

## Government of Niue

GEF - NATIONAL CAPACITY SELF ASSESSMENT (NCSA)

# Thematic Assessment Report



UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

**June 2008**



## Executive Summary

Niue as a Party to the Rio Conventions, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Combating Desertification, and the Framework Convention on Climate Change, is preparing its National Capacity Self Assessment Report to identify the capacity gaps on the implementation of the Conventions.

The thematic assessment component of the National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA) Project reviews the status of implementation for each of the three Rio Conventions at the national level. It further analysis the capacity constraints on the implementation and proposes potential opportunities for building the three levels of capacity development at the country level.

Niue has gone through numerous past capacity building projects in which similar issues were raised and plans developed. Therefore for this project, all the previous information was used as the baseline along with consultations and workshops used to verify and update the information.

Overall, the assessment found that Niue has very limited implementation of the Conventions. The only actions taken have been;

1. preparations of national plans for each convention such as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for the CBD and the National Action Programme (NAP) for the UNCCD, and the Initial Communications Report for UNFCCC.
2. Enactment of the Environment Act and the subsequent establishment of the Department of Environment
3. Participation on regionally driven projects addressing issues related to the Conventions such as the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP), the Pacific Islands Climate Change Assistance Programme (PICCAP), Pacific Islands International Waters Project (IWP), and Pacific Islands Renewable Energy Program (PIREP).
4. Preparation of National Reports for the CBD, FCCC and CCD.

Some of the causes identified for the lack of implementation are seen as hard to resolve via this project such as the very small population of Niue to draw a workforce from and the extremely limited budget available for use by the whole country.

In some cases, the assessment noted that better implementation would improve with a better collaboration and coordination of work amongst the different conventions or amongst the Government Departments to pool the limited resources and expertise together.

In some cases, there is the need to continually upskill the junior and middle level staff on some of the basic research and survey techniques while some level of training is also provided. As some of the expertise was noted as being available on island but only with the senior management position, it was also recommended that opportunity is given for these local experts

This information will be incorporated into the cross-cutting report and used to form the basis for the NCSA Action Plan

## ACRONYMS

CC	Climate Change
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forest and Fisheries
DE	Department of Education
DEA	Department of External Affairs
DJLS	Department of Justice, Lands and Survey
DMS	Department of Meteorological Services
DoE	Department of Environment
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoN	Government of Niue
IWP	International Waters Project
MEAs	Multilateral Environment Agreements
NAP	National Action Programme
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NBF	National Bio-safety Framework
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment
NEMS	National Environment Management Strategy
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Steering Committee
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
PSC	Public Service Commission
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Region for Environment Programme
TA	Thematic Assessment
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USP	University of the South Pacific
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) project to identify capacity development priorities and needs for the implementation of the three Rio Conventions in Niue started in 2006. The three Rio Conventions referred to in this project are:

- Biodiversity – UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD);
- Land degradation – UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); and
- Climate change – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The NCSA project in Niue was implemented by the Department of Environment (DOE) through Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding via the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the GEF Implementing Agency.

The main project activities included:

- Compilation and review of thematic materials (analysis of the existing plans, policies, strategies and relevant studies), consultations with relevant stakeholders as part of the Stocktaking;
- Preparation of the Thematic Assessments (reports) with pertinent analysis of the needs and opportunities for capacity building;
- Analysis of issues that cut across the three Conventions (identification of common capacity constraints and needs) and preparation of the Cross-cutting Assessment;
- Development of the NCSA Action Plan.

This report is the thematic assessment component of the NCSA process.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The approach taken for thematic assessments were in line with the NCSA recommended methodology. That is, the assessments were carried according to the three levels of capacity building against the obligations and requirements for each Convention.

### *Individual level*

At the **individual level**, capacities subject to the NCSA analysis include the abilities of individuals who are or should be involved in meeting the Convention requirements. Capacity building at this level is done through staff education and training, management improvements (staff motivation) and similar. The goal is to increase individual abilities in environmental management and protection, for individuals working alone or within an organization or society.

### *Institutional level*

At the **institutional level**, capacities include the general organization of activities and functional abilities of institutions and organizations. Institutional capacities include human, administrative, financial and technical resources. In the NCSA process, these components were assessed in the following way.

- *Human resources* – staff within an organization whose activities are linked to the Conventions implementation, including education and qualifications of the employees, their personal experience, access to training etc;
- *Administrative resources* – whether there are efficient structures in place within institutions and organizations, whether there are specialized units for fulfillment of the Convention requirements and whether, if in place, they are well-functioning;
- *Financial resources* – whether they are available, well-managed within the institution/ organization and whether well-allocated;
- *Information resources* – whether necessary information is available and reliable, whether managed properly within and outside the institution/ organization;
- *Technical resources* – whether necessary buildings, resources, computers and specialized equipment is available, whether adequately allocated and how they are managed.

Capacity building at the institutional level strives for an improved organizational structure and increased co-operation among groups or sectors within one institution or organization.

### *Systemic level*

The **systemic level** capacity is reflected in the conditions in which the institutions and organizations function and are in mutual interactions. It includes:

- Political framework (political support, appropriate political framework to assist the implementation of the Convention requirements);
- Legislative framework (whether appropriate laws are in effect, whether responsibilities have been divided, whether there are appropriate institutions/ organizations);
- Economic framework – whether the market functions efficiently;
- Resources at the systemic level – whether human, financial and information resources are available to national or local authorities, private sector, civil society;
- Public support – whether there is public awareness and support;
- Co-ordination – whether there are interrelations and co-operation between institutions in place.

The assessments undertaken focused primarily on the capacities at the national level including government and public institutions with competencies for Conventions implementation.

Many capacity building consultations have been undertaken over the past years in Niue for the purpose of national plans reviews, and assessments. Information gathered from these previous assessments were collected, analyzed and recorded. Specific to environmental planning and the Rio Conventions, each of the National Plans for Conventions included components of capacity building.

In light of this background situation, the approach taken for this thematic assessment exercise included;

- I. Review of past national reports to assess the implementation of the Rio Conventions in Niue.
- II. Stakeholder consultations on information gaps and capacity issues hindering the implementation of obligations in each Convention.
- III. Establishing capacity development issues needed to improve the Convention implementation
- IV. Presentation of information to a national validation workshop
- V. Finalize draft findings and present to a validation workshop where a prioritization exercise is also undertaken.

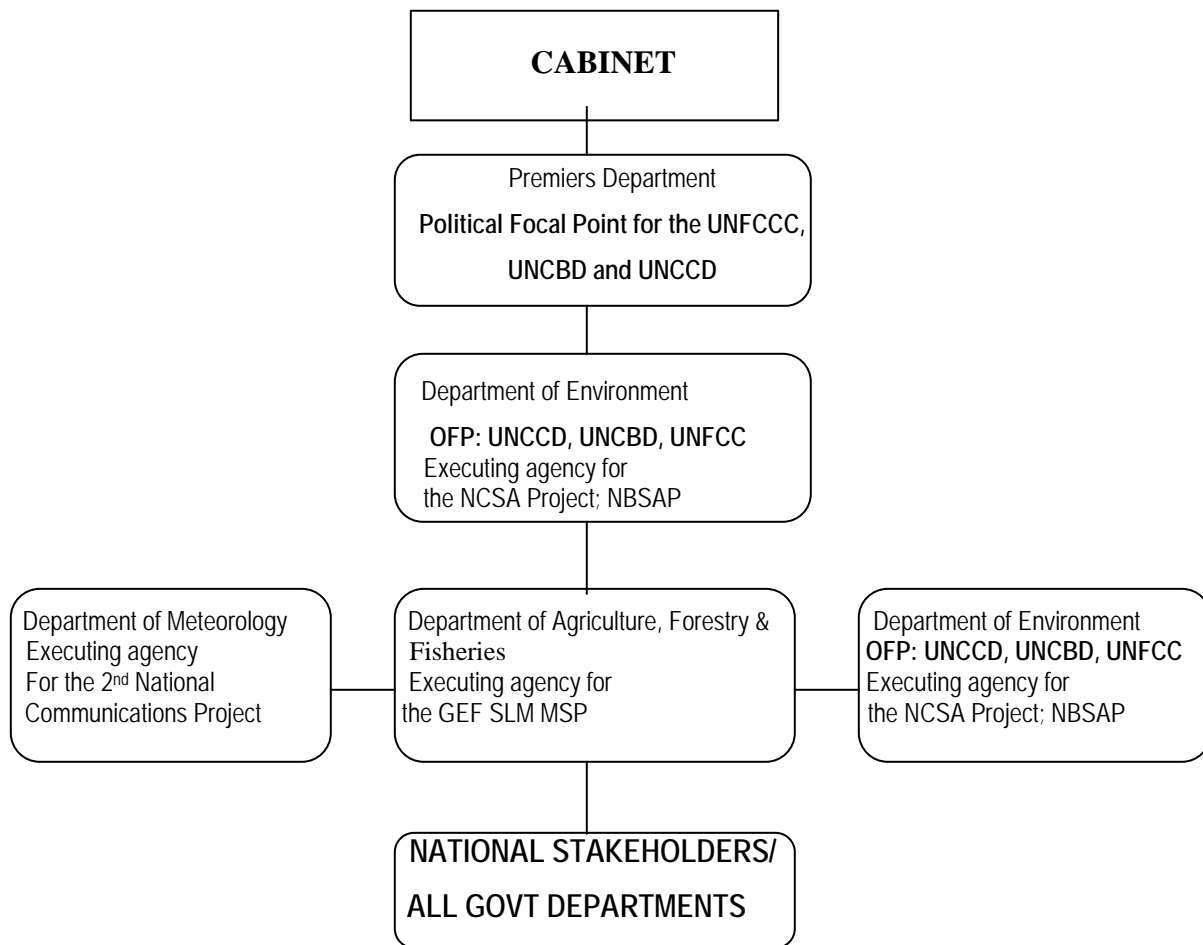
### **3. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Niue established the following institutional arrangements for the implementation of the UNCBD, UNCCD and UNFCCC.



The Premier's Department through the Department of External Affairs is the Political Focal Point for all the International Conventions including the Rio Conventions for Niue. The DOE as the main agency specifically established to oversee environmental work in Niue under the Environment Act is the Operational Focal Point for all the Rio Conventions. But to date, the Climate change projects are currently managed by the Meteorological Services while the Land Degradation projects are being managed through the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries since these Departments were managing the projects prior to the establishment of the DOE. The biodiversity projects and implementation of the CBD were also under the Environment Section when it was with the Department of Community Affairs, but were moved along with the whole Environment Unit when DOE was established.

For the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) as the financial mechanism for the Rio Conventions, the Premier's Department is also the Political Focal Point while the DOE is the Operational Focal Point. In terms of the implementation of the NCSA Project, the Department of Environment as the central environmental agency in the country is the lead agency for this project



## International and Regional Frameworks

Niue is a party to several international and regional multilateral environmental agreements which address similar issues and obligations such as the Rio Conventions. In most of these Conventions, DOE has been identified as the operational focal point while in some, other Departments are the focal points mainly due to the specific nature of these Conventions to those Departments, or in some cases, like the UNFCCC and UNCCD, they were ratified prior to the establishment of DOE, so the Departments are still performing these functions due to the limited staff and lack of expertise in the area by current DOE staff.

Convention	Date Signed	Focal Department
Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, 2000	Signed 30 Oct 2000 Ratified 17 Dec 2003	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Driftnets in the South Pacific, 1989, Wellington (Wellington Convention)	Ratified April 1997	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Convention for the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, 1986 Noumea (SPREP Convention)	Ratified 3 May 1990	Department of Environment
South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, Rarotonga, 1985	Signed 12 May 1986	Office for External Affairs
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants	Ratified 12 Mar 2002	Department of Environment
Treaty on Fisheries Between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the USA, 1987, Port Moresby	Ratified 28 Mar 2003 (10 year extension)	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Biosafety Protocol	Ratified 27 Feb 1996 Ratified 3 Jul 2002	Department of Environment
UN Convention on Combating Desertification	Ratified August 12 1998	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Kyoto Protocol	Ratified 27 Feb 1996 Ratified 6 May 1999	Meteorological Services
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982	Signed 1984 Acceded Sept 2003	Attorney General's Office
Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer 1985	New Zealand signed on Niue's behalf.	Department of Environment
Waigani Convention	Ratified 2003	Department of Environment
World Heritage Convention, 1972	Ratified 21 Dec 2000	Department of Community Affairs

## 4. GOALS AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE RIO CONVENTIONS

This section summaries the obligations and roles Parties like Niue are expected to fulfill as signatories to each of the 3 Rio Conventions.

### Convention on Biological Diversity

The **CBD** aims towards the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. It addresses all aspects of biological diversity: genetic resources, species, and ecosystems. It also recognizes the need to reconcile conservation and socio-economic development needs.

Parties to the CBD are requested as obligations to develop or adapt national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and to integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.

To achieve the objectives of the Convention in a more strategic and focused way the Convention the Conference of the Parties has initiated thematic programs of work in seven priority areas of biodiversity work: agricultural biodiversity; forest biodiversity; inland water biodiversity; marine and coastal biodiversity; dry land and sub-humid land biodiversity; and mountain biodiversity. More recently, the Conference of the Parties has developed an Island Biodiversity Program of Work which island states hope to be used as the over-arching framework for small island states' implementing and reporting requirements for the Convention.

In more recent years the Conference of the Parties has adopted the Cartagena protocol for progressing Parties' measures for implementing obligations on handling and use of biotechnologies and their products. Recently also, in relation to the UN Millennium Development Goals, the Convention's Conference of the Parties has adopted a 2010 global target and a framework of goals and targets to clarify and assess progress toward achieving this target

Each Contracting Party is obliged to, at intervals determined by the Conference of the Parties, submit reports on measures which it has taken for the implementation of the provisions of this Convention and their effectiveness.

Means to support developing countries in implementing the Convention include scientific and technical co-operation, access to financial and genetic resources, and the transfer of ecologically sound technologies. To this end, the Convention provides for a financial mechanism (the Global Environment Facility or GEF) and a subsidiary body on scientific, technical and technological advice. A Clearing House for Technical and Scientific Co-operation is also established to provide a means for identifying and disseminating information relevant to the implementation of the Convention.

## **Framework Convention on Climate Change**

The **UNFCCC** sets an 'ultimate objective' of stabilising atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases at a 'safe' level, namely a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. This should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. To achieve this objective, all parties have a general commitment to address climate change, adapt to its effects, and report on the actions they are taking to implement the Convention.

The Convention divides countries into 'Annex I Parties' and 'non-Annex I Parties'. Annex I Parties include developed countries and economies in transition. Non-Annex I Parties primarily include developing countries. Annex I Parties committed to adopting national policies and measures with the (non-legally binding) aim of returning their greenhouse-gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000. Niue is a non-Annex I country.

Parties to the 1997 **Kyoto Protocol** have agreed that Annex I countries will have a legally binding commitment to reduce their collective emissions of six greenhouse gases by at least 5% below 1990 levels in the period 2008 – 2012. The Protocol also establishes an emission trading regime and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The CDM allows the countries listed in the Annex I of the Convention to implement projects that will reduce the greenhouse-gas emissions in the developing countries, whereas the certified amounts of emission reduction generated through such projects can be accounted as a credit towards their overall emission reduction targets. Developing countries may participate in the CDM on a voluntary basis.

## **Convention on Combating Desertification**

The **UNCCD** aims to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in affected countries, particularly in Africa, with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. It recognises that achieving this objective will involve long term integrated strategies aimed at improving the productivity of land and conservation and management of land and water resources, with a view to improving living conditions, especially at the community level. Under the Convention, affected country parties undertake to give due priority to combating desertification and allocate adequate resources, address the underlying causes of desertification, with special attention to socio-economic factors providing an enabling policy and legislative environment, and promoting increased awareness and facilitating the participation of local populations and NGOs in efforts to combat desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. Developed country parties are committed to promote the mobilisation of financial and other resources to combat desertification, and encourage the mobilisation of private sector and non-governmental sources.

Under the Convention, affected developing country parties are required to prepare National Action Programmes for combating desertification. These plans elaborate long-term policies and strategies to combat desertification, mitigate the effects of drought, and prevent the degradation of land not yet affected. These plans should be formulated within the broader context of national policies for sustainable development.

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION OF RIO CONVENTION**

This section presents findings of the Thematic Assessments on the extent to which the Conventions have been implemented in Niue through the establishment of appropriate legal frameworks, integration of the environmental issues into the different sectoral plans and plans, institutional arrangements and projects implementation. This analysis served as a starting point for identification of capacity limitations and other shortcomings for the implementation of the Rio Conventions in Niue.

## Legal Frameworks, Policies and Plans

Since the ratification of the Rio Conventions, Niue has only enacted the Environment Act 2003, as the new piece of legislation aimed directly at providing the framework for the implementation of these Conventions. The Environment Act provides for the establishment of the Department of Environment as the focal agency for the implementation of all environmental agreements. The Act further provides for the establishment of an Environment Council to coordinate the work of Government Departments regarding the different requirements of the Conventions. Despite having the Environment Act, the Department of Environment does not have the necessary powers through regulations or national policies to regulate the necessary actions for Climate Change, biodiversity conservation and land degradation.

Niue has enacted other related Acts that support the implementation of the Rio Conventions such as the Forestry Act, and the Fisheries Act. Niue has also been able to secure funding from other international donors such as the SOPAC to develop a Coastal Management Act and Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.

For the other obligations to the Conventions, Niue has only been able to prepare its national plans and produced national reports for each Convention. These are the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for the CBD, the National Action Plan (NAP) for the UNCCD and the National Communication Reports for the UNFCCC. These were only possible through funding under the enabling activity window of the GEF as the financial mechanism for the Rio Conventions. Although all the plans have been produced for at least 4 years, none of plans have been implemented to date.

Limited work has been undertaken to integrate the actions identified in the NBSAP, NAP and National Communications Report issues into sectoral plans although the Niue Integrated Strategic Plan 2002-2007 has included the priority issues from the various National Plans for each Convention. Nevertheless, other national developmental priorities such as education, health, education and infrastructure continue to dominate the allocation of financial, technical and human resource allocations at the national level. Furthermore, the devastating impact of Cyclone Heta in 2004 on Niue's infrastructure and economy has lead to the reorganization of all its national priorities as efforts were directed on reconstruction of infrastructure such as the hospital, the main wharf, schools, family homes and government offices destroyed.

Despite the establishment of the Department of Environment, it's the staff have minimal to no interaction with the Conventions. All the staff currently involved with activities for each of the Conventions is recruited temporarily for projects such as the preparation of the NBSAP, the Biosafety Frameworks, and the National Communication Report to the UNFCCC and more recently, the Sustainable Land Management Project.

The Sustainable Land Use Management which is only just starting with its implementation is the first national project to be implemented that focuses on any of the national plans developed for the Rio Conventions. Other related projects addressing issues under the biodiversity and climate change such as community-based biodiversity conservation under the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Program, climate change related assessment projects such as PICCAP, Pacific Islands Renewable Energy Programme (PIREP), and International Water Project are all regionally based priorities rather than individual national priorities.

With the establishment of the GEF Small Grants Program in 2007, it is anticipated that more of the community-based actions identified in the NBSAP, the NAP and the National Communication Reports could now be financed and implemented.

## **Environmental Database**

No environmental database exists within Niue that could be used for the collection and storage of environmental information collected and compiled as part of the Rio Conventions work. A biodiversity database was initially developed as part of the NBSAP add-on project but was never completed due to the absence of a capacity within the DOE. As such, the information collected during the NBSAP was not properly stored and is only recollected when the national reports to the COP or other purposes are needed. Climate change information is collected and stored in the same way, while the Land Degradation issues will be compiled into a Geographic Information System as part of the Sustainable Land Management project. Training will also be provided to local staff for the long term management of this database.

Other Departments within Government such as the Department of Justice, Lands and Survey have the capabilities to collate and store geographic information systems, while the Statistics Department has the capabilities to collate and store hard data. Nevertheless, these Departments have not effectively utilized to date for management of environmental information and data.

## **Research and Monitoring**

Niue has limited capacity for undertaking detailed scientific research on biodiversity, climate change or land use. This is evident in the use of outside consultants for most of the research for projects in the past. Although, the consultations with stakeholders noted that there is capacity to undertake some of the research work, this capacity is only with the senior management staff that do not have time for research work.

Biodiversity research related to the implementation of the NBSAP have only focus of target species such as the coconut crab and pacific pigeon which are critical to the local livelihood and were deemed threatened after the devastation of Cyclone Ofa and Cyclone Heta. An Invasive Species Study and Report was conducted after Cyclone Heta. Other biodiversity specific research includes the National Forestry Inventory currently underway and the regular Fisheries surveys of the marine environment.

Climate change research has been conducted for the greenhouse gases inventory and those related to the preparation of the National Communication Reports to the UNFCCC. More comprehensive research and monitoring of climate change cannot be done due to the unavailability of equipment and technical capacity in country.

The Forestry Inventory is currently underway in Niue is undertaken by researchers from outside Niue with the locals receiving training on areas such as GIS training, and some plant identification. The main technical research components of the Sustainable Land Management Project will be provided by consultants from outside Niue, but will be providing training for Niue junior staff in areas such as GIS.

The major issues with relating to the lack of research on biodiversity issues within Niue are the limited available human resources at the junior to middle management level. Those with technical capacities are mostly in the senior official positions thus do not have the enough time to undertake the simple research required as they are often tied to management and administration work. Additionally, there is limited to no available equipment to effectively undertake the work.

## **Public Awareness and Education**



There is extensive experience and capacity within Niue for the areas of public awareness and education on environmental issues covered by the Rio Conventions. Public awareness campaigns related to each of the Rio Conventions on biodiversity, invasive species, climate change, and threatened species were all coordinated and implemented by local personnel with communities and schools. The limitation of public awareness and education programmes is the availability of funding and coordination amongst the relevant agencies such as Department of Education, Community Affairs Department and the Operational Focal Points for each Convention.

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THEMATIC ISSUES ON CBD

Information used to determine the main environmental issues and the main capacity gaps and needs were derived from the following past national reports, assessments, and project proposals;

- NCSA stock-taking report - 2007
- Niue National Biodiversity and Action Strategy Program (NBSAP) (2002)
- Niue's 3<sup>rd</sup> National Report to the CBD - 2005
- Report on a Capacity Needs Assessment for In-situ Conservation in Niue – 2007
- Report on the Analysis of Environment related legislation of Niue – 2007
- Report on an Analysis of Coastal Fisheries Problems in Niue – 2007
- Niue National Assessment Report on Strategic Sustainable Development – 2007

Since Niue's ratification of the UNCBD in 1996, the country continues to make efforts to meet its obligations. To date the only actions taken towards the implementation of the CBD are the establishment of the Department of Environment under the Environment Act, and projects funded by GEF such as the preparation of the NBSAP, the Biosafety Frameworks and the Huvalu Conservation Area under the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme. In all cases, the technical work on these projects were undertaken by overseas consultants with advisory and coordination roles provided by the Steering Committees made up of Niue public servants and NGO's.

The stakeholder analysis component of the NCSA and the National Reports to the CBD by Niue identified the priority focal areas for actions over the next five years as being

- Invasive species

- In-situ conservation
- Traditional knowledge.

Despite these areas being identified as priorities, no actions have been taken to address them apart from including invasive species and in-situ conservation as part of proposed GEF PAS proposals under consideration for funding.

## 7. CAPACITY GAPS IN THE CBD IMPLEMENTATION

The capacity gaps identified through the biodiversity thematic assessment were:

### Systemic Level

- Absence of National Biodiversity Policy and appropriate regulations to support the implementation of the NBSAP priority actions such as the conservation of biodiversity, protection of traditional knowledge, controlling invasive species and environmental impact assessment makes it hard to source funding or staff for activities under these areas, or seek collaboration amongst other agencies.
- Lack of Financial Resources within the National Government. All the projects within the DOE are funded via external Aid with Government contributing only the operational costs for the DOE office.
- Absence of a high level coordination mechanism to ensure collaboration amongst the Departments on the implementation of NBSAP. Although the Environment Act calls for the establishment of the Environment Council, this has not been activated yet. The National Steering Committee for the NBSAP is the only multisectoral coordination group in existence but its functions are only limited to the preparation of the NBSAP.

### Institutional

- Lack of staff within the DOE as the focal point for the CBD to coordinate the implementation of NBSAP. The present Biodiversity Office within DOE was only responsible for the preparation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Report to the COP, but now that the position is a permanent officer within the DOE, the functions could now be expanded to coordinating the implementation of the NBSAP.
- Absence of an information management system to facilitate the collection, storage and dissemination of information regarding the CBD. According to DOE, funds from the NBSAP add-on project were used

to produce a biodiversity database and a clearinghouse mechanism for Niue, but these were not completed, thus the information collected during the NBSAP are still stored in reports and files.

- Limited administrative and technical resources amongst the Departments to undertake the necessary work such as research and monitoring of biodiversity, biodiversity database, and preparation of awareness materials.

### **Individual Level**

- Limited technical capacity within the country at the middle management and junior level to conduct biodiversity research, establish protected areas or community-based conservation areas. Of the other priority biodiversity focal areas, there was no expertise available on island on invasive species and traditional knowledge. Some capacity does exist in the conduct of biodiversity survey as evident in the survey for the threatened species, marine biodiversity and the current forestry inventory.
- There are currently no programmes for short term training or tertiary level qualification on the biodiversity priority areas although training programmes do exist within the region for these areas. The upskilling and capacity building for staff in these areas are recognized as being an integral component if and when projects are funded for each focal area.

## 8. IMPLEMENTATION OF THEMATIC ISSUES FOR UNFCCC

Information used to determine the main environmental issues and the main capacity gaps and needs were derived from the following past national reports, assessments, and project proposals;

- NCSA stock-taking report – 2007
- 1<sup>st</sup> National Communications Report to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Report on consultations undertaken to develop an adaptation project for Niue under the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) Project – 2007
- Stock-take and proposal developed and presented to the UNDP and GEF to secure funds for Niue to undertake its UNFCCC 2<sup>nd</sup> National Communications.
- Report on the Analysis of Environment related legislation of Niue - 2007
- IWP Reports
- PIREP REPORT
- PIGARREP REPORT
- Stakeholder consultations

Niue ratified the UNFCCC in February 1996 and the Kyoto Protocol in May 1999. Since its ratification, Niue has completed its 1<sup>st</sup> National Communication Report and is currently preparing its 2<sup>nd</sup> National Communications Report. Since Niue is not included in the Least Developed Country category, it did not receive financial assistance to prepare a National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA), and as a consequence, no NAPA or equivalent national plan exists for climate change in Niue. The 1<sup>st</sup> National Communication Report identified capacity building needs and identified priority focal areas for actions in Niue.

To date, the only implementation actions For the UNFCCC in Niue have been regionally lead projects on the preparation of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Communications Report under the Pacific Islands Climate Change Assistance Programme (PICCAP) and preparation of information on the Pacific Islands Renewable Energy Project (PIREP). Niue is currently preparing the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Communications Report to the UNFCCC using local knowledge gained from the SPREP lead PICCAP.

Niue does not have any legal frameworks, policy or a plan of actions for mitigation or adaptation measures for climate change. It is currently included as part of several regional project proposals addressing climate

change. They are the Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Energy Project (PIGGAREP), Implementing Sustainable Integrated Water Resource and wastewater management (IWRM) and Accelerating the Use of Renewable energy Technologies. Niue is also working with the EU and SPC in developing a Coastal Management Programme as an adaptation measure to climate change. All projects will address several of the pertinent capacity building issues for Niue including, the establishment of a Climate Policy, an Environmental Impact Assessment Regulation, a Water Resources Policy, and a Renewable Energy Plan.

## **9. CAPACITY GAPS IN THE UNFCCC IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Systemic:**

1. Absence of National Climate Legislation, Policy and National Adaptation Programme of Action.
2. Lack of Financial Resources within the National Government to address climate issues
3. Limited understanding at Political Level and Senior Government Officials on UNFCCC obligations
4. There is no institutional coordination mechanism for the implementation of the Convention apart from the NSC for specific CC projects.

### **Institutional:**

1. Absences of a dedicated official or a unit within the Government structure to coordinate the implementation of the Convention. The current function of servicing the UNFCCC is done by the project officers of the Meteorology Department recruited as project officers for the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Communications Report to the UNFCCC.
2. Limited administrative and technical resources available have been funded through GEF project via the UNFCCC. These are not sufficient to adequately fulfill the requirements of the Convention.
3. Absence of technical equipment for the collection, monitoring and storage of information within the Convention Focal Point and the main implementing Department.
4. Lack of coordination amongst the Department of Meteorological Services and DOE as the main agencies responsible for the implementation of the UNFCCC.

**Individual:**

1. Limited technical capacity within the country at the middle management and junior level
2. Absence of specific projects that can improve technical capacity on the collection, storage, analysis and dissemination of information regarding the convention
3. Lack of understanding amongst the general population on Convention
4. Absence of institutional frameworks to facilitate long term collaboration amongst the relevant agencies on the implementation of the Convention

## 10. IMPLEMENTATION OF THEMATIC ISSUES FOR UNCCD

Information used to determine the main environmental issues and the main capacity gaps and needs were derived from the following past national reports, assessments, and project proposals;

- NCSA stock-taking report - 2007
- Niue National Action Plan (NAP) for Combating Land Degradation and Drought
- Niue's 3<sup>rd</sup> National Report on the implementation of the UNCCD - 2006
- Project Proposal for the GEF SIDS/LDCs Capacity Building for and Mainstreaming of SLM - Medium Sized Project 2007
- Report on the Analysis of Environment related legislation of Niue – 2007
- Niue National Assessment Report on Strategic Sustainable Development – 2007
- Stakeholder Consultations

Niue ratified the UNCCD in 1998 and completed its National Action Plan in 2004 and has submitted its 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> National Reports to the COP. The 3<sup>rd</sup> National Report to the UNCCD in 2006 documented progress, gaps and challenges in addressing land degradation and drought. Priority actions identified in the NAP are now being implemented via a GEF SIDS/LDCs Portfolio Project on Sustainable Land Management (SLM) to build capacity for the mainstreaming of SLM.

## 11. CAPACITY BUILDING ISSUES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNCCD

### Systemic:

- Absence of National Land Degradation Policy and Appropriate Regulations
- Lack of Financial Resources within the National Government
- Limited understanding of Political Level and Senior Government Officials
- There is no institutional coordination mechanism for the implementation of the Convention

### Institutional

- Absences of a dedicated unit within the Government on UNCCD
- Limited administrative and technical resources
- Limited budgetary allocations for land management work

## Individual Level

- Limited technical capacity within the country at the middle management and junior level
- Absence of a clearinghouse mechanism on available training for locals on technical matters relating to the Convention
- Lack of understanding amongst the general population on Convention

## 12. CONCLUSION

The Thematic Assessment highlighted the lack of actions on the implementation work in Niue for all the 3 Rio Conventions. As highlighted in previous sections, the only actions taken by Niue towards implementation are the establishment of the Environment Act. Additionally the preparation of national plans and national reports to the Conventions was possible through GEF funding.

This lack of implementation further highlights the capacity development issues that will always be faced by smaller island states such as Niue when it comes to fulfilling its obligations to regional and international conventions. These are

1. There will always be a shortage of human resources in countries that could be trained and retained over the long run to manage programmes. As demonstrated in Niue, staff can be trained in certain fields but this will not guarantee that they will stay either within the Department or the country for a long time where there is net loss in migration as more people move to NZ.
2. The financial resources available at the national level for environmental programmes will always be hard as what limited funds available - in the case of Niue, approximately NZ\$15m annually- will need to be shared amongst all the needed components of Government. Additionally when catastrophes strike such as the devastation of Cyclone Ofa in the early 1990s and Cyclone Heta in 2004, the resources are stretched even more to accommodate reconstruction purposes.
3. Existing staff dealing with environmental issues are overstretched in performing multiple functions that it is very hard to deal with only one specific Convention. As is the case with the DOE, one staff is usually charged with addressing more issues ranging from capacity building, to public awareness, to waste management to biodiversity assessments.



Therefore, it is anticipated that these will continue to exist in the future for Niue, but the challenge will therefore have to be, how confronted with these limitations can the country forged forward. It is for this that the following approaches will need to be addressed.

#### Systemic Level

1. Establishment of the Environment Council as the higher level coordination body that will facilitate the collaboration amongst the different Departments for the implementation of the Rio Conventions. The council or similar group should have the Political Focal point, the operational focal point and main line Departments implementing each Convention.
2. Government has to make a commitment to recruiting long term positions for each of the Conventions. Those staff should be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the developed national plans and the appropriated national legal frameworks.

#### Institutional Level

1. To address the limited staff and lack of expertise, more concerted effort needs to be invested in the pooling together of the limited resources available in Niue and maximizing there use. That is, instead of each Convention working on establishing its own database, it should work with the DJLS and Statistics Department with the long term expertise and resources to assist with the collection, documenting and storing of information. Similarly, public awareness and education should also be closely linked with the DE, and the Department of Community Affairs whom deal directly with schools and communities. Also interested Stakeholders are the NGOs and CBOs.
2. More effort should be put into the preparation of project proposals to implement the actions identified in the NBSAP and the NAP while a NAPA should be produced.

#### Individual

1. As noted in the assessments, expertise does exist in some of the fields but these national experts do hold senior management positions so do not have the time to conduct the necessary studies or implement the required work. It is therefore encouraged to continue with the existing system whereby senior staff should be allowed to conduct this work rather than recruiting outside consultants when possible.

2. The gap between the senior junior staff was noted as being significant with Senior staff mostly university graduates while the junior staff range from trade certificate holders to school leavers. This poses the problem on the lack of capacity. As was suggested by several of the stakeholders, training via on-the job or overseas working experience of short term training could be provided to upskill the junior staff so they can perform some of the required work. But in some cases, specialized work will always be dependent on outside expertise when funding is available.

This information will be incorporated into the cross-cutting report and used to form the basis for the NCSA Action Plan.

1. Niue Government; 1993, Niue State of the Environment Report, SPREP
2. DAFF, 2004, Sustainable Land Management for Niue GEF Proposal
3. DAFF, 2004, National Action Plan for Land Degradation
4. 1998, Coral Pasisi, Capacity Building for Environmental Management in the Pacific. Country Report for Niue.
5. 1998, DAFF, Niue National Forest Policy
6. 2007 Census, Department of Statistics
7. 2003-2008, Niue Integrated Strategic Plan, Government of Niue
8. Ernest Nemaia, 2002, Niue's National Report on the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.
9. Niue Environment Department 2001, Niue National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

#### Rio Convention National Reports

UNCBD: [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)

1. First National Report
2. Second National Report
3. Third National Report

UNCCD: [www.unccd.int](http://www.unccd.int)

1. First National Report
2. Second National Report
3. Third National Report

UNFCCC: [www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int)

1. Initial Communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

#### Websites

[www.gefweb.org](http://www.gefweb.org)