



CLIMATE CHANGE MATTERS

Issue 5 — September 2012

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"The Pacific Environment—sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures"



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ISSN: 2227-6947

Director's Note



*Dr Netatua Pelesikoti,
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Dear Readers

SPREP is executing two important regional climate change projects (1) the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) with a goal to reduce vulnerability and to increase adaptive capacity to the adverse effects of climate change in key Development Sectors identified by 14 participating countries and territories in the Pacific:

- Coastal Zone Management
- Food Production and Food Security
- Water Resource Management

(2) The Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Energy Programme (PIGGAREP) with the goal to reduce the growth of greenhouse gas emissions in the Pacific through adopting and implementing renewable energy (RE) technologies.

Both projects are funded by the Global Environment Facility and implemented through the United Nations Development Programme Office in Samoa.

In the past year PACC welcomed in another donor, the Australian Agency for International

Development (AusAID), bringing in an additional \$7.3million and is currently called PACC+ (Plus).

Both projects recently carried out their Multipartite Review (MPR) Meetings and, while notable progresses were reported by the countries and partners, both meetings highlighted the need to integrate gender considerations into every aspect of the project.

Some countries reported that gender integration is a key decision-making tool already used but it was noted that these good approaches needed to be reflected in reporting of outcomes as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Gender integration or mainstreaming in adaptation and mitigation projects or programmes is within the premise that men and women of all age groups and from all walks of life are impacted differently by climate change due to varying response capacity, roles and responsibilities.

Enjoy reading this new edition of *Climate Change Matters*.

About Us

SPREP's Climate Change Division (CCD) is made up of three programmes:

- (1) Adaptation;
- (2) Mitigation; and
- (3) Policy and Science.

The work of the CCD is directed by the SPREP Strategic Plan 2011-2015 based on the climate change priorities of SPREP Members and consistent with the *Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006-2015* (PIFACC) and other relevant and approved policy drivers such as the Pacific Plan and the Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Management.

SPREP's three (broad) climate change strategic priorities for 2011-2015 are:

1. Implementing adaptation measures;
2. Improving members' capacity, knowledge and understanding of climate change, and risk reduction; and contributing to global greenhouse gas reduction
3. Contributing to global greenhouse gas reduction

For more information visit our website at <http://www.sprep.org/Climate-Change/climate-change-about-us>

Nauru hosts 3rd Multipartite Review Meeting

7 Aug 2012



Participants in Nauru for the 3rd Multipartite Review Meeting for the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project

Acting Minister for Commerce, Industry and Environment of Nauru, Honourable Dominic Tabuna, shared the significant achievement of the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project for the people of Nauru as he officially opened the project's recent third Multipartite Review Meeting.

"Our Pacific Island Countries and Territories, through the PACC Project, are showing signs we can promote and build resilience at every level, whether it be my role as a policy and decision maker for the government or to the mother fetching potable water from her water tank without stress on the quality or ability of accessing it during long hot days," said Hon. Tabuna.

[View full article](#)

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PACC review meeting highlights move to measure impacts

14 August 2012

The Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project (PACC) recent third Multipartite Review Meeting concluded with the hope that the recommendations made will contribute to the further enhancement of PACC's overall impact at national level.

Discussions highlighted the need for a shift in the approach by PACC from project demonstration to being seen as an important part of the larger climate change programmes of intervention at the country level. This means going beyond simply delivering key project outputs, to contributing to broader changes at the national level.

[View full article](#)



PACC Regional Project Manager
Mr Taito Nakalevu

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Pacific Journalists learning how to report on climate change issues

22 August 2012



SPREP Climate Change Adaptation Adviser Ms Diane McFadzien (right) talking with participants

Pacific journalists attending the 43rd Pacific Islands Leader's Forum in the Cook Islands advanced their knowledge and understanding on Climate Change issues and learned how to convey them to their audience in their respective countries.

The training conducted by officials from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) gives a clear understanding of what climate change is about and its impact upon the people in the Pacific region.

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The PACC Project consists of 14 member countries; it is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). It is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Australian Agency for International Development with support from United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Climate Change Capacity Development (C3D+) Programme.



PIGGAREP focuses on strategic way forward

27 August 2012

The fifth multipartite review meeting for the Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Energy Project (PIGGAREP) was held in Savaii, Samoa from 20-24 August 2012.

After the opening prayer delivered by Reverend Suiava Gogo, Dr. Netatua Pelesikoti, Director of the Climate Change Division at the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), welcomed participants and partners, saying, "The development of renewable energy is key to achieving your national development goals, while at the same time demonstrating our commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions." [View full article](#)



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PIGGAREP emphasises gender during review meeting

27 August 2012

The need for disaggregated gender data was highlighted as a key issue among discussions held at the fifth Multipartite Review (MPR) meeting for the Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Energy Project (PIGGAREP) in Savaii, Samoa.

Commenting in an attempt to increase the focus on women, Ms. Nileema Noble, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative, said, "This remains a significant gap in the project that needs to be addressed immediately, going beyond training to ensure that disaggregated responses are put into design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation processes." [View full article](#)



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Cook Islands gear up for upcoming climate change negotiations

21 August 2012



Participants at the negotiations training with Mr Ewan Cameron (far left) and SPREP Climate Change Adaptation Adviser Ms Diane McFadzien (back row)

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme assisted the Cook Islands government officials as they prepare for the upcoming United Nations Framework on Climate Change 18th Conference of Parties (COP18) Meeting scheduled later in the year.

Officials from Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management and National Environment Service were part of the workshop held on 20th August.

SPREP Climate Change Adaptation Advisor, Ms Diane McFadzien, shared lessons learned and experiences from

past climate change negotiations, and tips and tools on how national delegations can equip themselves.

"The key to effective negotiation lies with advanced preparation," advised Ms McFadzien.

She added when at such COP meetings, delegates need to access official agenda and documentation as early as possible ensuring enough time to analyse and digest what can be a lot of information.

Mr Ewan Cameron, a past Cook Island delegate to UNFCCC events (COP 17) was also on hand to provide first hand experience to new comers to the negotiations process. Ms Nanette Woonton, SPREP's Media and Public Relations officer was also present.

Key discussions included steps delegations may take to prepare for the meeting.

Ms Anna Tiraa from Office of the Prime Minister has taken these steps on board and is now setting up a follow up meeting to work through some of the preparatory steps that were identified.

The workshop was held at the request of the Cook Islands government as part of the technical policy support SPREP provides to countries attending the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Meetings, prior to the Ad Hoc Working Groups to take place in Bangkok, in September.

For more information, contact Climate Change Adaptation Adviser at dianem@sprep.org

Drought warning issued for Tonga

23 August 2012

The central and northern islands of the Kingdom of Tonga have been experiencing below average rainfall through the winter months, with some islands now experiencing major deficiencies in water availability.

The Tonga Meteorological Service has issued a drought warning for Ha'apai, Vava'u and the Niu'a's. In these areas the rainfall for June and July 2012 has been normal, and for July these deficiencies have been extremely low. According to the Tonga

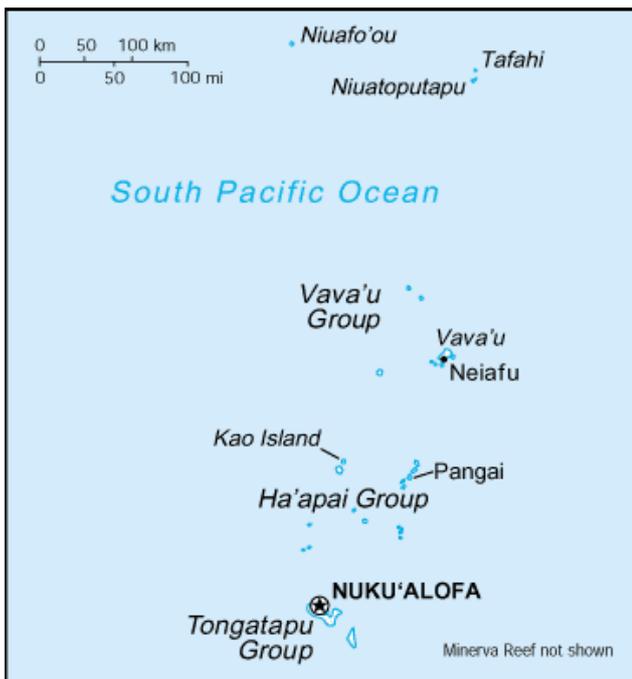
Meteorological Service, drought conditions are expected to continue for the next three months.

People relying on water tanks in these areas are advised to manage their water storage and usage carefully as below average rainfall is expected to continue from September to November 2012. This is due to the increasing risk of El Nino conditions that are known to cause less rainfall than normal over the Kingdom. Normal rainfall is expected for Tongatapu and E'ua for these months.

Tonga Red Cross reports that on Niuatoputapu Island, drinking water will run out if there is no rain in the next two weeks. Some of the water tanks on the island are already empty, and the high school is the only source of drinking water. There is accessible and sufficient ground water on Niuatoputapu therefore all communities on the island have a good chance of getting through the next few months before the summer rains arrive.

The World Bank-funded building reconstruction following the 2009 tsunami includes a new 3000 litre water tank for 74 houses in the new settlement built to replace those destroyed.

On Niufo'ou the concern is greater as there is no ground water available and the population depends entirely on collected rain water. If there is no rain in the next two weeks there will be no drinking or cooking water. There is a small swampy lake on Niufo'ou however it is not suitable for drinking and bathing. Water is likely to be shipped in to ensure islanders survive this drought.



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More extreme swings of the South Pacific convergence zone due to green house warming

23 August 2012

LETTER

doi:10.1038/nature11358

More extreme swings of the South Pacific convergence zone due to greenhouse warming

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The South Pacific convergence zone (SPCZ) is the Southern Hemisphere's most expansive and persistent rain band, extending from the equatorial western Pacific Ocean southeastward towards French Polynesia. It is a strong feature of the tropical Pacific, with its strength and position varying on all time scales from decadal to interannual. It is a major driver of the climate system in the South Pacific, and its position and intensity are strongly influenced by El Niño events, which can lead to massive drought and food shortages, unprecedented coral bleaching-induced mortality¹⁰ and cyclogenesis in the vicinity of French Polynesia¹¹. Such events are not uncommon in the South Pacific, and their frequency is expected to increase in the future as a result of climate change.

A recent article published in the science journal, *Nature* dated 16 August 2012, Volume 488 highlights findings from recent research on the behaviour of the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ) in the future as our climate changes.

The SPCZ is the dominant weather feature of the tropical south Pacific and is responsible for most of the rain and all the tropical cyclones that form in the South Pacific. It has been established that during El Nino events the SPCZ becomes more zonal in nature, contracting towards the equator, to the north and east

of the populated islands of the South Pacific. This results in less rainfall and increased tropical cyclone risk.

The letter published in the journal titled "More extreme swings of the South Pacific convergence zone due to greenhouse warming" was based on research conducted by climate scientists in Australia, New Zealand, France, United States and the United Kingdom, with contributions from the Director of the Cook Islands Meteorological Service, Mr. Arona Ngarf.

According to the letter, the computer model simulations show there is a high likelihood that Zonal displacements of the SPCZ may increase, perhaps doubling over the next century, with such events starting to occur outside the cycle of El Nino years.

The authors attribute the predicted changes to a projected enhanced equatorial warming in the Pacific Ocean and note that this "may lead to more frequent occurrences of extreme events across the Pacific island nations most affected by zonal SPCZ events".

[View Letter](#)

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Weather Outlook for September

By mid-August atmospheric indicators such as weakening of the trade winds and northward movement of the South Pacific Convergence Zone indicated a renewed response in the atmosphere to the unfolding El Niño event and the Southern Oscillation Index – the measure of pressure variations from long term averages in Darwin and Tahiti – had also decreased again, indicative of increasing El Niño like conditions across the Pacific.

Climate models continue to show further warming across the tropical Pacific Ocean, with temperatures exceeding El Niño thresholds expected before the end of September 2012. None of the models surveyed indicate a return to La Niña conditions. These models also suggest that this El Niño event will be of weak to moderate intensity, similar to that of 2010. And parts of Fiji and Tonga are already being

affected having drier than normal weather.

El Niño conditions bring below average rainfall to most parts of the Pacific, especially those places west of the date line and also to the south. The summer and spring months from December 2012 to May 2013 are expected to see below average and perhaps very much below average across most of the western Pacific west of the date line.

The risk of experiencing a tropical cyclone is slightly higher for the south-west Pacific region as a whole during seasons coinciding with El Niño conditions, and in particular the risk of stronger cyclones is also greater as cyclones tend to form further north and have more time to intensify before reaching island countries to the south.

14th Tropical Cyclone Committee Meeting



Samoa's Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Hon. Dr Fa'ale Tuma'alii opened the 14th Tropical Cyclone Committee for the South Pacific and South East Indian Ocean held recently.

The Committee is one of the six Regional Tropical Cyclone Bodies helping countries develop and coordinate mechanisms at national and regional levels to ensure

minimum loss of lives and property damage by cyclones. Discussions included reviewing the Tropical Cyclone Operational Plan for the South Pacific and South East Indian Ocean, a regional mechanism for cyclone warnings in the Pacific region.

The Plan brought into place organizational structures, operational procedures, guidelines and terminologies used for monitoring, detecting, analyzing, predicting, preparing and disseminating warnings on cyclones to the Pacific communities.

The meeting reviewed and updated the list of names of cyclone for upcoming cyclone seasons from 2012 until 2014.

Through the Committee, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) is assisting countries to provide reliable information and forecasts on cyclones, providing information and forecasts on floods associated with cyclones and providing awareness on cyclones and related use of warnings and to subsequently ensure minimal damage and loss of life caused from cyclones.

The weeklong meeting was supported by the Government of Samoa in partnership with the WMO.

For more information, contact WMO Programme Officer at henryt@sprep.org

Upcoming Events

Event	Location	Date
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform Meeting	Bangkok, Thailand	26 Aug—8 Sep
23rd Annual SPREP Meeting	New Caledonia	4—6 Sep
Working Arm on Climate Change (WACC) and Pacific Climate Change Roundtable (PCCR) Meeting	New Caledonia	8—11 Sep
Climate Change Public Expenditure and Institutional Reviews Workshop	Bangkok, Thailand	10-12 Sep
World Meteorological Organisation mission to Vanuatu to prepare for Vanuatu Meteorological Services Strategic Plan	Vanuatu	11—15 Sep
Pacific Broadcasters Emergency Plans Workshop	Samoa	17—20 Sep
Secretariat of the Pacific Community—Applied Geosciences and Technology Division (SPC/SOPAC) Pacific Disaster Risk Management Platform Meeting	New Caledonia	17—22 Sep
Framework Convention on Climate Change Least Developed Countries Expert Group Meeting	Tuvalu	26 Sep—3 Oct