

CLIMATE CHANGE MATTERS

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Photo: Pauline Marsden

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EDITORIAL

Talofa from SPREP

November was a momentous month for the region. For the first time since the UNFCCC was adopted in 1992, and entered into force in 1994, there has never been a COP President from a Small Island Developing State, let alone the Pacific. While Pacific Island Countries have played important roles as Vice-Presidents of COP (Samoa, Marshall Islands, PNG, FSM, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu), and Chairmen of committees (Fiji, Marshall Islands, Samoa), to be President of COP is of massive significance. Fiji stated from the outset that this would be a Pacific COP, and islands COP, and far-away, cold Bonn had its International Conference Centre transformed into a Pacific venue, as exemplified by the Talanoa Pavilion and the Fiji Pavilion. It was never going to be an easy task to navigate the differing viewpoints of 197 Parties to the Convention, but Fiji performed admirably and have set the course for its Presidency up until COP24 in 2018 when Poland takes over.

Oceans and climate change had tremendous visibility at COP23, with numerous side events detailing the contributions that oceans make as climate drivers, but also as a greenhouse gas and heat sink. This of course has detrimental impacts on our ecosystems and on sea level rise. Thus Fiji and partner countries launched the Oceans Pathway at COP23 as a means of giving momentum to positive actions that would not only clean up pollution in oceans but also provide added benefits in terms of reducing impacts of climate change.

Work on climate services at the regional level has also accelerated with the rolling out of the PICASO tool in countries. Vanuatu hosted its first training on this important cooperation between the Pacific and the Republic of Korea. There will be similar training carried out in the region in coming months.

COP23 allowed Pacific Island Countries to have an elevated presence and Pacific voices were heard loud and clear. It is now time for Pacific concerns to be acted upon in the negotiations process. As Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga has stated – save Tuvalu, and we save the world.

Espen Ronneber
Acting Director, Climate Change Division

Climate change matters.

Our Pacific islands matter.



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme



Photo: SPREP



Photo: SPREP



Photo: SPREP



Photo: Samoa Observer



Photo: FRES Foundation

SIDS at the forefront of tropical cyclones

Islands are experiencing an increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones, and this will become the new normal. This was the key message during a joint side event hosted by Climate Analytics, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), held during the Twenty-third United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bonn, Germany this week, 6-17 November, 2017.

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Pacific region united for urgent climate action at UN Climate Conference

History was in the making with Fiji presiding over the Twenty-Third Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP23). It was the first time a Pacific island nation has led the global climate conference that will bring together up to 25,000 people, “Uniting for Climate Action, Further, Faster – Together.”

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Oceans Pathway to be launched at Global Climate Summit

6 November, 2017, Bonn, Germany - The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP23) opened today bringing over 30,000 participants from all over the world, to Bonn, Germany. His Excellency Salaheddine Mezouar of Morocco passed the Presidency of COP23 over to Prime Minister Hon. Frank Bainimarama of Fiji, making this the first time in history that the summit’s rotating presidency is held by a country that is highly affected by climate change.

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Climate conference adopts gender action plan

(Source: Samoa Observer)
At the 11th hour of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (C.O.P. 23), influential leaders have decided to adopt the Subsidiary Body for Implementation’s (S.B.I.) request to develop a gender action plan (G.A.P) to support the implementation of gender-related decisions and mandates in the U.N.F.C.C.C. process.

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“Why wait?” asks report on full power access

(Source: Samoa Observer)
A report on sustainable energy for all and power for all rural and vulnerable populations in developing countries was released at the United Nations Framework Climate Change Conference (C.O.P. 23) meeting in Bonn, Germany.

The “Why wait? Seizing the energy access dividend” report focuses on deploying decentralized renewable energy solutions and developing countries could miss out on multiple wide ranging benefits if they are forced to wait years, or even decades to get access to electricity through first ever power from the grid.

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Photo: Samoa Observer



Photo: Samoa Observer



Photo: Samoa Observer



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Photo: SPREP

“Fossil fuels will destroy our homes”

(Source: Samoa Observer)
The high level call to constrain oil, gas and coal production to achieve the Paris goals was yesterday endorsed by former President of Kiribati and climate change activist, Anote Tong and Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Development Forum, Francois Martel. Both leaders formally signed the Lofoten Declaration at the event.

The Lofoten Declaration affirms the urgent responsibility and moral obligation of wealthy fossil fuel producers to lead in these efforts.

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Positive steps in issue of climate change insurance

(Source: Samoa Observer)
The proposal by the Alliance of Small Island States (A.O.S.I.S.) for an insurance pool to cover the cost of loss and damage caused by climate change was finally approved by world leaders at the 23rd United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties (C.O.P. 23) held in Bonn, Germany.

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“We’re sinking and we need help” Bainimarama tells world leaders

(Source: Samoa Observer)

Pacific islands are sinking as a result of climate change and they need help.

That’s the message from Fiji’s Prime Minister and the President of the 23rd meeting of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (U.N.F.C.C.C. C.O.P.23), Frank Bainimarama, to world leaders in Bonn, Germany, this week.

Speaking to the Samoa Observer, Mr. Bainimarama said he has called on the world leaders he has met with so far to act with more urgency.

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Italy backs plan with T\$7.5 million

(Source: Samoa Observer)

A fellowship programme which focuses on strengthening the institutional capacity for the Small Island Developing States (S.I.D.S.) and the Least Developed Countries (L.D.C.s) to respond to the challenges arising from climate change was established yesterday.

This was made possible by the Government of Italy, U.N. Climate Change and was endorsed through a memorandum of understanding at the C.O.P. 23 in Bonn, Germany.

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PICASO in Vanuatu to increase community resilience

The Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazards Department (VMGD) has received new climate prediction tools from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to enhance capacity to tailor seasonal climate forecasts and climate information to meet sectoral users and communities.

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IMPACT

SCIENCE-BASED IMPLEMENTATION OF LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE CLIMATE POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Briefing note

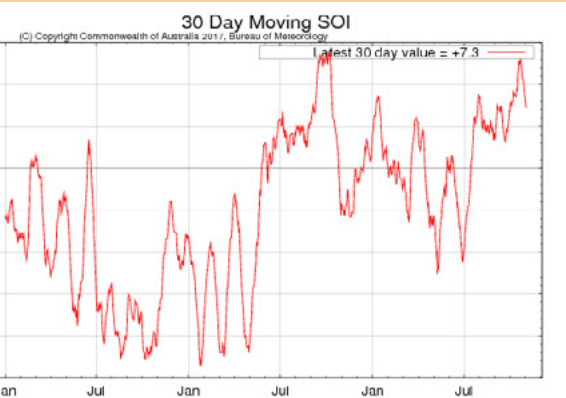
Tropical Cyclones: Impacts, the link to Climate Change and Adaptation

by Adelle Thomas, Patrick Pringle, Peter Pfleiderer and Carl-Friedrich Schleusener

Following the string of high intensity tropical cyclones in the Atlantic basin in 2017 and the devastating impacts on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), a number of questions have been raised about linkages between these cyclones and climate change. This briefing provides clarity on scientifically-supported connections between existing tropical cyclones and climate change. The briefing also summarises how climate change may affect tropical cyclones at increased global mean temperatures in the future and provides a summary of the observed socio-economic impacts of these extreme events on SIDS.

Key Findings:

- The Atlantic Hurricane season brought horrific destruction over the Caribbean. In Barbuda, over 90% of structures were destroyed, resulting in the island being completely uninhabited for the first time in 300 years. Across the Caribbean the economic costs of tropical cyclones amount to



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Climate outlook for October 2017

The **El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)** is currently neutral. However, models suggest the tropical Pacific Ocean will continue to cool, increasing the chance of a **La Niña** forming in late 2017 at least by 50%; around double the normal likelihood. The Bureau’s ENSO Outlook has shifted to **La Niña WATCH**.

El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO): This is what scientists refer to the ups and downs of El Niño and La Niña across the Pacific. ENSO causes changes to rainfall, cyclone risk, winds, sea levels and temperatures.

La Niña - This is what scientists call the time when the trade winds in the Pacific get stronger, pushing warmer water to the west and the

cloud meeting places further apart. This is the opposite of El Niño. La Niña conditions generally result in above average rainfall over much of western Pacific region.

The **Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)** signal has been inactive this month. All international climate models surveyed are near equally split with regards to forecasting continued inactivity or slightly enhanced activity over the Indian Ocean in the next few days.

MJO is a global-scale feature of the tropical atmosphere. The MJO is the major fluctuation in tropical weather on weekly to monthly timescales. The MJO can be characterized as an eastward moving “pulse” of cloud and rainfall near the equator that typically recurs every 30 to 60 days.

The **Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ)** in October was displaced north of its long-term average October position. The ITCZ was also largely suppressed between 160°E and the Date Line. This resulted in below normal rainfall for countries near the equator. In the south Pacific, the **South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ)** was close to its long-term average October position. Near and east of the Date Line, the SPCZ was enhanced over eastern Fiji, Tonga, Niue, Samoa and the Cook Islands.

ITCZ is a large-scale climate features of the western tropical Pacific. A place where clouds meet and rainfall occurs usually lies between Federated States of Micronesia and northern part of Kiribati.

SPCZ is Large-scale climate features of the western tropical Pacific. A place where clouds meet and rainfall occurs usually lies between Solomon Islands and Samoa.

Coral bleaching alerts for the Federated States of Micronesia. According to the four-week outlook from 05 November, level 2 alerts are expected over the western Federated States of Micronesia with level 1 alerts for central and eastern parts of this country. ‘Alert 2’ is the highest level of coral beaching while ‘no stress’ is the lowest level.

Seasonal rainfall outlooks for November 2017 to January 2018 favour below normal rainfall for Nauru and above normal rainfall for Pohnpei in Micronesia, the southern Marshall Islands, northern Tonga and Niue. Model outlooks differ elsewhere.

2017 CLIMATE CHANGE DIVISION CALENDAR: DECEMBER

PROJECTS/EVENTS	DETAILS	DATE	WHERE
Tuvalu National Drought Workshop and Consultations	Conduct National Stakeholder Consultations to Draft the National Drought Policy for Tuvalu	27 Nov - 01 Dec	Funafuti, Tuvalu
Pacific iCLIM Consultations - Tuvalu	Conduct IKM consultations with Climate Change/Disaster Risk Reduction stakeholders	27 Nov - 01 Dec	Funafuti, Tuvalu
SCOPIC and PICASO training	Conduct a training for Tuvalu Met Service on how to use SCOPIC, PICASO and CLIK-P	4 - 8 Dec	Funafuti, Tuvalu
Tuvalu Met website	Initial consultation to develop the Tuvalu website	4 - 8 Dec	Funafuti, Tuvalu
Fiji National Stakeholder Consultation Workshop	Developing Fiji’s National Implementation Plan for Enhanced Climate Services	12 - 14 Dec	Suva, Fiji
December OCOF 123	Monthly OCOF meeting	18 Dec	Online, SPREP




Airport signage welcoming participants at Cologne, Germany for COP23. Photo: Diane McFadzien



To find out more about SPREP’s Climate Change Division (CCD) please visit: www.sprep.org/Climate-Change/climate-change-about-us



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