

Climate Change Matters

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Director's Note

Season's Greetings and Fakalofa lahi atu,

With 2021 drawing to a close, we take this time to reflect on our collective achievements and show our sincerest appreciation for our Pacific people throughout another challenging year. We witnessed first-hand how the pandemic continues to affect our everyday lives and made every endeavour to find innovative ways to ensure that our Pacific voice remains strong, unwavering, and respected on a global scale.

As the lead for the One CROP Plus team this year, SPREP provided support to national government delegations in various discussions on the topics of loss and damage, early warning systems, climate finance, and environmental justice, amongst others. Pacific Leaders made bold statements and called on world leaders to act on climate change with the utmost urgency. Pacific poets and orators were given a special space at COP26 through the Mana Moana - Pacific Voices collection, a showcase of 11 pieces of poetry against digital art, to bring to light the heartbreaking reality of climate change in the islands. The Flex for 1.5 social media campaign to further amplify the Pacific voice at COP26 gained an enormous following and over 14 million views worldwide.

The Pacific Climate Change Centre supported learning and knowledge sharing opportunities for the Samoa Fa'afafine Association in late October and Samoan youth and experts with the Yokohama Commercial High School, Japan in mid-November. In this issue, we have also included the latest COSPPac Climate Summary that highlights the La Niña conditions currently present in the region and are forecasted to remain until February 2022. We hope that you have found these newsletters and updates useful - Please feel free to share any stories with us that you feel would be relevant for this newsletter.

Despite the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, much has happened, and been achieved in climate change this year. I thank you for your continued support in building Pacific resilience.

From our CCR family to yours, I wish you a healthy, safe, and happy holiday season and we look forward to working with you again in the new year.

God bless,
Soifua ma ia manuia,

Tagaloa

Director of Climate Change Resilience

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)



Tagaloa Cooper





COP26 GLASGOW CLIMATE PACT - "WE DIDN'T COME HOME EMPTY HANDED"

The odds are always stacked against the Pacific region in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, and at COP26 we faced the additional challenge of COVID-19.

The Pacific nations contribute less than 0.06% of the world's total greenhouse gasses, but are amongst the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Already facing a battle for our voices to be heard, the global pandemic stretched our capacities to their limits this year.

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PACIFIC SMALL ISLANDS DEVELOPING STATES TAKE THE FLOOR AT COP26

The 1.5C limit is non-negotiable for the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS). In the face of adversity with the Climate Action Tracker report released at COP26, as well as very small numbers within the Pacific delegation, the island region has ramped up its call upon the world to honor their promise of the Paris Agreement.

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"THERE ARE NO TRADEOFFS, WE ARE NEGOTIATING THE SURVIVAL OF OUR ISLANDS" - HON. PRIME MINISTER OF SAMOA MESSAGE TO COP26

Samoa calls for world leaders to act with the same urgency to climate change as that applied for the global COVID-19 vaccination programme. To do so, the world needs to implement ambitious emission cuts by 2030 to implement commitments of the Paris Agreement.

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MARSHALL ISLANDS TELLS COP26, "NOW IS THE TIME!"

"I'm speaking to you as a representative of a country under siege from the onslaught of climate change. The storm of climate catastrophe is gathering destructive power with every failed promise and missed target." The Marshall Islands took centre stage at COP26 in Glasgow, presenting a statement at the resumed High-Level sessions.

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FIJI PRIME MINISTER DEMANDS COURAGE AS WORLD LEADERS LISTEN AT COP26

Pacific leaders and delegations attending COP26 in Glasgow have not travelled half way across the world to watch “the future” of island nations being sacrificed at the “altar of appeasement of the world’s worst emitters.” The message came from Fiji’s Prime Minister, Honourable Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama.

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COP26 PRESIDENT HEARS THE AMPLIFIED VOICE OF THE PACIFIC

COP26 President, Alok Sharma, and the UK Minister of Environment Lord Zachary Goldsmith heard the amplified voice of the Pacific as they made their positions clear during a special session convened on the sidelines of COP26 in Glasgow.

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COP26 MUST LIGHT THE FIRE - PALAU PRESIDENT AT COP26

The Palauan legend of Uab was told to world leaders during the High-Level segment of COP26, a boy who grew into a giant that wouldn’t stop growing due to his unruly appetite, depleting all the natural resources before threatening to eat his people. It wasn’t until villagers banded together, took bold action and set Uab on fire, that they were saved.

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EVERY DEGREE BRINGS NEW LEVELS OF CLIMATE EXTREMES, SUFFERING, VANUATU REMINDS COP26

Vanuatu has called on world leaders and negotiators at COP26 to prioritise “action over politics, resilience over economic gain, and justice over inequality.” The point was made by Ambassador H.E Antas Sumbue, of Vanuatu’s Embassy in Switzerland, when he addressed the High-Level Segment in Glasgow, adding Vanuatu’s voice to an amplified call from the Pacific for urgent climate action.

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"TUVALU IS SINKING," PRIME MINISTER NATANO TELLS WORLD LEADERS GRIM REALITY OF ATOLL NATION

Tuvalu is sinking with 40 per cent of the atoll nation's capital, Funafuti, already below sea level at high tide. This reality coupled with rapidly rising sea level has placed Tuvalu's population under enormous threat, world leaders have been told.

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COOK ISLANDS PM CALL FOR NEW FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

World leaders, negotiators and delegates at COP26 should consider a new global financial instrument that recognises climate-related debt, separately from national debt.

The call to world leaders at COP26 to ramp up discussions about adaptation financing came from the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Honourable Mark Brown.

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NIUE TAKING ITS BOLD CLIMATE ACTION TO THE STAGE AT COP26

One of the world's smallest nations is taking giant steps when it comes to addressing climate change. Niue has made bold commitments in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) despite its greenhouse gas emissions being almost zero. Niue's solar energy currently provides 38% of its national power grid.

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WORLD LEADERS TOLD - "WE ARE NOT DROWING, WE ARE FIGHTING"

The Pacific voice rang loud and clear when Pacific climate activist Ms Brianna Fruean, took the stage at the opening ceremony of the World Leaders Summit at COP26 in Glasgow. Sounding the warrior call of Pacific youth, she declared that "We are not drowning, we are fighting".

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OUR ISLANDS SPEAK, OUR ANCESTORS SPEAK AT COP26

Pacific poetry giving voice to the loss of our way of life as we know it, our homelands, and our livelihoods to climate change have been heard in the corridors of COP26 through the Mana Moana – Pacific Voices collection. Consisting of 11 pieces of poetry showcased against digital art to create the Mana Moana – Pacific Voices collection.

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MANA MOANA PACIFIC VOICES AT COP

A compelling artistic work is harnessing the oratory skills of the Pacific to bring the heart-breaking reality of climate change from the islands to COP26. 'Mana Moana – Pacific Voices' is a collection of emotive and artistic video works created to amplify and support our Pacific call to drive global action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

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MOANA BLUE PACIFIC TO MAKE WAVES AT COP26

Pacific Island delegations at COP26 have a "home away from home" within the venue. Known as the Moana Blue Pacific, this hub supported our 140 island delegates as they strategised and planned across the two weeks of climate change negotiations. The Twenty-Sixth Conference of the Parties to the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change is reported to have 25,000 delegates attending.

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PACIFIC BATTLES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY ON THE TABLE AT COP26

As the Pacific emits less than 0.06% of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions, this means the Pacific may not be able to fully participate in carbon market trading – however, the island region is taking a strong interest and the lead in Article 6, the negotiation of market and non-market approaches in the Paris Agreement Rulebook.

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SAMOA TO REMAIN IN SEAT ON COP BUREAU

Samoa has been re-nominated to represent the Alliance of Small Islands States on the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change.

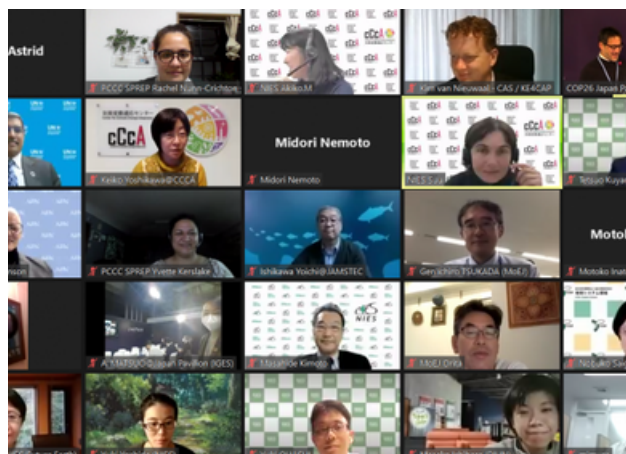
The Bureau is responsible for advising the President of the COP and taking decisions with the general management of the intergovernmental process as it has overall responsibility for questions of process.

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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DELIVERING SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION TO PACIFIC ISLAND COMMUNITIES AT COP26

The importance of interaction among climate science, policy, and action is key to building climate-resilient societies. This interaction is equally important in sharing best practices of how science can be used to inform evidence-based strategic planning and implementation of adaptation actions in the Pacific.

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AMPLIFYING OUR PACIFIC VOICE - HEAR US, SEE US, WORK WITH US

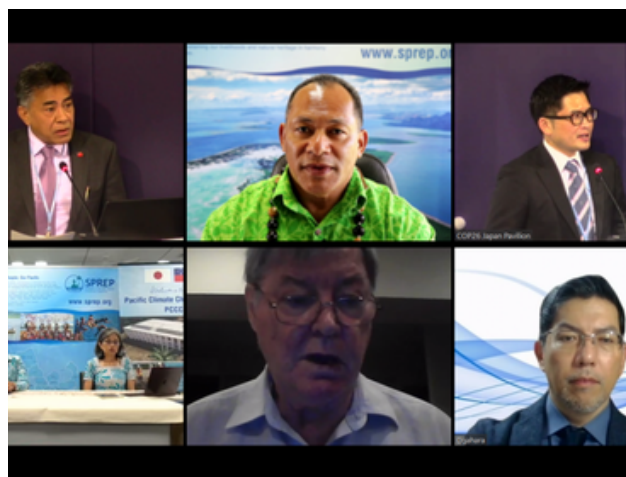
"Real" Pacific voices shared from three different perspectives was the focus of a special session at COP26 that some may call an armchair discussion, but we in the Pacific, call it a talanoa. Held at the Moana Blue Pacific at the Twenty-Sixth Conference of the Parties to the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow, the event united the work of three different areas of the Pacific - Religion, NGO and Academia.

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CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS TOWARDS CLIMATE INVESTMENT SHOWCASED AT COP26

The Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) showcased the outstanding outcomes of its training programmes of adaptation, mitigation, and access to climate finance to increase climate investment in the Pacific during a COP26 side event "Strengthened Resilience to Climate Change in the Pacific: from Capacity Building to Climate Investment".

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HIGHER AMBITION NEEDED FOR COP26 TO SECURE 1.5C GOAL

Headline-grabbing announcements in the first week of COP26 were given a reality check. The Climate Action Tracker released a landmark assessment showing that with all pledges, including those made in Glasgow, global greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 will still be around twice as high as necessary to prevent breaching the 1.5C temperature limit.

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90-DAY CHALLENGE FOR OUR OCEAN CONFERENCE ANNOUNCED

Palau, in partnership with the Office of the Climate Envoy under the US State Department, has laid out a 90-day challenge at COP26 calling for major initiatives to be prepared for announcement at the seventh Our Ocean Conference on 16 and 17 February 2022.

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COP26 TOLD WARMING OCEAN WILL DEVASTATE TUNA INDUSTRY

In amongst combatting sea level rise, threat to water and food security, and extreme weather events – our Pacific Island region will also need to contend with the loss of Pacific tuna stocks also under threat from climate change. The abundance and distribution of the four economically important tuna in the western and central Pacific is predicted to change.

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TRAINING EMPOWERS SAMOA FA'AFAFINE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE KNOWLEDGE

Members of the Sāmoa Fa'afafine Association (SFA) now have a better understanding of the basics of climate change, climate risk, vulnerability, adaptation and mitigation options, thanks to a one-day workshop hosted by the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) at Vailima.

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COSPPAC CLIMATE SUMMARY

Issued 10 December 2021

- La Niña is firmly established in the tropical Pacific with climate models suggesting this will persist until February 2022.
- The current Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) pulse has weakened in recent days but is expected to track eastwards across the Maritime Continent and restrengthen in the coming week while in the Western Pacific region.
- The Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) was active and shifted north of its normal position, while the South Pacific Convergence Zone (SPCZ) was active around New Caledonia, Vanuatu to New Zealand.
- The sea surface temperature anomaly pattern in November shows SSTs were warmer than average in the far western Pacific while cooler than average SSTs along the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean.
- Coral bleaching status warning 'Alert Level 2' for parts of northern PNG mainland while 'Alert Level 1' for other parts of northern and southeast PNG, Palau and FSM. 'No stress' or 'watch' for the rest of COSPPac countries. Coral bleaching outlook remains 'Alert Level 2' for northern and southern PNG for the next three weeks.
- A notable sea level anomaly of +300mm observed in Palau and FSM while other COSPPac countries recorded between +100mm to +250mm above normal sea level.
- For December 2021-February 2022, the dynamical models (including SCOPIC) agree on above normal rainfall for Palau, Guam, CNMI, FSM, southern RMI, southeastern PNG, most of Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Niue, southern Cook Islands and southern French Polynesia. The models also agree on below normal rainfall for northern PNG, northern RMI, northern Solomon Islands, Nauru, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tokelau, northern and central Cook Islands, and the northern and central French Polynesia.
- The weekly tropical cyclone forecast from the ACCESS-S model shows significant increased risk in the weeks beginning 12 December and ending 25 December 2021 for the northwest Pacific, especially in areas around Philippines. There is also increased risks for the southwest Pacific region especially for PNG, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and New Zealand for weeks beginning 12 December and ending 18 December.

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A resilient Pacific environment sustaining our livelihoods and natural heritage in harmony with our cultures