



# MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

November 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 November 2019

### Organisations update

#### UNFCCC

COP25 will take place in Madrid from 2 December to 13 December 2019.

#### ILO

New ILO Report titled “What works: Promoting Pathways to Decent Work” is now available online.

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms\\_724097.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_724097.pdf)

Visual data shows how active labour market policies and income support are in developing and emerging countries, including Pacific Islands.

The data is availability at: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/enhanced/WCMS\\_723177/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/enhanced/WCMS_723177/lang--en/index.htm)

#### PIFS

Pacific Islands Forum Chair Statement on US withdrawal from Paris Agreement.

“Withdrawing from the Paris Agreement will act to undermine American influence and credibility in the Pacific, the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Hon Kausea Natano, said today.

“In the Post-war period, America has often played a leadership role in supporting multilateralism and promoting a global rules-based system to enable collective responses to international problems. It is disappointing to see this ethos fade and falter when we need it the most.

“As stated in the Kainaki II Declaration made by Forum Leaders here in Tuvalu, the shared prosperity of our Blue Pacific continent can only safely exist if the international community pursues efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C, as set out in the Paris Agreement. The science is non-negotiable.

“Tuvalu is the frontline of the climate fight, and as a country we have contributed the least to global emissions, but we still do our part to implement Paris and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.



“At a time when the Pacific finds itself the focus of much strategic competition, I urge those governments involved to listen to the voice of the Blue Pacific, respect our collective will and support our stewardship of this great Oceanic continent.

“Statements of friendship, expanded aid programmes and high-level visits must be better backed by domestic policies and action to reduce emissions, as outlined in the Paris Agreement, in order to avert a climate catastrophe.

“As we have said often, if we save Tuvalu, we save the world”, said Pacific Islands Forum Chair, Prime Minister Natano.”

<https://www.forumsec.org/pacific-islands-forum-chair-statement-on-us-withdrawal-from-paris-agreement/>

## **IOM**

In 2018, over 80,000 migrants returned to their countries of origin with IOM’s assistance.

Returnees often struggle to adapt as they rebuild their lives back home. Economic pressure, the stigma of failure and the “push” factors that prompted many to migrate in the first place, often create new challenges, especially for returnees who have been out of the country for years.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), launched the Reintegration Handbook: practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance, a guide designed to help practitioners in reintegration assistance support migrants unable or unwilling to remain in host or transit countries and returning home through assisted voluntary return or through returns organized by host governments and other actors.

The handbook is available at:

[https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom\\_reintegration\\_handbook.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom_reintegration_handbook.pdf)

## **PIDF**

The outcome document of the third PIDF Leaders’ Summit is now available at:

<http://pacificidf.org/wp-content/uploads/PACIFICISLANDSDEVELOPMENTFORUMTHIRDLADERSSUMMITOUTCOMEDOCUMENT.pdf>

## **Pacific Island Countries & Territories news update**

### **Melanesian Spearhead Group**

The MSG Climate Finance Strategy has been described as the first needs-based Climate Finance Strategy to be developed leading the example following the mandate given by COP23 to the United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC).



Following the COP23 mandate, the UNFCCC Secretariat has been developing the Needs-based Finance (NBF) Project aimed at facilitating and mobilizing climate finance to support the needs identified by developing countries regarding the implementation of priority mitigation and adaptation actions, in accordance with the goals outlined in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), national adaptation plans (NAPs) and other relevant policies or strategies.

The needs based Finance (NBF) project aims at promoting and utilizing alliances with other mandates and processes under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement making it possible to build on and also complement existing climate finance related work of others in partner countries to build collaborations and avoid duplicating efforts.

This country-driven project focuses on several pilot partner countries in the regions of Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Melanesian Sub Region, giving the MSG Secretariat the honour of being the first to have completed a Climate Finance Strategy.

<https://www.msgsec.info/msg-climate-finance-strategy-declared-first-in-the-world-to-implement-cop23-mandate/>



# 09-15 November 2019

## Organisations update

### World Bank

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund adopt the Development Committee Communique, which also acknowledges the challenges faced by climate change and natural disasters.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/10/19/world-bankimf-annual-meetings-2019-development-committee-communique>

### UNCCD

The Global Mechanism (GM) of the UNCCD has just released a new briefing note that explores interlinkages between land degradation, poverty and inequality, making the case that investing in land degradation neutrality (LDN) – Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 15.3 – matters for some of the most pressing country priorities, such as ending poverty (SDG 1) and reducing inequality (SDG 10). Land degradation can generate or reinforce poverty and inequality by impacting disproportionately populations that largely depend on land resources for their livelihood.

Evidence from more than 800 subnational regions shows that those places with the highest proportion of degraded land are also home to the most disadvantaged people of society in terms of poverty and inequality calling for measures that alleviate their situation. This briefing note was jointly developed by Global Mechanism of UNCCD, Conservation International and German Development Institute.

<https://www.unccd.int/news-events/new-gm-briefing-note-land-degradation-poverty-and-inequality>

### UN Network on Migration

The Principals of the Executive Committee of the United Nations Network on Migration met in New York to discuss United Nations system-wide assistance to Member States in their implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

There was strong agreement on the need to reinforce support for both the objectives and guiding principles of the GCM, which is rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Principals called for the roll-out of the Network workplan, at regional and country levels, to ensure that 2020 sees the acceleration of collective efforts to demonstrate the benefits of international cooperation on migration.



The importance of effective UN support to the regional reviews of the GCM, scheduled for 2020 and as called for by the General Assembly, was also emphasized as they will inform the first International Migration Review Forum in 2022.

The Principals further reiterated their commitment to joint advocacy on migration-related issues, with a view to highlighting how upholding the rights and well-being of migrants and their communities and building on best practice in accordance with internationally agreed standards, can strengthen migration governance for the benefit of all.

Finally, the Principals of the Network urged strong donor support for the Migration Trust Fund as a visible means of demonstrating commitment to an inclusive framework of international cooperation on migration, and support for turning words into action.

Since the Principals last met in May 2019, the Network has formally launched the Fund and received pledges to its initial capitalization. The Principals and the Network Coordinator, as Chair of the Fund Steering Committee, IOM Director General António Vitorino, thanked all those who have to date pledged.

The Network has also launched its first workplan to operationalize its support to Member States. Since its inception, the Network has seen the establishment or revitalization of an increasing number of regional and country-level migration networks and working groups. These mechanisms will help Member States deliver results on the ground in achieving their GCM objectives, with joined up and coherent support from the UN and its partners.

The UN Network on Migration was established by the UN Secretary-General to ensure coordinated UN system-wide support to States in implementing the GCM. It comprises 38 entities of the UN system working collectively to support states in addressing their migration priorities, including as regards upholding the rights and well-being of migrants and their communities.

The Network operates with an Executive Committee of eight UN entities giving overall guidance and setting priorities. The Executive Committee includes ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDESA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNODC, with IOM as the Coordinator and Secretariat to the Network.

<http://migrationnetwork.un.org/statement/joint-statement-united-nations-network-migration-second-meeting-executive-committees>

## **PIFS**

Government representatives from the 15 Pacific ACP Group of countries (PACP), regional implementing Agencies EDF funded programmes including the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies, Development partners including the United Nations and other international development organisations met in Suva today at the fourth meeting of the Regional Steering Committee for the Pacific (RSCP) for the 11th EDF PRIP, to discuss the implementation of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Pacific Regional Indicative Programme (PRIP).



The meeting was hosted by PIFS in collaboration with the European Union (EU), being the duly mandated regional organisation for the Cooperation with the EU, and within its broader role in fostering regional cooperation.

Through the 11th EDF PRIP, the EU has committed a total of EUR 197 million (FJD 479 million) to support the Pacific PACP countries in sectors such as ocean protection and governance, waste management, public finance management, addressing root causes of gender inequality and violence against women, trade, investment and promotion of the private sector. Good progress has been made regards programming and implementation with the signature of most financing agreements and underlying contracts now completed, and inception and implementation has commenced for all the contracts that have been signed.

In addition, another EUR 200 million (FJD 486 million) are channelled to the Pacific region for Climate Change adaptation and environmental protection.

The meeting was also an opportunity to reflect on the future of EU-Pacific relations.

Within the margins of the RSCP, a signing ceremony took place for the bilateral EU funding (National Indicative Programmes (NIP)) for Kiribati (amounting to EUR 20.8 million focusing on resilience building in outer islands) and Federated States of Micronesia (amounting to EUR 14.2 million focusing on renewable energy).

<https://www.forumsec.org/fifteen-pacific-acp-countries-and-development-partners-meet-in-suva/>

## **Pacific Island Countries & Territories news update**

### **French Polynesia**

The head of the French agency dealing with nuclear test compensation, Alain Christnacht, says its hands are tied when it comes to reimbursing French Polynesia's social security agency CPS.

Last month, the CPS again called on France to pay it \$US770 million to cover the health costs of victims of the French nuclear weapons tests.

Mr Christnacht said he was bound by law, referring to a 2016 court decision which found that any compensation given to victims is paid out as a sign of France's national solidarity, and not because of any liability by the French state.

France tested 193 nuclear weapons in the South Pacific and until a first compensation law was introduced in 2010 the authorities maintained the tests were clean.

Speaking to local media following a week-long visit to Tahiti, Mr Christnacht said out of the 311 people who applied for compensation for radiation-induced illnesses, 121 had been accepted.

He said of those, 110 had been awarded money since the beginning of last year.

Mr Christnacht defended his agency's vetting process, which recognises 23 radiation-induced conditions.

Not all cancers in French Polynesia could be attributed to the nuclear tests, he added, saying some people might have developed the illness because of smoking, drinking or obesity.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/404728/france-responds-to-tahiti-s-nuclear-compensation-claim>





# 18-22 November 2019

## Organisations update

### IOM

World Migration Report 2020 was launched. The report is available at:  
[https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2020.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf)

Disaster management actors in Papua New Guinea (PNG)'s Autonomous Region of Bougainville (AROB) have adopted IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) to better manage data when responding to natural disasters. The remote region experiences earthquakes, volcanic activity and tropical cyclones.

The training was part of a USAID-funded IOM project: Strengthening Early Warning Systems and Preparedness Actions for Disaster Risk Reduction in Papua New Guinea.

<https://www.iom.int/news/displacement-tracking-aids-disaster-response-papua-new-guineas-autonomous-region-bougainville>

### IDMC

IDMC has published the report "Twice Invisible: Accounting for Internally Displaced Children", which is available at:

[www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/201911-twice-invisible-internally-displaced-children.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/201911-twice-invisible-internally-displaced-children.pdf)

### SPREP

The Moana Blue Pacific Pavilion is a Pacific partnership supported by New Zealand with Fiji. It is managed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme. The Moana Blue Pacific Pavilion is moving full steam ahead going into the 25th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP25).

The Moana Blue Pacific Pavilion will amplify the Pacific's call for ambitious global action by all, support collaboration involving stakeholders from the Pacific to promote a high level of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) ambitions and to exchange stories of national resilience planning; and also to showcase the challenges and opportunities of climate change affected regions in the Pacific using a range of communications mediums.

The Moana Blue Pacific Pavilion will be open the full duration of the COP25 from 2 – 13 December. It will also provide a platform of discussion, debate and knowledge-transfer on issues important to the Pacific, including options for enhancing mitigation and resilience and supporting collaboration involving stakeholders from the Pacific.

<https://www.sprep.org/news/pacific-representation-at-cop25-in-madrid-in-full-force-with-the-moana-blue-pacific-pavilion>



## Pacific Island Countries & Territories news update

### Samoa, Fiji and Tonga

UNICEF delivers over 260,000 vaccines and medical supplies to fight measles outbreaks in Samoa, Fiji and Tonga.

<http://www.pina.com.fj/?p=pacnews&m=read&o=5217160305de063d8f89400d241530>

### Climate Vulnerable Forum

Heads of state and government from the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) linked the survival of vulnerable nations to all parties to the Paris Agreement delivering new nationally determined contributions (NDCs) by 2020 to safeguard the 1.5C degrees limit to warming. The leaders called for a COP25 decision for all nations to adopt higher ambition efforts by next year.

President Hilda Heine of the Marshall Islands said: "The most vulnerable already face death row. Not coming forward with a new, improved NDC – with a stronger national effort – by next year is the same as a government passing sentence on our future. To force our country to die."

The meeting was chaired virtually by President Heine through video-link from the Marshall Islands as a demonstration of low-emission solutions. The event highlighted how vulnerable nations were working on mobilizing \$20 billion of new funds for adaptation and renewable energy from innovative initiatives as the 48-members of the Forum continue to lead on upgrading the ambition of their NDCs for 2020.

<http://www.pina.com.fj/?p=pacnews&m=read&o=9618911485de5d1fad9b79562d2dc7>



# 25-29 November 2019

## Organisations update

### UNEP

The Emissions Gap Report 2019 was released by the United Nations Environment Programme, which is available at:

<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2019>

### UNCCD

UN General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously adopted a resolution on the work of UNCCD on 28 November, reaffirming the role of land degradation neutrality (LDN) as a vehicle for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and recognizing the potential of land-based solutions to address climate change.

The resolution also recognized the successes of the recent UNCCD COP14 and proposed a UNGA high-level dialog to assess the progress in the fight against desertification, land degradation and drought and to map the way beyond the UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification which ends next year.

<https://www.unccd.int/news-events/un-calls-high-level-dialogue-close-deserts-and-desertification-decade>

### WMO

We have again broken records in carbon dioxide concentrations and we have already exceeded 400ppm level which was regarded as a critical level," said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas, in reference to the 407.8 parts per million reading for 2018. "That happened already two years ago and this carbon dioxide concentration continues and continues, and last year's increase was about the same as we have been observing in the past 10 years, as an average."

Highlighting the need for the global community to tackle emissions, the WMO head explained that the biggest polluters "used to be Europe and North America, USA, but China has become number the one emitter – along with "fairly strong growth in the emissions of non-OECD countries" too. This demonstrates that global perspective and strategy is needed to solve this problem, Professor Taalas said. The European Union or USA, or China, can't solve it alone, "you have to have all of the countries involved."

While Governments understand that this is a challenge, so too does the private sector, he added, noting that it was "more and more interested in finding solutions".

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/11/1052111>



## Pacific Island Countries & Territories news update

### PNG

“After a decade-long civil war and relative peace, the Autonomous Region of Bougainville is in the midst of a referendum which could determine whether they move forward as a new nation.

The island of Bougainville and the accompanying smaller islands and atolls which make up the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, a province of Papua New Guinea, actually form the northernmost islands of the Solomon Islands archipelago. The island was colonised by Germany in the late 19th century, and since that time, has struggled through world wars, a parade of colonisers, conflict with the mainland, and internal strife. When Papua New Guinea was granted independence in 1975, Bougainville was included in the nation - a fact directly relevant to the referendum.

The region is rich in copper deposits, and beginning in the 1960s mining became the island’s most prominent economic activity. Conflict over the large mine at Panguna became the source of what has become known as the Bougainville “crisis” (a euphemism for the Bougainville Civil War). Dissatisfaction over aspects of the mine resulted in disputes and violence that resulted in the Papua New Guinea Defence Force being deployed on the island. During the 1990s the situation in Bougainville descended into military action, where a blockade by the Papua New Guinea government exacerbated the internal conflict, which resulted in the loss of an estimated 15,000 lives, thousands displaced, and an immense amount of destruction still evident today.

The Bougainville conflict is extremely tangled, and entire volumes have been dedicated to disentangling all of the complexities. What is clear is that the Bougainville Peace Agreement, signed in 2001, rests on three pillars, one of which is a guaranteed referendum to determine Bougainville’s future, and where independence must be an option on the ballot. After 18 years, that referendum is being held (23 November – 07 December).”

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/381346/solomons-dismisses-regional-free-trade-agreement-concerns>