

Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006-2015

(i) Scope

In this framework, Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs') refers to American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna.

The timeframe for this Framework is 2006-2015. This Framework builds on *The Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change, Climate Variability and Sea Level Rise 2000-2004*

In this Pacific regional framework, climate change refers to any change in climate over time both as a result of human activity and natural variability.¹

I. Preamble

The adverse effects of climate change and sea level rise present significant risks to the sustainable development of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs') and the long-term effects of climate change may threaten the very existence of some of them. This was agreed to generally by Small Island Developing States together with the international community most recently in the *Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States*.

PICTs' priorities and needs in the area of climate change are reflected in international documents such as the Mauritius Strategy. These are also reflected in national communications, the outcomes of the UNFCCC Conferences of the Parties and the outcomes of related international meetings.

¹ Refer to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the United Nations Framework Convention definition of climate change.

At the regional level, PICTs' priorities and needs have been reiterated for over a decade in relevant documents such as Forum Leaders Communiqués, regional policy frameworks and related action plans together with the strategic plans of the regional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

At the national level, PICTs' are also taking action to address climate change through their national sustainable development strategies or their equivalent which are linked to national budgetary and planning processes.

PICTs' recognize their commitment to sustainable development is a national responsibility but realise that this cannot be achieved without development partner support. Within this context the Framework identifies broad priorities for PICTs'. It provides a strategic platform not only for use by policy and decision makers at all levels, but also for the development and strengthening of partnerships for implementation of national and regional initiatives.

The Framework runs from 2006-2015 and is consistent with the timeframes of the *Millennium Declaration*, the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* and the subsequent work of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. It does not create legal rights or impose obligations under international law.

The Framework is intended to promote links with, but in no way supercedes more specific regional and national instruments and plans across specific sectors that link to weather and climate including water: agriculture; energy; forestry and land use; health; coastal zone management; marine ecosystems; ocean management; tourism and transport.

Addressing the issues of climate change requires an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach. Furthermore, a strategic programmatic approach is required rather than an increase in stand-alone project initiatives.

II. Pacific Context

PICTs' experience a high level of risk from the effects of extreme weather and climate variability. Climate models suggest the tropical Pacific region will continue to warm. This warming has the potential to alter and indeed increase such risks, through changing the frequency and/or intensity of extreme weather or climate variability phenomena or through accelerated sea-level rise. The impacts of these climate events will exacerbate already stressed marine, freshwater and terrestrial environments.

Reducing the risks associated with the impacts of extreme weather and climate variability is a fundamental developmental challenge faced by PICTs'. This must be urgently addressed in order to contribute to improving livelihoods, economic wellbeing and health as well as maintaining biodiversity and culture.

An integrated and multi-stakeholder approach that considers the complete cycle of interlinked causes and effects, within the context of risk management across all sectors, is vital. A high priority is the need to develop and strengthen community-centered initiatives.

III. Vision

Pacific island people, their livelihoods and the environment resilient to the risks and impacts of climate change.

IV. Goal

Ensure Pacific island people build their capacity to be resilient to the risks and impacts of climate change with the key objective to deliver on the expected outcomes under the following Principles:

- implementing adaptation measures;
- governance and decision making;
- improving understanding of climate change;
- education, training and awareness;
- contributing to global greenhouse gas reduction;
- and,
- partnerships and cooperation.

V. Principles

Principle 1. Implementing adaptation measures

Building resilience through adaptation to climate change, climate variability and extreme weather events has been identified as the key priority for PICTs'. All PICTs' agree that they are already witnessing the adverse effects of climate change. Atoll states in particular believe that their very survival is threatened.

The ecological fragility, economic and social vulnerability, and the remoteness of many Pacific Island countries makes recovery from extreme weather events very difficult.

Adaptation now will greatly increase our capacity to better adapt to future climate change impacts. Appropriate adaptation measures using a multi-stakeholder approach need to be integrated into national/sectoral sustainable development strategies or their equivalent.

PICTs' will encourage adaptation measures based on the principles of risk management and where this is not possible the "no regrets" or precautionary approach with a focus on improving the livelihoods of its people including safety and security.

Expected Outcomes by 2015:

- 1.1 Adaptation measures to the adverse effects of climate change developed and implemented at all levels.
- 1.2 Identification of vulnerable priority areas/sectors and appropriate adaptation measures using available and appropriate information recognizing that such information may be incomplete.
- 1.3 Adaptation measures in vulnerable priority areas supported by existing data sets and traditional knowledge, or new data developed in some instances as necessary.
- 1.4 Appropriate adaptation measures integrated into national/sectoral sustainable development strategies or their equivalent and linked to the budgeting process.

Principle 2. Governance and decision making

PICTs' recognize that they have a national responsibility for addressing the risks and effects of climate change in the context of their national sustainable development strategies and reflecting principles of sustainable development and good governance.

All stakeholders have a role to play in developing individual and collective resilience through adapting, preventing and/or mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. Climate change and its effects is a shared responsibility, which also requires effective partnership with all relevant stakeholders in decision-making and implementation of strategies and actions at all levels.

Recognizing the presence of limited technical and financial resources and institutional capacity at the national and regional levels, collaboration and partnerships between CROP agencies in support of national efforts, consistent with the Pacific Leaders' vision, is critical, harnessing key disciplinary skills and expertise across the region.

Good governance ensures the adoption of core principles of accountability and transparency by all stakeholders and at all levels, which is critical for cost effective adaptation and greenhouse gas reduction activities against the risks of climate change.

Expected Outcomes by 2015:

- 2.1 Climate change considerations mainstreamed into national policies, planning processes, plans and decision-making at all levels and across all sectors.
- 2.2 Partnerships and organizational arrangements between government agencies, private sector, civil society, community and other stakeholders strengthened.
- 2.3 CROP agency partnerships coordinated, harmonized and strengthened to ensure country and outcome focused delivery of services.
- 2.4 Good governance by all stakeholders in climate change activities management at regional, national and local levels strengthened.

Principle 3. Improving our understanding of climate change

Better understanding of climate change, variability and extreme weather events is needed to inform local, national and regional responses. This will mean enhancing human resource capacity for generating, analyzing and managing climate related data sets; sustaining and upgrading existing observation and application systems; developing and strengthening technical data sets and tools for climate observations; establishing baseline data in different sectors and maintaining the collection of the latest information on sea level rise.

As a basis for improving our understanding of climate change, is the ongoing need to engage research into improving understanding in the variations, circulations and climatic patterns in the Pacific region.

Translating climate change science into applicable information products through user-friendly materials and tools is necessary to inform the decision making process at all levels.

Expected Outcomes by 2015:

- 3.1 Existing meteorological, hydrological, oceanographic and terrestrial institutional capacity including data collection systems sustained and upgraded.
- 3.2 Technical data sets integrated with relevant climatic, environmental, social and economic information and data sets, and traditional knowledge for risk management.
- 3.3 Analytical frameworks, models and tools for projections of regional climate change and variability, risk assessment and management strengthened.
- 3.4 Development, strengthen where necessary datasets and information required to underpin, strengthen and monitor vulnerable priority areas, sectors and adaptation measures.

Principle 4. Education, Training and Awareness

PICTs' capacity to use economic, scientific and traditional knowledge to monitor, assess and predict environmental, social and economic risks and effects of climate change needs strengthening. This is critical for developing and implementing viable and sustainable national programmes on cost effective adaptation and greenhouse gas reduction measures.

Concerted efforts need to be undertaken to enhance human capacity in the assessment of the risks and impacts of climate change, climate variability and extreme weather events. A pool of informed resource persons conversant with development and application of practical steps in adaptation tools and methods is critical. Increased awareness and understanding of risks and effects of climate change is particularly important at the community level to increase their resilience.

Expected Outcomes by 2015:

- 4.1 Strengthened human capacity to monitor and assess environmental, social and economic risks and effects of climate change.
- 4.2 Strengthened human capacity to identify, analyse and implement cost effective adaptation measures as well as greenhouse gas reduction measures and creation of a pool of informed resource persons conversant with development of practical steps in adaptation tools and methods.
- 4.3 Strengthened human capacity to identify and integrate economic, scientific and traditional knowledge into adaptation and greenhouse gas reduction practices.
- 4.4 Better informed public on climate change issues.

Principle 5 Contributing to global greenhouse gas reduction

PICTs' contributions to the total global emission of greenhouse gases are insignificant compared to the rest of the international community. Nonetheless, PICTs' wish to contribute to the global effort to reduce emissions. As part of their national policies, PICTs' will promote cost effective measures to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions, including increased energy efficiency and increased use of appropriate low carbon and renewable energy technologies.

There may be the opportunity to work with developed countries on the Kyoto Protocol Clean Development Mechanism projects to support these efforts. Complementing the effort will be national plans and policies to ban the use of ozone depleting substances.

Expected Outcomes by 2015:

- 5.1 Energy efficiency actions and cost effective technologies promoted and implemented.
- 5.2 Cost effective renewable energy technologies and local sources promoted, shared and implemented.
- 5.3 Commitments met on ozone depleting substances.
- 5.4 Clean Development Mechanism initiatives developed and implemented, where appropriate.

Principle 6. Partnerships and Cooperation

Partnerships and cooperation provide an enabling environment and are an essential part of PICTs' efforts to build resilience to the adverse effects of climate change.

PICTs' will continue to advocate for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and to advance adaptation internationally. Networks and partnerships to inform policy development for harmonized regional, national and local responses to climate change is necessary.

Additional resources will need to be accessed through multilateral and bilateral funding. One of the roles of regional organizations is to support national efforts to access this assistance and to coordinate existing and new innovative projects and programmes, including the *Pacific Partnership Initiative for Adaptation to Climate Change* launched by Pacific leaders at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Efforts will be taken to ensure climate change partnerships are strategic and well coordinated.

Expected Outcomes by 2015:

- 6.1 Existing and emerging international partnerships for the Pacific islands region on climate change and related issues strengthened and established.
- 6.2 Enhanced coordination of regional action on climate change issues.
- 6.3 Climate change related assistance from development partners coordinated and harmonized to maximize benefits to PICTs’.
- 6.4 Access by PICTs’ to secure increased resources from funding mechanisms related to climate change instruments optimized.
- 6.5 Promote significant international support through advocacy for further reduction in greenhouse gases and securing resources for adaptation.

VI. Implementation Strategy

PICTs’ recognise that the implementation of this Framework, the *Mauritius Strategy, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation*, as well as the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the *Millennium Declaration*, are mutually reinforcing.

The implementation of this Framework will be further elaborated in the *Pacific Islands Action Plan on Climate Change 2006-2015*. It will require more focused and substantially increased effort, by PICTs’ and appropriate support from their regional organisations and the international community. PICTs’ recognize that each country has primary responsibility for its own development and that the role of national policies, development strategies and the allocation of dedicated financial resources cannot be overemphasized.

VII. Monitoring Progress and Updating this Framework

Targets and indicators will be established within the Action Plan linked to the Framework and set at the appropriate levels. The framework will be subjected to a mid-term review in 2010 to determine overall progress.

Evaluating progress towards achieving the outcomes of this Framework will be measured every two years against the agreed national and regional indicators with the support of regional organizations and the international community. This will require PICTs' to identify progress towards achieving the principles contained in this Framework, and to identify emerging gaps requiring priority action and adjustment of priorities in future. The regional organizations will where necessary provide support and a coordinating role, for regional and international reporting.