SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

EIGHTH CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY
(Suva, Fiji, 18–19 November 2013)
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AGENDA ITEM 4 - ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PACIFIC COMMUNITIES – HELPING SHAPE THE POST-2015 AGENDA

(Paper presented jointly by the Government of Fiji and the secretariat)

SUMMARY

1.   The Pacific Islands region is approaching an important point in the lead-up to the post-2015 development agenda. At a regional level, the Pacific Plan review is proposing a successor 'framework for advancing regionalism' aimed at strengthening regional integration. At the global level, the region is engaging in the process currently in train to develop successor goals to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

2.   A 30 member, intergovernmental Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was established following the Rio+20 Conference to define a process that would ultimately result in a report proposing a set of SDGs. In addition, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed a 27 member High-level Panel to advise on the global development framework beyond the 2015 target date for the MDGs. The panel's work was closely coordinated with that of the working group tasked with designing Sustainable Development Goals. The Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) region is represented on the working group by Papua New Guinea, Nauru and Palau, which are strongly advocating that climate change challenges, ocean issues, and the nexus between the marine environment and sustainable development be recognised and included in the SDGs.

3.   This is an important year for Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) internationally: Fiji chairs the G77 grouping of countries; Nauru chairs the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS); Papua New Guinea chairs the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) group in New York; and Palau, Nauru and Papua New Guinea are participating in the SDG Open Working Group. Samoa will host the Third International Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS from 1 to 4 September 2014 with the theme _Sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships._ Pacific SIDS began preparing for this conference at their regional preparatory meeting in Nadi, Fiji, in July 2013. Subsequently, SIDS met at the Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Third International Conference on SIDS, in August 2013.

4.   Never before has our region been so well positioned to influence the development agenda, given the current level of engagement in these international processes. It is important, however, that PICTs act strategically to maximise their engagement in a coordinated manner. SPC is committed to assisting all its island members to engage strategically in the post-2015 development agenda in 2013 and 2014 by providing information, analysis and technical assistance, including developing standards and norms relevant to the Pacific region that could be considered as indicators for some of the SDGs that will succeed the MDGs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.   Conference is invited to :

   i.   acknowledge the strategic value of coordinated involvement by all members of the Pacific
         Community in participating in the various processes established to shape the post-2015 development
         agenda;

   ii.   note the secretariat's intention to continue to support all members, in particular Pacific Small Island
         Developing States Ambassadors, through providing information, analysis and technical assistance
         relevant to their engagement in the post-2015 development agenda.

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ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY – HELPING SHAPE THE POST-2015 AGENDA

Purpose

1. This paper summarises the processes being implemented by the global community to shape the post-2015 development agenda, and highlights the importance of coordinated engagement by PICTs to maximise their influence on the outcome of the process for the benefit of the region and its future.

Background

2. With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ending in 2015, the global process to develop successor goals to the MDGs – the post-2015 development agenda – has begun.

3. *The future we want* was the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in June 2012, also known as Rio+20. It called for providing the longer-term vision and goals that the international community, including the countries and territories of our region, wished to head toward. A 30 member intergovernmental Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was established to define a process that would result in a report proposing a set of SDGs.

4. In July 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed a 27 member High-level Panel (HLP) to advise on the global development framework after 2015. The panel was co-chaired by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, and included leaders from civil society, the private sector and governments. The HLP submitted its report and recommendations to the Secretary-General on 30 May 2013. The report is the culmination of highly interactive, multi-stakeholder round-tables and panel discussions on aspects of sustainable development and the post-2015 agenda. The panel's work was closely coordinated with that of the Working Group tasked with designing the SDGs, as agreed at Rio+20.[1]

5. The HLP report recommended that the global development framework beyond 2015 should be driven by the following five transformative shifts, in the belief that their implementation could bring together social, economic and environmental issues in a coherent, effective and sustainable way:

    i.   Leave no-one behind – aim to end poverty in all its forms
    ii. Put sustainable development at the core
    iii. Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth
    iv. Build peace, and effective, open and accountable institutions for all
    v.   Forge a new global partnership

6. The HLP also proposed an illustrative set of 12 goals and 54 targets to show how these transformative changes could be expressed in precise and measurable terms.

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[1] http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf

7.   It is envisaged that at the beginning of the 69th United Nations General Assembly in September, 2014, member states will engage in negotiations to bring the post-MDG and SDG processes together. The objective of these deliberations is to establish a coherent post-2015 development agenda, defined by one set of global goals to eradicate poverty in the context of sustainable development. Once the goals and targets are endorsed by the UN General Assembly, the global debate will then elaborate on the indicators, monitoring systems and approach for implementation, with a view to launching the new UN post-2015 development agenda in 2016.

8.   Pacific SIDS met in Nadi, Fiji, in July 2013 for the Pacific regional preparatory meeting ahead of the 2014 SIDS Conference and agreed on a number of areas to be included for consideration at the SIDS Conference. In addition to those issues, at the inter-regional preparatory meeting in Barbados in September 2013, SIDS agreed on several other issues that should also be included for consideration at the SIDS Conference.

9.   In relation to the post-2015 development agenda, both these meetings acknowledged the special characteristics of Pacific SIDS and strongly recommended that climate change and oceans should be included in the SDGs. It was also agreed that the priorities of SIDS should be part of the post-2015 development agenda and that this should be incorporated in the outcome of the Samoa Conference. The meetings emphasised that the post-2015 development agenda should be people-centred. Annex A lists the priorities emanating from the various meetings and processes to date. It also gives two additional key priorities for the region that are worthy of inclusion.

10.   Samoa will host the Third International Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS from 1 to 4 September 2014. The overarching theme of the conference is *Sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships.* A key objective of the conference is to identify priorities for consideration in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. Several partnership initiatives will be launched at the conference. During the post forum dialogue at this year's Forum Meeting in Marshall Islands, the Prime Minister of Samoa, the Honourable Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi, highlighted the following priority areas in which stronger partnerships need to be developed: climate change (adaptation and mitigation); oceans and forests; enhancing SIDS resilience; disaster risk reduction; renewable energy; and post LDC (least developed country) graduation.

11.   In addition to the global and regional processes described above, a number of important decisions and processes will continue to guide the region's position on the post-2015 development agenda. These include the following:

      i.   Pacific Island Forum Leaders at their meeting in Majuro, RMI, in August 2013, reiterated the importance of the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda/SDGs and the opportunity for the Pacific to contribute to, as well as shape, the new development paradigm. Leaders renewed their calls for the coherence of the parallel processes, ensuring important priorities specific to the Pacific, including **disaster risk management, culture,** and **mental health**, are included as goals and targets with indicators appropriate for PICTs. Leaders noted the vital role of CROP agencies in supporting PICTs to prepare for the SIDS 2014 Conference, and the need for their greater inclusion in the conference and its preparatory processes.[2]

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[2] 2013 Forum Communiqué.

ii. The Majuro Declaration on Climate Change highlights the leaders' strong political commitment to be the region of 'climate leaders', and is an effort to spark a new wave of climate leadership that will accelerate the reduction and phasing down of greenhouse gas pollution worldwide.[3]

iii. Two previously stand-alone regional frameworks for climate change and disaster risk reduction (Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change and Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Management Framework for Action) will be integrated into a single strategy focusing on 'climate and disaster resilient development' to succeed the two frameworks from 2015.

iv. The review of the Pacific Plan, which puts forward the suggested direction for the successor framework for advancing regionalism based on inclusive processes of political dialogue, expression of political values on regional integration and sovereignty, and decisive implementation of regional economic integration.

Early assessment of the priorities emanating from the various processes

12. The secretariat's early assessment of the priorities emanating from the High-level Panel, the SDG working group, and the preparatory meetings for the SIDS Conference, is summarised in Annex A. Early indications are that the majority of the region's priorities are reflected in the outcomes of the various processes to date, except for two key priorities – culture and mental health – which should be seriously considered for inclusion.

13. The secretariat is of the view that the region should make a case for culture to be considered as a fourth pillar of sustainable development. In the Pacific in particular, our cultures are the glue that binds development together. Cultural practices, norms and life-styles influence how people think and act; they are central to individual and collective identity and sense of belonging; they provide the social fabric that bonds communities and families; and they are integral to social cohesion and sustainable livelihoods. In short, culture defines who we are. Culture therefore needs to take its place as a pillar of sustainable development. In the Pacific, culture could in fact be considered a driver of sustainable development. The cultural sector promotes economic growth through creative industries, tourism, agriculture, food and medicine and fisheries. In many PICTs, it is a significant revenue generator and contributor to economic growth. Much of the revenue generation attributed to tourism in fact derives from culture. Culture is the reason tourism is successful in many countries, though its role is not acknowledged. The inter-linkage between cultural and natural heritage is a foundation for environmental sustainability and biodiversity preservation. Culture is necessary not only for the confidence, creativity and happiness of people and communities, but also for their survival. It is therefore time culture was recognised as a pillar of sustainable development in its own right.

14. The World Health Organization defines mental health as '...a state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.'[4] While cultural differences affect how 'mental health' is defined or perceived, general estimates suggest that 2–3% of people in most populations worldwide suffer from severe mental illness such as schizophrenia. A further 5–10% have moderate disorders such as depression – which is reported to be a major cause of illness and is responsible for approximately 6% of the burden of disease in the Pacific region. A major specific concern in many PICTs are the challenges for young people resulting from lack of employment opportunities and

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[3] Majuro Climate Leadership Declaration.
[4] World Health Organization: Fact sheet No. 220, September 2010.

increasing levels of substance abuse, in urban areas in particular. These are not mental health issues per se, but they can be considered predisposing factors. In addition, many PICTs have inadequate capacity to undertake early diagnosis or provide treatment and care for mental illnesses. If these growing problems are not recognised early and addressed appropriately, including through gathering data to allow better estimates of the nature and extent of mental disorders in the region, they could become a major challenge for many PICTs.[5] At their meeting in Apia in July 2013, Pacific Health Ministers called for the inclusion of mental health and NCDs in the post-2015 development agenda[6]. The secretariat supports this view.

15. SPC works collaboratively with our partner CROP organisations in areas where we have mutual roles in supporting our members either individually or collectively to engage effectively in addressing development challenges at the regional and international level.

Conclusion

16. The region now has an important and realistic opportunity to influence the post-2015 development agenda through its participation in the various processes that have been established. A collective and coordinated approach by all PICTs will be valuable in ensuring the region's voice and position are heard and considered. The call by the Pacific Plan review to focus on a successor 'framework for advancing regionalism' aimed at strengthening regional integration already puts the region in good stead to take a coordinated approach to influencing the global process established to develop SDGs to succeed the MDGs.

17. SPC is committed to supporting all its island members to position themselves to engage strategically with the post-2015 development agenda through providing information, analysis, technical assistance and development of standards and norms that are appropriate to the Pacific region and that could be considered as indicators for some of the SDG goals and targets.

Recommendations

18. Conference is invited to:

   i.   acknowledge the strategic value of coordinated involvement by all members of the Pacific Community in participating in the various processes established to shape the post-2015 development agenda;

   ii. note the secretariat's intention to continue to support all members, in particular Pacific Small Island Developing States Ambassadors, through providing information, analysis and technical assistance relevant to their engagement in the post-2015 development agenda.

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[5] Towards healthy islands: Pacific mental health response. Paper presented at the 10th Pacific Health Ministers Meeting, Apia, Samoa, 2-4 July 2013.

[6] Pacific Health Minister's Apia Communiqué, 2-4 July 2013.

Annex A - Priorities emanating from the various processes established to support the development of the post 2015 agenda

High-level Panel Goals	Open Working Group Emerging SDGs	Pacific Small Island Developing States Priorities from the regional preparatory meeting, Nadi, July 2013	SIDS Priorities from the inter-regional preparatory meeting, Barbados, September 2013	Key priorities proposed for inclusion, based on perceived gaps for the region
1. Goal 1: End poverty 2. Goal 2: Empower girls and women and achieve gender equality 3. Goal 3: Provide quality education and lifelong learning 4. Goal 4: Ensure healthy lives 5. Goal 5: Ensure food security and good nutrition 6. Goal 6: Achieve universal access to water and sanitation 7. Goal 7: Secure sustainable energy 8. Goal 8: Create jobs, sustainable livelihoods, and equitable growth 9. Goal 9: Manage natural resource assets sustainably 10. Goal 10: Ensure good governance and effective institutions 11. Goal 11: Ensure stable and peaceful societies 12. Goal 12: Create a global enabling environment and catalyse long-term finance	1. Eradicate poverty 2. Eradicate hunger (increase in nutritious food) 3. Health – universal coverage 4. Education – quality and access 5. Water and sanitation 6. Employment, especially for youth 7. Energy 8. Climate change 9. Growth and productive capacity 10. Resilience to shocks 11. Biodiversity, forests 12. Oceans 13. *Means of implementation – finance and technology* 14. *Sustainable consumption and production* 15. *Inequalities, including gender* 16. *Human rights and governance* 17. *Peace and security*	1. Climate change 2. Health, especially non-communicable diseases 3. Social development – *poverty eradication; gender inequality; youth; vulnerable and disadvantaged groups; people with disabilities; human rights based approach to social development* 4. Governance – *peace and security, and stability; data revolution* 5. Infrastructure 6. Sustainable energy 7. Oceans 8. Sustainable resource management and protection – *land, water and food security, agriculture, and biodiversity – they encompass the political, social, economic and environment dimensions of the post-2015 development agenda* 9. UN institutional support to SIDS 10. Inclusive and sustainable economic management – *green growth as a tool to support sustainable development* 11. Means of implementation and partnerships – *recognise South-South and triangular cooperation*	1. Climate change 2. Sustainable consumption and production 3. Health and NCDs 4. ICTs 5. Green growth 6. Management of chemicals and water, including hazardous waste 7. Oceans and seas 8. Food security 9. Biodiversity 10. Forests 11. Social development 12. Disaster risk reduction 13. Sustainable energy 14. *UN Institutional Support to SIDS* 15. *Enabling factors* 　i. *financing* 　ii. *capacity building* 　iii. *technology transfer* 　iv. *data collection and management* 　v. *trade* 　vi. *participation in international financial systems* 　vii. *debt sustainability.*	1. Culture 2. Mental health