited SPC. Through these partners, Pacific island countries will be able to channel viable investment projects, and benefit from the international organisations already here to support Pacific countries in their areas of expertise including other larger projects.

<https://www.sprep.org/news/combating-climate-change-by-increasing-pacific-access-to-climate-finance>

Pacific Island Countries & Territories news update

Pacific – EU

The Cotonou Agreement currently governing EU-ACP relations is due to expire in 2020. Political negotiations on a new ACP-EU Partnership were launched in New York on 28 September 2018.

Current talks mainly focus on the so-called common foundation at EU-ACP level. This contains the values and principles that bring the EU and ACP countries together. It also indicates the strategic priority areas that the two sides intend to prospectively work on together. In the future agreement, on top of the foundation there will be three action-oriented regional pillars to focus on each region's specific needs. Through the future partnership, EU and ACP countries will seek closer political cooperation on the world stage. Together, they represent more than half of all UN member countries and unite over 1.5 billion people.

EU's press release is available at: <https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/download.pdf>

Vanuatu

The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat in partnership with the Pacific Community's (SPC) Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) and the Pacific Regional Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) held a refresher workshop on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) with a mock session for the government delegation preparing to travel to Geneva to report on Vanuatu's implementation progress of the CRPD.

https://www.msgsec.info/pr_msg-secretariat-supports-vanuatus-governments-constructive-dialogue-with-the-expert-committee-on-disabilities-in-geneva/



25-29 March 2019

Organisations update

PIFS

Nauru Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Margo Deiya, delivers the opening statement on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Chair at negotiations on the Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty at the United Nations in New York:

<https://www.forumsec.org/bbnj-treaty-negotiations-open-in-new-york/>

SPREP

The development of two key environment planning and reporting documents – the State of Environment (SoE) report and the National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS) for the Federated States of Micronesia will further strengthen the country's capacity to protect and conserve its pristine environment.

Planning for the two documents first started in October 2018 under the leadership of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECEM) with the active engagement and input from the FSM States representatives. The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) through the Environment Monitoring and Governance Programme with technical support from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supported the SoE and NEMS processes in FSM.

Pacific Island Countries & Territories news update

The United Nations

In its resolution 72/249 of 24 December 2017, the General Assembly decided to convene an Intergovernmental Conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, to consider the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee established by resolution 69/292 of 19 June 2015 on the elements and to elaborate the text of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, with a view to developing the instrument as soon as possible.

The Conference will meet for four sessions. The first session was convened from 4 to 17 September 2018. The second and third sessions will be convened from 25 March to 5 April 2019 and from 19 to 30 August 2019. The fourth session will take place in the first half of 2020.

<https://www.un.org/bbnj/>