

CLIMATE CHANGE MATTERS

Issue 42 February 2016

Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston over Fiji
Photo: Fiji Meteorological Services

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Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme

"The Pacific Environment—sustaining our livelihoods and natural
heritage in harmony with our cultures"

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Director's Note



Dr Netatua Pelesikoti

*Climate Change Division Director
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Dear colleagues and friends,

Welcome to the first issue of CCM for 2016.

This newsletter has been in circulation for almost four consecutive years. We are happy to continue to share with you climate change and related initiatives from our region by way of this newsletter.

As you know we are experiencing a very active cyclone season coupled with El Nino as witnessed by Winston a category 5 and the worst cyclone in the history of Fiji. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Government and people of Fiji for the loss of loved ones and loss of livelihoods.

We are reminded yet again of the impacts of climate change and extreme events, the importance of preparedness and early warning systems.

The compilation of this issue has been in process before Cyclone Winston battered the Fiji islands, I would like to invite you to send in articles relevant to Severe Cyclone Winston and the recovery work being carried out that you are involved with that can be shared with the CCM circulation list.

Given the current predictions, our region should remain vigilant, well informed and prepared. The warmer than normal sea surface temperatures in the eastern Pacific caused by the current El Nino and the state of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) have increased the area in which cyclones can form, leading to this years' above average cyclone season. In the future is it predicted that the frequency of severe storms such as Winston will increase, thus effective early warning systems and increasing community resilience are essential.

'ofa atu,

Neta

About Us

SPREP's Climate Change Division (CCD) is made up of three programmes:

1. Adaptation;
2. Mitigation;
3. Policy and Science.

The work of the CCD is directed by the SPREP Strategic Plan 2011-2015 based on the climate change priorities of SPREP Members and consistent with the *Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change 2006-2015* (PIFACC) and other relevant and approved policy drivers such as the Pacific Plan and the Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Management.

SPREP's three (broad) climate change strategic priorities for 2011-2015 are:

1. Implementing adaptation measures;
2. Improving members' capacity, knowledge and understanding of climate change, and risk reduction;
3. Contributing to global greenhouse gas reduction.

Please visit our website at: www.sprep.org/Climate-Change/climate-change-about-us

We kindly acknowledge the following donors and partners:





Understanding the Paris Agreement and where to from here, with SPREP

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) will continue to work closely with its member countries, regional organisations and development partners to provide direct support to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

The adoption of the Paris Agreement at the recent 21st Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) marks a potentially revolutionary moment in the history of the battle against climate change.

For the full article: [Click here](#)

Republic of Marshall Islands: Declares State of Emergency

The President of the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI), Her Excellency Hilda C. Heine, has declared a State of Emergency due to the persisting drought conditions brought on by the current El Niño. The prevailing El Niño is one of the strongest on record and the lack of sufficient rainfall on the atoll islands of RMI has caused widespread drought conditions. Seasonal climate prediction for the first quarter of 2016 still indicates that the rainfall across RMI will be below 50% average.

For more information: [Click here](#)

High Level Support Mechanism to convenes to discuss implications of the Paris Agreement on the Pacific – April 2016.

SPREP, in partnership with Climate Analytics through the High Level Support Mechanism, will convene a meeting of Pacific Island Ministers and their senior climate change officials to discuss the Paris Agreement and its implications for the Pacific. This will be the third High Level Support Mechanism regional event to be held in the Pacific.

For the full article: [Click here](#)



Prime Minister of Tuvalu with President of Palau (left) and the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands (right) at a Pacific Press Conference at the COP21, in Paris, France.



Majuro island: trucks supply water to drought affected communities.



Implications of the Paris Agreement will affect all of us.





Wind energy technology to draw water from the ground

Pacific discusses how to access technology needed to address climate change.

Pacific island countries met 24-26th February in Tonga at a regional forum for National Designated Entities (NDEs) under the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN). The CTCN is the operational arm of the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism, promoting the accelerated transfer of environmentally sound technologies for low carbon and climate resilient development at the request of developing countries.

For the full article: [Click here](#)

NOAA launches unprecedented effort to discover how El Niño affects weather.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) scientists and partners have embarked on a land, sea, and air campaign in the tropical Pacific to study the current El Niño and gather data in an effort to improve weather forecasts thousands of miles away. The El Niño Rapid Response Field Campaign will deploy NOAA's Gulfstream IV research plane and NOAA Ship *Ronald H. Brown*, NASA's Global Hawk unmanned aircraft equipped with specialised sensors, and researchers stationed on Kiritimati (Christmas) Island in the Republic of Kiribati, approximately 1,340 miles south of Honolulu.

For the full article: [Click here](#)



NOAA Ship Ronald H. Brown.

Early Warning, Early Action.

"Access to safe drinking water is our priority" says Kevin de Brum, a leader of the Jenrok community on Majuro Atoll. "God will not forsake us because we are his children and he loves us. Despite the State of Emergency, the people in the communities remain hopeful and their faith strong." These community members are taking part in the planning and designing of the Jenrok Community Early Warning System under the Finland-Pacific (FINPAC) Project. <https://www.sprep.org/finpac/>

For the full article: [Click here](#)



The Chief of the Jenrok community on Majuro Island at the FINPAC Community Consultation.





PIDF convenes Public Forum on the Paris Agreement.

A key conclusion of the Public Forum on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change this month, was that all organisations and experts in the region have to work together to ensure that the Paris Agreement is ratified and effectively implemented by Pacific Island Countries. SPREP is currently developing a regional support programme to that end, to provide assistance in developing adaptation and mitigation measures and comply with their obligations under the new Agreement.

For the full article: [Click here](#)



Main road infrastructure on Christmas Island, Kiribati

Republic of Marshall Islands receives new climate prediction tool 'CLIKP'.

The Marshall Islands National Weather Service received training from SPREP on a new climate prediction tool [CLIK Pacific](#) ('CLIKP') in February to help provide reliable temperature and rainfall prediction in the months ahead and support drought management planning decisions, and address challenges associated with the 2015/16 drought.

CLIK Pacific provides advanced 3-monthly forecasts to guide the use and management of household water catchments, and other water storage facilities as well as levels of salinity of water drawn from underground wells.

For the full article: [Click here](#)



Representatives from Marshall Islands Weather Services and SPREP examines the rain gauge in Majuro.

Ecosystem based Adaptation to build resilience in Fiji, begins.

"The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, are all dependent on the goods and services that ecosystems provide," acknowledged Tui Macuata, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere at the two day inception workshop hosted in Fiji for the Pacific Ecosystem-based Adaptation to Climate Change (PEBACC) Project.

For the full article: [Click here](#)



Ecosystem-based Adaptation workshop participants





Abaiang Island Development Committee (IDC) with Kiribati National Expert Group (KNEG) and Regional Support team (SPREP, SPC and GIZ)

Kiribati National Expert Group, Regional Support team and Abaiang Island Development Committee Discuss Lessons Learned under the Kiribati Whole of Island Approach.

Abaiang was selected as one of the two vulnerable islands identified by the Kiribati cabinet in August 2013 under the Whole of Island (Wol) approach. The WOI approach is an initiative driven by the government in support of a holistic approach to climate change and disaster risk projects, moving away from a sector-based and project-by-project paradigm.

For the full article: [Click here](#)



Mo'uga'one rainfall volunteers during field training

Pilot Project for Reducing Vulnerability in Mo'unga'one underway

A Partnership Pilot Project is being implemented on the remote Ha'apai Island of Mo'unga'one by the Government of Tonga, through its Meteorology and Emergency Managements Departments and partners at reducing the vulnerability of the Mouna'one Community livelihoods to Climate Change and Natural Disasters through improved meteorology and tsunami warning services.

For the full article: [Click here](#)



Coastal erosion, Jenrok weto, Majuro Island.

Update on the Regional Technical Support Mechanism (RTSM)

Administered by SPREP, the Regional Technical Support Mechanism (RTSM) is a registered network of experts in climate change who can provide coordinated and timely technical advice on appropriate resource opportunities, strategic approaches and technical assistance on climate change, as linked to food security and infrastructure, to PICs on a needs basis.

For the full article: [Click here](#)





RTSM

Regional Technical Support Mechanism

and associated Rapid Response Fund (RRF)

is to provide technical and advisory assistance for:

- Capacity building of members for climate finance, economic analysis and food security in relation to climate change



- Development of climate change finance project proposals that will trigger resourcing opportunities



- Inputs to policy development in mainstreaming CCA and DRR into national, sector and/or organisation plans (e.g. ministry work programmes and budgets)



- Assessing and addressing social aspects of climate change



- Development or strengthening of knowledge management systems



Vision statement

The Regional Technical Support Mechanism (RTSM) and Rapid Response Fund (RRF) is a collaborative undertaking of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies and their associated development partners and donors.

The establishment of the RTSM and RRF promotes the spirit of cooperation and collaboration between CROP agencies, to efficiently serve the priorities and needs of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to effectively respond to climate change and disaster risk reduction.



Photo: © Claverina/SPREP

What is the RRF?

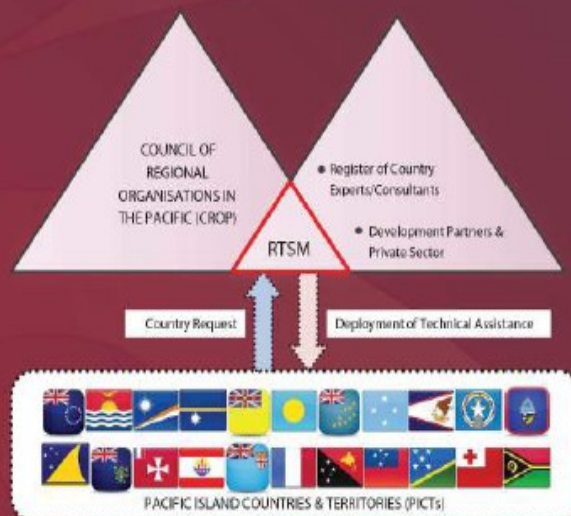
The RRF was established initially with financing from the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF) through the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with a long term vision of it evolving into a climate change financing facility for the Pacific region.

The RRF does not replace the everyday technical assistance roles of CROP Agencies and is open to all donors and development partners who may wish to join as a partner. The RRF complements long-term development interventions on climate change rather than supplanting or duplicating them.

What is the RTSM?

The Regional Technical Support Mechanism (RTSM) is a registered network of experts in climate change, who can provide coordinated and timely technical advice on appropriate resource opportunities, strategic approaches and technical assistance (TA) on climate change to PICTs on a needs basis.

They also provide where necessary, support in developing project proposals, preparing reporting requirements and implementing and monitoring projects.



How can PICTs make a request?

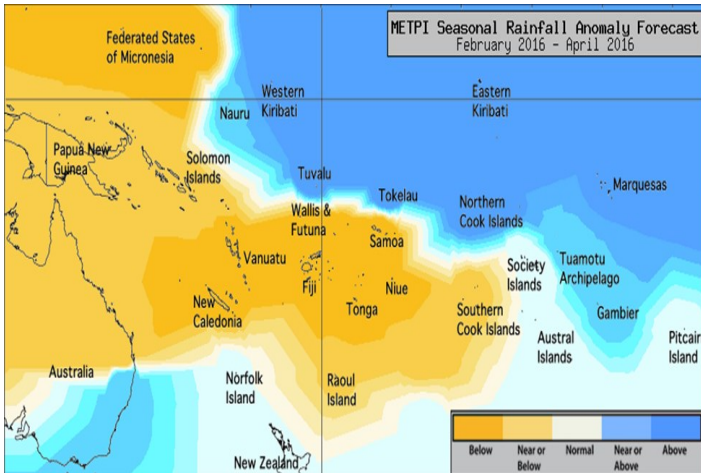
All proposals must use the approved Request Form.

- 1 Forms are available online via the: Pacific Climate Change Portal: www.pacificclimatechange.net
- 2 Completed forms must then be sent to the RTSM Coordinator: rtsm@sprep.org

For more information, please contact:

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Our Vision: The Pacific environment, sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures

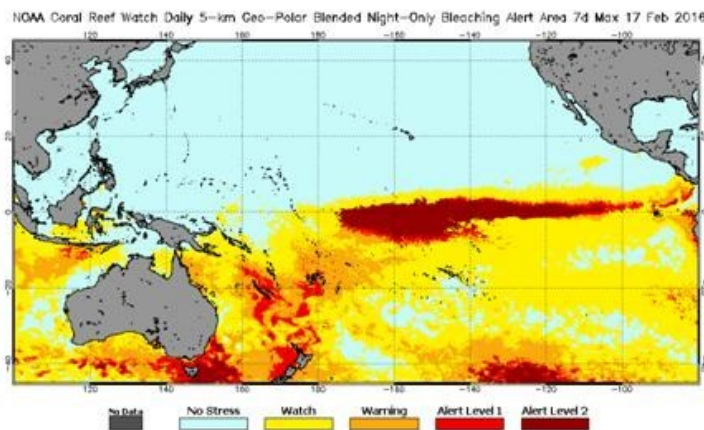


METPI Seasonal Rainfall Forecast, February to April 2016

El Nino Update: El Nino conditions continue

Strong El Niño condition continued during January 2016; and is likely to persist for another few months. Sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies still exceed $+2^{\circ}\text{C}$ in the central and eastern Pacific, but have weakened from the peak values in November-December 2015. The Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) was displaced towards the Equator in the central and eastern Pacific, and the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ) was shifted to the north and east of normal, both signals being consistent with El Niño.

For the full article: [Click here](#)



NOAA Coral Reef Watch Bleach Alert for the Pacific

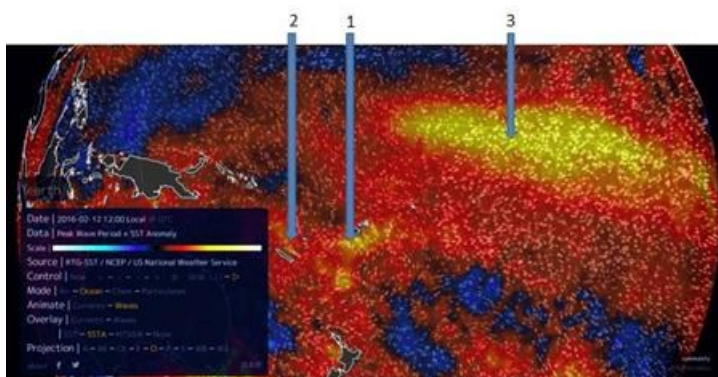
Pacific Reefs Feeling the Heat

Due to a combination of the current El Niño and the current state of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (currently in a negative phase) the Pacific Island region is experiencing much warmer than normal water conditions.

Unlike us mammals, most marine organisms are highly sensitive to changes in temperature, especially rapid changes. During periods of prolonged heat-stress corals will expel their symbiotic zooxanthellae (algae that live in the coral and give it much of its color). Corals can recover from brief periods of bleaching, but the longer they are bleached the lower their chances of survival.

US NOAA's Coral Reef Watch has most of the central equatorial Pacific under Alert Level 2 (widespread bleaching and some mortality expected), and most of the South Pacific is under Watch to Alert Level 1 warnings (for more information visit <http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/satellite/index.php>).

For the full article: [Click here](#)



Sea surface temperature anomalies (temperatures above the seasonal average) in the Pacific Region.





| CALENDAR—MARCH 2016 Activities | Date | Location |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Community Climate and Disaster Resilience Planning Workshop with the Lorde Howe Community by the Mataniko River in Honiara | 29 Feb – 04 Mar | Solomon Islands |
| 10x20 MPA Meeting | 07 – 09 Mar | Rome |
| Media Training | 07 – 12 Mar | Vanuatu |
| Republic of Korea—Pacific Islands Prediction Project (ROK-PI CLIPS) CLIK Pacific Climate Prediction System Training and Demonstration | 09 – 11 Mar | Vanuatu |
| PPCR Planning Meeting | 10 – 11 Mar | Samoa |
| Asia Pacific Adaptation Network Steering Committee Meeting | 10 – 11 Mar | Thailand |
| Vanuatu Pacific Partnership on Ocean Acidification Stakeholder Consultation | 14 – 18 Mar | Vanuatu |
| National Climate Consultation for Stakeholders | 14 – 18 Mar | Vanuatu |
| Pacific iCLIM Planning Meeting | 15 – 16 Mar | Australia |
| Pacific Islands Climate Services (PICS) Panel Meeting | 21 – 23 Mar | Vanuatu |

