



“Our Ocean, Our Home: Climate Resilience for a Blue Pacific”

Fourth Pacific Climate Change Conference

Organised by

**National University of Samoa, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
through the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) and Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of
Wellington**

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Apia, Samoa

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights in its Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of 2022 that the global community must mobilize at greater speed and scale to mitigate the catastrophic effects of climate change. The evidence of the latest IPCC report is irrefutable - unless we act immediately to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we will not be able to stave off the worst consequences of climate change.

The 2050 Strategy of the Blue Pacific Continent is in action. It articulates a long-term strategy that responds to the Pacific region's important challenges in environment and sustainable development.

Pacific leaders have reconfirmed that climate change remains the single greatest existential threat facing the Blue Pacific. Leaders have also declared that the Pacific is facing a Climate Emergency that threatens the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of its people and ecosystems, backed by the latest science and the daily lived realities in Pacific communities. At the outset, the leaders of the Pacific have been collectively calling to amplify ambitious international action to limit global warming below 1.5°C in order for us to secure the future of our Blue Pacific.

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues confronting the Pacific region today. Pacific nations are among the most affected by the ongoing consequences of global warming. Many of them already experience higher temperatures, shifts in rainfall patterns, rising sea levels and altered frequency and intensity of extreme climate events. Strong traditions, cultures and adaptability to the unique characteristics of their environment and geography have fostered resilient communities over centuries. However, climate change poses a considerable threat to their future.

The overall theme of the Fourth Pacific Climate Change Conference underlines the central role of the Pacific Ocean in the life of the communities in the region. It recognises that protection of the ocean is crucial to enable Pacific nations that depend on it to continue to thrive in their home environment. Hence, taking stock of the scientific data and forecasts concerning the social, legal, political, economic,

cultural, scientific and environmental impacts of climate change in the Pacific is critical. Equally important is to analyse how the peoples of the Pacific region address them.

The Conference will bring together activists and experts, private, public, and civil society actors, and a wide variety of participants from the arts, churches, industry and other distinct backgrounds to shed light on the knowledge and interpretations related to the rapid changes observed in the region, as well as any divergence between the perceptions of local actors and the dominant scientific discourse.

This is the fourth in a series of conferences dedicated to efforts to combat climate change since the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015. These conferences, previously held in 2016 and 2018 in Wellington, New Zealand and online in 2020, have explored the role of Pacific nations in the negotiation process, the initiatives that have been taken and implemented in this area, but also the challenges that remain to be addressed for enabling better adaptation, and beyond that, ensuring easier access to finance and compensation for loss and damage.

The theme of this fourth conference is highly relevant because Pacific nations are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and the loss of biodiversity. At the same time, new initiatives, such as Vanuatu's campaign for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on climate change, advances in relation to loss and damage through the creation of a Fund adopted at COP27 and increasing efforts to protect maritime zones and to develop programmes on climate mobility highlight the importance of cooperation in addressing climate issues.

Conference Organisers:

Secretariat of the Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) through the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC), the National University of Samoa and the Victoria University of Wellington will be hosting the Fourth Pacific Climate Change Conference.

SPREP is a regional, intergovernmental organisation comprising 26 members consisting of 21 Pacific Island Countries and Territories and five developed countries with direct interests in the Pacific region. The purposes of SPREP are to promote co-operation in the Pacific region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations.

The Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) is the regional Centre of excellence for climate change information, research, capacity building, and innovation, hosted at the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). As a Centre of excellence, the PCCC is mandated to provide practical information, support, research and training to address the adaptation and mitigation priorities of Pacific Island communities.

Victoria University of Wellington (Victoria) is a university established under s162 of the Education Act 1989 with an address of Kelburn Parade, Wellington.

The National University of Samoa is the only national university in Samoa. Established in 1984 by an act of parliament, it is coeducational and provides certificate, diploma, and undergraduate degree programs, as well as technical and vocational training.

Conference Objectives:

1. Raise awareness about the specific challenges faced by Pacific nations due to climate change.
2. Facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among experts, policymakers, researchers, and community leaders.
3. Promote sustainable solutions and innovations for mitigating and adapting to climate change in the Pacific region.
4. Advocate for global climate action and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Facilitate a pathway for research and articles to feed into regional frameworks and for submission of articles to global platforms e.g. IPCC.

Conference Topics:

1. *Climate Science and Impacts*: Presenting the latest scientific findings on climate change in the Pacific, including sea-level rise, ocean acidification, and the intensification of extreme weather events.
2. *Adaptation and Resilience*: Discussing strategies and initiatives for building resilience in Pacific communities, such as coastal protection, disaster preparedness, and sustainable agriculture.
3. *Mitigation Efforts*: Highlighting efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including renewable energy projects, conservation initiatives, and sustainable transportation solutions.
4. *Policy and Governance*: Analysing the role of national and international policies in addressing climate change in the Pacific and discussing the challenges and opportunities for law and policy development.
5. *Community Engagement*: Showcasing successful community-driven climate initiatives and the importance of involving local communities in decision-making processes.
6. *Indigenous Knowledge and Traditions*: Recognising the importance of indigenous knowledge and traditional practices in adapting to climate change and preserving cultural heritage.
7. *International Collaboration*: Exploring partnerships between Pacific nations and global organisations, as well as promoting solidarity and mutual support.
8. *Economic and Social Impacts*: Assessing the economic and social consequences of climate change in the Pacific, including impacts on livelihoods, food security, and health.

Conference Format:

The conference will consist of a mix of plenary and parallel sessions, panel discussions and poster presentations. A series of workshops before and after the conference may also take place, focusing on specific themes. The conference will adopt an “in-person” format.

Target Audience:

- Government officials and policymakers
- Climate scientists and researchers
- Environmental, human rights and faith-based organisations
- Indigenous and local community leaders
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Business and industry representatives
- International institutions and development agencies
- Students and academics

Outcome:

The goal of this conference is to foster collaboration, knowledge exchange and sharing, and concrete actions to address climate change in the Pacific. It is hoped the conference will result in the development of strategies, policies and partnerships to help Pacific nations adapt to and mitigate the impacts of global warming while also contributing to the global effort to combat climate change.

One component of the conference will be a session devoted to mitigation action under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Representatives of nations across the Pacific will be asked to report on steps being taken at the national level to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow the rate of climate change.

Registration and Call for Papers:

Details about the conference registration and a call for abstracts and poster presentations will be made via the conference website <https://nus.edu.ws/4th-popccc/>