



## Regional Policy Briefing no.9

### Briefing series on Small island economies: from vulnerabilities to opportunities

#### **Building resilience to climate change in the Pacific islands**

*Port-Vila, Vanuatu, 31<sup>st</sup> October-2<sup>nd</sup> November 2012*

*Le Lagon Resort Vanuatu*

<http://brusselsbriefings.net>

#### **Context**

Although small island nations across the Pacific region have differences in terms of size, population, social and economic conditions, infrastructure and standard of living, they have many common disadvantages such as small size, a narrow range of resources, excessive dependence on international trade, high transport and communication costs, high population density. Due to their small size, isolation and fragility of island ecosystems, their renowned biological diversity is among the most threatened in the world. Natural disasters are of special concern because of their dependence on agriculture and tourism, two sectors that are particularly vulnerable to natural and environmental disasters.

The Pacific islands face economic, climate change and environmental challenges which threaten the livelihoods of millions of people with unsustainable and inequitable economic growth patterns. One of the major challenges facing the region is water and energy insecurity, vulnerability to price shocks, land scarcity available for food production due to the completion from other sectors such as building, tourism, industry and poor natural resource management. Food supply is being affected by low crop yields, rising input costs, competing demands for freshwater, loss of farm land for housing and industry.

The transition towards “green” policy commitments and investments in a way which ensures sustainable development presents opportunities for markets and technologies while preserving the resource-base.

#### **The impact of climate change**

Climate change is expected to result in a variety of environmental, social, and economic effects on island states, including threats to natural habitat, loss of habitable and agricultural land, coastal erosion, increased intensity of tropical storms, occurrence of invasive and pest species, decreased food and water security, and adverse impacts on human health with particular acuity in small island economies.

Climate change is already disproportionately affecting the islands of the Pacific. Although islanders have done little to contribute to the cause – less than 0.03% of current global greenhouse gas emissions – they are among the first to be exposed. Most islands are experiencing climate change impacts on community livelihoods, infrastructure, water supply, coastal and forest ecosystems, fisheries, agriculture, and human health. The consequences of sea level rise, sea temperature increases, ocean acidification, altered rainfall patterns, and overall temperature rise will be increasingly felt.

The potential economic and social impacts of environmental degradation are particularly important for the Pacific islands which are amongst the most vulnerable to climate change and tend to be more dependent than advanced economies on the exploitation of natural resources for economic growth. In addition they face severe economic, social and ecological threats from energy, food and water insecurity to climate change and extreme weather risks.

There are two main categories of active response to climate change: mitigation and adaptation. The need for both has been recognized in the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as in other agreements and strategies. Mitigation refers to those activities which seek to reduce the buildup of greenhouse gas and other climate-modifying constituents and thereby reduce the rate and magnitude of climate change. Many countries in the Pacific have done little to cause changes in atmospheric composition and hence in the global climate. Moreover, few are in a position, by themselves, to directly influence mitigation. But collectively Pacific island countries can have an influence on mitigation, as has been amply illustrated during the negotiations leading to the UNFCCC. Consistent with the Convention, Pacific island countries are also active in reporting on and implementing mitigation

strategies. Adaptation refers to those activities which enable communities, now or in the future, to cope with changes resulting from global warming. It therefore includes activities which seek to offset the costs and increase the benefits that may accrue from climate change. We would like to share at this Briefing adaptive responses in Pacific countries and lessons learnt.

## **Greening the economy and enhancing sustainable development**

In the face of pressing economic and environmental challenges, national and international efforts to promote green growth as a new source of growth have been intensifying in recent years. Thus there is growing convergence around the notion that the current economic system is not only unsustainable and inefficient in its resource use, but moreover is inequitable in its distribution of costs and benefits.

Green growth is, in general terms, economic progress that fosters environmentally sustainable, low-carbon and socially inclusive development. A “green economy,” is characterized by substantially increased investments in economic activities that build on and enhance the earth’s natural capital, while reducing ecological scarcities and environmental risks – activities such as renewable energy, low carbon transport, energy- and water-efficient buildings, sustainable agriculture and forest management and sustainable fisheries. Some challenges include the high initial costs for the transition to green growth appears to be beyond the reach of many countries, e.g. solar power for rural communities. Often basic technologies are lacking particularly in the fields of wastewater treatment, household and hazardous waste management, energy efficiency and integrated water resource management. In addition there is a concern that developing countries’ own technologies, including indigenous approaches, will not be able to compete, and they will need to import technologies from other countries: exchange of scientific and technical knowledge and removing the barriers constituted by intellectual property rights are of great importance if a genuine transfer of green technologies is to take place between developed and developing countries. But also opportunities in building on various initiatives and efforts, it is a good time for the Pacific to look at potentialities offered by green growth which can help to accelerate progress towards sustainable development and poverty reduction through, for example, more sustainable use of natural resources, efficiencies in the use of energy, and valuation of ecosystem services. It is also the opportunity to support infrastructure investments guided by the principles of sustainability, accessibility, and social inclusiveness

## **Policy responses for Pacific island countries**

Vulnerability assessments have confirmed the need for urgent action at the regional level to alleviate the adverse impacts of climate change on human, environmental and economic sectors of Pacific island countries. In this context, a policy of enhanced regional cooperation would facilitate collective responses to climate change and common strategies towards green growth strategies and would overcome the many shortcomings identified in terms of human; institutional structures and the need for improved linkages between the public and private sectors; the sectoral governance arrangements vs cross-sectoral systems; legislation; technologies (e.g. failure to retain, develop or transfer environmentally-sound and sustainable technologies); infrastructure (coastal protection systems); intellectual property and financial resources. The development, dissemination and transfer of efficient energy technologies that can assist the Pacific islands in mitigating the effects of climate change should be a priority with greater investments in research and development to support technical advances and enable rapid progression in renewable energy. The services sector, and in particular tourism, represent a genuine opportunity to expand economic activities while earning foreign currency. Investing in green tourism can reduce costs and enhance the value of ecosystems and cultural heritage. The private sector must be mobilized to support sustainable tourism and financing for investing in greening practices.

The Pacific countries will have to identify and develop particular areas of opportunity and comparative advantage. These domestic actions include carbon taxes, green energy funds, payment for ecosystem services schemes, renewable energy initiatives, sustainable public procurement initiatives and natural resource management initiatives.

It is crucial to strengthen the ability to engage in climate change negotiations, access funding sources and meet international responsibilities such as under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

## **Regional Briefing looking at Pacific responses to CC and green growth opportunities**

To improve information sharing and promote networking, the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the DG DEVCO from the European Commission, the ACP Secretariat, Concord and regional partners organise briefings on key issues and challenges for rural development. The Briefing on 31<sup>st</sup> October-2<sup>nd</sup> November 2012, organized in partnership with the Government of Vanuatu and with the support of the Embassy of Vanuatu to the EU and the ACP and Pacific Group of Ambassadors, will address issues related *Building resilience to climate change in the Pacific islands*. Building upon the Brussels Briefing<sup>1</sup> and the regional Briefings held in Mauritius in April 2012 on *ACP Small island economies: from vulnerabilities to opportunities*, and in St Lucia in the Caribbean on Green growth investments in September 2012, Around 50 organisations representing policy-makers, research, civil society groups, development practitioners and development partners.

### **Expected outputs**

It is expected that this Briefing will contribute to current efforts to build a regional strategy to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts and to a green growth regional agenda in the region. This Briefing will also feed into the 1<sup>st</sup> ACP Council of Ministers on Climate Change to be held in Brussels from 7 to 9 November 2012. It will also contribute to the 18th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and the 8th session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol will take place from Monday, 26 November to Friday, 7 December 2012 at the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha, Qatar.

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<sup>1</sup> The Brussels Briefings are organized since 2007 by CTA in collaboration with the European Commission, the ACP Group, Concord and other partners on key issues and challenges for rural development in the context of EU/ACP cooperation in Brussels. [http://brusselsbriefings.net/past-briefings/small\\_island\\_economies](http://brusselsbriefings.net/past-briefings/small_island_economies)



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### Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012

8h30-9h00 **Opening remarks:** H.E. Mamou Alieu Jagne, Ambassador of Gambia to the EU and Chair of the ACP Working Group on Climate Change; Ms Isolina Boto, Manager, CTA Brussels Office; Mr Robert De Raeve, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Delegation of the European Union to Vanuatu Mr Jeffrey Wilfred, Director General of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry, Vanuatu

#### 9h00-13h00 Panel 1: Pacific island vulnerabilities to climate change

Climate change is already disproportionately affecting the islands of the Pacific. Although islanders have done little to contribute to the cause – less than 0.03% of current global greenhouse gas emissions – they are among the first to be exposed. Most islands are experiencing climate change impacts on community livelihoods, infrastructure, water supply, coastal and forest ecosystems, fisheries, agriculture, and human health. The consequences of sea level rise, sea temperature increases, ocean acidification, altered rainfall patterns, and overall temperature rise will be increasingly felt. It is also crucial to strengthen the ability to engage in climate change negotiations, access funding sources and meet international responsibilities such as under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

#### Panellists:

- Climate trends, regional and national climate change projections  
*Gillian Cambers, Project Manager, Global Climate Change Alliance Pacific-Small Island States, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Fiji*
- Climate change negotiations between Rio+20 and COP18: Building negotiating capacities  
*Espen Ronneberg the Climate Change Adviser for the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)*
- EU's Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA): Approach and lessons learned  
*Thierry Catteau, Attaché, Environment and Natural Resources Section, Delegation of the European Union for the Pacific, Fiji*
- Joint National Action Adaptation Plans on CC Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management  
*Mosese Sikivou, Programme Manager, Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission*
- Building the capacity of climate-vulnerable small islands to migrate "with dignity"  
*Timothy Westbury United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Subregional Office, Suva, Fiji*
- Vulnerability assessments for Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change  
*Maria Tuoro, Director, Policy and Projects, Ministry of Agriculture, Cook Islands*
- Reframing the Pacific through a Climate Change Lens " A shift from Vulnerability to Value"  
*Taholo Kami, Regional Director, IUCN Oceania, Fiji*

13h00-14h00 Lunch

#### 14h00-17h30 Panel 2: Climate change, agriculture and environmental challenges and solutions

Climate change is expected to result in a variety of environmental, social, and economic effects on island states, including threats to natural habitat, loss of habitable and agricultural land, coastal erosion,

increased intensity of tropical storms, occurrence of invasive and pest species, decreased food and water security, and adverse impacts on human health with particular effect on small island economies. This panel will discuss these threats but also the development of adaptive capacities and community-based strategies to respond to climate change. It will also consider policy options to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience of vulnerable economies and policies ensuring coordination and coherence of food security actions and climate change policies and actions.

Panelists:

- Coping with insularity: adaptation to climatic & environmental changes for food security in Pacific  
*Vincent Lebot, Researcher, CIRAD, Vanuatu*
- Impacts of climate change on food and nutrition security: assessing vulnerability  
*Karen Fukofuka, Pacific Nutritionist, Vanuatu*
- The Blue economy: new threats and opportunities to sustainable use of marine resources  
*Gillian Cambers, Project Manager, Global Climate Change Alliance Pacific-Small Island States, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Fiji*
- Melanesian Green Growth Roadmap: blue carbon, terrestrial conservation and climate funding  
*Barbara Age, Melanesian Spearhead Group, Vanuatu*
- Environmental sustainability: the case of Papua New Guinea  
*Theresa Kamau-Kas, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Papua New Guinea*
- Climate risk management and disaster risk reduction  
*Karen Bernard, Programme Specialist, Disaster Risk Reduction & Recovery, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Centre, Fiji Islands*
- Integrating Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DDR)  
*Jotham Napat, Director of Meteorology and Geo Hazards Department, Head of NAPA, Vanuatu*

## Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012

### 8h30-13h00 Panel 3: Enhancing resilience of Pacific islands to climate change effects

This panel will present some concrete examples across the Pacific on ways to increase resilience through innovation, cross-sectors collaboration and adequate financial resources.

Panelists:

- Building resilience through adaptation and mitigation strategies and actions  
*Espen Ronneberg the Climate Change Adviser for the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)*
- Agriculture and Climate Change Adaptation in the Pacific  
*Andrew McGregor, Koko Siga Fiji*
- Building resilience through macroeconomic and energy policies  
*Shaswat Sapkota, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Subregional Office, Suva, Fiji*
- Pacific Appropriate Community Adaptation for productive Sectors  
*Christopher Bartlett, SPC-GIZ Coping with Climate Change in the Pacific Islands Region, CCCPIR*
- Strengthening national governance of the funding used for adaptation in the Pacific region  
*Sarah Meads, Oxfam, New Zealand*
- Climate-change adaptation in the food chain: Improve the transportation and marketing infrastructure with climate resilience as a focus  
*Taito Nakalevu, Project Manager, Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC), SPREP*
- Financing climate change adaptation and mitigation  
*Coral Pasisi, Regional and International Issues Adviser, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat*

13h00-14h00 Lunch

### 14h00-17h30 Panel 4: Greening the economy and enhancing sustainable development

This panel will discuss how greening the economy can offer real opportunities for the Pacific islands enhance sustainable development and increase resilience for sustainable production and consumption,  
Panellists:

- Green Growth in a Blue World: Pacific Perspective  
*Iosefa Maiava, Head of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Subregional Office, Fiji*
- Indicators and economic tools to effect more inclusive and sustainable growth in the Pacific  
*Jillian Campbell, Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Subregional Office, Fiji*
- Sustainability in the context of coastal and marine tourism: Marine Protected Areas in Vanuatu  
*John Ronneth, Chairman, Marine Protected Areas: Nguna-Pele Marine Protected Area, Vanuatu*
- Green Economies - the Pacific response to climate change - an extraordinary emphasis on biodiversity, environment and Resilient societies  
*Taholo Kami, Regional Director, IUCN Oceania, Fiji*
- Increasing valued added production through green developments and models  
*Chey Scovell, Manufacturers Council of Papua New Guinea*
- Potential and achievements in the sector of Green energy  
*Philippe Mehrenberger, Director of Unelco Vanuatu*
- *Linking sectors: developing "agro-tourism" experiences from the Caribbean*  
*Ena Harvey, Agrotourism Specialist and Caribbean Management Coordinator, Inter-American Institute for cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Costa Rica*
- Eco-tourism initiatives within the Pacific  
*Vanuatu*
- Improved knowledge, education and awareness on climate change and green economy  
*Isolina Boto, Manager, Brussels Office, CTA*

## **Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2012**

### **8h30-11h00 The way forward**

Discussion on key negotiating positions of AOSIS, MSG and other groupings.

Communiqué to be presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> ACP Council of Ministers on Climate Change to be held in Brussels 7-9 November 2012, at the ACP Summit of Heads of State to be held from 12-14 December 2012 in Equatorial Guinea and to the Co18 in Qatar.

Closing remarks

11h00-12h00 Lunch

12h00-17h30 **Field trip:** Marine Protected Area of Nguna Pele islands