

# UN COUNTRY RESULTS REPORT FOR THE PACIFIC REGION 2022



UNITED NATIONS  
PACIFIC



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UN PACIFIC RESULTS REPORT 2022

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This document is a formal publication of the United Nations System in the Pacific covering the 14 countries and territories of Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

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#### UN Multi-Country Office Fiji

Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga,  
Tuvalu, Vanuatu

Level 8 Kadavu House,  
414 Victoria Parade,  
Private Mail Bag, Suva, Fiji

+679 331-2500  
rco.fiji@un.org

#### UN Multi-Country Office Micronesia

Palau, Federated States of Micronesia,  
Marshall Islands, Nauru, Kiribati

J&T Building, Kaselehlie Street,  
P.O. Box 2466,  
Kolonia, Pohnpei,  
Federated States of Micronesia 96941

+691 320-2435

#### UN Multi-Country Office Samoa

Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau

One UN House, SIDS Street,  
Tuanaimato, Private Mail Bag,  
Apia, Samoa

+685 23670  
+685 23555

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2022**



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## Foreword by Resident Coordinators

From the perspective of socio-economic development in the Pacific Island states, the year 2022 was marked by events demonstrating what can be achieved through partnership, community and commitment to common goals, the values entwined in the cultural fabric of the diverse nations and uniting the Pacific island nations. It was a year that saw a considerable increase in engagement with government agencies, civil society, and development partners.

The COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately spread to all island states, even those that had held the pandemic at bay for over two years. Yet, with the unwaning support of UN agencies and other development partners, effective response and mitigation measures successfully contained its impact on the populations. Through their efforts and the efforts of many others across the globe, borders were re-opened by the second half of the year travel resumed to all 14 countries and territories covered under the UN Pacific Strategy 2018-2022 to resume our crucial work supporting towards achieving the ambitious 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Symbolising this partnership, in 2022, the UN, together with all 14 Pacific Governments in which we work, signed the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027, acknowledging the consultative and inclusive process used to create our joint development priorities. This UN Cooperation Framework was developed upon the foundations of our collaboration with all national and regional stakeholders. Honouring our commitment to



increasing country-level engagement, work was begun on the creation of individual Country Implementation Plans – a crucial aspect of the Framework that links goals to outcomes and ensures that the Framework aligns with each country's own National Development Plan.

In line with our ethos to “leave no-one behind”, an equally significant accomplishment was the operationalization of the UN Multi-Country Office in Micronesia and the scaling up of the UN's presence and expanded programming in the five Micronesian countries. Our sincere gratitude to the leadership and officials of the Federated States of Micronesia Federal Government and Pohnpei State Government in hosting us and in enabling our start-up. With this expansion of UN presence in the Pacific, we expect that the number of UN organisations in Pohnpei, FSM will increase from the current 5 to 19 or more in the next few years, opening the door even wider for further cooperation and development among the regions.

To maximise the impact of development investment, the UN leveraged joint funding facilities such as the UN Pacific Strategy Fund and SDG Joint Fund to design and implement a number of catalytic joint UN programmes and initiatives throughout 2022. The UN continued to support the achievement of major milestones across all nations by providing technical assistance for national elections, the development of social policies and legislation promoting social equity and justice at the national and regional level, as well as supporting the amplification of the joint Pacific island nations voices' on these international stage such as at the UN Ocean Summit held in Lisbon in July 2022 and the design and negotiations for the recognition of the Multi-Vulnerability Index for SIDS.

We once again witnessed first-hand the vulnerability of the Pacific nations to natural hazards. The UN garnered its forces to provide immediate direct emergency support to the people and Government of Tonga following the eruption of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcano and subsequent tsunami which tragically claimed the lives of four people, affected 84% of the population and caused an estimated \$90.4m in damages.



Looking ahead to 2023, we plan to continue to telescope in and out from the global to the local, leveraging global resources and priorities such as education, climate change and global economic recovery to spur on progress towards the SDGs in the communities of the PIDS.

We aim to capitalize on the momentum gained with the Food Systems Summit and the Transforming Education Summit. Our actions will demonstrate a sustained ambition to reach the farthest child on the most remote island with quality education. We also aim to explore non-traditional

farming methods for atoll nations and islands and will intensify efforts to address the impact of climate change. We will be strong advocates for all 14 PICs at COP28 and are committed to building resilience against key climate security challenges through our many projects and programmes. Strengthening and forming partnerships and mobilizing resources to maximize the relevance of the UN development support in the next five years is crucial and this is a key component in continuing our work into 2023.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jaap van Hierden'.

**Jaap van Hierden**  
UN Resident Coordinator  
Palau, Federated States of Micronesia,  
Marshall Islands, Nauru, Kiribati



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sanaka Samarasinghe'.

**Sanaka Samarasinghe**  
UN Resident Coordinator  
Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga,  
Tuvalu, Vanuatu



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simona Marinescu'.

**Simona Marinescu**  
UN Resident Coordinator  
Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa,  
Tokelau







# United Nations Country Team in the Pacific (UNCT)

The UN Multi-Country engagement in the Pacific is led by three Resident Coordinators and a Joint UN Country Team linked across three regional hubs, operating regionally out of Fiji, Micronesia, and Samoa.



The UN has 24 Resident Agencies based in the Pacific while seven are Non-Resident (NRAs).



## Resident Agencies



United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)



International Labour Organization (ILO)



International Organization for Migration (IOM)



The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)



UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)



United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)



United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS)



United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)



United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)



United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)



United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)



Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)



United Nations Volunteers (UNV)



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)



World Food Programme (WFP)



World Health Organization (WHO)



World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

## Non-Resident Agencies



United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat - Fukuoka)



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR - Canberra)



United Nations Information Centres (UNIC - Canberra)



United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO - Bangkok)



United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS - Port Moresby)



International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA - Vienna)



International Telecommunication Union (ITU - Bangkok)



## CHAPTER 01

# Key Development in the Region

Key development trends and emerging issues in the year and their implications for national SDG priorities

The Pacific Region nations underwent a turbulent 2022, and all countries were faced with similar challenges with trying to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic while also managing the impacts of the war in Ukraine.



### COVID-19 challenges to health and economy

The five Small Island States of Micronesia – Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Nauru – all dealt with the fallout from the pandemic. While Nauru kept some COVID-19-related travel restrictions, the four other Micronesian countries returned to standard procedures for international travel and transport. Following the increase in people and trade flows, these countries experienced rapid economic recovery, starting in the second half of 2022.

Inflation caused by increased food, energy and transportation costs in the post-COVID-19 global economy, along with the war in Ukraine, impeded Micronesian countries' economies, and experts have warned of the risk of recessions in some economies. Nevertheless, it is expected that their economic growth will continue in 2023.



One minor concern is the long-term price increase in global food and commodity markets, as Micronesian countries rely heavily on imported foods and products. Priorities include strengthening their local environment, society and governance, and enhancing domestic and foreign capital flows to achieve steady economic growth through the implementation of comprehensive development programmes in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Tonga experienced modest gains in tourism recovery in 2022 of 3–9 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, with remittances doing the heavy lifting in holding up the economy in the face of the economic slowdown in tourism, retail and agriculture sectors due to the combined impact of the pandemic, volcanic eruption and tsunami.

Vanuatu regained approximately 10–11 per cent of its pre-pandemic level tourist inflows in 2022. It continued to invest in infrastructure recovery from damage and cascading effects on employment and the economy caused by Cyclone Harold. Vanuatu is ranked the most vulnerable country in the world to natural disasters triggered by climate change, and continues to face the brunt of their effects.

While Tuvalu remained COVID-19-free until late 2022, it suffered from lower tourism activity, reduced remittances and delays in infrastructure projects for most of 2022. Tuvalu sustained itself through the pandemic with the support of development partners and stable fisheries revenues. As an import-dependent economy, volatile international commodity prices present the ongoing concern of erosion of real household incomes.



### Post-pandemic tourism recovery

The countries in the South Pacific (Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau) reopened their borders in August of 2022 on the back of hugely successful vaccination programmes, welcoming tourists and returning residents mainly from New Zealand. Arrivals to the Cook Islands rose by 4.4 per cent at the end of 2021, following a contraction of 85.2 per cent one year prior. Niuean arrivals were significantly slower. The country welcomed 670 visitors in 2022, a marked turnaround given its normal 10,500 visitors annually. Fiji experienced a stronger-than-expected tourism rebound in 2022, where the total number of Australian tourists alone reached 84 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ADB monitor





## Rising costs and inflation

The rise in global food and fuel prices heightened inflationary pressures in the South Pacific, including in Tokelau. On a year-on-year basis, the average consumer price inflation in Tokelau rose by 11.5 per cent in September 2022, underpinned by higher prices for food and non-alcoholic beverages. In Samoa, the Government saw a similar increase of 10.2 per cent as of November 2022, similarly owing to higher food prices, but also due to rises in building material and fuel costs.

For Samoa, remittances – which have surged since Australia and New Zealand’s employment programmes – have served as a buffer, particularly for households. Despite three consecutive fiscal years (2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/2022) of negative GDP growth, owing in addition to the 2019 measles outbreak, remittances to Samoa remained strong, posting annual growth rates of 5.6 per cent and 6.7 per cent in 2020 and 2021.

In tandem, Samoa experienced its first positive year-on-year growth rate since 2012. In September 2022, the economy grew by 4.7 per cent, while growth in the Cook Islands rebounded by 7.6 per cent one year earlier. However, as would be anticipated, there was increased emigration from Niue and Cook Islands amid increased unemployment, particularly in tourism where a higher proportion of workers are women. Cook Islands’ large fiscal stimulus led to high expenditures and a rapid build-up in debt, causing the government to abandon its fiscal rules in favour of a higher debt ceiling. Tokelau’s economy remained mostly unharmed thanks to its limited dependence on tourism, and also owing to continued development assistance from New Zealand.

In 2022, Solomon Islands expressed its intention to defer graduation from LDC status since the country is facing multiple impacts from two earthquakes in November 2022, the November 2021 domestic civil unrest, an increasing urban-rural divide, accelerating population

growth that is outpacing the expansion in basic public services, and the lingering economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, on top of persistent climate and disaster risks.

These trends imply a higher risk of food insecurity, poorer health outcomes, gender inequity and poverty, with the consequent risk of reversing progress across these countries’ SDGs. A concerted effort aimed at supporting their post-COVID-19 recovery, reversing the downturn in SDG progress, and dampening the effects of inflation will be necessary to keep these countries on track toward achieving sustainable development by 2030.

The five South Pacific Island states of Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and Tuvalu are each navigating a complex post-pandemic recovery, constrained by the Ukraine crisis and their unique challenges including a constant threat of natural disasters and external shocks.

This marks an opportune time for Fiji in particular to invest in strong social protection programmes as backup for future crises. Increasing emigration of skilled labour, while boosting remittances, has also led to a potential brain drain, exacerbating a skills gap that could constrain Fiji’s economic recovery.

Risks of further global economic slowdown, inflation, and volatile revenue flows including grants from development partners will continue to plague these countries in the short to medium term, in addition to the constant threat of climate-related natural disasters. To address these risks, the South Pacific countries will need to invest more in social protection to accelerate poverty reduction, prioritize fiscal consolidation to reduce high levels of public debt, reorient towards greener tourism, and explore new sources of green and innovative financing to support recovery and growth.









Photo: © John Rae/UNCDF Pacific

## CHAPTER 02

# UN Development System Support to National Development Priorities through the Cooperation Framework

## 2.1 Overview of Cooperation Framework Results

### Joint Work Plans

The number of joint workplans under the UNPS has increased substantially in the last couple of years, attributed primarily to greater availability of funding for joint projects and increased efforts by the RCOs to incentivise such programmes. The number of joint programmes increased two-fold in 2022 as compared to the previous year. Some of these joint programmes/projects addressed key regional or national priorities strategically at the policy level. The utilization of joint funds (e.g., Joint SDG fund, SG's Fund for COVID Response, the Spotlight Initiative, the UN Pacific Strategy Fund, etc.) has provided UN agencies with strong incentives to collaborate in the formulation of joint proposals. By virtue of their common teams and budgets, these projects have enabled relevant agencies and national partners to reduce overall transaction costs and reduce the fragmentation of programmes.



## Responses to Evolving Country Situations

The annual update of the UN's Common Country Analysis (CCA) for all 14 countries ensures adaptability by providing a mechanism through which the United Nations Pacific Strategy (UNPS) responded to evolving country situations and priorities. This CCA assists in identifying changes to priorities and enables a configuration exercise.

The UNPS's coordination structure helped the Pacific UN team to deliver more efficiently with lower transaction costs. The role of structures at the country level has been a crucial factor in the efficiency of planning, execution and reporting. Two key structures are the presence of agency offices and Country Coordination Specialists in-country, and the Joint Country Action Plans (JCAPs).

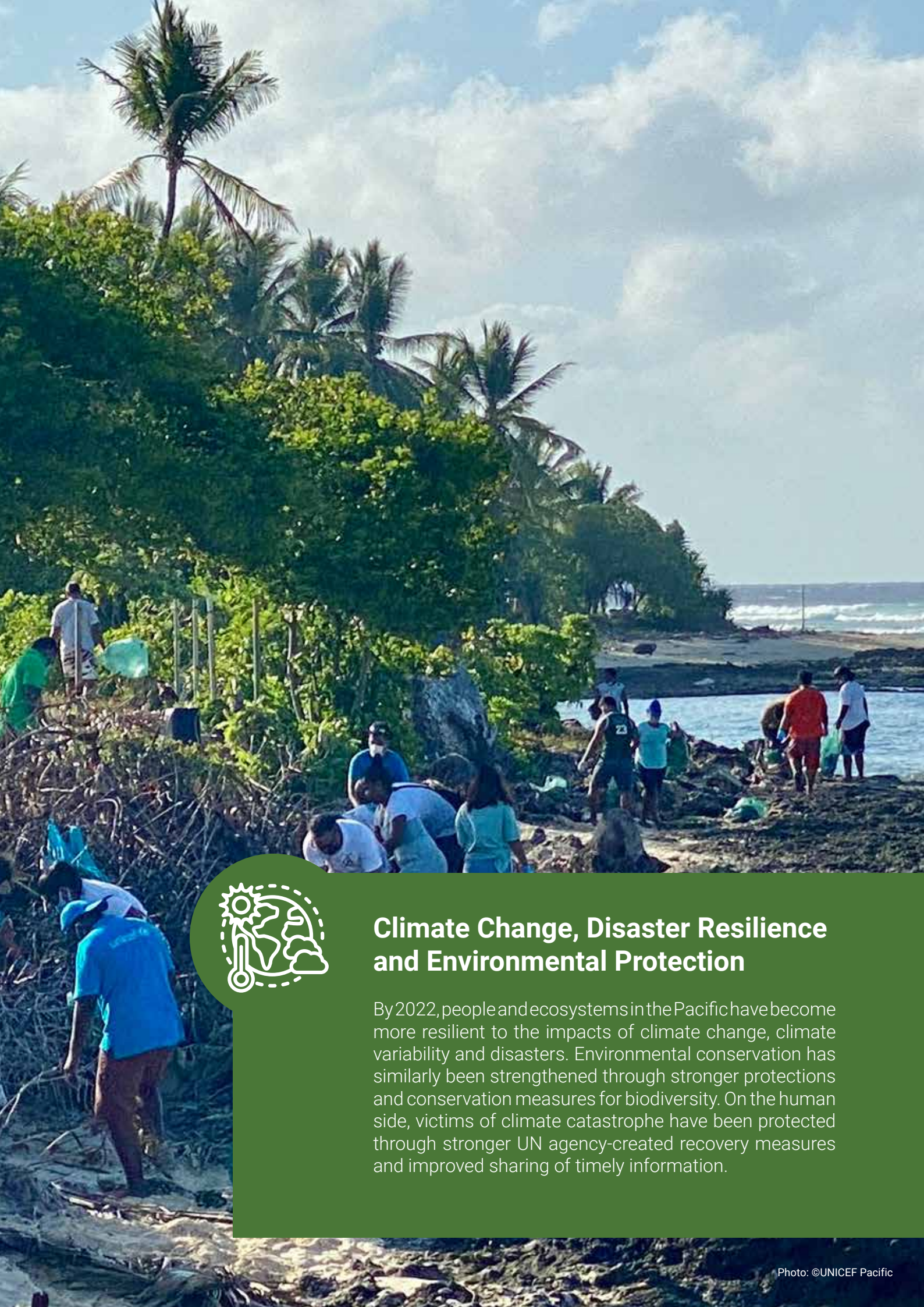


Photo: © John Rae/UNCDF Pacific

2.2

# United Nations Pacific Strategy Priorities, Outcomes and Thematic Area





## Climate Change, Disaster Resilience and Environmental Protection

By 2022, people and ecosystems in the Pacific have become more resilient to the impacts of climate change, climate variability and disasters. Environmental conservation has similarly been strengthened through stronger protections and conservation measures for biodiversity. On the human side, victims of climate catastrophe have been protected through stronger UN agency-created recovery measures and improved sharing of timely information.





### Climate Resilience

The Pacific has demonstrated increase resilience to climate change through UNDP's support, with the integration of gender responsive and human rights adaptation policies as part of NDC and NAP commitments in four countries (RMI, FSM, Kiribati and Solomon Islands). In addition to contributing to SDGs 13 and 14, this support enhances the Pacific countries' national development plan priorities in securing a resilient Pacific community. In collaboration with UNEP, UNDP supported FSM with accelerated implementation of the NDC through the establishment of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory. In Solomon Islands, UNDP strengthened the government's information management capacity, which enabled GHG data monitoring and verification to better inform national adaptation and mitigation policies.

For Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like Palau, climate change is one of the biggest national concerns. To ensure that medical facilities remain climate-resilient, UNOPS has adopted sustainable and green infrastructure solutions that tackle climate-induced vulnerabilities through the mainstreaming of energy-efficient solutions and the use of construction materials suitable for extreme coastal weather conditions.

IOM constructed 39 storm-resistant homes for residents who lost their homes to the destructive impacts of Typhoon Wutip in Chuuk, FSM. An additional 17 households in Pohnpei were provided with vouchers to repair storm damage. In Chuuk State, 163 community members were trained in construction skills to support the repair and reconstruction of homes and damaged infrastructure.

Reinforcing SDG 13 and 14, UNDP further supported the establishment of the first ever Climate Security Risk Country Profiles for Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and Tuvalu (to be released in 2023), strengthening country-level responses in managing key climate-related security risks of atoll nations and Pacific Island Countries. The Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project (TCAP) issued work contracts for coastal protection works on three islands. These projects will fortify 2,780 meters of vulnerable coastline across Funafuti, Nanumea and Nanumaga, making them more resilient to erosion and improving the protection of homes, schools and hospitals for 6,600 Tuvaluan.

In FSM and RMI, 295 individuals were reached through hazard vulnerability capacity-mapping to assess previous negative impacts, as well as the community's capacity to cope with disasters.



Photo: © John Rae/UNCDF Pacific

In RMI, the UN reached close to 40,000 people using public radio, video messages, social media, round table discussions and distribution of posters to promote drought awareness and mitigation, through a country-wide Risk Communications and Community Engagement campaign.

In close collaboration with RMI's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), the UN retrieved and maintained Reverse Osmosis (RO) units, batteries and solar panels in need of repair to ensure they are ready for dispatch to municipalities experiencing, or exposed to, drought. IOM also procured and prepositioned RO unit spare parts to support rapid response when needed. Also in RMI, xx developed a training module on mediation and building social cohesion which was rolled out in seven communities facing climate security risks.

In FSM, RMI and Palau, 150 students, staff and teachers were reached through the raising of awareness on human trafficking, with a goal of ensuring that potential migrants can make informed migration decisions and travel through safe means.



### Biodiversity Conservation

UNDP supported improved biodiversity conservation with increased coverage on terrestrial and marine protected areas in RMI, Fiji and Kiribati, directly or indirectly benefiting their populations. In RMI, an additional 26,691 ha of land gained protection through the development of the Resource Management Plan. In Fiji, an additional 144,623 ha were protected through the establishment of community catchment plans, while in Kiribati, an additional 245,170 ha were protected with three bylaws and enforcement of the Coastal Fisheries Regulation.



### Pacific Insurance and Climate Adaptation Programme (PICAP)

The UN, within the Pacific Insurance and Climate Adaptation Programme, has provided 5,200 individuals across Tonga, Fiji and Vanuatu to access to eight new and improved climate and disaster risk financing and insurance (CDRFI) programs. This joint UNCDF, UNDP and UNU-EHS initiative was launched late 2020 and is aimed at





improving the financial preparedness and resilience of Pacific Islanders towards climate change and natural hazards through the development and implementation of market-based meso and microinsurance schemes. These insurance products will help vulnerable individuals, communities and MSMEs respond and recover more quickly with access to and usage of market-based CDRFI instruments. Out of those registered for the products, 1,867 were women, 2,000 were social welfare recipients, and 609 are people living with disabilities.



### Disaster preparedness and Response

In 2022, WFP maintained the agility of its emergency response efforts, including its ongoing support during the COVID-19 crisis in the Pacific and a rapid response to the volcanic eruption in Tonga. WFP facilitated coordination among partners and provided technical assistance through regional logistics, emergency telecommunications, and food security clusters to streamline information sharing on the humanitarian situation, assess needs and deploy the most effective response.

Throughout 2022, the Pacific Humanitarian Air Service remained a crucial link to the Pacific region's partners, primarily governments and other UN agencies, transporting passengers and large volumes of essential humanitarian cargo. The number of flights and demand for the air service nevertheless dropped significantly compared to the previous two years, given the reopening of borders and the resumption of commercial aviation networks to pre-pandemic capacities across the region. In total, WFP organized seven flights for the Pacific Humanitarian Air Service, delivering 296 cubic metres of essential cargo and transporting 31 passengers in 2022.

WFP, as co-chair of the Pacific Regional Cash Working Group (PRCWG), fostered partnerships and collaboration around cash-based interventions and strengthening the capacity of partners. The PRCWG developed an interactive platform to track all ongoing Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) activities across the Pacific, including transfer values, funding, financial service providers, information on partners and donors as well as updates of the various regional clusters. This aimed to improve the coordination and effectiveness of CVA programmes in the region.





The PRCWG supported Tonga's emergency response by establishing a CVA Community of Practice, providing information management, technical coordination and strategic support, as well as advocating for CVA as one of the default transfer modalities. The PRCWG also supported partners in the development of market assessment tools to conduct CVA feasibility analysis, mapping CVA activities in Tonga with support from the Pacific Humanitarian Team. This included the development of a CVA dashboard to identify CVA activities and actors, along with continued engagement with the Tonga community of practice throughout the year.

In tandem with the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), WFP continued to support the Fiji Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and the Department of Social Welfare to scale up a climate risk insurance pilot to 2,000 recipients following the 2012/22 tropical cyclone season. This initiative provided social welfare recipients living in high disaster risk locations in Fiji with parametric insurance, where recipients received electronic cash transfers.







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## Key challenges and Lessons Learned

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- Mobilizing adequate resources to address the vast climate change-related challenges faced across the Pacific remains a daunting task for SIDS in the face of increasing frequency and intensity of climate catastrophes coupled with environmental protection quagmires. The capacity to implement development interventions in SIDS remains a constraint, due to limited resources, capacity, distance and the cost of doing business, as well as perceived readiness to provide the high-level resources required to address key challenges such as sea level rise.
- UNDP supported three countries (FSM, Palau and Tonga) in the reduction of disaster risks through the strengthening of institutions and infrastructures on climate early warning systems . There was insufficient data to establish the amount of reduction in economic loss in relation to regional GDP. UNDP will work on gathering further data to establish a baseline against outcome level results going forward.
- As noted above, the increasing frequency and intensity of disasters – and subsequent damage and loss – has added to the challenges of economic recovery for SIDS. However, there are opportunities to minimize GDP loss through the integration of risk-informed development at both the national and subnational level.

UNDP is working to expand its support. The importance of continued investment in the strengthening of information and data collection and management across the Pacific is critical to ensure informed decisions about forward planning. LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data in Tuvalu has helped shape future strategic planning and is now a critical integrated tool used by the government to make decisions beyond the Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project (TCAP). It could also potentially be used elsewhere across the Pacific.







Impact & Beneficiary Stories

# TREES SHADE THE WAY TO POSITIVE CHANGE

West Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands – If you asked the local children about the long line of trees growing next to the coastal road between Takaboru and Horabau on Guadalcanal Island, they might tell you that the trees have always been there. Many of the young people won't remember that a decade ago, this part of the island looked different than it does today, and these trees are part of an environmental and economic transformation taking place in the region.

[www.undp.org/pacific/news/trees-shade-way-positive-change](http://www.undp.org/pacific/news/trees-shade-way-positive-change)



Mr. Francis Koria  
with the Isi Akson  
Afforestation  
project team.

Photo: © UNDP Pacific





Photo: © UNDP Pacific





Impact & Beneficiary Stories

# CLEAN AND SAFE WATER THROUGH RESILIENT AND INCLUSIVE WATER FACILITIES

Access to public water supplies and sanitation services in Chuuk State of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is limited. The 2010 National Census reported that 7 percent of households obtained drinking water from the public water supply systems. The public water supply operated by the Chuuk Public Utility Corporation (CPUC) produces 2,500 cubic meters of water per day, of which 95 percent is sourced from deep wells.

[www.undp.org/pacific/press-releases/clean-and-safe-water-through-resilient-and-inclusive-water-facilities](http://www.undp.org/pacific/press-releases/clean-and-safe-water-through-resilient-and-inclusive-water-facilities)



Photo: © CPUC





Photo: © CPUC





Photo: © SPREP

# Pacific member countries among 175 nations that endorsed an Historic Resolution to End Plastic Pollution.

Heads of Governments, Ministers of environment and other representatives from UN Member States endorsed a historic resolution at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) March 2022 in Nairobi to End Plastic Pollution and forge an international legally binding agreement by 2024. The resolution addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, including its production, design and disposal.

The historic resolution, titled “End Plastic Pollution: Towards an internationally legally binding instrument” was adopted with the conclusion of the three-day UNEA-5.2 meeting, attended by more than 3,400 in-person and 1,500 online participants from UN Member States.

“

Today marks a triumph by planet earth over single-use plastics. This is the most significant environmental multilateral deal since the Paris accord. It is an insurance policy for this generation and future ones, so they may live with plastic and not be doomed by it. ”

said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP.

According to the Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme (SPREP), “The impact of waste and pollution has already taken its toll on the health of all Pacific communities, degrading natural ecosystems, threatening food security, impeding resilience to climate change and adversely impacting on social and economic development.”. “We need urgent actions to address this. The decision in Nairobi means there will



now be a solid global framework on plastic pollution, against which we measure progress or the lack of in our work as we move towards the future.”

The Pacific region contributes as little as 1.3% of global plastic pollution, yet are grossly and disproportionately affected by its impacts.

The Second World Ocean Assessment states that the highest recorded quantity of floating plastics are in the South Pacific subtropical gyre. SPREP’s intervention during UNEA-5 highlighted its support for the resolution.



*In August 2022, SPREP convened a Pacific Regional Preparatory workshop in Fiji with funding from the Australian Government aiming to prepare and assist Pacific countries for negotiations when the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee process starts later in the year. UNEP contributed and participated in this consultation process.*

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) convened a forum in November 2022 for the first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-1), to share knowledge and best practices in different parts of the world. The Forum enabled open discussions and ensured Member States are informed by science, reporting on progress throughout the next two years. UNEP supported the attendance of 14 Pacific Member states in the Forum held in Uruguay. Upon completion of the INC’s work, UNEP will convene a diplomatic conference to adopt its outcome and open it for signatures.



1. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/historic-day-campaign-beat-plastic-pollution-nations-commit-develop>
2. <https://www.sprep.org/news/sprep-applauds-endorsement-of-resolution-to-end-plastic-pollution>



## Gender Equality and Child Protection

Despite the challenges imposed by post-pandemic economic recovery, 2022 saw notable gains in gender equality and child-centred protections across the Pacific Region. Protections against violence directed at women and children (both sexual and generalized) were also strengthened through collaborations and partnerships between UN agencies and church entities.





### **Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls and achieve gender equality**

In 2022, the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) worked with regional and national churches and faith leaders to help prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and achieve gender equality. Focusing specifically on Sustainable Development Goals 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reducing Inequalities), and 17 (Partnerships), PCC galvanized senior church leadership within the PCC network to endorse and approve the Gender Status Card for Churches, geared towards building safe, dignified and empowered communities in the Pacific. The Gender Status Card, a simple action-oriented self-assessment tool developed in consultation and in partnership with member churches across the Pacific, is intended to guide PCC's member churches and other faith organizations in the region on assessing, monitoring, and implementing their commitments towards creating safe churches free from gender-based violence. The first of its kind globally, it was presented at the World Council of Churches Summit in September 2022 as a model for increasing advocacy and accountability for churches in preventing and responding to violence. Five churches from Vanuatu, Kiribati, Fiji, Samoa and Tuvalu have begun their assessments. The process has opened a dialogue around changing the mindsets of church administrators and personnel on the role of VAWG in faith settings. UN Women played an instrumental role in co-developing and designing the Gender Status Card with PCC through technical assistance and quality assurance.

Despite the initial outbreak and rapid community transmission of COVID-19 in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga, women and girls in all their diversities were still able to access crucial Gender-Based Violence (GBV) services thanks to UN Women-coordinated preparedness activities, developed and implemented in partnership with National Women's Machineries and CSOs.



### **Women's Resilience to Disasters (WRD) Programme**

At the national level, with advocacy and technical support provided by the Women's Resilience to Disasters (WRD) Programme, the Government of Fiji is now developing a gender and disability mainstreaming supplement to National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (NDRRP) to ensure gender and disability inclusion principles are implemented in practice. The Government of Kiribati is reviving traditional food preservation methods and introducing new ones for sustainable livelihoods and food security. In Vanuatu, a review of the National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster Induced Displacement (NPCCDID) has been initiated to integrate social inclusion and protection.



### **Market for Change**

Rural women's engagement in the UN Women's Markets for Change (M4C) Project in its four project countries, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, continued to increase in 2022. Eleven out of 13 municipal markets in Fiji, all six markets in Vanuatu, and all four markets in Solomon Islands are led by women market vendors, bringing their voice and agency to decide on matters related to market economic activity and operations to foster a more enabling environment. Twenty-one municipal markets have established Market Vendor Associations (MVAs), 13 MVAs have female presidents elected, and all 21 legally established associations have female leaders in positions of leadership. In total, the M4C Project supported 7,074 market vendors in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, 90 per cent of whom are women and nearly all are rural women. The project has only recently included Samoa; thus, it is still in the implementation stage. The overarching focus of the M4C Project is on developing effective marketplace representation, thereby creating a pathway



for women vendors, the majority of whom are from rural areas, to assume leadership positions within duly registered Market Vendor Associations (MVAs). UNDP similarly implements this joint project with funding support from the government of New Zealand.



### Pacific Partnership

2022 saw the fifth year of the Pacific Partnership, a key result of which is the documentation and dissemination of vital learnings and best practices on primary prevention of GBV in the Pacific. Nine knowledge products were developed and designed in partnership with CSOs and Government ministries across the Pacific. Knowledge products focused on 'what works' and 'how-to,' including a comprehensive How-To guide on developing a NAP to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls utilizing Fiji's experience, and a What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls in Faith Settings. The products were created in partnership with HOS, documenting prevention approaches including and pre-dating the SASA! Faith initiative.



### Health Systems strengthening for GBV response

UNFPA, through Ministries of Health, facilitated the completion of Standard Operating Procedures for Fiji, Tonga and Kiribati, as well as the roll-out of training on GBV Standard Operating Procedures to 130 Health workers enabling each health facility to have at least two staff trained in providing GBV services. In addition, the completion of seven Health Facility Readiness and Service Availability (HFRSA) Assessments were achieved (for Fiji, Kiribati, FSM, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu). These countries have baseline data on GBV service provision, while continuous spot checks have improved health facility awareness and further strengthened data capture and referrals as part of continuous quality improvement. UNFPA also facilitated Ministries of health roll-out of an electronic spot-check system (Tupaia) to enable collection of real-time GBV service provision data.

UNFPA and UN Women, in partnership with the Palau Red Cross Society, trained 30 frontline humanitarian workers in Koror. The three-day training introduced local responders to different GBV risk identification and mitigation approaches that can be used





Photo: © John Rae/UNCDF Pacific

during emergencies. Partners included Palau Parents Empowered, Omekesang, Oceania Partnerships, National Emergency Management Office, Ministry of Health and Human Services, Directorate of Gender, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice and Palau Red Cross.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Emergency Management Office, and the Protection Cluster in Tonga, 39 non-specialised GBV service providers in Nuku'alofa were trained on GBV minimum standards and GBV risk mitigation in the health, shelter, settlement, and recovery sectors. Action plans tailored to sectors of social work and social services, justice and security, and health were also developed.



### **Transformation of gender and social norms**

UNFPA in the Pacific is working with government ministries and civil society partners in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, FSM and RMI to implement Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)/Family Life Education (FLE) for both in-school and out-of-school youth through community-based training.

In 2022, UNFPA invested in sexuality education programmes by supporting the development of curricula that meet international standards, build national capacity, and ensure ownership and institutionalisation of CSE/FLE. The goal is sustainability of achieved social and health behavioural outcomes that increase sexual and reproductive health (SRH) awareness and mitigate gender-based violence.

The resounding success of national ownership for CSE/FLE, witnessed across countries, is attributed to political will aided by UNFPA program support which has enabled a conducive environment for advocating and implementing CSE/FLE at national and regional levels. Operationalization of CSE/FLE started in 2022, with in-country instruction of master trainers. In Kiribati for instance, 90 per cent (n=600) of all in-service teachers have been trained in FLE through the Kiribati Teachers College (KTC). These teachers have supported the rollout of FLE in grades 7-9, reaching approximately 7,279 students each year in these grades according to Kiribati Ministry of Education enrolment data. Samoa, Vanuatu, Federated States of Micronesia and Marshall Islands have had master training for teachers on FLE, and they expect to roll out integrated FLE in the schools starting 2023. The eight countries have progressed into development of



Photo: © John Rae/UNCDF Pacific

the Pacific guidance for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), and plans are underway for adaptation including the development of country-specific FLE monitoring and evaluation frameworks. In addition, progress is being made in advancing teacher competencies to deliver quality CSE/FLE through integration of FLE into the KTC's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program. Samoa has developed proposals for an in-service teacher micro-credential and pre-service inclusion of FLE as a minor in its Bachelor of Education program with Samoa National University, while Vanuatu is discussing a CSE/FLE out-of-school career pathway by Vanuatu Quality assurance agency. These proposals have been submitted to the University Council for approval and subsequent implementation in 2023. In regard out of school CSE/FLE, all eight countries have finalised the required six modules: Values, Rights and Sexuality; Healthy Relationships; Gender; Safety: Yours, Mine and Ours; My Body and its Development; and My Sexual and Reproductive Health.

Over 2022, UNDRR undertook a midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR in the Pacific in partnership with Pacific governments, regional partners and local agencies. The review focused on inclusive and human rights-based approaches to DRR in the region. Results will be shared in 2023 and will serve as an important contribution to future strategies and programming in the Pacific.



### **Child Protection Legislation, Policy and Plans**

UNICEF's contribution to strengthening the legislative framework for child protection (CP) is ongoing across the PICTs through technical support, ensuring that legislation provides equal protection for boys and girls. In Fiji, the advocacy brief for the Child Care and Protection Bill was updated and the bill is expected to be tabled in Parliament in 2023. In Solomon Islands, the 2017 Child





### Violence Against Women & Girls Data/Evidence

During the reporting period, UNFPA partnership with the University of Melbourne, the Nossal institute and SPC continued to facilitate a four-part gender-based violence (GBV) administrative data workshop series across Spotlight target countries. The capacity-building approach was specifically used to expand training on administrative data systems to the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Nauru, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Samoa Tonga and Vanuatu. Training included increasing capacity in technical aspects, including clarifying the concept and design of administrative

data systems; design and review of data collection tools; establishment of decision-making processes related to indicator selection; and data sharing, dissemination and utilization across sectors. Mapping of all GBV-related data collection tools, services and referral systems provided by government and NGOs was undertaken in alignment with National Gender Equality policies in countries where available. In addition, the formal kNOwVAWdata course was implemented to improve capacities of national institutions and CSOs on VAW prevalence data collection, analysis and use. Specifically, the following results were achieved:



Training of

**102**

**technical government and CSOs on safe and ethical administrative data collection and management systems**

in FSM, Palau, Nauru, RMI, Solomon Islands, Samoa Tonga, and Vanuatu.



**92**

participants

**completed the formal kNOwVAWdata course**

course to complement skills gained through regional workshops and to capacitate national statistical offices, CSOs and sector ministry staff with skills to conduct prevalence surveys, as most of the Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) are either undertaking VAW surveys or including Domestic Violence modules in their Demographic and Health surveys/Multi-Cluster Surveys.



Photo: ©UNDP Pacific



### Women in Disaster Risk Reduction

In 2021, only five SIDS out of 11 in the Pacific reported disaster-disaggregated data by sex (mortality, people affected) on the Sendai Framework Monitor (SFM). In 2022, UNDRR conducted SFM capacity-building sessions. As a result, the number of countries reporting this data increased to ten. This data will help National Disaster Management offices to understand the impacts of disasters on different groups, enabling them to plan disaster risk reduction strategies that address their unique vulnerabilities through a human rights-based approach.

UNDRR recognised women’s achievements, built a network of women working in disaster risk reduction, and ensured women’s representation through the following activities:

Published

## Pacific women leaders’ profiles covering 14 women

from nine SIDS.

## Granted WIN DRR

(Women’s International Network on Disaster Risk Reduction)

## Excellence award to Esline Garaebiti,

Director General of the Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology, Geo-Hazards, Environment, Energy and Disaster Management in Vanuatu.

During the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction,

## UNDRR ensured women’s participation, and UN Women and UNFPA funded the travels of several female participants.

As a result, 47% of 2149 participants were female, and 57% of 115 panelists were female.

Over 2022,

## UNDRR undertook a midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR

in the Pacific in partnership with Pacific governments,





and Family Welfare Act was launched and is now in effect. In Samoa, the Child Care and Protection Bill is with the Attorney General's Office for review and is expected to be passed in 2023.

In Tonga, UNICEF provided technical input and supported consultations on the development of a national CP policy. In Vanuatu, consultations on the Adoption Bill have been completed, and a report with recommendations is imminent. In RMI, UNICEF continued to provide technical assistance to finalize the Child Rights Protection Act Amendment Bill, which has been presented and pre-approved by Parliament and is awaiting public hearings by the Human Rights, Education and Social Affairs Committee.

Significant progress was made in Tonga, FSM and RMI to establish national coordination mechanisms for CP. In Tonga, the Ministry of Justice formed the National Child Protection Policy Development Committee, bringing stakeholders together to develop a national CP policy; the committee will evolve into a CP technical working group in 2023. In FSM, the President's National Advisory Council for Children (PNACC) was reactivated and is establishing a multisectoral national CP Working Group. In Samoa, the Ministry of Women, Community and

Social Development has convened stakeholders to form the National CP Working Group in 2023. In RMI, terms of reference (TORs) for the National CP Working Group were finalized, and group members were trained.

In Fiji, Kiribati and Vanuatu, CP coordination groups made similar progress. Fiji finalized TORs and tools for district Inter-Agency Committees (IAC), while the Safety and Protection Cluster convened to prepare for the cyclone season. In Kiribati, the referral pathway was launched, and an implementation plan for its roll-out in the outer islands is ongoing. In Vanuatu, the national CP Working Group is operational, and subnational referral pathways were launched.



## Child Protection Services

Technical support from UNICEF has helped strengthen child protection services to be more gender-sensitive and GBV-responsive, and protection interventions are designed according to children's needs.

In Fiji and Solomon Islands, UNICEF supported studies on the economic burden of Violence against Children. Also in Fiji, the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA) will establish a specialized Department of Children in 2023. Forty-two case workers and 12 supervisors trained for this in 2022.

In Fiji, FSM, RMI, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, technical advisors were deployed to ministries that provided on-the-job mentoring on CP and case management for 131 social welfare officers. UNICEF also provided financial support for social welfare officers in FSM, RMI, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu. In Kiribati, case management standard operating procedures (SOPs) were finalized and await validation.

In the education sector, Fiji launched a 2022-2025 costed plan for Child Protection in Education. In Solomon Islands, UNICEF supported the integration of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development's (MEHRD) Child Protection Policy into six draft Administrative Instructions. In Kiribati, the Child Safe Schools Policy has been finalized, while in Vanuatu, the same policy is undergoing review to include disaster risk reduction. In Samoa the policy will also include internal reporting and response protocols. Twenty-one school personnel completed mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) training in Samoa. Eighty trained personnel in Tonga provided MHPSS to 5,012 children and 5,177 caregivers in response to the volcanic eruption/tsunami, and in Tuvalu, 17 trained counsellors reached 1,711 children.







Photo: © IOM Pacific

In the health sector, UNICEF trained 75 master trainers and provided technical support to update the Child Protection Handbook for Health Workers in Fiji, which included a section on handling GBV cases. Samoa conducted a training on the SOPs for the clinical management of rape.

In response to COVID-19, UNICEF supported the Social Welfare Ministry in Kiribati in the provision of CP services, recreational kits, PSS and remote case management. In Samoa, 125,000 individuals were reached with remote PSS during quarantine, and 112 at-risk children received food vouchers. In Fiji, UNICEF partnered with the Red Cross to train 146 volunteers on CP in emergencies (CPiE) and PSS, and also distributed 40 recreational kits. In Tonga, a CPiE Specialist was deployed to support the Safety and Protection Cluster and in-country partners, which reached 5,012 (2,406 Females) children and 5,117 (3,095 Females) caregivers with PSS via 68 mobile child-friendly spaces.



### Community-based Child Protection

Considering the significant influence and reach of faith-based organizations in PICTs, UNICEF has leveraged church-based partnerships in Fiji, RMI and Solomon Islands on two fronts: safe churches, and community engagement on social behaviour change initiatives.

At the regional level, UNICEF expanded its partnership with the Pacific Council of Churches (PCC), training 50 church enablers (36 in Fiji and 14 in RMI) on the “Christian messaging of Child Protection and Safeguarding in a Safe Church environment” toolkit. The enablers conducted 48 sessions, with each session reaching an average of 30 adults and children. PCC has also finalized the safe churches policy and obtained the endorsement of 16 denominations from five churches. With UNICEF’s support, PCC is developing a CP curriculum to be integrated into theological studies.



Photo: © John Rae/UNCDF Pacific

In Fiji, UNICEF provided technical support to review and update a community facilitation package titled “Children are a Precious Gift of God.” The Ministry of I-Taukei translated and contextualized the package, and both ministries are identifying communities for implementation in 2023.

In Samoa, the Ministry of Women, Community, and Social Development (MWCSD) and Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG) launched the Malu I Fale multimedia campaign addressing intersections between GBV and VAC. The campaign was reinforced by positive discipline sessions targeting 324 caregivers and life-skills training for 214 adolescents in seven villages.

In Vanuatu, the provincial councils of Tafea, Shefa, Malampa, Sanma, Penama and Torba delivered community engagement interventions in 32 communities in six provinces, reaching 373 caregivers and 101 children. Child Protection Officers from the Ministry of Justice and Community Services (MJCS) facilitated CP awareness sessions in 12 schools and 16 communities focusing on CP during COVID-19, benefiting 367 adults, including 37 teachers, and 406 children.

Adolescent engagement interventions were implemented in Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Samoa and Tonga to address substance abuse, smoking and depression particularly among male adolescents. 417 adolescents participated in depression awareness and suicide prevention campaigns, led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ Church Leaders Desk.

To improve online CP in Vanuatu, UNICEF partnered with the Vanuatu Internet Governance Forum (VanIGF) and the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development (MYSP) to establish a national child online protection (COP) resource platform. The Pekinini (child) helpline was integrated into the national referral system. Orientation sessions on safe use of the Internet and COP were conducted at the community level, covering topics on online grooming, sexual harassment and cyber-bullying.





The sessions benefited 5,516 children, 420 caregivers and 225 teachers and principals.

In Solomon Islands, UNICEF partnered with Oxfam to deliver workshops on online safety and introduced the U-Report messaging tool. A total of 4,174 youth U-Reporters developed questions and designed polls on online safety, which garnered an average of 400 responses per poll (approximately 50 per cent F) on 13 topics related to child well-being.





## Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Empowerment

2022 saw notable growth and gains in the areas of digital economy; gender inclusivity; food security and poverty reduction; and child protection. All of these areas were addressed as a means of improving livelihoods while also bolstering the Pacific Region's resilience to future challenges.





### **Pacific Digital Economy Programme**

The Pacific Digital Economy Programme is a joint UNCDF, UNDP and UNCTAD initiative aimed at building more inclusive digital economies that support rural communities, women, youth, MSMEs and seasonal workers. The initiative aims to enhance these group’s market participation, improving their livelihoods and in turn promoting economic growth. Implementation commenced in 2021, and throughout 2022 a number of initiatives were introduced to strengthen e-commerce and e-payments in the region. These included:

## **The development of the National E-Commerce Strategy**

in Solomon Islands;

## **Supporting the digitization of government services**

through the pilot of the e-police clearance certification (e-PCC) services in Vanuatu;

## **The pilot of 5 e-commerce projects supporting MSMEs**

across Fiji, Solomons, Tonga, and Vanuatu;

## **Conducting the Pacific Islands FinTech Innovation Challenge**

which attracted both local and global FinTechs to develop and co-create solutions to address pre-identified challenges around the Pacific digital payment’s ecosystem.

Through the programme, the first-ever Digital and Financial Literacy (DFL) Baseline Survey was rolled out across eight Pacific Island Countries including Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati and Timor-Leste. The results of this survey will be released in 2023 and will inform future DFL literacy interventions in the region.



### **Inclusive Growth**

Gender equality and women’s economic empowerment was promoted in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Approximately 702 market vendors (440 women, 188 men, 40 youth, 12 people living with disabilities, and a Household Approach reaching 53 couples and village headmen). The vendors (62 per cent women) were trained in a variety of skills including financial literacy, business management, value addition and organic farming practices. A joint UN Women and UNDP initiative, both agencies partnered to celebrate and advocate for the recognition of rural women market vendors in Santo in Vanuatu during the International Rural Women’s Day celebration. The event was attended by government partners based in Santo, as well as the Luganville Municipal Council. Three hundred rural women market vendors were recognized for their contribution to food production, processing, cultivation and distribution to consumers and acknowledged for their role in rural development.

In 2022, UNDP supported the Government of Fiji in the development of a non-charitable trust called the “Fiji Rural Electrification Fund” to provide affordable, clean and renewable electricity to over 300 households, supporting over 17,000 Fijians by 2030. With an initial plan to roll out this project in 40 communities, the financial target is to mobilize \$30 million, of which \$4.4 million has been raised.



Photo: © John Rae/UNCDF Pacific

In 2022, UNDP supported 18 young entrepreneurs in Vanuatu to identify and develop social impact business models, including developing e-commerce platforms and recycling projects that are aligned with accelerating the SDGs.

Economic poverty is only one dimension of poverty. Considering multiple inequalities is crucial to evaluating the MCO's progress towards enhancing quality of life across the Pacific. The World Bank's adjustment of Fiji's poverty rate from 29.9 per cent to 24.1 per cent, for example, caused ongoing debate about data validity and a possible politicisation of statistics. Such scrutiny is important, but it seems imperative to shift from a narrow focus on economic poverty to a multidimensional understanding of poverty and inequality in Fiji – and, indeed, the wider Pacific Islands region – when considering future programmatic activity.

Strengthening relations with implementation partners across government, the private sector and development entities is needed going forward, achieved through continuous dialogue and ensuring all parties' priorities align and their services complement each other. Resource mobilization remains an issue at the Outcome level – as well as at the Output level – and will require care and attention to generate future programmatic success.



### Food Security

Like many outer island communities, RMI faces several challenges including water shortages, lack of transport, and reduced access to electricity, telecommunications and basic services. The atoll nation is also affected by a lack of economies of scale; high costs and limited availability of transportation; high imported fuel prices; relatively poor soil that limits agricultural activities; high migration rates of young persons; and diminishing returns from coral reef-based near-shore fisheries.

To respond to the growing crisis, UNOPS and the India-UN Fund partnered to support the people of Marshall Islands by procuring and delivering 120 solar-powered chest freezers, a sustainable and environmentally friendly solution that will allow local communities to freeze food obtained from subsistence farming and fishing and store it for longer periods of time. The ability to freeze food will allow households to bridge gaps between fluctuations in food production and fisheries more easily. Being able to store food for longer periods of time will also help families plan and ration food consumption and resources more effectively, while reducing the time, money and energy that was traditionally spent on longer and more frequent food purchasing trips.





WFP continued to collect cross-sectional data through its mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM) tool in five countries (Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, Tonga and Kiribati) in support of national and regional stakeholders to implement evidence-based analyses for decision-making. WFP's mVAM data provided insights into households' vulnerabilities and broader livelihood issues, revealing changes in food security, diets and negative impacts on livelihoods as a result of cumulative shocks such as COVID-19 and the global food crisis on consumption patterns of nutritious food. The mVAM evidence, especially the disaggregated data for groups at risk of being left behind, enabled partners to better understand the situation with food security and nutrition, design effective preparedness measures, and plan relevant post-disaster interventions.

WFP and FAO jointly supported the design and implementation of context-centred remote assessments through mVAM in Samoa, under the Joint SDG Fund Development Emergency Modality project. The project aimed at strengthening national technical capacity to collect and analyse data in response to impacts from the global food crisis. This included producing a joint snapshot of the regional situation regarding food and selected non-food item pricing and market conditions.

WFP also supported the Kiribati Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development in its drought response by designing a sector-specific needs assessment form using KobotoolBox, a free toolkit for collecting and managing data. WFP also provided enumerators training for ministry staff, as well as donating tablets to support assessments.

In partnership with the University of the South Pacific (USP), WFP initiated activities on measuring the capacity and functionality of markets in Fiji using the Market Functionality Index (MFI). WFP also trained USP enumerators on data collection and use of the index. Under this initiative, a Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) for Fiji will be established to define the cost for an average household to meet food and non-food essential needs. The results aimed to inform the ability of markets to meet households' demands and indicate whether they have the economic capacity to meet rising prices.





# RURAL MARKET VENDORS ARE CRUCIAL TO VANUATU'S AGRICULTURE AND LIVELIHOOD

Market vendors in Vanuatu should be encouraged and promoted as agents of change, as they play a crucial role in enhancing agricultural and rural development to improve food security and eradicate rural poverty.

[www.undp.org/pacific/stories/rural-market-vendors-are-crucial-vanuatus-agriculture-and-livelihood](https://www.undp.org/pacific/stories/rural-market-vendors-are-crucial-vanuatus-agriculture-and-livelihood)







Photo: © UNDP Pacific





Impact & Beneficiary Stories

# A GOOD ANCESTOR TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

Senimili Dainaki hails from Saqani Village in Cakaudrove Province, on Fiji's second-largest island Vanua Levu.

The village's low-slung location along Natewa Bay is picturesque, but rising seas have led to painful discussions within the Saqani tribe about the possibility of relocating into the highlands.

[undp-biodiversity.exposure.co/a-good-ancestor-to-future-generations](https://undp-biodiversity.exposure.co/a-good-ancestor-to-future-generations)



*Mangrove planting with youth on Malaka Island in Rakiraki*

Photo: © UNDP Pacific







Photo: © UNDP Pacific



Impact & Beneficiary Stories

# REDUCING RELIANCE ON IMPORTS

Rose Ongalibang shows off the pinkish-purple powder in a small bag. "It's taro flour," explains the genial retiree at her home on Palau's largest island, Babeldaob.

[https://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1507809/?utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_medium=social+media&utm\\_campaign=fao](https://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1507809/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social+media&utm_campaign=fao)



*Traditional taro cultivation is also a potential draw for tourists.*

Photo: © FAO Pacific





Photo: © FAO Pacific

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## Key challenges and Lessons Learned

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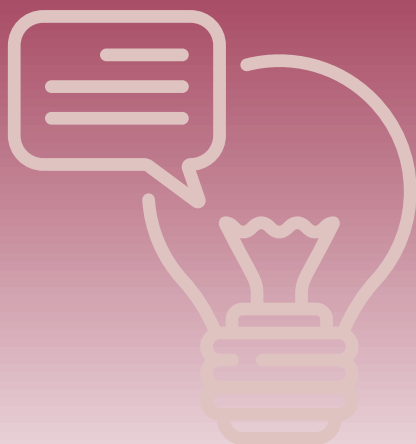
Since women were first elected to the legislatures of the 14 analysed PICTs in the 1960s, the number of women standing for and winning elections has increased significantly. Despite this, the representation of women in national parliaments is lower in the Pacific Islands than in any other global region or subregion. Across the 14 PICTs analysed in this brief, 42 of the 457 seats in national legislatures were held by women in September 2022, accounting for 9% of the total seats (UNW).

In 2021, globally, female ministers are often concentrated in particular roles, most commonly as ministers of departments for the environment, natural resources, and energy; social affairs; family, children, youth, elderly, and disabled persons; employment, labour and vocational training; and education. Significantly fewer women hold ministerial roles overseeing transport, economy and finance, and defence sectors. In Fiji, there is one female Minister, for the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, as well as female Assistant Ministers in the Ministry of Women Children and Poverty Alleviation (UNW).

The high prevalence of gender-based violence within societies acts as a barrier to increased participation of women in governance; violence within families reinforces social norms in which men are viewed as leaders under whom women should be submissive, and violent and controlling behaviour within the home can actively obstruct women's access to leadership roles and political processes (UNW).

The Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative (PSDI) analysed women in business leadership in the Pacific in 2021 and found that an estimated 16% of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) roles were held by women across 13 of the 14 PICTS analysed in this brief, with no analysis conducted in Tokelau.<sup>7</sup> The global average is estimated to be 5% as of 2021. The highest proportion of CEO roles held by women in PSDI's 2021 analysis were found in Kiribati, Palau, and Tuvalu, all at 29%. Comparatively high levels were also found in the Cook Islands (27%) and Samoa (25%). The lowest nonzero percentage was in Solomon Islands (7%), while Nauru and the Republic of the Marshall Islands had no female CEOs within the organisations analysed by the PSDI (UNW).

Reference: (UNW: Women's leadership in public and political life brief for 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories, 2023)











## Basic Services

With the understanding that solid governance and a functioning society begins with healthy citizens, the UN and its development partners made significant strides in the enhancement of health care reach, availability and services across the Pacific Region over the course of 2022. Improvements were seen in areas including COVID-19 vaccination, childhood immunizations, nutrition, and sexual and reproductive health.

Education was another major target for UN agencies, with a focus on improving early childhood education (ECE) and increasing access to crucial education resources across the region.





## Health & Nutrition

### Improving and sustaining health and nutrition services

In support of COVID-19 response, UNICEF provided PICTs with a range of essential health supplies, including 6.7 million masks, 17.7 million gloves, 130,000 protection coveralls, 308,000 face-shields, 337 high-performance tents, 71,000 COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests, 1.1 million rapid diagnostic tests and 495 oxygen therapy devices. The cold chain and immunization supply chain were further strengthened to facilitate COVID-19 vaccination with the provision of an additional 60,000 litres of vaccine storage capacity and 7,400 litres of freezer capacity. By the end of November 2022, UNICEF had supported the delivery of over 2.64 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines.

With funding from the Government of the RMI and the World Bank, UNOPS has been collaborating with the Ministry of Health and Human Services to procure more than \$5.3 million in medical supplies, personal protective equipment and laboratory resources to support the country's COVID-19 response. UNOPS implemented a two-phase approach to help the RMI Government tackle the virus.

Phase 1 of the project, which came to an end in May 2022, focused on supporting government efforts to strengthen healthcare facilities. To this aim, the first phase saw several achievements including the successful delivery of around 100 different types of medicines, medical equipment and personal protective equipment to Majuro and Ebeye.

Since June 2020, UNOPS has been working with the Government of the FSM to combat COVID-19 challenges. Achievements included procuring personal protective equipment and medical equipment, critical medicines, and supplies worth \$2.5 million in support of health workers, people affected by COVID-19, and at-risk populations including the elderly and people with diabetes.

With \$2.3 million in funding from the World Bank, UNOPS has delivered a number of medical items and supplies including ventilators, COVID-19 testing kits, PCR machines, hospital beds, oxygen concentrators, and incubators. UNOPS efforts in Samoa form part of its broader Pacific COVID-19 response, which is seeing the implementation of a range of initiatives to help Pacific island governments mitigate COVID-19 outbreaks and respond to the pandemic through the quick mobilization of existing partnerships and procurement networks across the region.



Photo: ©UNICEF Pacific

*Fiji was supported with five vehicles and 15 solar powered vaccine refrigerators by the Government of Japan and UNICEF to support the country's ongoing COVID-19 vaccination campaign.*

Introduction of three new vaccines (PCV, rotavirus and HPV) was completed in seven PICTs and partially completed in two. The three childhood vaccines were included in the routine vaccination schedule in the Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu. Plans are in place to initiate HPV vaccination in Vanuatu and Kiribati in mid-2023



Photo: ©UNICEF Pacific

*9-month-old baby Ngaoa is all smiles as she gets vaccinated against pneumococcal disease during the official launch of pneumococcal conjugate and rotavirus vaccines for children in the Cook Islands, supported by UNICEF and Rotary Give Every Child A Future*

A comprehensive review of existing nutrition policies and programmes, including barriers to access and recommendations to address all forms of malnutrition, was completed for all 14 PICTs. School nutrition environment assessment tools were pre-tested in 10 schools in Fiji, and will be further rolled out in Fiji and other PICTs in 2023.



### Strengthened access to quality integrated sexual and reproductive health services for women, adolescents and youth across the development humanitarian nexus

The cervical cancer burden in the Pacific region is substantial, with few elements of cervical cancer control being implemented across the region. This includes extremely low screening rates and a lack of integrated and comprehensive programmes. In 2022, UNFPA Pacific, in collaboration with Cooks Islands Centre for Research (CICR), developed cervical cancer elimination policies and strategies for 4 PICTs (RMI, Samoa, Tonga and Solomons Islands). The documents outline the vision for the elimination of cervical cancer in these countries, along with a set of strategies and actions to achieve this goal.

In 2022, UNFPA Pacific provided technical support to countries to move from MDSR to Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) to prevent avoidable maternal and neonatal deaths and stillbirth. This is important as the loss of a baby increases the desire to have another, thus increasing the risk of pregnancy related maternal morbidity and mortality. In 2022, Fiji conducted the first-ever MPDSR training and developed an action plan for establishing MPDSR committees at divisional levels.

Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) policies have been drafted and are either awaiting approval or have been completed in four PICTs (Fiji, RMI, Tonga and Kiribati), with Vanuatu's policy already approved in 2021. The policy development process provided an opportunity to move forward with key issues related to SRH, including supply chain and commodity security; GBV Response; disability-inclusive services; and humanitarian response.

In 2022, UNFPA provided technical support to six PICTs (Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomons Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu) in the development of Adolescent and Youth friendly Health Service (AYFHS) guidelines aimed at providing technical and operational guidance to health workers and support staff in delivering sexual and reproductive health services to young people aged 10 to 24 years. The guidelines are intended to be used by government and non-government service providers and other stakeholders to plan and implement SRH services, including the scale-up of existing services.



Photo: © UNICEF Pacific

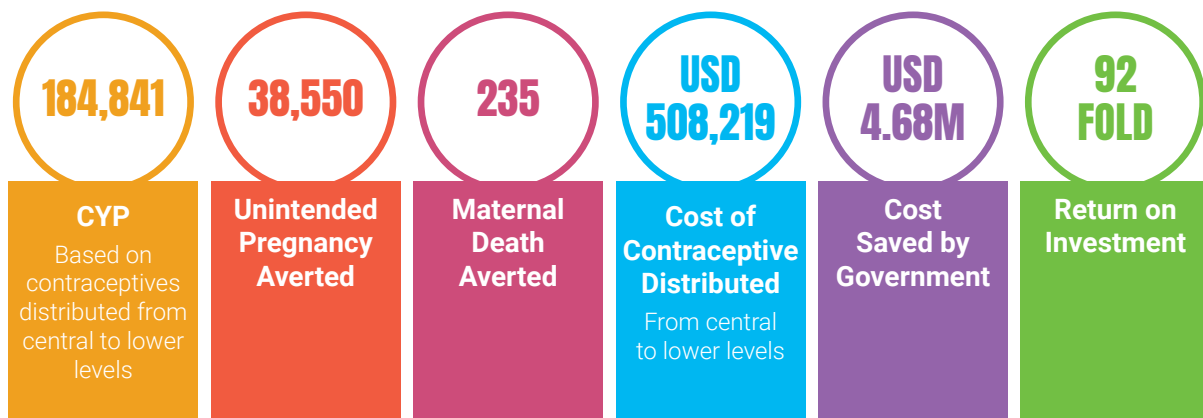
**Strengthened health workforce capacities in health management and clinical skills for high quality and integrated SRH services**

The Midwifery Faculty Development Programme (FDP), initiated in 2021, continued to strengthen midwifery faculty capacity across the Pacific region in 2022. The programme encompasses six modules and supports development of knowledge and skills in all aspects of midwifery education curriculum design, development, implementation and evaluation. Two of the six FDP modules were delivered in 2021, with the remaining four delivered in 2022 to 85 participants across the Pacific region. The skills and knowledge acquired through the FDP supported government and university staff in the process of updating national midwifery curricula.

UNFPA Pacific, working in collaboration with Ministries of Health, have continued to strengthen in-service Family Planning (FP) training in six focus countries: Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The training is designed with a human right and client-centred approach

to build capacity for health workers to provide family planning counselling including on at least one long-acting, reversible contraceptive (LARC). It also prepares health workers to screen women and girls at risk of gender-based violence, provide basic counselling and referrals, and provide quality services for people living with disabilities. In 2022, Tonga and Samoa achieved the target of 100 per cent Service Delivery Points (SDPs), meaning that they have at least one member of staff available and fully trained in youth-friendly, disability-inclusive family planning service provision.

UNFPA Pacific supplies 14 Pacific Island countries and territories with sexual and reproductive health commodities to increase the availability of a range of quality modern contraceptives and essential maternal medicines. Estimated outcomes achieved from the distribution of contraceptives from countries' central warehouses to service delivery points are illustrated in the infographic below.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Data from Q4/2022 has not yet been received from the countries.



The total Couple-Years of Protection (CYP) for contraceptives distributed by the 14 Pacific Island countries and territories to lower levels in 2022 is estimated at 184,841; this is a 67 per cent increase compared to 2021 (110,843). The CYP of contraceptives distributed has the potential to avert more than 38,550 unintended pregnancies, prevent close to 235 maternal deaths and save over \$4.68 million, resulting in a more than nine-fold return on investment.

#### Strengthened integration of violence against women in the national health sector

Three new clinical standard operating guidelines for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were developed for Fiji, Kiribati and Tonga. These SOPs outline procedures for a competent, step-by-step response to survivors of SGBV in order to ensure a quality standard of healthcare.



Photo: © John Rae/UNCDF Pacific







## Education

### Expanding access to quality education

UNICEF worked in close partnership with PICTs during 2022, providing technical and financial support to strengthen the enabling environment for ECE. Efforts included improving data availability, supporting national education sector planning, strengthening the regional evidence base and guidance on inclusive ECE, and designing a system of consultations to inform the development of national statements of commitment for the Transforming Education Summit.

ECE was prioritized through policy and sector planning in Solomon Islands, where national ECE regulations were included for the first time in the Education Bill, and in

FSM, where a compulsory ECE policy has been submitted to the Legislature. Kiribati, FSM, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu all strengthened their ECE curricula.

Robust education sector planning was advanced in Solomon Islands, where a five-year National Education Action Plan (NEAP) was finalized and launched. PICTs strengthened the collection and use of data for education-related planning. In Kiribati, an Education Statistical Digest covering 2015-2020 was drafted, with Ministry of Education officials trained on data analysis. Education MICS workshops were held in Fiji and Tonga to inform sector analysis and planning. Kiribati and Vanuatu continued to strengthen the use of school quality standards at the primary and secondary levels.



*The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development in Solomon Islands launched the National Education Action Plan (NEAP) 2022-2026.*

A Regional Review of Inclusive Education, including country profiles for 15 countries (including Papua New Guinea), was finalized and launched, expanding the regional knowledge base on education policies, programmes and data collection mechanisms, with a special focus on learners with disabilities and out-of-school children.



*Fifteen Pacific Island countries launched the new Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Review.*

UNESCO supported PICTs taking steps to enhance resources and capacity in inclusive usage of ICT in education, responding to the needs of digital transformation and widening the range of effective teaching and learning processes. This was done through provision of technical assistance, mobilizing resources, and supporting policy and programming. Samoa is enhancing multimedia teaching in remote schools, while enhancing Ministry capacity in teaching and learning materials development and training. Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Palau, RMI, Tonga, Tuvalu and Palau gained access to the regional learning management platform with online and offline resources, and teachers were trained in its effective use. A joint UN programme was initiated in support of digital transformation in Micronesia to support government strategies for ICT inclusion in education and consolidation of open educational resources.

Progress was made by PICTs with UNESCO support in ensuring learning pathways

through technical and vocational education and training, higher education, and lifelong learning opportunities. Fiji established the National Information Centre for higher education and connected with the Asia-Pacific-wide network of higher education institutions and experts. Samoa updated its Qualifications Framework to be more inclusive, providing training and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Relevant organizations and government departments in Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Samoa received training on human rights, social protection, tools and resources for advocacy, partnership building, and application towards policy and programming in education and social protection.

With technical support from UNESCO and UNICEF in tandem with coordination and managerial support from three UN RCOs in the Pacific, 10 Pacific SIDS consulted with cross-sectoral stakeholders, reviewing and developing national commitments



in education through the Transforming Education Summit process. Pacific SIDS gained opportunities to share experiences and strategies on addressing learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and identifying key transformation needs in education systems through Pacific-wide, Asia-Pacific-wide and global consultations and jointly endorsed regional and global commitments.

Increased national capacity to design and implement community and school-based family life education programmes that promote human rights and gender equality.

UNFPA in the Pacific is working with government ministries and civil society partners in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomons Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, FSM and RMI to implement Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)/Family Life Education for both in-school and out-of-school young people through community-based training. UNFPA invests in sexuality education programmes by supporting development of curricula that meet international standards, building national capacity and ownership and ensuring institutionalisation of CSE/FLE. The overall aim is the sustainability of achieved social and health behavioural outcomes that increase SRH and mitigate GBV among adolescents and youth.

Integration of CSE into formal education curricula according to international standards is advancing across most countries with varying degrees of progress. All the above eight countries have implemented recommendations from their CSE/FLE gap analysis conducted at the beginning of the programming cycle, leading to successful alignment with international standards prescribed by the ITGSE 2018. The resounding success of national ownership for CSE/FLE witnessed across countries is attributable to political will aided by UNFPA program support, enabling a conducive environment for advocating and implementing CSE/FLE at national and regional levels.

In coordination with other cross-sectoral stakeholders through established FLE committees, Ministries of Education (MOE) in 2022 continued to take the lead in developing and pre-testing syllabi and teacher guides in the countries where CSE/FLE content is integrated in identified subjects across multiple grades. Training of master trainers is underway in multiple countries. Further significant achievements made in strengthening FLE in school implementation include the development of a Pacific guidance for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in schools introduced to all countries. Plans underway for its adaptation include the development of country-specific FLE monitoring and evaluation frameworks.



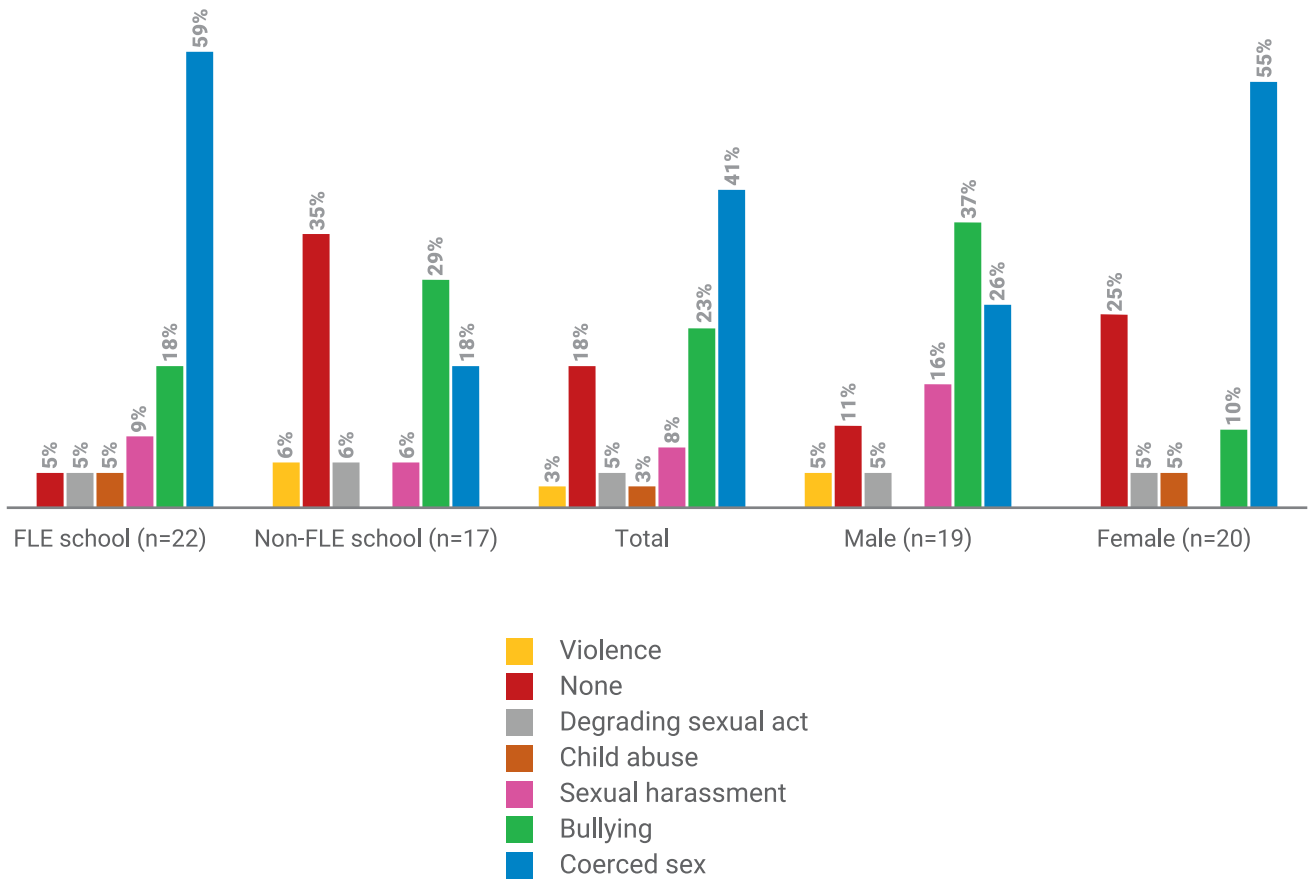
Photo: © UNICEF Pacific

Another achievement is integration of competency to deliver quality CSE/FLE into the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program in two countries (Kiribati and Samoa).

A preliminary report of the midterm evaluation of FLE in Kiribati conducted in 2022 by UNFPA indicated that although more needs to be done regarding attitudes

of males on coerced sex, learners who were exposed to CSE/FLE were more knowledgeable on most common forms on SGBV, their effects, and how to protect themselves against it.

See table below on learners' awareness on sexual violence comparing those exposed to CSE/FLE and those without exposure to CSE/FLE.









## WASH

### Improving access to WASH

Significant progress was made on improving Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in schools, health care facilities and communities. UNICEF reached to a total of 178 schools across the Pacific with supplies, improved handwashing facilities, the rehabilitation of WASH facilities and the promotion of menstrual hygiene and health (MHH). These activities supported the safe reopening of schools after COVID-related closures. With UNICEF support, WASH in health care facilities were upgraded in Fiji, Kiribati, FSM and Vanuatu. In Solomon Islands, UNICEF supported Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) implementation across 98 communities in two provinces, with seven communities declared open defecation free.

Considerable emergency response support was provided to Tonga in the aftermath of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha-apai volcanic eruption and subsequent tsunami, including the provision of 3,000 household WASH kits and 800 WASH in schools kits. Technical support and equipment were provided to the Ministry of Health (MoH) to strengthen its capacity for coordination, information management, monitoring, and data collection and analysis. In Kiribati, UNICEF supported the government's response to the ongoing drought by mobilizing funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) for groundwater assessments, community engagement activities and drinking water quality monitoring.



Photo: © UNICEF Pacific





*The supply and installation of 10,000-litre water tanks, among other life-saving interventions in the aftermath of the Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai underwater volcano eruption and tsunami, is part of UNICEF's ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Health to support affected families and children with access to clean drinking water, proper sanitation and hygiene (WASH).*



# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: 100 PER CENT OF HEALTH FACILITIES IN TONGA NOW OFFER YOUTH-FRIENDLY, DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES — UNFPA TRAINING WITH AUSTRALIA FUNDING

Following a recent training, 100 per cent of Tonga's health care facilities now have at least one member of staff who is fully trained on how to provide youth-friendly and disability-inclusive family planning services.

<https://pacific.unfpa.org/en/news/leaving-no-one-behind-100-health-facilities-tonga-now-offer-youth-friendly-disability-inclusive>





Photo: © UNFPA Pacific



Health

# ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION SUPPORTING CATCH-UP CAMPAIGNS - USAID FUNDED

8-month-old Inaaya gets vaccinated against measles at the Nausori Health Centre in Fiji. USAID's Mission Director Ryan Washburn (standing-middle) and Deputy Mission Director Betty Chung (standing-left) see first-hand the impact of the USAID and UNICEF partnership in supporting the Fiji Ministry of Health & Medical Services deliver essential health services.

[www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/protecting-most-risk-children](https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/protecting-most-risk-children)





Photo: © UNICEF Pacific



Nutrition

# MICRONUTRIENT POWDER TO OVERCOME UNDERNUTRITION

Before he reached the age of one, Kerry Tabonana's fifth child passed away. She had noticed that all her children would get sick from common illnesses in their first year of life. Sadly for her fifth child, this was too much for his little body to handle as he just couldn't recover.

UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services to distribute the MNP for mothers like Kerry in Aboakoro, who were also given a simple recipe book for cooking baby food with local ingredients and a guide to parents on their child's needs and development. The guide, titled 'I love it when' (or in Kiribati, 'I tatangiria ngkana') was designed to also be used as a reading book.

[www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/proud-mothers-daughter-thriving](https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/proud-mothers-daughter-thriving)





Photo: © UNICEF Pacific



WASH

# WATER TANKS AND TREATMENT IN TONGA

One year ago this month, the Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai underwater volcano violently erupted, triggering a 1.2-metre-high tsunami.

The massive eruption, which sent shockwaves to as far as Japan and Peru – thousands of kilometres away, affected 85 per cent of the Tongan population. It destroyed buildings and damaged crops, and left families and children without access to basic needs. One of the biggest impacts was on water.

UNICEF worked quickly together with the Ministry of Health to deliver life-saving WASH support to families and children, reaching over 47,000 people.

[www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/hope-delivered-families-tonga](http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/hope-delivered-families-tonga)







Photo: © UNFPA Pacific



Impact & Beneficiary Stories



WASH

# EDUCATION: FIRST EVER ECE CURRICULUM IN KIRIBATI

Willie Bule, 55, casts his eyes to the ground as he talks about his granddaughters. 10-year-old Carol Ragko is four years older than her younger sister, Jenny Ragko.

[www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/love-water](http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/love-water)



*Willie Bule has the important task of taking care of the school, health centre and community water supply, cleaning out the spring box after lot of heavy rain.*

Photo: © UNFPA Pacific





Photo: © UNFPA Pacific



Impact & Beneficiary Stories



Education

# FIRST EVER ECE CURRICULUM IN KIRIBATI

The first-ever national Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) curriculum is currently being developed and will be implemented at all the ECCE centres in Kiribati.

[www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/first-ever-national-ecce-curriculum-kiribati](http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/first-ever-national-ecce-curriculum-kiribati)



*Making learning fun and interactive for children*

Photo: © UNICEF Pacific



# TIME TABLE

Day	Time	Activities
Mon	9:00-9:30	Free Play
	9:30-10:00	Morning Circle
	10:00-10:15	Hand Wash (Break)
	10:15-10:45	Activity
	10:45-11:00	Rhymes / Dancing
	11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Closing Prayer</li> <li>* Closing or Farewell Song</li> </ul>
Tues	9:00-9:30	Outdoor
Thurs	9:00-10:00	Morning Circle
	10:00-10:15	Hand Wash (Break)
	10:15-10:45	Activity
	10:45-11:00	Rhymes / Dancing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Closing Prayer</li> <li>* Farewell Song</li> </ul>
Friday	10:45-11:00	Music & Dancing
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Closing Prayer</li> <li>* Farewell</li> </ul>

Photo: © UNICEF Pacific







Impact & Beneficiary Stories



Education

# LEARNING PASSPORT – HELPING CHILDREN LEARN FROM HOME DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES IN KIRIBATI

While the remote island country of Kiribati is currently COVID-free, the Ministry of Education, with support from UNICEF, has been working to ensure that learning can continue even in the case of future school closures.

[www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/learning-passport-brings-innovation-education-kiribati](https://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/stories/learning-passport-brings-innovation-education-kiribati)

TRANS S.A.  
SHIP SUPPLIES

Photo: © UNICEF Pacific



Photo: © UNFPA Pacific

# First-ever training for 21 health workers to prevent perinatal and maternal deaths in Fiji

The birth of a baby should be a joyous end to a pregnancy for the mother and her family. However, the physiological function of reproduction carries with it several possible outcomes including grave risks of death and disability for both mother and baby.

There have been significant reductions in maternal and newborn mortality over the last two decades. Nevertheless, maternal and neonatal deaths persist, resulting mostly from complications during and following pregnancy and childbirth.

UNFPA Pacific conducted a three-day training session for the 21 Fijian health workers on Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR), along with review of 2020 and 2021 maternal deaths. The training, which took place from 24 to 26 September, equipped health workers with newly-developed World Health Organisation (WHO) tools and skills to conduct MPDSR in their health facilities.

MPDSR is a system aimed at preventing maternal deaths and improving the quality of care through the dissemination and use of information for appropriate decision-making.

Dr. Ranu Anjali, paediatrician at the Lautoka Hospital, described the training as the first of its kind, and rewarding to take part in.





“

We had a lot of great discussions and learnings during this training, what are some of the processes involved, how to establish the committee for maternal death review and what tools are to be used such as Notification Form, Maternal Death Review Form, Stillbirth and Perinatal Forms, MPDSR Review Meeting minutes and Action Items Form, Monthly Summary Form and MPDSR report, ”

said Dr. Anjali.

Dr. Kelera Sakumeni, head of obstetricians at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital (CWMH) in Suva, shared similar sentiments about the workshop, highlighting the support of UNFPA in the upskilling of healthcare workers involved in maternal health care.

“

The knowledge gained from this workshop will enable the health workers to improve our services for our pregnant women when they come into clinic or the time of their delivery, ”

said Dr. Sakumeni.

MPDSR stresses that all countries should incorporate maternal deaths in their system of notifiable disease reporting and that concrete steps should be taken to ensure timely notification. MPDSR also stresses the need to collect data on all maternal deaths that occurred in facilities as well as communities, and to use this information to provide a snapshot of weaknesses in the health care delivery system as a whole – from the community through various levels of referral to the tertiary care facility. The Fijian Ministry of Health and Medical Services, with the support from UNFPA Pacific, is moving forward to strengthen the country's MPDSR process, a first step towards introducing the MPDSR system in Fiji. Once established, Fiji will be the first country in Pacific to have the system.

The Second World Ocean Assessment states that the highest recorded quantity of floating plastics are in the South Pacific subtropical gyre. SPREP's intervention during UNEA-5 highlighted its support for the resolution.

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## Key challenges and Lessons Learned

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### Health & Nutrition

- Although data gaps in nutrition remain, especially on anaemia in children, the impacts of anaemia on mortality, morbidity and longer-term health consequences are such that using estimates and a 'no regrets' approach to reversing these trends was adopted with the introduction of the high-impact nutrition interventions (HINI) framework, which includes introducing multiple micronutrient powders (MNPs). The framework saw national scale-up in Kiribati, and rapid expansion in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.
- The integration of COVID-19 into the immunization programme and primary health care (PHC) provided opportunities to reach high-risk populations, remote outer islands and children who have been missed by basic services such as routine vaccination, nutrition screening, and supplementation. While implementation is still in the initial stages, this strategy has been particularly effective in Solomon Islands, which faces challenges in capacity of health workers and geographical access. Integrated maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) service delivery was also carried out in communities affected by the tsunami that followed the volcanic eruption in Tonga.
- The significant resources dedicated to COVID helped PICTs strengthen and expand cold chain storage capacity; improve vaccine distribution, logistics and warehousing; increase transportation assets; and improve data management and digitalization. Downstream support from UNICEF for programme planning and implementation in introducing COVID-19 vaccines among different age groups provided the opportunity to work with ministries of health (MoHs) and partners, which strengthened collaboration and partnerships. This was especially the case in countries where UNICEF conventionally works in upstream advocacy, policy and strategy. Programme deficiencies and gaps were identified while working at the implementation level; some were addressed, and others will be included in the future workplan.





- MPDSR training in Fiji brought both OBGYNs and paediatricians together for the first time – a first step towards establishing the MPDSR system in the Pacific. The training allowed both groups to leverage on each other’s strengths in jointly identifying and addressing cross-cutting underlying factors to both maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality in order to accelerate the reduction in preventable maternal and neonatal deaths.
- It is crucial that following the completion of FP training, participants newly trained on long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) must be provided the opportunity to practice these skills on clients under supervision of the trainers to ensure full competency in applying them. This boosts their confidence in providing LARC to their clients.
- The release of 2021 PILNA data complemented the Transforming Education Summit in building awareness of challenges for foundational literacy and numeracy learning in PICTs. Ten countries developed national statements of commitment on Transforming Education, several of which are already informing education sector planning processes. There is also a drive for a closer look at teachers, pedagogy and technology-enhanced learning, and how these can better contribute to building foundational learning in the Pacific in 2023 and beyond.
- At the start of 2022, UNICEF held nine Global Partnerships for Education (GPE) grants covering six different PICTs. Many were accessing GPE funds for the first time as a result of the opportunity provided by COVID-19 accelerated funding. This expanded and strengthened UNICEF partnerships with several PICTs and helped establish relationships between those countries and GPE for the first time. It was also a good test case of what is required for UNICEF MCO support for multiple GPE grants, of particular value as the nine GPE-eligible countries in the Pacific have been alerted of their eligibility for much larger grants. UNICEF Pacific continues to explore the capacity necessary to support countries in their effective utilization of GPE funding, particularly given that few grant agents are active in the Pacific.



## Education

- As COVID-19 continued to spread in 2022, with some Pacific countries experiencing their first community transmission and school closures, sharing of knowledge between countries allowed for the development of better-informed contingency planning and appropriate resources, systems, policies, procedures and capacities. Vanuatu and Tonga adapted and contextualized resources developed in Fiji in 2021 for psychosocial support (PSS) during remote learning, as well as for safe school reopening, which contributed to the smooth reopening of schools in both countries in June 2022.

- Conceptual challenges still exist regarding social acceptability of CSE/FLE. In 2022 there continued to be resistance from communities on sexuality education – especially on intent and content – but also, some national education authorities undermined the aggregate benefit of implementing CSE/FLE due to misconception of the term “sexuality.” UNFPA will continue its advocacy and policy engagement to ensure ownership and acceptability of CSE/FLE is acquired across the board. The COVID-19 lockdowns delayed committee meetings to finalise some FLE resources, which led to further setbacks both in training of trainers (teachers and out-of-school facilitators) and subsequent roll-out to schools and communities. Establishing a national and provincial coordination mechanism for CSE/FLE in the form of committees accelerates national ownership and advocacy for CSE/FLE. Such platforms have also nurtured innovations on its sustainability, including its integration in teacher pre-service training, the creation of quality career pathways for CSE/FLE out-of-school facilitators, and the expansion of CSE/FLE into vocational training institutions.

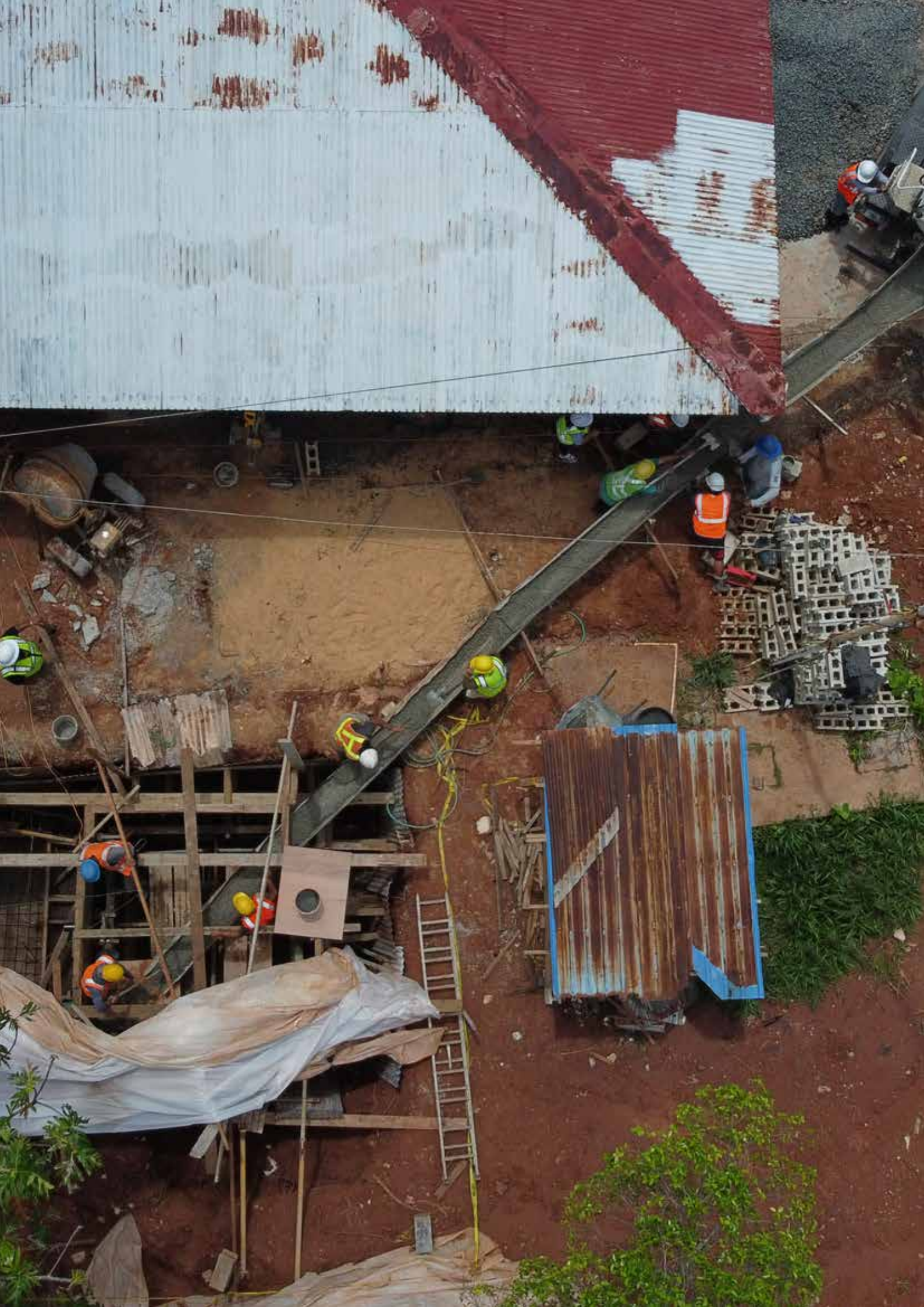


#### WASH

- Demonstrating replicable solutions to gaps in the quality and sustainability of WASH services in communities, schools and health care facilities makes it possible to leverage additional resources and partnerships for achieving results at scale. For example, in Vanuatu, the community Drinking Water Safety and Security Planning approach (nurtured and tested by UNICEF) generated \$23 million from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for further scale-up. Similarly, the UNICEF-developed WASH in schools programme in Penama province formed the steppingstone for the Ministry of Education to upscale across all provinces, with a lead role for UNICEF.
- In-country partnerships with key stakeholders and donors are key to leveraging additional financial and technical support to allow for timely responses to emergencies. For example, close collaboration with partners in the North Pacific (e.g., Rotary Club of Pohnpei, the Pohnpei Women Council, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Centre for Entrepreneurship at the College of Micronesia national campus) helped mobilize resources to allow UNICEF’s timely response during COVID-19. In Chuuk State, FSM, UNICEF was the first development partner to arrive and provide support to test-to-treat centres.











## Effective Governance

**Types of Abuse/Exploitation:**

- SEXUALLY ABUSED/RAPPED
- PHYSICALLY ABUSED/RAPPED
- MENTALLY ABUSED/RAPPED
- PARENTS ABUSED
- FISHERMEN BOSS AND ABUSED BY HER WORKERS
- DOES NOT GET PAID AND THE FOREIGNERS DECEASED
- BEINGS DECEASED
- NOT GET PAID
- CONSTRUCTION

**Case A.**

... FROM CHINA TO PALAU ...





2022 challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and effects of the war in Ukraine were intensified by apparent gaps in governance and election support among Pacific Region countries. Over the course of the year, UNDP and partners made notable progress in both of these areas.

A significant increase in UNDP electoral assistance to the Vanuatu Electoral Office, intense voter registration and voter education resulted in 71 per cent of eligible voters casting their votes in the 2022 Snap Election. UNDP technical and policy support resulted in adoption of two legislations which were gazetted in 2022: the Vanuatu Identity Card Act (Cap 27 2022) and the Civil Registry and Identity Management Act (Cap 28 2022). A total of 302,012 National ID registrations were achieved, 93 per cent of the total population of 324,000. Legal identity for 88 per cent of the adult population above 18 was established, with national ID cards issued to 94,170 men (49.97 per cent) and 94,281 women (50.03 per cent).

In Nauru, with UNDP's electoral support, 7,820 of 8,131 registered voters (96.2 per cent) took part in the September 2022 elections.

Enhanced and informed citizen participation in elections was achieved in partnerships with the Fijian Elections Office through community and schools-based voter education and awareness. Two hundred eight Community Election Advocates (39 per cent women, 61 per cent men), 256 School Elections Advocates (59 per cent girls, 41 per cent boys), and university institutions reached over 400,000 citizens with voter education ahead of the general election in December 2022 through community education meetings, debates, social media posts, election voter education video competitions and inclusive 'Talanoa' sessions.

In Fiji, a new communication and outreach strategy for Parliament was also adopted, strengthening citizen engagement with Government.

In addition, 158 aspiring developers' capacities for innovation were also enhanced through the first ever Pacific-wide hackathon, organized by the Pacific Internet Society (PICISOC). The event encouraged participants to develop a platform to amplify the Pacific's voices on accountability

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## Key challenges and Lessons Learned

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Of the three countries that held elections in 2022, the specific number of women elected were as follows: six women (11 per cent) were elected to the 55-member Fiji Parliament following the 2022 election, which is a decrease from 11 women in the previous Parliament which had 51 members. In Nauru, only two women (10.5 per cent) were elected to the 19-member Parliament, while in Vanuatu, the country's 13th legislature saw its first woman MP elected since 2008 (representing 2 per cent of the total members of Parliament).

Of note for Pacific Island countries is the deep-rooted cultural and social norms which have remained an impediment to increasing quantitative and qualitative representation of women in leadership and, specifically, political positions. UNDP will embark on the development of a strategy with SPC and other UN Agencies exploring innovative approaches to tackle this complex issue for the Pacific. The new MCPD and the UNSDCF, as well as the PIF 2050 strategy, recognise the enormity of the challenge and the need for more concerted efforts in order to see progressive and incremental changes in this area.







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Photo: © UNDP Pacific





# DIGITAL NATIONAL ID – A SMALL ITEM IN THE POCKET BUT A BIG STEP FOR VANUATU

With the close cooperation of Vanuatu's Electoral Authorities, the Civil Registry and Identity Management Department (CRIMD) and the Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP), funded by the New Zealand Government and managed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), significant electoral reforms are underway aimed at fairer, transparent elections in turn leading to good governance and economic development outcomes.

[www.undp.org/pacific/stories/digital-national-id-small-item-pocket-big-step-vanuatu](https://www.undp.org/pacific/stories/digital-national-id-small-item-pocket-big-step-vanuatu)





Impact & Beneficiary Stories

# REACH SERVICE DELIVERY AIDS TONGA'S RECOVERY EFFORTS

As the country continues its efforts to build back better, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) through its Rights, Empowerment and Cohesion (REACH) project is supporting the Government of Tonga and non-governmental organizations to deliver crucial services to communities.

[www.undp.org/pacific/news/reach-service-delivery-aids-tongas-recovery-efforts](https://www.undp.org/pacific/news/reach-service-delivery-aids-tongas-recovery-efforts)



*Nomuka island months after the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha'apai volcanic eruption. Located close to the volcano, it was one of the worst affected areas.*

Photo: © UNDP Pacific





Photo: © UNDP Pacific





## Human Rights

The elevation of human rights remains a chief priority of the UN and its agencies. In collaboration with regional partners, the UN contributed jointly to increased visibility of human rights, Pacific Island countries' engagement and reporting under international human rights mechanisms, and national efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights by governments and civil society.

In 2022, human rights mainstreaming for sustainable development was prioritized in the new Pacific United Nations Strategic Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027. Accountability for results was strengthened through the visible integration of human rights in the UNSDCF narrative and the utilization of human rights indicators in its results framework. The Pacific UNCT committed to strengthened structures and mechanisms for coordination, accountability and partnerships with the establishment of a new Human Rights Theme Group and a Civil Society Advisory group from 2023.







### **Pacific Stakeholders engagement with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**

Pacific Island engagement in UPR reporting was strengthened through joint UN support. Under the leadership of the RCO and OHCHR, UN agencies contributed to the joint United Nations Country Team submission for the fourth UPR of Tonga. Technical guidance provided by the OHCHR included the provision of briefings for government delegations, and from UNICEF, awareness raising on progress, areas of concern and recommendations for advancing child rights. For Samoa, OHCHR supported the conduct of follow-up UPR consultations with government and other stakeholders.



### **Pacific States engagement with core international human rights treaties and ILO Conventions**

Joint advocacy interventions were undertaken to increase treaty ratification and treaty reporting compliance. In August, the Solomon Islands ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. There was also a public commitment to submit the Instrument of Ratification to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

In 2022, UN agencies contributed to the United Nations Country Team joint submissions for state party reviews by treaty bodies, specifically for the CEDAW Periodic Review of Fiji. Furthermore, capacity-building efforts for engaging with the treaty bodies continued with government and civil society. For example, UNICEF, together with OHCHR, organized a mock session and provided technical support to the Government of Kiribati to

prepare for the review of its combined second to fourth periodic report by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

There was important collaboration between the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW) and Pacific UN and regional organizations. In July 2022, UNWomen Pacific, OHCHR and the Pacific Community (SPC) facilitated a Pacific Regional Government Learning Exchange on CEDAW reporting and implementation in Fiji. The learning exchange brought together government representatives from Fiji, Kiribati, Vanuatu, FSM, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, PNG, Cook Islands and Tuvalu, with two experts from the CEDAW Committee, Ms. Bandana Rana and Ms. Natasha Stott-Despoja.



### **Establishment of National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up (NMIRFs)**

Knowledge sharing on key NMIRF capacities – for example, best practices on governmental mechanisms and processes to ensure coherent and coordinated engagement with the international human rights mechanisms – was promoted throughout 2022.

Following the Asia-Pacific regional consultation on NMIRFs held in December 2021, OHCHR participated in the regional Pacific 'Talanoa' on NMIRFs organized by the SPC in August. This was attended by representatives from the Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, RMI, Nauru, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Follow-up support continues with Governments at the national level on the potential to establish NMIRFs and meet reporting commitments.



*Fiji – UNICEF & Ministry of Youth & Sports (International Youth Day Workshop). Also pictured, members of the newly established Western Division Youth Climate Action Working Group*



### **Establishment of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)**

In August, a stakeholder dialogue on the proposed establishment of a National Human Rights Institution was held in the Cook Islands. The dialogue provided an important platform for community members, government representatives, faith-based organizations and civil society to discuss the role, mandate and functions of an NHRI, as well as a proposed model for its establishment. OHCHR, the SPC and the Asia-Pacific Forum of NHRIs continue to support efforts to establish Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs for the promotion and protection of human rights.



### **Expansion of civic space and the protection of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)**

There has been welcome momentum by stakeholders to enhance protection of human rights defenders. Membership in the Pacific Human Rights Defenders Network (PHRDN) increased in 2022, with: strengthened engagement, empowerment

and solidarity by women human rights defenders; regular and increased meetings and coordination of network members; and capacity-building initiatives conducted for members.

In partnership with the Swiss Embassy in Canberra, the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (FWCC), OHCHR supported a capacity-development workshop of the focal points of the PHRDN from seven Pacific countries: PNG, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Fiji. As a result, HRDs covering a diverse range of thematic mandates – including women, indigenous rights, environment, youth, ethnic and religious minorities and LGBTQI+ – were equipped with the tools, resources and knowledge to defend human rights. Additionally, for the 2nd Asia-Pacific Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) Forum in Bangkok, OHCHR provided support to Pacific civil society and EHRDs to facilitate their increased engagement with international human rights mechanisms.

There has also been further increased engagement between OHCHR and the USP on human rights courses. In 2022, a second academic course on human rights defenders at the University of the South





*Fiji – OHCHR, RCO, PDF and Pacific Development Partners (International Day of Persons with Disabilities)*

Pacific was initiated, with the first course having reached more than 50 students and receiving valuable support by the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.

Additionally, a report on the status of LGBTQI+ persons in the Pacific was initiated under the UN Free and Equal Campaign. A validation workshop with stakeholders, which included the contributions of civil society actors and LGBTQI+ networks, was held by OHCHR in December. The report will be an important resource guide for partners to meet their human rights obligations towards LGBTQI+ persons in the Pacific.



### **Rights of Persons with Disabilities and disability inclusion**

The UN made significant strides to continue to implement disability inclusion in UN Agencies working in the Pacific. The implementation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UN DIS) pilot in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu in 2022 included an accessibility audit of UN buildings in the four countries. At the launch of the Access Audit and Validation report on 2 December, the International

Day for Persons with Disabilities organized by the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), the findings of the report recommended that in line with Article 9 of the CRPD, UN agencies should action and use the report's recommendations to improve disability inclusion and accessibility. Recommended steps included enhancing websites, improving office structures, and upgrading recruitment processes.

The inception phase of a new joint programme was approved by the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi Partners Trust Fund (UN PRPD MPTF) in December. The funding, which supports collaboration between UNESCO, ILO and the PDF, brings together organizations of partners with disabilities (OPDs), government stakeholders and civil society organizations in Fiji to advance the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and action on disability-inclusive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



### Stepping up action on online civic space and digitalization

The UN has supported national efforts to improve digital space and emerging technologies for the prevention of, and response to, online offenses. OHCHR, UNODC Pacific and UNODC Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific presented joint legal submissions to the Fiji Parliament Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence on Fiji's intention to accede to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime. The submissions focused on the overall need to strengthen existing domestic legislation from a human rights perspective, and guidance was provided around the specific requirements and implications of acceding to the Budapest Convention. In April 2022, the UNCT also enhanced its own capacity through a training session with OHCHR and EOSG on the global framework on hate speech and freedom of expression.

Solid progress was made on the strengthening of government systems through digitalization. In Fiji, UNICEF supported the digitizing of government forms, and development of the first online tool/database for the Ministry of Youth & Sports. This streamlines online processes, linking the work of ministry officials at national and sub-national level and ensuring timely and coordinated service delivery to the country's youth.



### Climate change and business and human rights

There has been active engagement to increase stakeholders' knowledge on the links between climate change, human rights and environmental protection. At the regional level, under the joint Pacific Climate Change, Migration and Human Security (PCCMHS) programme, Pacific countries expressed further commitment to address climate mobility from a

rights perspective. In June, a High-Level Dialogue was held to develop and review the new draft Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility. The dialogue was attended by over 100 Pacific State and Non-State Actors from sixteen Pacific countries. Facilitated by the six PCCMHS partners – IOM, ILO, ESCAP, OHCHR, PDD and the PIF – the draft framework, which aims to be finalized in 2023, will support climate-induced mobility, both internally and cross-border. The process is now in the hands of a joint working group of the PIF, co-chaired by Fiji and Tuvalu.

Additional knowledge sharing and capacity-development events on environmental law, climate change and business and human rights include a capacity-development workshop for Pacific judges on environmental law, climate change and human rights. The workshop involved OHCHR, UNEP and IUCN and the 3rd Pacific Forum on Business and Human Rights (BHR), organized by OHCHR and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights. The BHR forum discussed various issues of relevance for the Pacific region, including labour migration, modern slavery, climate change, development finance, food insecurity, responsible business conduct in the extractive and minerals sectors, and access to remedies.



### Law enforcement and human rights

Under the Fiji Police Support Project, UNDP and OHCHR in partnership with the Fiji Police Force supported the application of a survivor-centred human rights-based approach for access to justice. As part of the effort to integrate human rights into law enforcement, 325 police officers were trained in six remote locations in Fiji, including the island of Rotuma, and community dialogues were held with women, chiefs, community leaders, faith-based organizations and youth. Women comprised one third of the police officers trained, and women formed 60 per cent









Fiji – OHCHR (Police Law Enforcement and Human Rights Training)

of community members at the dialogues, ensuring that gender representation and experiences informed efforts to improve a gender-responsive justice approach and rights-based service delivery.



### Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Vanuatu approved the Reproductive Maternal Neonatal and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) policy with specific provisions on ensuring sexual and reproductive health rights of young people, whereby parental consent is no longer required for those under 18 years to access SRH services including contraception from health service providers.



### Labour rights and employment policies

Samoa adopted a National Employment Policy for the period 2021/2022 to 2025/2026. It commits the country to taking decisive action on child labour, particularly street vending. It also commits Samoa to increasing employment opportunities for women in the labour market, and to addressing the challenge of youth unemployment. The Cook Islands, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have similarly all launched a process to develop and adopt their own National Employment Policies.



### Child rights and youth policies

The strengthening of national frameworks for children and youth were progressed through the development of key national policies, actions plans and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. UNICEF supported the development of the new Solomon Islands National Children’s Policy (2023-2028) and the Palau National Youth Policy, while also supporting review of the existing Cook Islands National Children’s





Photo: © John Rae/UNCDF Pacific

Policy in advance of the development of a new policy, which will be completed and launched in 2023. The Palau Youth Policy will be launched in the first quarter of 2023, while the Solomon Islands Children's Policy is pending submission to Cabinet for approval.

These policies, which were identified through extensive consultation with children, youth and key stakeholders, domesticate international treaties such as the Convention of the Rights of the Child and are aligned to national development priorities. They are intended to address key development-related child and youth issues such as: access to services for health, education, skills and employment; protection; climate change and the environment; engagement; participation; and the need for strengthened coordination.

The UNFPA, UNICEF, OHCHR and other UN agencies supported the Fiji Ministry of Youth & Sports in its 2022 International Youth Day celebration. With the theme of Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for All Ages, the celebration provided an opportunity for young people to engage in dialogue with government and other key stakeholders and provided a platform for young people to showcase their small businesses and talents. UNICEF furthered

collaboration with the Ministry, organizing and co-facilitating youth workshops with selected youth club representatives focusing on climate action and youth-driven community solutions. UNICEF also supported the establishment of three divisional climate action youth working groups.



#### Human rights in the context of elections – early warning early action

The RC, UN heads of agencies and UN HQ were able to engage around human rights issues relating to the Fiji elections in December 2022, thanks to RCO's PDA team, OHCHR's emergency response team and UNDP's elections team providing selected human rights monitoring and suggested responses to early warning. This work also benefited staff in Fiji, who were provided with guidance and support.

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## Key challenges and Lessons Learned

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- COVID-19 impacts on programming continue to remain a challenge, creating competing priorities for government and national partners.
- Disaggregated data is not regularly collected and requires increased commitment to collection and analysis.
- Progress on gender equality and human rights commitments continues to be hindered by discrimination and patriarchal structures. Progressing discussion on LGBTQI+ issues and rights remains a challenge in some countries.







### Disability Assessments

UNFPA Pacific, Women Enabled International, and the Pacific Disability Forum jointly developed and launched three disability needs assessment reports in 2022. The country-specific reports identify barriers that prevent women, girls and young people with disabilities living in Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu from accessing GBV and SRH services. The reports also highlight factors that limit these individuals from fully exercising their SRH and hinder the prevention, mitigation and response to GBV. Given that 1.5 million Pacific islanders live with some form of disability, these needs assessments provide concrete recommendations that the UNDS can use to improve and engage countries' responses to SRH and GBV and better serve the needs of persons with disabilities.



### Community-based Sexual and Reproductive Health Officers programme

UNFPA, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), the Fiji Disabled People's Federation (FDPF), Medical Services Pacific (MSP), the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) and Women Enabled International (WEI), piloted a community-based Sexual and Reproductive Health Officers programme in Fiji to create awareness and increase knowledge of information on SRH and GBV services among women, young people and those with disabilities living in the central and western regions of Fiji. The programme reached 127 young people, of which 104 were persons with disabilities (72 per cent women). The programme will continue in 2023 with clear linkages to services and enhancement of partnerships.



### UPR (49th session)

UNFPA provided a statement to the UPR of Samoa in 2022 acknowledging Samoa's efforts to prioritise population and development, as contained in the 1994 International Conference and Development (ICPD), and commitments made by the Samoan government at the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25. UNFPA welcomed recommendations on gender equality, GBV legislation, sexual and reproductive health policy and the reduction of maternal mortality.



### Youth Council

UNFPA supported the Samoa National Youth Council to provide a statement through the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education in Samoa's UPR (49th Session). The statement underscored youth realization of ICPD 25 commitments being under threat by climate change, the COVID-19 Pandemic and political instability. It also commended the Government of Samoa for accepting recommendations, emphasizing the key role of continued alignment of comprehensive sexuality education/family life education to international standards, taking into account the direct benefits of reducing adolescent births and nurturing respectful relationships to reduce GBV.





## 2.3 Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

### Results from key strategic programmes



#### Accelerating the SDGs through investments from the Joint SDG Fund

In 2022, ILO, ITU, OHCHR, UNESCO, UNODC, and UNOPS of the UNCT Fiji received an additional allocation of \$4,258,000 from the SDG Fund to support national efforts in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu to accelerate their SDG achievements. The investment aims to advance the development of a digital economy, support economic diversification and build greater community resilience across the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental and economic).



#### Unlocking SDG financing in the Pacific through capacity-building and creation of Blue Bonds

During the year, the UN through continued its support for work related to Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Governments were supported through the completion of nutrition-specific budget and expenditure analysis. Capacity-building support was provided to relevant national counterparts in order to track future investments in the area of nutrition. The financing under INFF-related work also supported the completion of a regional study on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and WASH financing covering Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. In collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), a paper on Investment in Early Childhood was also presented to the 2022 Pacific Finance and Economic Ministers Meeting in Vanuatu. Countries were supported in the development of manuals on project

planning, programming and cost/benefit analysis for public investment projects (Solomon Islands); capacity-strengthening on public sector investment planning and reporting (Vanuatu); and preparing for upcoming VNR reporting (Fiji).

In Fiji, support was provided to the Ministry of Economy for the formulation of an SDG Bond Framework. Technical support was provided for the development of a project pipeline for the issuance of Blue Bonds. This included projects in these thematic areas: green shipping; sustainable aquaculture and food security; decarbonizing private and public land transportation; reducing plastic waste; solid waste management and developing the circular economy; access to clean energy for isolated communities; and the regeneration of coral reefs and mangrove forests. Technical support was also provided for the development of a financing framework for Fiji's National Climate Strategy.



#### Investing in coral reefs and the blue economy

UNCDF and UNDP continued progressing their work in the area of blue economy through investments in five subprojects via a combination of grant and debt impact financing to ready them for implementation and co-financing. In 2022, these subprojects, in various stages of development, were strongly supported by the Fijian Government. The ultimate aim of the initial investments was to raise a total of \$50million of additional financing from public and private investors.

The collaboration focused on a range of initiatives, including private sector investment in a \$10 million blended finance facility for effective management of 30 Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) in Fiji. Beqa Adventure Divers, co-manager of

the Shark Reef Marine Reserve, was one of the 10 LMMA projects to have gotten a concessional loan from the UN. This financing was crucial for the company to jumpstart its shark diving business following shutdown by the pandemic. The UN also provided a grant for Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme (BAGS) to continue its conservation activities, including fishing ground patrols with the Ministry of Fisheries. The programme will accelerate short-term investment readiness of a pipeline of 10 LMMA projects (with a \$3.1 million target) and bring the wider pipeline of 20 more LMMA projects to market by after the next call for expression of interest. The business model for this component includes reef-first businesses such as ecotourism, visitor centres, community-based sustainable fisheries, and blue carbon projects.

Private sector investment also fuelled a \$14 million blended finance facility for a sanitary landfill project in the Western Division of Fiji. This will replace the Vanato Dump in Lautoka and municipal dumpsites from Sigatoka to Tavua, and the approach will subsequently be replicated to other landfill projects in the country. The project will be facilitated through a private-public partnership approach to be outlined by the by the Ministry of Economy jointly with other relevant Ministries. The UN is facilitating engagement between the private developer and the Government of Fiji to establish a solid project development process.

UN investment of \$750,000 will go to develop an eco-fertilizer factory in Fiji. The factory will be replicated in at least two other sites in Fiji with different investors. Waste Clear Fiji has shown strong interest in investing in the project alongside the UN with equity-based cash. Waste Clear and Matanataki have jointly established The Fertile Factory Company (TFFC) to develop the factory, with TFFC working on securing a land lease for a planned site near Naboro Landfill. TFFC has completed the Environment Impact Assessment for the proposed factory and its operations and is awaiting further feedback from the Government. The UN's due diligence process has been completed and the project is in the contract negotiation stage with TFFC's founder.

In another development, a Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) for financial instruments will be established and operationalised for blue economy small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The TAF is expected to: provide expertise during the pre- and post-investment life cycle of SMEs working in the blue economy space; aggregate and pool investments and other financial instruments to reduce transaction costs and risk profiles; work with the Government to improve the regulatory framework; and fundraise development and private finance.



#### **Pacific insurance and climate adaptation programme (UNCDF, UNU-EHS and UNDP)**

Pacific SIDS are highly vulnerable to climate change and natural hazards like cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods etc. They have limited technical and financial capacity to cope with natural disasters that result in severe economic losses and affect the lives and livelihoods of Pacific islanders. To address this persistent development challenge and with the objective of building their financial preparedness and resilience, this UNCDF-led programme has developed the first ever market-based climate disaster risk insurance, unlocking the potential of the private sector to deploy appropriate and affordable solutions.



## SOME OF THE RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2022

Scaling up covered

**4,000**

households in Fiji before the 2022-2023 cyclone season (noting that 1,388 households were covered during 2021);

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### **Pilots**

were launched in Vanuatu and Tonga

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### **A unique group aggregation and distribution model was set up**

to use cooperatives and associations to reach smallholder farmers, fishers, market vendors, and small business owners

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Policy support was provided from the Fiji government through

### **VAT exemption on the parametric insurance premium**

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### **A market system development approach**

was taken to enable the ecosystem to deliver robust solutions





### Delivering partnerships for Agenda 2030 through convening dialogues

The UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Fiji organized a high-level roundtable in New York after the UN General Assembly in September. The meeting addressed "the need to salvage the SDGs," a message that was shared by the UN Secretary-General and reiterated for DESA.

This roundtable discussion was a platform for unified, open and interactive dialogue on the opportunities and challenges related to financing the SDGs in Pacific SIDS. High-level representatives of Pacific SIDS, development practitioners and leads on development financing contributed to a robust discussion with the United Nations and key donor representatives.

The meeting discussed the need for Pacific SIDS to determine potential means to finance the SDGs, examining the challenges they face in accessing financing due to the scarcity of ODA, the need to consider medium-term fiscal needs, and the urgency to explore catalytic and new types of investments that would allow Pacific SIDS to get back on track.

The conversation revealed that recovering from global macroeconomic shocks was extraordinarily challenging, particularly for Pacific SIDS which are exposed to frequent and severe climate disasters and are highly vulnerable to rising import prices for food and fuel. It was noted that there is a need for increased long-term concessional financing for developing countries, which is part of the proposed SDG stimulus package. The idea is for lending criteria to be broadened to include the dimensions of vulnerability that most affect developing countries (via the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI)).

The meeting also noted that, for many countries including SIDS, public debt has reached critical levels. Efforts are needed to make relief programmes available to all vulnerable countries and to explore mechanisms to write down debts through initiatives such as Debt for Climate Swaps or Debt for SDG Investment Swaps.





## 2.4 Results of the UN working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency

### **The Fiji Operations Management Team (OMT) focused on improving coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in 2022.**

#### **Some of the key results include:**

- Joint LTAs for the procurement of goods and services for the BOS Common Services such as Event Management, HACT Assurance Services, Internet and Mobile services, printing services, Travel services, etc., saves UN agencies around 50 per cent of staff time and costs that were previously spent on searching for vendors. This has reduced the transaction costs of obtaining quotes from different vendors for each agency. Following the CBA for Fiji BOS, it was noted that Fiji was able to achieve a total cost avoidance of around \$3.62 million.
- Having LTA with Fiji Airways for travel services in 2019 was of great benefit to the agencies, allowing them a 10 per cent discount on all interline flights, 15 per cent on any business class fare, and 18 per cent on any economy class fare. However, due to the pandemic, travel was minimized and the agreement was terminated in 2022. The new agreement with Fiji Airways is currently under discussion for newly negotiated discount rates. There is as of yet no final determination from Fiji Airways for negotiated rates for UN agency travel.
- UN agencies have been working on Common Premises Management in Fiji. For the agencies housed in Kadavu House (KH), for example, the KH Working Group lead agency collects all issues from the agencies and meets monthly with the landlord. This has saved time for approximately 20 per cent of staff and reduced the number of meetings from 10 or more per month previously to just one per month.
- Joint rental reimbursement for all UN agencies has also saved staff time and reduced admin costs, as agencies no longer have to submit their own monthly receipts to the Government of Fiji for reimbursement. This collaboration has reduced the number of submissions from 15 per month to one per month, resulting in monthly cost reductions from the previous \$100 per agency down to \$45.
- Through the joint review of banking services, cash transfer solutions, HACT exercise and joint staff surveys (e.g., DSA surveys, salary surveys, and hardship classification surveys), the agencies have created a platform for common discussion and inputs. This has saved the time and expense of each agency going through the process individually and resulted in more transparent discussions.
- Launch of the UN Common Premises project with the Government of Fiji in Suva has made simplified the communication and discussion process via the common premises task force team, comprised of representatives from all UN Agencies. This project required considerable collaboration, discussions and meetings with UN Staff, government, and the design brief contractor regarding details such as the building site, design, specifications and staff requirements. Contractor selection was also evaluated and approved by the task force team from three applications that were received. Discussion points were collated and reflected in the design brief document. Town hall meetings were also convened for all UN staff to discuss the design brief document before it

could be finalized and submitted to the government. This saved the agencies time and costs by, for example, reducing the number of meetings repeating the same discussion points. Costs of the project design brief were also co-shared among the agencies and all payment processing to the contractor was managed by one agency, saving on admin costs for all agencies. The design brief was submitted to the Government of Fiji for review and awaits finalization.

- The formation of working groups has also streamlined queries and the approval process. This has also resulted in the creation of a common forum for all staff members to discuss any agency issues via email or discussions. Having working groups and agencies working together has contributed to reduced staff costs and lengthy meetings. Collaboration for the use of common services has led to further efficiency gains for UN agencies.
- Collaboration with OMTs in Samoa and FSM for common BOS and other applicable training has minimized the cost of training, while reaching a wider group of people via one training session.
- The OMT in Micronesia was established, with membership composed of UN agencies resident in Micronesia.
- Initial groundwork was laid for the One UN House.
- A common UN office in FSM was established and will serve as the common UN premises until construction on the One UN House is completed. These common premises will in the meantime facilitate an increased UN presence and broader UN engagement in Micronesia.

*Challenges: The most challenging factor facing the Fiji OMT is agency participation/contribution in the OMT and WG. Agency staff have demonstrated reluctance to take part in chairing either group, and meeting attendance has been sparse.*







Photo: © John Rae/UNCDF Pacific



## 2.5 Evaluations and lessons learned

An evaluation of the United Nations Pacific Strategy (UNPS) 2018-2022, conducted from October 2021 to March 2022, assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and coherence of the strategy towards realization of the UNPS objectives in the 14 PICTs. Carried out by independent evaluators, the evaluation involved mixed methodology, including: documentary review; interviews and surveys with key informants from the PICT governments; donors and development partners; civil society and implementing partners; and UN heads of agencies and outcome groups members. About 100 individuals participated in the evaluation of collected data. Information from data collection was triangulated, analysed and synthesized.

The evaluation found that UN agencies engage effectively on an individual basis with their respective line ministries, but engagement with governments and intergovernmental bodies at UNCT level has not been systematic. The introduction of Joint Country Action Plans (JCAP) improved coherence, and along with Joint Presence Offices, the JCAPs are well-recognized and valued by the PICT Governments for their coordinating role.

Joint programmes under the UNPS have increased substantially in the last years. Two factors identified as contributors to this increase are joint fund availability, and RCO convening for joint programming. The evaluation however notes that joint programmes are driven by individuals (agency or donor) rather than a shared process, so that cohesion and efficiency is judged to suffer as a result.

The UNPS is aligned to regional and national priorities, but from the design stage it lacked country-specific results frameworks. For example, despite following SDG indicators, the UNPS lacked the necessary country-level baselines and targets for monitoring progress at the national level. As a result, the UNPS suffered from lack

of national ownership. The JCAP are again noted in the evaluation as an important improvement towards national ownership. Under UNPS Outcome Areas 1 to 6, the evaluation recognizes the advancement in the relevant SDGs made by the respective Outcome Groups, as well as some emerging and endemic challenges faced. The evaluation identified two key issues for the sustainability of UN activities in the Pacific: resource mobilization and knowledge sharing, and institutional memory. Both issues require greater attention to ensure positive UN results in the region.

The evaluation makes nine recommendations and 42 subrecommendations. The nine recommendations can be broadly summarized as:

- 1 **stronger inter-agency coordination structures;**
- 2 **effective engagement with regional cooperation structures;**
- 3 **stronger partnerships with civil society, private sector and development Partners;**
- 4 **stronger governance and accountability of country-level joint structures;**
- 5 **promotion of joint activities and programming;**
- 6-9 **enhanced design, results-based management, human rights-based approach and sustainability of the new UN Cooperation Framework.**

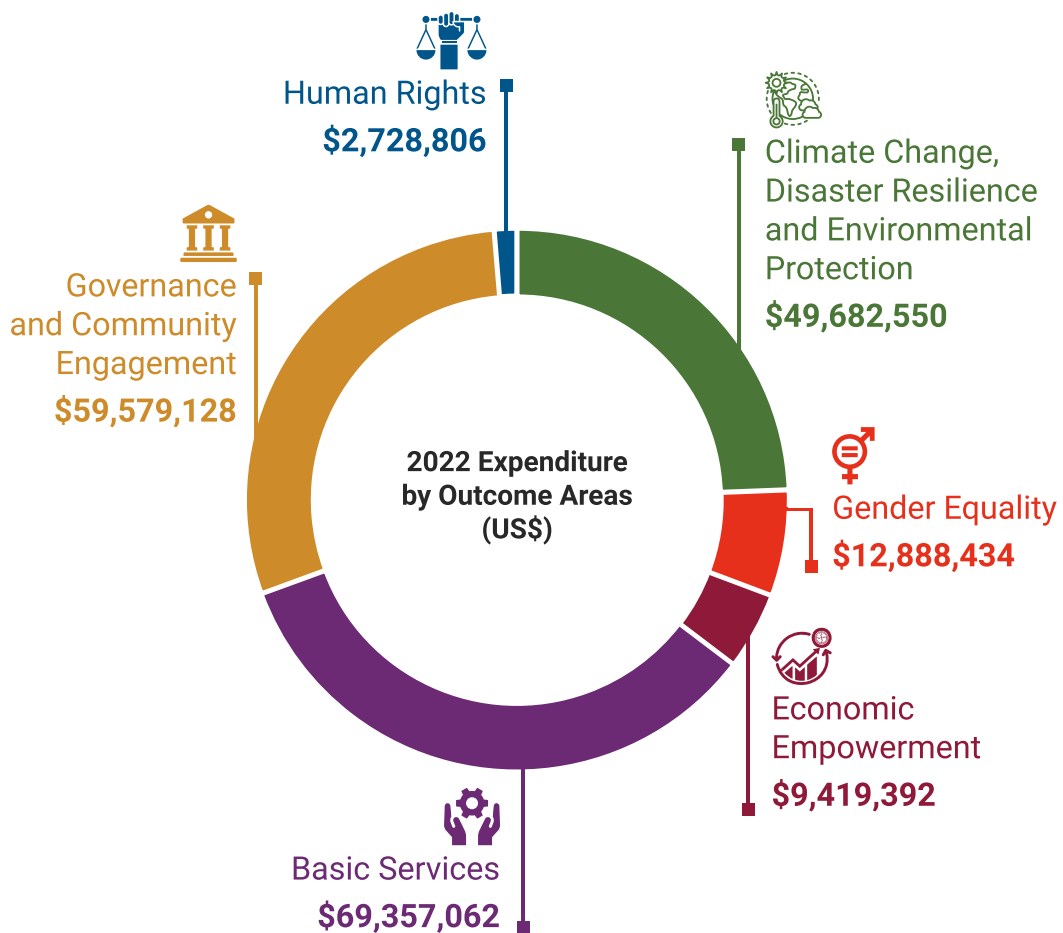
The UNCT endorsed the final evaluation report and accepted all recommendations. A response to the evaluation was formulated by UNCT, with relevant actions itemized to address each recommendation toward strengthening UN's joint work in the Pacific.



## 2.6 Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization

In 2022, a total of approximately \$203.5 million was disbursed across the region. The UN agencies, funds and programmes expended 34 per cent of their budgets towards Equitable Basic Services; 29 per cent towards Good Governance and Community Engagement; 24 per cent towards Climate Change, Disaster Resilience and Environmental Protection; 6 per cent for Gender Equality; 5 per cent towards Sustainable Economic Empowerment; and 1 per cent for Human Rights.

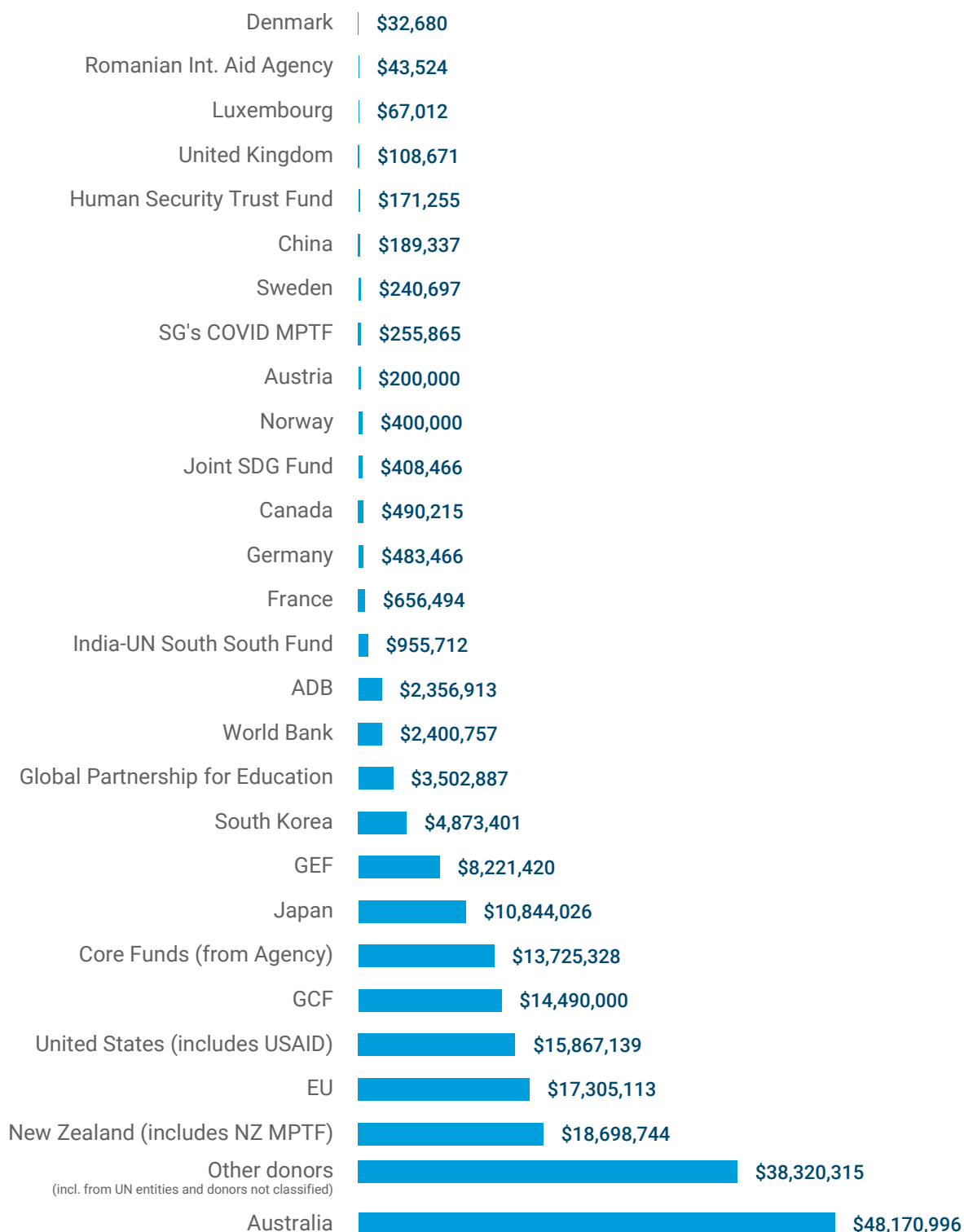
### Total Expenditure by Outcome Areas



## Total Expenditure by Donors

There were more than 30 donors that funded UN programmes in the Pacific in 2022. The major donors include Australia, the United States, New Zealand, the European Union, GCF and core funds from UN agencies.

### Expenditure by Donors - 2022 (US\$)

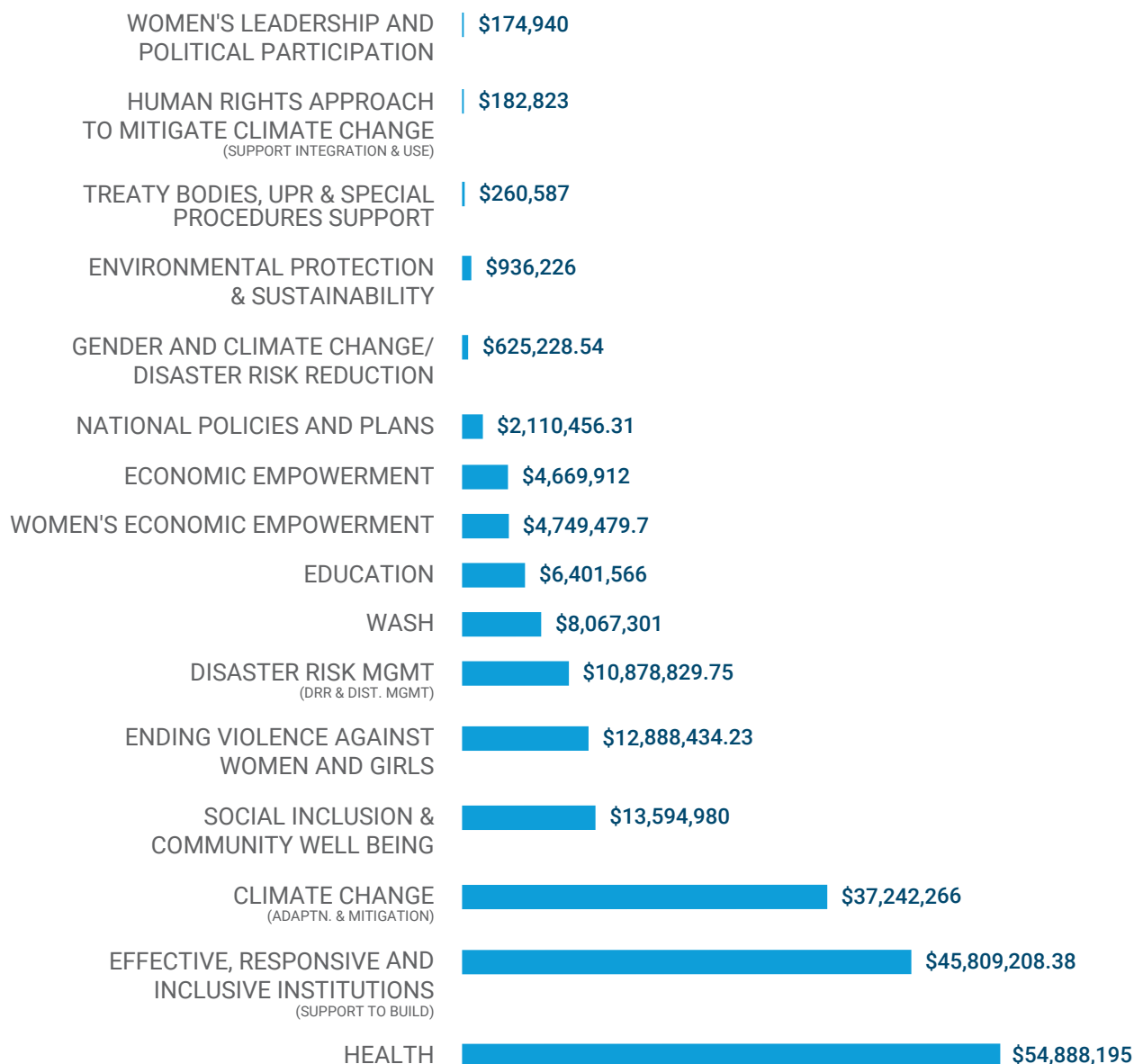




## 2022 Expenditure by Thematic Areas

While there were around 16 thematic areas, the higher end of expenditure was committed for Health (27 per cent), followed by Effective, Responsive and Inclusive institutions (23 per cent) and Climate Change (Disaster Risk Reduction and Disaster Mitigation, at 18 per cent).

### Expenditure by Thematic Areas - 2022 (US\$)





## CHAPTER 03

# UNCT Key Focus for Next Year

2023 presents an opportunity for the UN to strengthen its commitment towards achieving sustainable development in the region. It also marks the beginning of the Country Implementation Plans (CIPs) under the UNSDCF 2023-2037. These CIPs are aligned to the development priorities and needs of Pacific countries. Initial consultations with governments, civil society, and development partners have begun and will be followed by coordinated, effective implementation in 2023.

To achieve results, Pacific UN Country Teams will work together in a collaborative and integrated manner, leveraging the strengths and expertise of each agency to achieve shared goals. This will require greater coordination, communication, and a shared understanding of priorities and objectives among all UNCT members.

While the region continues to recover from the pandemic and also grapple with climate change and the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters, it faces additional national challenges around population, peace, gender-based violence, non-communicable diseases and more.



The Pacific UNCTs must generate greater resource mobilization to implement CIPs effectively. This requires a renewed commitment from development partners, including governments, private sector, and civil society, to invest in sustainable development in the region.

There are opportunities to work towards overcoming these challenges, and some positive developments are expected as Pacific leadership will meet in three high-level forums: the 21st Micronesian Presidents' Forum in January 2023 followed by Pacific Islands Forum (PIFS) Leaders Retreat in February, and the PIFS Forum later in the year. These events will convene Pacific leaders to discuss pressing development issues and will likely result in the strengthening of traditional partnerships, as well as the creation of new ones.

2022 was a milestone year for the Micronesia multi-country office, which completed its first full year of presence in a temporary One UN Space provided by the Government of FSM. As highlighted earlier, this space will house more UN agencies in the North Pacific until the One UN Micronesia House is designed and constructed. The project is expected to house up to 19 agencies and 120-plus staff, resulting in an enhanced UN presence. The first quarter of 2023 already saw an enhanced presence of ESCAP, ITU, OHCHR, UNESCO, UNODC and UN Women in Micronesia.

In Solomon Islands, 2023 marks a strong focus on peacebuilding, governance and high-level UN presence on the ground, supporting agency coordination and providing political support to government. This will be particularly important for Solomon Islands as it continues its journey towards graduating from a Least Developed Country by 2027.

The UN will continue working closely with the Government of Tuvalu to support climate resilience and climate adaptation work on the ground, in addition to key focus areas such as food systems and food security.









In particularly climate-vulnerable countries such as Tonga – which suffered greatly from the eruption of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha’apai volcano and ensuing tsunami – rebuilding of structures including homes, schools, and businesses continues. COVID-19 remains a priority for the Tongan Government, as does improving tourism prospects, resilient food systems and livelihoods, and youth employment. The UN continues to encourage Tonga to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), as it remains the sole Pacific nation that has not done so.

After 16 years, the people of Fiji welcomed a new coalition government this year. However, development priorities remain largely unchanged: to strengthen tourism, diversify the economy to reduce heavy reliance on tourism, strengthen governance and human rights institutions, and support access and expertise of local MSMEs.

Similarly, the remainder of 2023 will continue to see enhanced collaboration to support governance and human rights institutions in Vanuatu, as well as support to climate resilience, disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness through one of our key partners on the ground, the Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office. Additionally, greater encouragement to address and reduce domestic violence in Vanuatu is crucial in 2023, as violence against women in the region remains unacceptably high.

Overall, 2023 remains an important year for the UN as it seeks to consolidate its efforts towards sustainable development and strengthened partnerships with governments and other stakeholders in the region. By working together and generating greater resource mobilization, we hope to see a more prosperous, peaceful and sustainable future for the Pacific.











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