

CLIMATE CHANGE MATTERS

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Overview of Fagaloa, Samoa. Photo: D.McFadzien

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“ Director's Note

Welcome to our final edition of CCM for the year 2016.

As you will read, this month's CCM is a Special, focussing on the Twenty-Second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Marrakech, Morocco from 7 – 18 November.

It was a momentous event, given the Paris Agreement had come into force just days before and the very first Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA1). It ended with a number of outcomes, a key summary of which can be read here.

Within this CCM are a range of stories on activities that happened during the two week event, we also ran a special on the Pacific negotiators which can be read on www.sprep.org.

Before we sign off, we'd like to thank you all for your support in 2016 and we look forward to working with you again in 2017.

From myself, our Climate Change Team and all of us at SPREP – May you have a safe Christmas and a Happy New Year.

See you in 2017!



Breathing life into the Paris Agreement – Nauru at the UN Climate Change Conference

Fearing complacency has set in, the President of Nauru, H.E. Baron Waqa has called upon countries to “breathe life into the Paris Agreement” as he made his statement at the Twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Marrakech, Morocco.

President Waqa was the first Pacific island leader to take the podium amongst other world leaders to make statements at the High Level Segment of the COP22. While celebrating the Paris Agreement, he also expressed the feelings of hope that are matched by a sense of distress.

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Marshall Islands and Palau sign on to second “Because the Ocean” Declaration

Palau and the Marshall Islands were the Pacific Islands of 15 countries that signed the second “Because the Ocean Declaration” on the edges of the UN Climate Conference in Marrakech in November. The first “Because the Ocean Declaration” was signed by 23 countries in Paris in December last year which stressed the important role of the Ocean for the climate system. This year, it was signed during the Twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP22).

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Pacific Displays Leadership in Integrated Approach to Resilient Development

The integrated approach to building resilient communities is well documented in the Pacific region. However, more efforts still need to be made for Pacific countries to better access financing mechanisms to effectively implement these approaches. Dr Netatua Pelesikoti spoke as a panellist on the topic: ‘Integrated Approach for Resilient Development in the Pacific’ at a side event organised by the United Nations Education and Scientific Cultural Organisation. “The Pacific is ready with the regional and national arrangements for resilient development. The recently endorsed Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) and the approaches that the region has done on sustainable and integrated management of the Oceans highlights the Pacific’s leadership in moving towards resilient development.”

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“Living with Change” – Tokelau attends the UN Climate Change Conference

Plans to launch ‘Living with Change: Enhancing the Resilience of Tokelau to climate change and related hazards, 2017-2030’ (LivC), early next year, is on the table for the island atoll which has delegates attending the twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Marrakech, Morocco (UNFCCC COP22) as part of the New Zealand delegation. Climate change is a priority for Tokelau, a non-self-governing territory of New Zealand which consists of three small coral atolls – Atafu, Nukunono and Fakaofu that are three to five metres about sea level.

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Institutional Arrangements Key in Accessing Climate Finance: A Tonga Perspective

The Government of Tonga’s approach in combining climate change and disaster risk consideration into overall development planning is a proactive step in not only accessing financial mechanisms with the overall aim of building the resilience of communities. Referred to as the Joint National Action Plan (JNAP) on climate change adaptation and disaster risk management, the five year action plan outlines not only the aspirations but also concrete steps to ensure Tonga’s resilient development.

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Papua New Guinea’s REDD+ approach an opportunity for countries to learn

Lessons from Papua New Guinea’s REDD+ activities for the past five years can be a useful guide for those interested in implementing similar approaches in their own countries. REDD+ is referred to as the efforts to ‘Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, and plus (+) conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests, and enhancements of forest carbon stocks. Under the REDD+ initiative, PNG is preparing to implement REDD+ as part of its contribution to tackle global climate change through the Paris Agreement.

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New Pacific Climate Change Centre an Exciting Opportunity for the Pacific

The newly established Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) will provide Pacific island countries with better access data, information and build regional capacity on climate change issues. Funded by the Government of Japan and developed in partnership with the Government of Samoa and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the Centre will be able to host climate change experts, researchers, and officials for applied research, training and policy initiatives. The Centre will be the regional hub for enhanced and inclusive collaboration and coordination to support climate resilient development which would accelerate climate actions in the region.

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Pacific island women show leadership at UN Climate Talks

While women accounted for around 35% of all national party delegates at the 2015 UN climate conference and women’s participation in Easter and Western Europe is 45% and around 21% in Africa and the Asia-Pacific, the Pacific island region itself can boast of strong women participation, particularly in key roles. This participation is further supported by the Women’s Delegate Fund (WDF), who undertook research resulting in the above statistics. Pacific island women, new to the UN Climate Negotiations have participated in the WDF over the past five years, helping to strengthen the leadership and participation shown by Pacific island women.

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Pacific islanders benefit from AOSIS climate fellowship program

From the islands to New York, five of our very own Pacific islanders have strengthened their professional development through the Climate Change Fellowship Program established by the Alliance of Small Island States. Started in 2014, the programme brings earlier career professionals from AOSIS member countries to their country mission offices in New York to undergo comprehensive training on climate change issues, including attendance to the United Nations and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Fellows from Fiji, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu have been recipients of the opportunity which spans a year with 80% of their time focussed on AOSIS related matters and 20% on national issues.

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Adaptation Fund pours over 20 USD million into the Pacific

Negotiations are now underway at the UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakech, Morocco to see how the Adaptation Fund can serve the Paris Agreement. The Adaptation Fund was established under the Kyoto Protocol, it finances projects and programmes to help developing countries adapt to climate changes. Since 2010 it has committed USD 357 million in 63 countries, of these five are from the Pacific islands. It is financed in part by government and private donors.

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International Partnership for Blue Carbon

The Governments of Australia and United Arab Emirates convened a side event in Marrakech at the UN Climate Conference on the Blue Carbon Partnership. The partnership was established in recognition of the role that ecosystems such as seagrasses, mangroves and salt marshes play in the carbon cycle through their sequestration of carbon dioxide. Chaired by the Minister of Environment of Australia, the Hon. Josh Frydenberg and the representatives of UAE, the side event brought together a diverse set of stakeholders including the Director General of SPREP, Mr Kosi Latu.

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Pacific islanders encouraged to help develop IPCC Climate Change science reports

The call has come for more Pacific island authors and contributors to be part of the science reports released by the Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change. A special IPCC report on the Impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emissions pathways is to be released in 2018.

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"1.5 to stay alive" to be supported by IPCC Report

Small, but powerful, the call by the Pacific islands with the Alliance of Small Island States to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, continues to be a priority at the UN Climate negotiations. The chant of "1.5 to stay alive" has been given wider recognition within the Paris Agreement that aims to keep global temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and even further to 1.5.

Come 2018, a special report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways will be released, giving further weight to the chants of "1.5 to stay alive".

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Pacific Islands Regional Climate Center (PI-RCC) Network prepares for Demonstration

Representatives from National and Regional organisations met in Honolulu, United States of America from 21-23 November 2016 to discuss basic technical organisational elements of the PI-RCC Network and agreed on a roadmap for its implementation. The Pacific Islands Regional Climate Center Network Implementation planning meeting discussed individual contributions to the WMO RA V PI-RCC Network along the mandatory and highly recommended RCC functions including identification of coordination needs, gaps and interfaces.

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Transforming today's climate science into tomorrow's climate service.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has agreed the outlines of two new reports that will help governments implement the Paris Climate Change Agreement. The decision on the outlines, or table of contents, which had been drafted by scoping meetings in August, clears the way for the IPCC to launch the call for nominations for authors for both reports at the beginning of November. The special report on 1.5°C was requested at the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris in December 2015, which set a target of limiting global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts to hold it to 1.5°C.

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Island of Ta'u, American Samoa, turns to solar for nearly 100% of electricity needs

Currently, neither El Niño nor La Niña conditions prevail in the Pacific, this is referred to as ENSO-neutral conditions. Continued ENSO-neutral conditions or a weak La Niña is expected over the period November 2016 to February 2017. Thereafter, ENSO-neutral conditions are favoured.

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PROJECTS/EVENTS	DATE	WHERE
Community-based Adaptation - Federated States of Micronesia	1 - 20 December	Federated States of Micronesia
FINPAC - Kiribati Handover	5 - 10 December	Kiribati
FINPAC Solomon Islands Handover	5 - 9 December	Solomon Islands
Regional Culture Strategy, Working Group Meeting	6 - 8 December	Suva, Fiji
Green Climate Fund Board Meeting	13 - 15 December	Apia, Samoa



Photo: S.Seuseu



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Our vision: The Pacific environment – sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures.

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