



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT YOUTH CONVENTION 2017

# **PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM (PIF)**

TOPIC GUIDE





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## ABOUT THE CHAIRS

AYYAPAN  
MADHUMITHA  
HEAD CHAIR

Madhu is a Year 5 student in NUS High School, with a strong passion for debating and current affairs. She began her model UN Journey in SDYC 2015 and is grateful to the MUN Circuit for exposing her to unique world views and perspectives that she does not encounter in the books. Apart from MUNs, she takes interest in travelling around the world, learning about exotic cultures and languages and eating good food. She loves the mysteries of che-mystery and maintains a weird sense of humor that her social circle rarely understands. Madhu promises that SDYC will be a fabulous experience for all delegates and promises it to be a MUN like no other. P

MACKENZIE TAN  
PHEI HUEY  
VICE CHAIR

Mackenzie is a Year 4 student in NUS High. He kickstarted his experience in Model United Nations in SDYC, and has participated in many MUNs in recent times. In tandem with his extensive background in debate, his interests and knowledge in current affairs, international relations, political theory, economics, and philosophy have grown. MUNs have given him insight into unique and technical solutions to many problems through the lens of various stakeholders, and has helped him write this paragraph in 3rd person. Aside from that, he is an avid player of various 4x and grand strategy titles, a connoisseur of memes, and is passionate about biology. He plans to hear the Pacific plan proposed by the council in the PIF of SDYC 2017, and new solutions to issues specific to the Pacific.



## KEY QUESTION

How can the Pacific Islands achieve sustainable development in the key areas of the preservation of a stable environmental, sustained growth of the economy, strength and transparency in politics and a healthy and culturally significant social development?

## COMMITTEE INTRODUCTION

The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) is a political grouping of 16 independent and self-governing states. Founded in 1971 as the South Pacific Forum; now regarded as the Pacific Islands Forum to better reflect the geographical position of member states; it aims to stimulate economic growth, enhance political governance and security for the region as per its stated goals.

It exists to address the needs, rights and challenges of its most vulnerable member states, communities and individuals while upholding and promoting the unique characteristics of the Pacific Islands such as cultural diversity, oceanic resources and good governance. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat works with member countries, the private sector, civil and political non-governmental organizations, and the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP).

The key deliverables of the Forum is also to track and encourage the progress of Forum Islands Countries in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which focus on eradicating poverty and hunger, improving the state of primary education and gender equality, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and having access to clean, potable water.

## SPECIAL RULES

The Pacific Islands Forum will be adopting the 'Pacific Way' of passing a Pacific Plan which requires full consensus from the committee for a Pacific plan to be passed. What this means is that no member state can vote against the Plan if it is to pass. The council will be engaging in a constructive process to create the final plan through the creation of communiqués, which are resolution like documents. These documents require a 2/3 majority to pass, much like an ordinary resolution. The process of passing communiqués requires the usual procedure of having main submitter, co-submitters and sponsors. The communiqués will accept friendly and unfriendly amendments as well. The council will be expected to pass at least 1 of these per topic, but may pass more if it deems fit.



All successful communiqués will be combined into a final Pacific Plan. All main submitters of prior communiqués will be considered as sponsors of the Pacific Plan, and the document will go through debate and reconciliation through amendments before a vote is taken. Observer states and other non-member states should note they will not be able to vote on all substantive votes, including on communiqués, and must indicate that they are present in council.

## TOPIC INTRODUCTION

As mostly small, developing, island nations, the Pacific Islands face unique challenges that arise most pertinently from rising sea levels and economic dynamics created by their small size and isolation from the world at large. However, despite being some of the world's most at risk countries to environmental and economic shock, the Pacific Islands have to be strong and resilient.

However, with the ever looming and worsening threat of climate change, the security of Pacific Islands is already and will be severely challenged in the years to come. As members of the Pacific Islands Forum, it is essential that all member islands come together as one to discuss existing challenges and the means to overcome them. Challenges in four key areas, environment, economy, politics and social development have to be tackled by representatives of the Pacific Islands in a pragmatic fashion, taking into account constraints such as time, finances, international support and resources.

The key challenge to be discussed constitute issues that if left unattended, might question the future of the Pacific Islands. These challenges, categorized into four areas are namely, environmental, political, economic and social concerns.

Firstly, the environmental concerns can be summarized in 5 concise tiers; climate change, lack of cooperation in policy making, environmental refugees, climate induced health problems and the energy and environmental crisis. The geographical placing of Pacific Islands warrants unpredictable climate changes that require Pacific Islanders to be prepared for the worst of situations. Along with the risk of climate change, Pacific Islanders are also highly prone to health problems induced by the climate, such as dengue and typhoid. Weak government boards have mismanaged this situation through poor policy making and a lack of collaboration, and have thus invigorated islanders to migrate to nearby islands. The epitome of environmental concerns is presented by the environmental and energy crisis closer to home, which requires urgent attention.



Secondly, the specific Pacific political problems to be addressed can be broken down into 3 tiers. The first of which is the need for institutional integrity in the governance of the region, which encompasses the eradication of corruption, the maintaining of stability, and the value of sovereignty titles. The second issue is that of human rights, both regional and domestic. With respect to the limitations of each individual state's capabilities, the third issue is the strength of regional bonds, which requires the settling of outstanding disputes which corrode the unanimity and strength of the regional stance, and the cooperation in implementing further regional initiatives.

Thirdly, understanding that the Pacific Island economy is developing and not entirely self-sufficient, the economic concerns identify platforms which invigorate the economy such as an abundance of natural resources, a youthful and entrepreneurial manpower, abundant marine resources and lush tourism.

Finally, social concerns must be addressed alongside political and material development. The issues in the region include solving the real root of the devastating state of healthcare in the Pacific, the preservation of invaluable culture unique to the region, and the addressing of drastic changes in the constitution of the population. The latter of which can be tackled in terms of fertility transitions, migration, and demographic shifts.

The four key challenges to be discussed in this forum are identified to address the most urgent and contentious problems in the Pacific Islands. From the sustainability of the unique and biologically isolated environment, to mitigating the effects of irreversible but very tangible changes in climate and topography; to the people at risk themselves, who face problems such as corruption, coups, cultural obscurity, obesity, and overpopulation; to the challenge of extracting resources to fund the changes it seeks to implement, the Pacific Islands forum seeks to assemble the most efficient, engaging and diplomatic representatives of the Pacific Islands to consort in this forum.





## KEY CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

### Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the ability to be supported, upheld and confirmed. Below are the definitions for economic, environmental and social sustainability:

### Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability refers to the use of various strategies for employing existing resources optimally so that a responsible and beneficial economic versus sustainability balance can be achieved over the long term.

### Environmental Sustainability

Being responsible when collaborating with the environment to prevent harming the ecosystem so as to sustain nature's capability to support human life in the long term. This allows future generations to enjoy the same environmental benefits as we do today.

### Social Sustainability

Social sustainability entails the promotion of well-being in citizens' life through areas such as equity, diversity, quality of life, democracy and governance and etc.

### Capacity Building

Refers to the identification, strengthening and linking of a community's tangible resources, such as local service groups, and intangible resources like community spirit.

### Energy Crisis

An energy crisis is any great bottleneck (or price rise) in the supply of energy resources to an economy. In popular literature though, it often refers to any such crisis one of the energy sources used at a certain time and place, particularly those that supply national electricity grids or serve as fuel for vehicles.



## KEY ISSUES

### Environmental Concerns

Climate Change has been a prominent and contentious issue in the long history of the Pacific Islands. Due to the susceptible geographic location of the islands, they are constantly prone to a barrage of cyclones, floods, storm surges and droughts. Crops and infrastructure are frequently damaged by extreme weather and the scarcity of clean water has led to various health problems, such as typhoid, dengue fever, leptospirosis (a bacterial infection caused by bacteria of the genus leptospira) and diarrheal illnesses, among Pacific Islanders. In fact, two such Pacific Islands, Tuvalu and Nauru have been identified as being the 'ground zero' of climate change, exemplifying the urgency and severity of this matter. Five other tiny, Pacific Islands, part of the Solomon Islands (fortunately with no inhabitants) have already disappeared due to rising sea levels and erosion.

Due to the small size and unaggressive nature of these islands, wealthy nations have largely ignored the current state of the Pacific Islands in international summits and climate deals. The most comprehensive discussions with regards to the susceptibility of Pacific Islands to climate change occurred in the UN Climate Change Summit in Paris, however unfortunately with little influence or change to the sufferings of the people. Most notably, industrialized nations contributing heavily to global warming and climate change has resulted in Pacific Islanders facing the brunt of climate change as it impacts them the most due to their vulnerable geographic positions. Many Pacific Islanders have expressed feelings of anger and injustice as it has become pertinently apparent that they have not made significant contributions to climate change, yet they are suffering the most due to the unreasonable and illegitimate economic goals and desires of wealthy, urbanised nations. Unfortunately, these wealthy nations which are major contributors to the climate change faced by these innocent bystanders, have yet to show the political will or the initiative to take the moral high ground to help these victims of climate change. Especially considering the inherent obligation that these wealthy nations have to the world, it is indeed disheartening to see that the Pacific Islands have been left on their own to solve the worldwide crisis of climate change.

The lack of regional leadership from neighboring states (such as Australia and the U.S.) and the weakness of the Pacific Islands leadership board reinforces the urgent need for action by the international community, to salvage large communities housed in the Pacific Islands.

Another key consequence of climate change is the mass exodus of Pacific Islanders from their homes to different countries and higher zones. This inevitable and largely desperate movement by the people





acting in their best interests not only affects the country of origin, but also the regions of transit and destination. This elevates the issue of climate change in Pacific Islands to a global scale as neighboring countries will be affected due to mass migrations, adding to the pressure of immigrants from other war-torn states such as Syria. In view of this migration, Kiribati, an island nation in the central Pacific Ocean, has initiated a program to encourage cross border migration with dignity wherein migrants are equipped with skills that are beneficial to host countries, thus promoting 2-way symbiosis between the host country and the migrant's country of origin. Although migration is a considerable focus of the debate, delegates are encouraged to debate further on the matter of migration, and adaptations could be implemented to improve the living conditions of Pacific Islanders in their countries of origin, rather than to implement more migration policies which do not favour sustainability of the Pacific Islands.

Climate-influenced diseases are also on the rise in Pacific Islands. Surveys show that a dengue outbreak in Fiji has affected 20,000 people leading to inundation of health clinics and lack of sanitary medical facilities for all to access. These health impacts are particularly strenuous for women, infants and adolescents. As women in the Pacific Islands carry out traditional family bearing duties (such as household chores, taking care of the children, cooking, taking care of livestock), their rapidly deteriorating health conditions in the face of climate change, might take a toll on conventional family units in Pacific islands.

As it can be seen, climate change has far seeking consequences not only on the environmental level but also on the social and individual level. It is thus important for viable and sustainable solutions to be sought to equip Pacific Islands with strategies to tackle the worst of these issues. Beyond financial support, Pacific Islands require aid in the form of education and skill to tackle the effects of climate change efficiently.

Another prominent tier under environmental problems in the Pacific Islands is the much less known Energy and Environmental Crisis. Although the Pacific Islands are recognised for their highly beautiful and paradisiacal beaches, years of mismanagement and poor policy making agenda have resulted in energy calamities such as the lack of natural resources from over-exploitation, that might predict the downfall of the Pacific Islands. Only a limited number of island countries have national energy strategies. In many countries, a lack of planning meant that the default policy to exploit natural resources at an unsustainable rate is practised, leading to detrimental environmental effects.

Beyond climate change, a domestic issue that requires principles of good governance is the resource crisis which has its origins closer to home. Few of the Pacific Islands have adopted viable and sustainable natural resource management strategies, which promulgate the bleak, resource poor



future of these islands. The lack of planning has also catalyzed the consumption of natural resources such as logs and wildlife at an astonishing rate. In the Solomon Islands, natural forests have been logged without regulation. Timber exports have decreased significantly from 2015 due to the unsustainability of former logging practices which have rendered forests scarce of resources. Local communities have also overused logging as it was adopted as a viable source of income since the island's independence. Mining also poses a challenge to the cleanliness of water and productivity of fishing grounds. 80 million tons of contaminated waste has been discharged rivers each year, displacing habitants and poisoning fishes which are a key source of food security for Pacific Islands. In addition to this, poor water quality has threatened the health status of coral reefs leading to major coral bleaching episodes localizing in the Pacific Islands region.

What needs to be understood is that ecological management requires a state with due diligence and concern for the ecosystem and sustainable planning for governments in order to rebuild the attractive ecosystem of the Pacific Islands. Delegates are encouraged to discuss possible collaborative solutions to ensure sufficient energy sources and a healthy environment for the future of the Pacific Islands.

## Political Concerns

### Institutional Integrity

Corruption is arguably the biggest barrier withholding the Pacific Island nations from truly achieving sustainable development. It decreases the resources available to the government, misappropriates its distribution, and undermines the effectiveness of policies. Its harms work very much in tandem with the obstruction of progress, much notably so due to the scale of corruption in resource extraction and execution of public services.

| REGION                | MELANESIA | POLYNESIA | MICRONESIA |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| RESOURCE EXTRACTION   |           |           |            |
| Forestry              | x         |           |            |
| Mining                | x         |           |            |
| Oil / Petroleum       | x         |           |            |
| Fisheries             | x         | x         | x          |
| PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION |           |           |            |
| Police                | x         | x         | x          |
| Customs               | x         | x         | x          |



|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Land and Titles Administration  | x | x | x |
| Ports   | x | x | x |
| Healthcare  | x | x | x |
| Education   | x | x | x |
| Access to Public Office   | x | x | x |
| OTHER   |   |   |   |
| Retirement Funds  | x |   | x |
| Tendering   | x | x | x |
| Offshore Banking  |   | x | x |
| Sovereignty Sales   | x | x | x |
| Table 1.1 - Prevalence of corruption in various sectors of Pacific Island economies by region |   |   |   |

| TYPE                     | PNG | FIJI | SOLOMON IS. | VANUATU | SAMOA | KIRIBATI | FSM | TONGA | MARSHALL IS. | PALAU | COOK IS. | NAURU | TUVALU | NIUE |
|--------------------------|-----|------|-------------|---------|-------|----------|-----|-------|--------------|-------|----------|-------|--------|------|
| Procurement              | YES |      | YES         | YES     |       |          | YES |       | YES          | YES   |          |       |        | YES  |
| Nepotism / Wanktoism     | YES | YES  | YES         | YES     |       |          | YES |       |              |       | YES      |       | YES    |      |
| Travel                   |     |      |             | YES     |       |          |     |       |              |       | YES      | YES   | YES    |      |
| Conflicts of Interest    | YES |      | YES         | YES     | YES   |          |     |       |              |       | YES      | YES   |        |      |
| Local Government         |     |      | YES         | NO      |       |          |     |       | YES          | YES   |          |       |        |      |
| Land titles              |     |      | YES         | YES     | YES   |          |     |       |              |       |          |       |        |      |
| Natural Resources        | YES | YES  | YES         |         |       |          |     |       |              |       |          | YES   |        |      |
| Retirement Funds         | YES |      |             | YES     |       |          |     |       |              |       |          |       |        |      |
| Ex Gratia / compensation | YES |      | YES         | YES     |       | YES      |     |       |              |       |          |       |        |      |
| Disaster Relief          |     |      | YES         | YES     |       |          |     |       |              |       |          |       |        |      |
| Foreign Aid              |     |      | YES         | YES     |       |          |     |       |              |       |          |       |        |      |
| Courts                   | NO  | YES  | NO          | NO      |       | NO       | NO  | NO    | YES          | NO    | NO       |       |        | YES  |
| Police                   | YES | YES  | YES         |         | YES   |          |     |       |              | YES   |          |       |        |      |
| Military                 | YES | YES  |             |         |       |          |     |       |              |       |          |       |        |      |
| Election Office          |     |      | NO          | YES     |       |          |     |       |              | NO    |          |       |        |      |
| Slush Funds              | YES |      | YES         |         |       |          |     |       |              |       |          |       |        |      |
| Political Appointments   | YES |      | YES         | YES     |       |          |     |       |              |       |          |       |        | YES  |
| Political Interference   | YES | YES  | YES         | YES     |       |          |     |       |              |       |          |       | YES    | YES  |
| Party Funding            |     | YES  |             |         |       |          |     |       |              |       |          |       |        |      |



|  |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Party Dominance  |     |     |     |     | YES | YES |  |     |     |     |     |     |     | YES |
| Vote Buying  | YES |     | YES | YES | YES | YES |  |     | YES |     |     | YES | YES | YES |
| Private Sector   | YES |     | YES | YES |     |     |  |     |     | NO  |     |     |     |     |
| Churches   |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |     |     |     |     |     | YES |     |
| NGOs   |     |     |     | YES |     |     |  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Process of Privatisation                                 | YES | YES |     |     |     |     |  |     |     |     | YES |     |     |     |
| Sovereignty sales  |     |     | YES | YES | YES | YES |  | YES | YES | YES | YES |     | YES | YES |
| Table 1.2 - Types of Corruption in the Pacific by County |     |     |     |     |     |     |  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

In 2013, the UN launched an anti-corruption project, the Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption Project impact, costing 4.3 million dollars, ratified by 9 nations. Today, it covers 15 territories, the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, the territory of Tokelau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Oceania is the only region in the world to have completed all peer reviews under the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. Despite that, corruption is still rampant in the Pacific, with respect to Table 1.2 above.

To solve a problem, the identification of that problem is necessary. However, there are constraints in the definition and identification of corruption itself. The National Integrity Studies of Pacific Island Countries (NISPAC) has concluded that there is a lack of consensus among Pacific Island Nations as to what counts as corruption. Different states have heterogeneous metrics in recognizing corruption. The identification of corruption is also not easy, as corruption is usually underground, and due to the limitations of the institutions in the Pacific, such as the lack of resources attributed to a small size, proper data on corruption is difficult to find.

The other issue is political stability. There have been many instances of turmoil in Pacific Politics. The parliament of the Marshall Islands ousted its democratically elected president, Casten Nemra out in a vote of no confidence within a few weeks of his inauguration. Although he won the election with a one-vote majority, this kind of motion has never been filed so soon after an inauguration, and is speculated to be due to the lack of a clear majority and politics rather than the performance of Casten Nemra himself. Currently, the Marshall Islands are under the leadership of Hilda Heine. In the 33 seat Nitijela (parliament), 6 seats are taken by Heines, the largest family bloc in parliament.

In Vanuatu, 14 sitting members of parliament were arrested and incarcerated on corruption charges, bringing forward its elections. Vanuatu has changed its prime minister 22 times since its independence in 1980. Since independence, Fiji has gone through four coups d'état and four constitutions. In 2000,



rebels staged a coup in the Solomon Islands, ousting the president. Both coups in 2000 caused democratically elected governments to be ousted.

Australia and New Zealand have warned that the South Pacific is at risk of political unrest. New Zealand's foreign minister said in 2007 that the island nations in the Pacific were at the brink of civil war and anarchy. In Papua New Guinea, there was a civil war between the government and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army for 1988 to 1998, making it the deadliest conflict in Oceania since the end of World War 2. In addition, racial riots against the Chinese diaspora occurred in Tonga in 2006, and in the Solomon Islands in 2007. Both of which prompted intervention, Australia and New Zealand for the Tongan Riots, and a PIF-backed Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands.

In these corrupt countries there is a gap between the ideal state that is impartial to the needs of the people and their representatives, and the conflicts of interests of politicians. A possible source of this political instability is how the colonial administrations did not oust the indigenous political systems, but tried to fuse them together. In which, it granted leeway for some village chiefs to usurp state funds to secure their places, and their progenies' places, in politics.

With respect to the backlash against the Chinese diaspora in the Solomon Islands above, the sale of citizenship played a large role in the inciting of ethnic tensions. Pacific Island Nations have collected about 153,450,000 USD from the sale of passports to mostly Chinese foreigners. These foreigners who can afford citizenship (50,000 USD per person) live more well-off lives, and have more wealth than locals, another factor in the race riots. In addition, the sale of passports serves as a way for foreigners to avoid tax or criminals to escape prosecution. Tonga's Police and Immigration Minister Clive Edwards admitted that suspected money launderers and Mafia associates sought Tongan passports. The sale of passports can show that monetary interests take precedence over the general welfare of locals.

| Country          | Passports sold | Gross revenues(\$m) | % GDP | Years     |
|------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------|-----------|
| Tonga            | 8450           | 92.95               | 6.5   | 1982-1996 |
| Samoa            | 2200           | 24.20               | 2.0   | 1991-1997 |
| Marshall Islands | 2000           | 22.00               | 11.0  | 1995-1996 |
| Nauru            | 1000           | 11.00               | 8.0   | 1998-2002 |
| Vanuatu          | 300            | 3.30                | 1.5   | 1996-1997 |



Thus, the discussion of the value of sovereignty in the Pacific is also crucial in this council. In 2017, Kiribati considered and rejected a proposal from Anton Bakov, the leader of the Russian Monarchist Party, to purchase 3 islands and restore the Russian Monarchy. They have offered to invest 350 Million USD. Although Kiribati may have exercised its sovereignty over the region, the issue of the authority of the state and the legality of the sale of land to private entities should be discussed in the Forum.

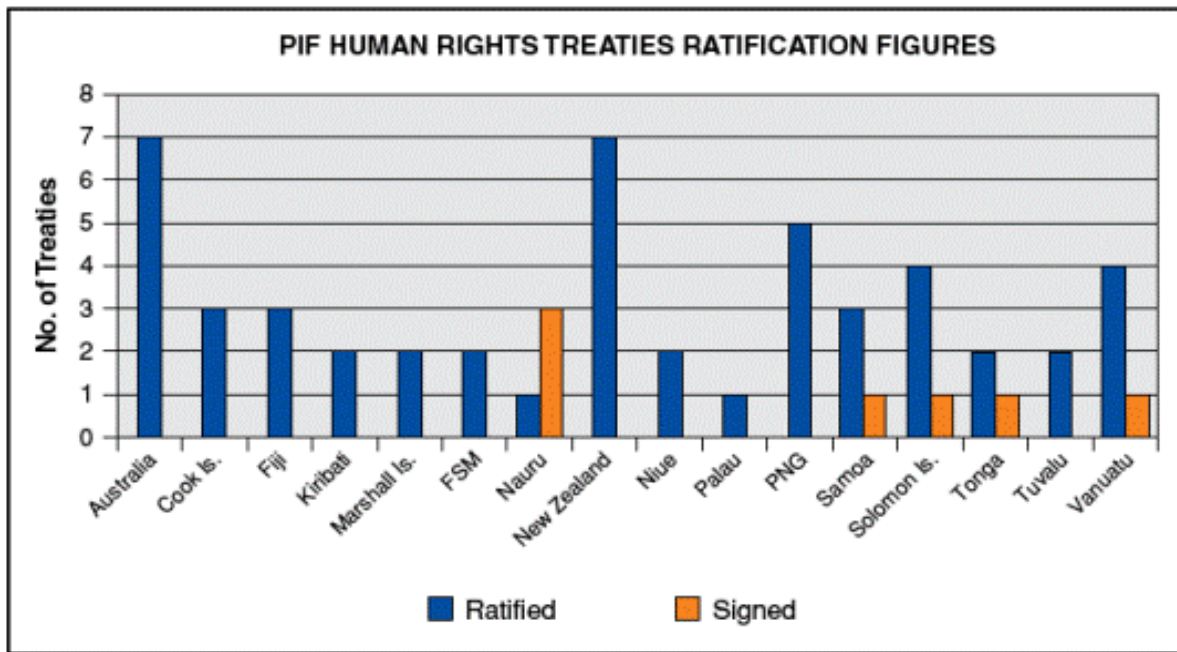
Delegates should aim to combat corruption in the Pacific by standardizing the ratification of international legislation and treaties, and providing framework of a support system through capacity building or otherwise to aid states whose institutions are not capable, or themselves corrupt. The PIF could play a role in investigating and prosecuting corrupt leaders, and could serve as a forum to legislate transnational laws against corruption such that it is not easy for offenders to escape prosecution. The issue of resolving corruption in the Pacific lies in the fact that local politics, possibly due to the minuscule size of these nations, are very much intertwined with family ties, customs and powerful lobby groups like mining interests. Delegates are also encouraged to come up with mechanisms to prevent escalation into armed conflict, and to mitigate the impact of political stability to the people on the ground. The PIF could encourage impartiality in politics and the spread of suffrage in the region. They can hold election observers, and raise awareness about the rights of man of people living in the region.

#### Human Rights Abuses

The Pacific Islands are making great progress in the pursuit of better human rights, even though many treaties relevant to it have not been ratified, and states often do not have the capability of enforcing them. Almost if not all Pacific Island nations have successfully undergone UPR (Universal Periodic Reviews) twice; MPs from 11 nations have signed on the Denarau 2015 Declaration of Human Rights and Good Governance. Despite that, more needs to be done. Notably, the strengthening of human and institutional resources to enforce the maintenance of human rights, and to deter would-be human rights violators.

According to Amnesty International, 70% of women in the Pacific are victims of sexual violence. There is a lack of laws that criminalise statutory rape and domestic violence. Existing legislation is not enough to fully prosecute all forms of gender-based violence. There is a lack of attention being given to the issue of Human Rights Abuses in West Papua, which falls under the jurisdiction of Indonesia - a country not in the PIF. There was a lack of effort to push the issue of West Papuan self-determination and Human Rights Abuses to the UN, said Pacific Islands Association of NGOs executive director, Emele Duituturaga. She stated that she will work with the Pacific Islands Coalition on West Papua (PICWP) - a coalition that speaks for only 7 of the nations in the PIF - members to do so.





Australia has agreements with Papua New Guinea and Nauru to house refugees. The Australian government claims its centers there are for the processing of refugees before entry, however, refugees are housed there for years on end in terrible conditions. Many have self-immolated, sown up their mouths in protest, or gone on hunger strike.

Delegates should focus on the speeding up of the improvement of human rights and the ratification of various treaties, and the aspects of human rights that have gone unnoticed. The PIF should serve as a monitor of the state of human rights in the region, by actively promoting and pressuring member states into ratifying various treaties. It can also work in tandem with various NGOs to promote the spread of it, such as the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO). It must also take a more united stand against Human Rights violations in neighbouring countries, such as West Papua, and member states.

#### Centralized Regionalism

The 2005 - 2014 Pacific Plan has been recast as the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. In 2014 it was agreed that Pacific Regionalism would encompass building a common Pacific identity; the sharing of capacity in terms of resources, institutions, and markets; working in tandem with each other to accomplish local goals and overcoming shared difficulties; and ensuring sustainable development in the Pacific Region as a whole. It would aim to increase human development, economic growth, and promote good governance for the Islanders.



Much initiative and political effort is needed to actualize deeper regionalism. The Nations of the Pacific will have to collate resources such as funds or natural resources, form both voluntary and legally binding agreements, changes in local legislation, and reaching regional standards. The Framework sets a few forms of collective actions for signatories to fulfill. Among which are coordination - to share information and expertise; cooperation - to sustainably harness and preserve the region's physical, social and cultural wealth; collaboration - to acquire economies of scale that would not be viable intranationally; harmonisation - the achievement of legal and institutional goals; economic integration - forming a greater co-prosperity region by linking economies and distributing benefits and costs; administrative/legal/institutional integration - to secure the region and govern it well.

The Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum is the permanent Chair of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) made up of ten main regional organisations in the Pacific region: the Fiji School of Medicine (FSchM); South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA); Pacific Islands Development Programme (PIDP); Secretariat for the Pacific Community (SPC); South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC); South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA); Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS); South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP); South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO); and the University of the South Pacific (USP). These are examples of regional organisations that have been established to forge better regional ties.

There will definitely be difficulty in achieving these goals. Usually, regional initiatives have been shot down by the prospect, or the reality, of one or more nations receiving more benefits than others. A noteworthy example would be Air Pacific, originally purposed to service the entire region. However, due to many factors, it collapsed and was taken over by Fiji as their national airline. One of them being a failure to distribute gains fairly. Prior to the collapse, Fiji has required all air routes be flown through itself, and controlled the employment of its staff. This failure did make states wary of new plans, such as the various shipping proposals that were rejected before the formation of the Pacific Forum Line in 1977. Each nation leased their ships to the PFL, which kept it from being biased towards one nation. However, it only ran its first surplus in 1985, surviving on grants and loans. Another example is the University of the South Pacific, which has its main campus in Fiji, granting them de facto rights to decide how selectively permeable their borders were to employees, scholars and students. The USP has put forth 2000 recommendations to create a Pan-Pacific identity in the university, in spite of the controversy.

The secretariat of the Regional Environment Programme, based in Samoa has devoted attention to increasing energy efficiency in the Pacific islands. Through the promotion of good governance in mining



and energy usage as stated by the World Bank, the REP Secretariat is spreading awareness of this cause among member states.

Regionalism is also challenged in the face of disagreements or inaction by member states. The PIF model of unanimity has given every member a veto vote, which may diminish the collective unity and power of the forum. The PIF has generally been inactive in the internal affairs of its members, and maintained a high level of respect for sovereignty. This, however, has manifested itself in PIF inaction during the 1989 civil war in Papua New Guinea and the Fijian coups in 1987. The PIF only responded to the civil war after 9 years; and the response then was to peace talks being carried out. In addition, not all states are party to many regional agreements and cooperations, such as there being only 7 states in the Pacific Islands Coalition on West Papua, or the 11 nations that signed the Denarau declaration on Good Governance. The Commonwealth led negotiations for peace agreements in the Solomon Islands in the Honiara Accord and the Panatina Agreement of 1999. When those agreements collapsed in the armed conflict of mid-2000, it was Australia and New Zealand that intervened, not the PIF.

There has been internal disharmony within the PIF. The only nation to have been suspended from the PIF was Fiji. It was diplomatically isolated by New Zealand and Australia following their refusal to hold elections in 2009, and remains the second nation to be booted from the Commonwealth. Then, it has formed its own version of the PIF, the PIDF, Pacific Islands Development Forum, which excludes Australia and New Zealand. It has also refused to attend PIF summits unless New Zealand and Australia were excluded, even though the suspension was lifted in 2014 following the carrying out of their elections.

Australia and New Zealand have had distinct stances and differences from the rest of the region. They have been and still are colonial powers in the region, and have been seen as “overbearing, condescending or even hegemonic”. The issue of indigenous rights and democracy has chilled relations between New Zealand and the rest of the region. For Australia, their Prime Minister in the 1990s issued a statement that he would prioritize the Australian economy over binding environmental agreements. The rest of the forum acknowledged the harms of climate change and lobbied for “an outcome which would produce the highest net reduction in global greenhouse emissions”. Tuvalu’s Prime Minister responded to Australia’s statements by saying that “Australia dominates us so much in this region. For once, we would like to have got some respect”. In addition to that, a few countries in the Pacific have strong Australian and New Zealand influences in their local governments. The PNG Government removed 15 Australian advisors from its public service last year. There remains 18 in their administration. The Solomon Islands and Fiji are in a similar situation.



Delegates are expected to plan for mechanisms to promote deeper regionalism, and build up the capacity of the PIF to act as an arbitrator of this regionalism. Delegates should strive to find a compromise that will allow for greater cooperation in the PIF.

## Economic Concerns

Every island that comprises the Pacific Islands share similar challenges and opportunities as small and remote island economies. They exhibit common shared characteristics, due to their demographics and geographic settings, such as a narrow economy, large distance to major markets, limited natural resources, vulnerability to exogenous shocks and natural disasters and high economic volatility.

Although the Pacific Islands have not stabilised to a stage where they have the ability to generate economic growth needed to provide self-sufficiency, economists believe that with the right policies in place and appropriate reforms implemented, they can develop successful economic frameworks. Despite their limitations in size and location, they can overcome these challenges like in the case of Switzerland, Singapore and tiny Norfolk island by incorporating more open labour markets, better infrastructure , secured property rights, more equitable natural resource agreements and more integration. These measures would be able to attract foreign investors to the Pacific Islands as well as to promote entrepreneurial desire among the local population.

Given that the Pacific Islands have considerable potential for development in sectors such as tourism, fisheries, forestry, mining and agriculture, there are countless possibilities through which they can capitalize on their economic resources to scale the economic ladder. The countries that possess abundant economic resources are the larger, high island countries such as Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and New Caledonia.

Apart from economic resources, an abundance of marine resources play to the benefit of the Pacific Islands' economic growth, In addition to the nearshore lagoons and reefs, international law allows Pacific Islands complete access to the Exclusive Economic Zone which is 6 times to the size of their total land. The Pacific holds nearly 90 percent of the world's catchable fish stocks and 70 percent of global tuna population. A sizable amount of profits is garnered from allowing nations permission to enable their fishing fleets to fish in the Exclusive Economic Zones of the Pacific Islands. Although illegal fishing is a rising problem, the Pacific Islands have expressed difficulty in patrolling the large area due to shortage in manpower and the extreme size of the EEZ.

Lastly, tourism is also seen as a viable mode of economic growth. The islands have been popular locations for meetings and International conventions. The climate in Polynesia offers tourist a perfect



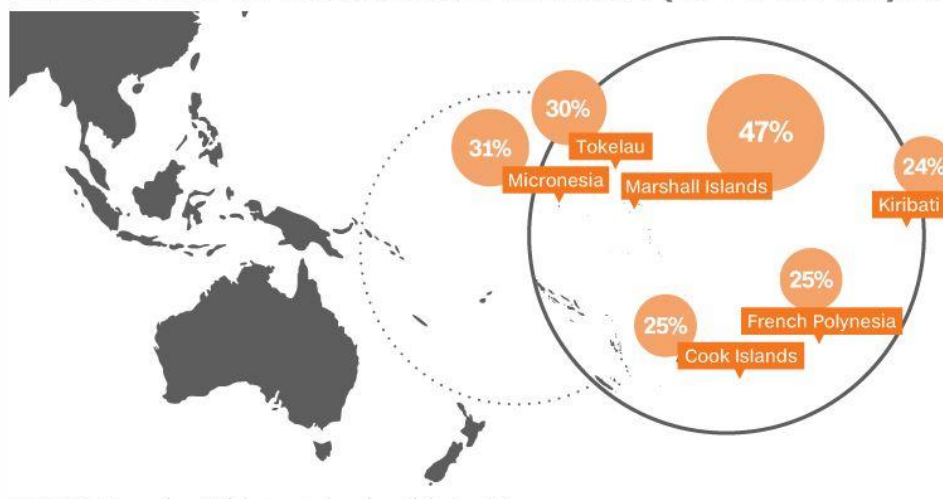
depiction of coral atolls, waving palms, white sandy beaches and balmy breezes. The slow, unhurried pace of life of a typical islander is a selling point for tourists worldwide. Ethnic and cultural diversity have also become popularized among tourists who predominantly originate from urban, westernized regions. Natural attractions of marine life also serve as a niche market for the increasing growth of the tourist industry in the Pacific islands.

## Developmental Concerns

There is an obesity epidemic in the Pacific. This can mainly be attributed to the diets of the Pacific Islanders. There are 2 reasons why the Pacific Islanders have abandoned their traditional diets in favour of cheaper, imported meals. Firstly, economic necessity, and cultural degradation have led to the consumption of these diets. These low cost foods, with high energy density have contributed to the rise of obesity.

In addition, scientists have identified a gene more prevalent in Pacific Islanders' genomes that gives them a genetic predisposition to obesity. Called the 'Thrifty gene', wayfarers who could store energy on long voyages survived these journeys. As obesity is tied to diabetes, the prevalence of it is also staggering. Micronutrient deficiencies are also prevalent. Vitamin A and Iodine deficiency poses a challenge in Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and Papua New Guinea.

**% DIABETES IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (20-79 YEARS) 2014**



About 40% of people in the Pacific have a noncommunicable disease, such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease, all linked to diet. The healthier traditional diets have fallen out of favour with the local populace. Taro, the traditional staple food, is no longer popular in the islands. There is less demand, and thus, less incentive to supply it. The Arapo, which is the native lunar planting calendar, has become obsolete and successor generations are no longer being taught.



In addition, many Islanders are migrating away from the Islands. For example, the Maori of the Cook Islands have emigrated to New Zealand (as they have free entry), causing the number of working age people to decline. During 1995 to 1997, 10% of the population emigrated. In addition, climate change refugees, such as victims of the numerous hurricanes and typhoons, or those driven out by rising sea levels have also left their home islands. This causes an alienation of customary lands, where they do not feel the spiritual, ancestral, and cultural ties to the lands they live on.

Cultural Preservation is integral to the Pacific Islands as part of their national identity. It is also vital to the uniqueness of their peoples, and serves as a factor attracting tourism. Due to the colonial history of the region, many traditional languages have been lost in favour of more 'necessary' languages. Proper translation has been lacking as many aspects of native languages are not conventions inherent in English. Vocabulary of native tongues has also failed to keep up.

The wayfinding culture of the Pacific has become obsolete. Only a select few know the techniques of navigation and ship construction. There may also be a loss of traditional arts and crafts, as many seek higher paying jobs, or do not possess the know-how to create such crafts. Pacific craft is made by wood of the trees on the islands. Modern Islanders have lost the knowledge of the types of trees suitable for crafting.

Demographic challenges are also an obstacle for these nations. There has been high emigration from the Cook Islands, who have been experiencing high depopulation of its outer islands, which have reached historically low population levels. According to the CIA World Factbook, it has had an aggregate population growth rate of -2.88% a year, the highest emigration rate in the world. A collapse of small communities and a loss of culture is possible here. Rural-urban migration may cause harm to small rural communities, with the mass exodus of people. The Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu are facing similar problems. The Federated States of Micronesia also face a similar problem, with the 11th highest emigration rate at -0.49%. A strong incentive for emigration is the pull factors of lucrative foreign opportunities, or urbanization. However, a sustainable rate of migration is important to long-term demographic stability as distorted age structures and demographic shifts can cause long term harm, such as a shortage of able-bodied workers and a high number of dependents.

The Marshall Islands has had a rate of population growth of 0.4%, but a natural growth rate of 2.6 percent. This means that the disparity is due to the high rate of emigration from the Marshall Islands. Niue is also harmed by emigration working in tandem with an ageing population. Population decline in these small nations decreases the capacity of local firms and services to reach much needed economies





of scale. In addition, with a smaller working population governments have a lower base tax. Brain drain is also an issue for countries like Fiji and the Cook Islands where losses of skilled personnel harm the service quality of services necessary to development such as education and healthcare. For the Cook Islands, many members of its population is dependent on opportunities and remittances from New Zealand. Remittances may provide a short-term benefit to local families, but there is the long-term emigration and infeasibility to be dealt with.

Some countries also have to deal with an ageing population, such as the Cook Islands, which has a population aged 60 and over of 14% which is expected to increase; Niue, Fiji, Palau, and Tonga are examples of countries that also are aging rapidly. Policies need to be implemented to shift resources towards caring for the elderly.

However, the natural population growth rate in some Pacific countries is still very high. Policies are needed to encourage the fertility transition to fully occur. Kiribati, for example, has had a stalled fertility transition for 20 years, which currently has a total fertility rate of 3.8 babies per woman. There should be increased proliferation of contraception and sex education. Other nations with lagging fertility transitions include the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, The Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.



## LINKS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Our Paradise of the Pacific was one of the last regions on the planet to be settled by humans. The challenges the way-finders faced were as deep as the ocean itself, and their progeny are trying to keep their heads above water. For generations to experience the pristine beaches and birds of paradise instead of underwater tours of ancient ruins, a sustainable form of development is needed in the Pacific, specifically “development that can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” as defined by the Brundtland Report, according to the International Institute of Sustainable development.

The sad reality of the Pacific is that they are the frontline of climate change. Islanders are at the mercy of rising sea levels and cyclones. Development must be centered around mitigation of future harms to satisfy the needs of both the present generation and their offspring. These needs being the need to be able to live on land, to experience the biodiversity of their countries, and to lead healthy lives. Mechanisms must be put in place to prevent the complete submerging of sovereign territory and the annihilation of biodiversity, and if it is unavoidable, steps must be taken to ensure the welfare of future generations.

Although they are at the mercy of Mother Nature, they are placed there by other large polluters. These Islands must garner diplomatic and political power to make their voices heard at the world’s stage. The islands must develop a more united front in confronting the world, and cannot be hindered by internal disputes. In addition, internal affairs must also not hold a nation from achieving proper development, so be it instability or corruption. Sustainable development can only be achieved when there are strong and capable institutions, with enough capacity to execute its duties. One of which is the upholding of human rights, which if violated shows that fundamental needs of the people have been ignored.

Capacity building is further enhanced by the prerequisite of resources. These Pacific economies may be segregated from the Asian and American powerhouses of the mainland, and held back by their small population. However, measures must, and can be taken to improve economic power in the region. The islands can still reap the benefits of economies of scale through collaboration, and through the utilization of their comparative advantages so be it tourism, fishing or mining.

Finally, the people themselves must also be developing socially in parallel with material growth. It is not sustainable to have population pyramids which are waiting to collapse on themselves. For a sustainable population, demographic changes and dependency ratios must be stabilized; growth rates and emigration must be kept in check. Progeny should have a chance to experience the cultures and



traditions of those in the present, their way of life must be preserved, as well as that of their wayfinding ancestors. The cultural wellbeing being addressed, physical health is also of high importance. The abandonment of traditional diets for unhealthy foreign ones has devastated health in the Pacific. It is not sustainable for these nations as a whole to struggle with this problem on top of those mentioned previously.

## PAST INITIATIVES

The Pacific Islands Forum can be justifiably proud of its accomplishments as a regional organization despite shortcomings in other aspects. It has amplified a collective voice, that of the Pacific Island nations, on major international issues. However- despite these accomplishments, there are setbacks to the forum's functionality such as lack of capacity, ability of single nations to exercise a de facto veto (made possible through the Pacific Way) and national interests overriding regional benefits. The past initiatives in the Pacific Islands, although limited, prove that the forum has vast capabilities that is yet to be tapped on.

### South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is a regional organization established by the governments and administrations of the Pacific region to look after its environment. Its mission is "to promote co-operation in the South Pacific region and to provide assistance in order to protect and improve its environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations."

The scope of the organization is Biodiversity and Natural Resource Conservation, Climate Change and Integrated Coastal Management, Waste Management, Pollution Prevention and Emergencies, Environmental Management, Planning and Institutional Strengthening Environmental Education, Information and Training. It has undertaken some projects such as Waste Management Education and Awareness by the European Union and Global Climate Change Education and Community Outreach by the U.S. Department of Energy (ARM Project).

At the Planning and Policy for Ecosystem-Based Management Forum, resource managers of Pacific Island countries identified the following critical issues sea level rise and coastal engineering, availability of resources and data, population and socioeconomic change, greenhouse gases and climate change, land-based pollution, livelihood of people – food and land security, invasive species, sustaining fish stocks, outdated and conflicting policies and regulations, enforcement. Despite much discussion taking place, the PIF board was not able to efficiently implement these policies, resulting is no tangible outcome from being produced.



## United Nations Pacific Anti-Corruption Initiative (UN-PRAC)

The United Nations Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption (UN-PRAC) is a four-year initiative jointly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with funding from the Australian Government. The aim of UN-PRAC is to support Pacific Island countries (PICs) to strengthen their national integrity systems in order to promote 'clean' governments and create an enabling environment for trade, business, investment and sustainable development to increase in the region.

## Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)

The Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) was founded in 1979 to provide a central point for information sharing and to serve as the chief negotiating body between Forum members and Distant Water Fishing Nations on licensing agreements to fish in the large and tuna-rich Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of the Forum nations.

# STAKEHOLDERS

## Australia

Located in Oceania, a continent between the Indian ocean and the South Pacific Ocean, Australia is the driest inhabited continent on earth, making it particularly vulnerable to the challenges of climate change. There has been major discontent with Australia in the Pacific Islands forum as members believe that Australia is unable to align with climate change stances of the regional body. Kiribati President Anote Tong said said Australia and New Zealand should be relegated from full PIF members to "development partners", which would give them observer status on the sidelines like the EU, China and India.

## New Zealand

Similar to Australia, the PIF has been shouldering heavy discontent with New Zealand with regards to its climate change stance. New Zealand's emission reduction targets are inconsistent with keeping global temperature rise below 2 degrees let alone the 1.5 degrees called for by Pacific leaders. An Oxfam report has stated that Australia and New Zealand are "threatening the very survival of some Pacific nations." However, fortunately, in the topic of fisheries, the member islands of PIF have found more common ground with New Zealand through the NZ Catch Quota System Model. Pacific Islanders had sent ministers to New Zealand to learn more about the System Model as well.



## French Polynesia

The membership of French Polynesia has reinforced the French presence in the regional organisation. More than a million French citizens are habitants of the south Pacific, providing France the privilege of access to the second largest exclusive zone in the world. By supporting the regionalism in the Pacific, French policy makers wish for France to remain part of this inclusive dynamic, enabling Paris to maintain its presence in the Pacific, under the veil of French Polynesia.

## Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea's presence in PIF is reinforced largely due to its animosity with Fiji. The Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea has requested Fiji to reconsider its stance on being a PIF member at several instances, due to Fiji's inability to be present at regional meetings. In the nation's Highlands region alone, dozens of deaths have been linked to food shortages caused by the prolonged drought and severe frosts.

## Tuvalu

Tuvalu has been suffering from a rise in sea level that might potentially drown its country. The Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Enele Sopoaga, severely threatened by the doom of climate change, has said in a compelling statement that "the last option for his country was to migrate to another nation". Sopoaga has expressed himself with a combative mood adding on that his people "do not want to leave their forefathers and dead relatives behind".

## Cook Islands

With a population of 15,000 people, the Cook Islands is on the front line of sea level rise and intense tropical storms. Despite being a group of small islands, Cook Island officials have been vocally against action that formulates climate targets for shipping at the International Maritime Organization environmental committee meeting. The Cook Islands has also taken a stance and made the decision to have an electricity target of 100% renewable energy by 2020. The CIA also estimates that the Cook Island Population is declining by 3% a year, a rate second only to war-torn Syria.

## Fiji

Fijian Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama's refusal to rejoin the Pacific Islands Forum unless New Zealand and Australian influence was addressed has destabilized the region's governance architecture. Many Pacific leaders have condemned Fiji's harsh stance but at the same time, have expressed feelings similar to such as Wellington and Canberra have been driving the agenda in Pacific Islands. Fiji has also



taken the lead in forming a new regional body, Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), which excludes New Zealand and Australia's participation.

## Nieu

Nieu, a lush coral atoll, has been facing a population decline that is steady and relentless. While some islands in the PIF have been facing overpopulation, Niue is facing the opposite problem. In the 1960s, there were more than 5000 people living in Nieu as opposed to the present, where there are only 1,600 habitants. The Niue culture, that consists of stories, songs and language developed over 1000 years is at a risk of vanishing too.

## Kiribati

Kiribati, a nation that stands just six feet above sea level, might face extinction within the next 60 years. The president, Anote Tong notes that his island will be uninhabitable due to climate change. It also bears the risk of disappearing because of sea level rise from melting ice in Greenland and Antarctica. The president has also identified that the Pacific Islands Forum could potentially split over climate change stances.

## Marshall Islands

The Marshall Islands has multiple issues under its belt; tides from rising sea levels, intermittent floods, droughts and mass migration. In fact, the current president, Hilda Heine's presidency will be defined by how she tackles these issues. A state of emergency was declared as soon as Heine took charge of the country over a drought, which led to water rationing in the capital. Over 20,000 departing Marshallese have travelled to US. In the US, a remarkable quantity of Marshallese have gathered in Springdale, a town in Arkansas. While the Marshall Islands has been capitalising on its aesthetic island paradise for economic revenue, tourism is also at stake due to coral bleaching and sand atoll destruction.

## American Samoa

The American Samoa is a non-independent Island State with a fragile ecosystem. With regards to climate change, Samoa believes that prudence should be practiced whilst addressing environmental issues. With the majority of the population residing in the shoreline, the Samoa is threatened by rising ocean levels that might displace homes and destroy lives. The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency aims to have an active stance on the territorial level and has supported programs such as green buildings, hybrid vehicles, alternative energy sources such as wind farms and solar arrays and public education.





## Vanuatu

In 2015, Vanuatu was devastated by Cyclone Pam. 90% of the housing in its capital were severely damaged. Its president says that climate change contributed to the severity of the cyclone. Vanuatu is also home to the first climate change refugees, as declared by the UN, when villagers of Lataw were displaced as their homes were flooded. Politics in Vanuatu are unstable. In 2015, 14 members of parliament were incarcerated on corruption charges, bringing forward its elections. The Supreme court rules that it is unconstitutional. There have been 22 Prime Ministers in its 37 year long history.

## Solomon Islands

The fully independent Solomon Islands has made mixed progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Its notable achievements are in areas such as universal primary education and in reducing child and maternal mortality rates. There is a growing sign of inequality between the inhabitants of rural and urban populations. The islands is also in a period of transition; from a post conflict phase to a developmental phase. The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) is being slowly withdrawn after 10 years and funding and resources for the military component are being channelled to capacity building undertaken by the police force.

## Micronesia

The Federated States of Micronesia consists of four districts Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap. The districts consist of multiple islands and atoll groupings that represent in excess of 2,600,000 square kilometers of land and territorial waters. Crime and substance abuse are rampant throughout Micronesia, making constant headlines. A weak regional labour force due to high unemployment rates, is currently being worked on by Micronesian leaders. Another point concern for Micronesia is boost its island economy, most of which is largely dependent on tourism, according to its governor's office.

## Nauru

Nauru is the most densely populated island in the Pacific, although it has a population of 11 288 people. These people will be harmed by rising sea levels; its population is concentrated on the coast and the interior of the island is ravaged by phosphate mining - an important component of the economy aside from foreign aid. Foreign aid has been cut from New Zealand, as it cannot condone Nauru's legal system that silences opposition and destroys basic freedoms. It was the chair of the Alliance for Small Island States until 2014, where it advocated limits to carbon emissions. Nauru is the world's fattest country, where 80% of its population is overweight. It has the highest average BMI range. The UN has criticised Nauru's treatment of refugees from Australia, outlining the various violations of human rights.



## Palau

Palau has been subject to a series of occupying powers, namely Spain, Germany, Japan, and finally, the United States. It was the last country to achieve independence via the Trusteeship council of the United Nations in 1994. Rising ocean temperatures prompted a mass coral bleaching event in 1997 and 1998, and had detrimental effects on the marine tourism sector of their economy. Temperatures are not the only thing that's rising; so are sea levels, which threaten the water supply, biodiversity, and agriculture. It has taken proactive conservation measures, such as limits to visitors, moratoriums on mangrove clearing, and protected areas for marine life. Of course, much more needs to be done.

## Tonga

Tonga, or the Kingdom of Tonga is a constitutional monarchy in the Pacific. The King holds much power in Tongan politics, and this is subject to much opposition by the pro-democracy Human Rights and Democracy Movement. However, support for the monarch remains very strong in Tongan society. Elections do take place in Tonga, as they do embrace the Parliamentary democracy system. There has been some controversy with the actions of the Tongan government, such as the constitutional amendment to "Tonganise" the media, which attracted thousands of protesters to protest in the capital. Tonga experienced race riots in the 2006 against their Chinese diaspora. The state of political stability and governance in Tonga should be addressed. Tonga's economy is dependent on remittances from expatriates and foreign aid. Rising tides and climate change are making life in Tonga difficult, as 80% of the population live on the coast.



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How can the PIF mitigate the impact of climate change on the Pacific Islands, given the limitations in terms of resources?

Can political stability be achieved in PIF by carrying out organizational restructuring? Does restructuring help to advance the PIF from a forum for collaboration to a forum of strategic planning and implementation?

To what extent does PIF value the overall wellbeing of its citizens, in terms of healthcare and security?

How do we best maximize the economic capabilities of the Pacific Island countries? Does establishment of new economic policies increase the economic power of Pacific Islands?

What role does the Pacific Islands forum play in preserving cultural identity in the Pacific Islands? To what extent is cultural preservation essential?

What are possible ways for collaboration between island countries in the PIF?

Is regional centralization favorable for Pacific Island countries? If so, how do individual island countries benefit from these ties?

What are various avenues for Pacific Island countries to establish ties with the international community?



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