

Annex 1. Concept Note by the One CROP+ team for COP 26 Political Climate Champions

1. Purpose

This concept note sets out the rationale, objectives and proposed approach to **strengthen the capacity of Pacific Island Country Parties to the UNFCCC to strategically engage at COP26**, through well-supported **Political Climate Champions**, to influence decision making by the COP on issues of particular importance to the region.

It builds on the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' *Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Change Action Now* and the Forum Foreign Ministers' decision in 2020 for stronger political advocacy and consistent senior political representation at COP26.

2. Problem and Opportunity

Pacific Leaders' moral authority on climate change has been recognised internationally, particularly the significant efforts they have progressed both at the national and regional levels to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts. In this instance, their voice and engagement in global platforms carry weight and having the Paris Agreement reflective of key regional priorities and ratified in record time demonstrates this authority, as the Pacific was instrumental in mobilising political support towards consensus on a strong outcome at COP21 in 2015, and amongst the first globally to ratify the Paris Agreement. Building and strengthening this engagement in more strategic ways would ensure all country Parties to the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement deliver on the goals of the Paris Agreement when they convene for COP26.

Due to capacity constraints faced by Pacific Island Country Parties to the UNFCCC in terms of financing and dedicated advisory/briefing support, their ability to meaningfully engage at the highest level at recent COPs have been limited.

In recognition of these challenges, Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers in their meeting in 2020:

- Reaffirmed their support for the 2019 Leaders' *Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Change Action Now*, with its 10 calls being relevant for COP26 as the basis of the Pacific's preparation and engagement at COP26;
- Tasked the Forum Secretariat and the One CROP+ team to progress the appropriate advocacy initiatives for stronger political engagement and advocacy in the lead up to and at COP26;
- Supported the need for consistent senior Pacific political representation for the duration of COP26 negotiations, including clarity on the role of political champions, and tasked the One CROP+ team to explore funding opportunities to ensure this; and,
- Recognised the value of proactively engaging with the United Kingdom to discuss and consider its priorities as the President of COP26, and to inform the region's preparations.

The **One CROP+ team** being led by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) together with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), The Pacific Community (SPC), University of the South Pacific (USP), Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Environment Programme (UNEP) took a joint response to the Forum Foreign Ministers' decisions and assessed the practicality of the proposed Political Climate

Champions for the Pacific. This is based on the many years of experience supporting Pacific island leaders within the climate change negotiations.

In past years this support has included the High-Level Support Mechanism under the SURVIVE and IMPACT projects which were a partnership between SPREP, Climate Analytics, Charles and Associates and the One CROP+ team. This was a tailored programme specifically designed for Pacific High-Level engagement and general negotiations preparations and support.

In this critical year for UNFCCC a more strategic approach is required to maximise the impact of Pacific Island Leaders in the negotiations. It is also acknowledged that this process will take time and the expected benefits will go beyond COP26 to fully materialise.

At COPs it is important that strategic engagement on contentious issues by senior political representatives from the Pacific is supported, especially at critical moments during the negotiations, and at the closing plenary. These are key opportunities where COP decisions are negotiated and where political level engagement can bring greater influence. Pacific Island Ministers and Leaders need to be sufficiently equipped with the appropriate political support, talking points, customised and detailed briefs to advocate proactively for the region.

3. Role of Political Climate Champions

The **Political Climate Champions, supported by their respective Senior Government Officials and the One CROP+ team**, are expected to undertake the following roles, but not limited to:

Advocacy and Visibility

- Lead COP26 high-level advocacy and visibility on the key negotiating priorities/positions of Pacific Island Country Parties in the lead up, during COP26, and Post-COP26;
- Liaise with global allies and stakeholders advocating for similar issues (e.g. AOSIS, OACPS, High Ambition Coalition, GLISPA etc.) as well as engaging with other non-ally negotiating groups to mobilise support for Pacific island priorities at COP26;
- Advocate on behalf of the Pacific Island Country Parties drawing on agreed high-level political messages, including the 10 calls of the Kainaki II Declaration;

Guide and Inform

- Provide high-level guidance for consolidating the views of non-Party stakeholders in the Pacific, including civil society, youth, academics and the private sector to inform Pacific's engagement at COP26;
- Provide updates to other Pacific Island Ministers or Leaders on the progress of the negotiations during Pacific coordination meetings at COP26;
- Provide reflections to the post-COP26 report, including to Pacific Islands Forum Leaders on the region's engagement and outcomes from COP26;

Represent

- Represent the Pacific in relevant political meetings or negotiations on common issues of importance to the Pacific in the lead up to and at COP26;
- Be prepared to volunteer to coordinate/co-lead political discussions on contentious issues during COP26, if invited by the COP26 President; and
- Participate in bilateral meetings, side events, media interviews, issuance of statements, Op-

Eds, and communication approaches arranged by the One CROP+ team.

4. Expected Outcomes

The **overall outcome is to influence strong COP26 outcomes which are reflective of Pacific priorities**. This is expected to be achieved through:

- Well briefed and meaningful participation by high level champion representatives from the Pacific during the negotiations at COP26, to drive the achievement of Pacific priorities at COP26;
- Strong collective high-level advocacy in the lead up to COP26; and,
- Increased visibility of Pacific priorities in the media and increased awareness of regional climate change concerns with target audiences.

For the Champions, the benefits include:

- Added impetus in advocating for climate change concerns of the region;
- Enhanced international profile for climate leadership at COP26 and acknowledgement from the global community; and,
- Ongoing opportunity to profile national climate actions and plans.

5. Approach

This approach to be implemented in the lead up to COP26 and during COP26 will:

- be in partnership with Pacific Island Country Parties to the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, who will guide the process, and the One CROP+ team will support them based on their needs;
- identify the commitment needed from high-level Pacific Island Climate Champions and clarify expectations; and,
- identify the commitment and support One CROP+ team will provide to the high-level champions.

The approach respects and acknowledges the sovereign rights of Pacific Island Country Parties and be sensitive to their national priorities in implementing this programme.

This initiative will work in partnership with any high-level programmes and opportunities arising with the Alliance of Small Islands States or other stakeholders including the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).

This programme is intended to support **senior political representatives from Pacific Island Country Parties to the UNFCCC (ideally Ministerial or Leader level)** to engage and advocate proactively and strategically in advance of the COP26 meeting, during COP26, and to provide reflections post-COP26. It is a timely opportunity to prepare senior political climate champion representatives from the Pacific Islands to be able to maximise on the opportunities from the active outreach and leadership by the United Kingdom (incoming COP26 President) and promote Pacific Island Countries' priorities at COP26.

The Post-COP26 report will include reflections on the effectiveness of this initiative and will also be forwarded to Pacific Islands Forum Leaders.

After working with Pacific Island Country Parties to identify their high-level political climate champions to lead identified thematic areas, this programme will develop and implement briefing for the following areas:

- Growing understanding and awareness of the UNFCCC and COP negotiation process;
- Build knowledge of the political context, dynamics, intricacies, and sensitivities.
- Understand the thematic issue inclusive of its history, the issue itself, forecast possibilities and working with other stakeholders in these negotiations; and
- Empower delivery of messaging through various communication and advocacy platforms and fora.

It will result in individual action plans tailored for each high-level political climate champion to suit the focus area of each champion and schedule of events.

6. How this will work in practice

Having Political Climate Champions at the Ministerial or Leader-level will demonstrate the region's collective leadership and moral authority, signaling the importance of securing a strong outcome from COP26, and to facilitate access to high-level closed room discussions with other Leaders during COP26 on issues where progress has been halted in the technical negotiations.

Members of the One CROP+ team have extensive experience in the negotiations process and collectively have sufficient skill and expertise to deliver and implement this programme. The One CROP+ team also have experience in working with Pacific Island Country Parties to the UNFCCC and are guided by their knowledge and experience with regional and national processes.

This approach recognises that Ministerial or Leader participation at COP26 will be first and foremost to represent their national positions. When Pacific Island Ministers or Leaders make interventions in the closed negotiation rooms, in the plenary, during the delivery of national statements as part of the High-Level Segment, at side events or bilateral meetings, these would be to advance their national priorities and interests. However, given the convergence of national and regional priorities, and with the support of the One CROP+ team, these high-level statements and interventions can also represent the region.

This proposal will promote a structured approach where Pacific Island Ministers and Leaders who are willing to take up the challenge will be empowered to advocate on behalf of the Pacific Island Country Parties on climate change issues important to the region. This programme will ensure they are properly supported (financially and technically) and briefed by senior government officials and assigned advisers and media support from the One CROP+ team. On the appointment of Political Climate Champions, the One CROP+ team will facilitate a virtual briefing for the CEOs of SPREP, SPC, PIFS, USP and FFA with the Political Climate Champions to initiate the process, to be followed by more customised and detailed briefings by senior officials and One CROP+ team. Interactions with Leaders or Ministers from other island regions will also be arranged as appropriate. The Political Climate Champions will be invited to the Pacific Pre-COP26 meeting planned for October 2021.

In the lead up to COP26, the Political Climate Champions could:

- highlight their role and the importance of the issues and themes being advocated during bilateral meetings with traditional donors and development partners;

- endeavour to include regional perspectives on their issues or themes in regional and international events/conferences/seminars/webinars/meetings;
- support regional or sub-regional discussions to share views on COP26 advocacy priorities with non-state actors, including CSOs, the private sector, academics and youth;
- actively engage and convey the Pacific’s high-level input to any global campaigns for COP26, including relevant events hosted by the UK;
- issue relevant statements, Op-Eds, interviews, social media postings, or letters on behalf of the Pacific Island Country Parties to global leaders on COP26 issues that relate to the issues or themes;
- participate in the Pacific Pre-COP26 meetings/workshops; and
- engage in discussions with existing or emerging political coalitions or alliances in the lead up to and at COP26.

During COP26, the Political Climate Champions:

- are expected to arrive at COP26 at the latest for the high-level week of the negotiations;
- could deliver interventions on behalf of the Pacific Island Country Parties (when appropriate) on issues that fall within the scope of their theme during the negotiations. The Champions have the discretion to make an intervention on their national position, or, as a regional perspective;
- may wish to include a regional perspective when delivering statements during the COP26 High-Level Segment;
- could participate in media interviews, events, and visibility activities;
- are expected to provide progress update to Pacific Island Ministers and Leaders during Pacific coordination meetings at COP26;
- must be willing to stay on in Glasgow to push for Pacific Island Countries’ priorities until the COP26 decisions are adopted in the closing plenary; and,
- should be prepared to volunteer, if invited by the COP26 President, to co-lead/coordinate political discussions on contentious issues that are not progressing in the technical negotiation.

Post-COP26, the Political Climate Champions:

- would provide reflections to the post-COP26 report on the region’s engagement at COP26 and the COP26 outcome, including to Pacific Islands Forum Leaders;
- could provide feedback to the One CROP+ team on what worked well and what needs improvement; and
- should continue to advocate on behalf of the Pacific until COP27 Political Champions are identified.

7. Scope of Focus

The focus will be on five key themes relevant to COP26 discussions and also link to the UK’s five high-level priorities for COP26:

- Finance** – need for increased financing for adaptation to come from public sources and in the form of grants, delivery of the USD100bn commitment, conclude negotiations on Adaptation Fund Board composition, and new climate finance quantitative goal.

- ii. **Ambition** – conclude negotiations on the Paris Rulebook at COP26, mobilise global commitment to enhanced NDCs, carbon neutrality by 2050, transition from fossil fuel subsidies towards 1.5°C goal (including through Clean Energy and Clean Transport), and stronger adaptation targets.
- iii. **Environmental Integrity** – promote Nature-based Solutions, conclude negotiations on Markets (Article 6) with an outcome that is consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius and ensuring adequate share of proceeds from the Markets mechanism for adaptation activities in developing countries.
- iv. **Loss and Damage** – provide guidance to the work of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) on Loss and Damage, and advocate for dedicated financing for loss and damage.
- v. **Oceans** – advocate for the outcomes of the Ocean-Climate nexus workshop in December 2020 to inform COP26 discussions, and mobilise further political support for global initiatives such as the Ocean Pathway launched at COP23 and ‘30 by 30 ocean target’ launched by the UK’.

This would require at least 5 high-level champions, noting the overlaps and inter-linkages between the three themes.

8. Criteria for Nomination

Pacific Island Country Parties have the discretion to nominate their own Minister or Leader, or, nominate a Minister or Leader from another Pacific Island Country, given that he/she fulfills the list of criteria below.

- i. Preferably Ministerial or Leader level, who is articulate and knowledgeable about the issues and willingness to step up and advocate on behalf of the Pacific Island Country Parties;
- ii. Clearly a champion or advocate for a specific theme/issue over the past years;
- iii. Ambitious climate change action at the national level as evidenced by NDCs or NAPs or similar;
- iv. Ideally to encourage sub-regional and gender balance; and,
- v. Commitment to be in Glasgow for the latest up to one week (high-level week) until the COP26 closing plenary.

9. Process for Nomination & Endorsement

- i. External Circular to Climate Change and Foreign Affairs focal points inviting suggestions for Political Climate Champions – by late June
- ii. Consolidation of nominations received & recommendation to Members – One CROP+ team – by mid-July
- iii. The **One CROP+ team will start to work with identified Political Climate Champions** – by late July
- iv. Endorsement for Pacific Island Country Parties to the UNFCCC Climate Champions – target PACP Officials Meeting and PACP Leaders Meeting.
- v. Seek support for the approach to strengthen the capacity of FICs to strategically engage at COP26 – target FOC, FFMM and Forum Leaders Meeting.

10. Indicative Budget

A tentative budget is presented below, based on the assumption for five (5) Political Climate Champions and the borders reopening for face-to-face meeting participation. It is also based on the assumption for insurance and compulsory quarantine costs where necessary. This budget does not include costs related to the travel for members of the One CROP+ team either to the regional Pre-COP (in Apia) or global Pre-COP26 in Milan or COP26 in Glasgow. So far, resources have been identified from existing core and project funding sources kept within respective agencies that are members of the One CROP+ team to ensure this program does not incur additional financial burden on participating countries. If necessary, the One CROP+ team will seek additional donor support to fully implement the indicative budget on behalf of Pacific Island Country Parties.

Cost item	Quantity	Unit Cost (USD)	Sub-total (USD)
Business class return air-ticket to Glasgow (COP26), hotel accommodation for 7 days, travel insurance, COVID-19 quarantine costs & per diem	5 Political Champions	\$15000	\$75,000
Economy Class return air-ticket to Glasgow (COP26), hotel accommodation for 21 days (3 weeks), travel insurance, COVID-19 quarantine costs & per diem	5 Senior Government Officials (Advisers to Climate Champions)	\$15000	\$75,000
Business class return air-ticket to Milan (Global Pre-COP26), hotel accommodation for 3 days, travel insurance, COVID-19 quarantine costs & per diem	5 Political Champions	\$10000	\$50,000
Economy class return air-ticket to Milan (Global Pre-COP26), hotel accommodation for 3 days, travel insurance, COVID-19 quarantine costs & per diem	5 Senior Government Officials (Advisers to Climate Champions)	\$8000	\$40,000
Business class return air-ticket to Apia (Pacific regional Pre-COP26), hotel accommodation for 3 days, travel insurance, COVID-19 quarantine costs & per diem	5 Political Champions	\$5000	\$25,000
Economy class return air-ticket to Apia (Pacific regional Pre-COP26), hotel accommodation for 3 days, travel insurance, COVID-19 quarantine costs & per diem	5 Senior Government Officials (Advisers to Climate Champions)	\$4000	\$20,000
Communication and advocacy outreach initiatives for the Political Champions		\$20,000	\$20,000
Contingency @5% of activity cost			\$15,250
Total			US\$320,250

In addition to the above, the One CROP+ team will fund its members to participate in the relevant meetings and support the Political Climate Champions. Apart from securing financial resources, the One CROP+ team will also provide technical assistance to assist with the drafting of statements, interview responses, Op-Eds and media/visibility support. Verbal and written briefs will also be

prepared by the One CROP+ team, in consultation with the Political Climate Champion's government senior officials. The One CROP+ team will also assist with scheduling of bilateral meetings, media interviews, side events and other visibility initiatives for the Champions.