

# PACNEWS

**Pacific News Agency Service - administered by the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA)**  
Second Edition Monday 22 November 2021 © Copyright PINA 2021

**In this bulletin:**

- [1. PACIFIC --- U.S lawmakers press White House on Compact talks](#)
- [2. NZ --- British diplomat on climate: 'This is existential'](#)
- [3. PNG --- PNG deadly Covid crisis getting worse](#)
- [4. FIJI --- I will support State efforts for equality: Fiji President Ratu Wiliame](#)
- [5. PACIFIC --- Priorities for capacity building in disaster risk finance identified](#)
- [6. SAMOA --- Samoa vaccines rolled out in one-day campaign](#)
- [7. VAN --- Vanuatu supports Kanaks' call to defer referendum date](#)
- [8. PACIFIC --- The talanoa about the future of our Pacific Languages](#)
- [9. PACNEWS BIZ --- Palau President Whipps says fisheries can be one key to economic growth](#)
- [10. PACNEWS BIZ --- Vanuatu plastic bottle buyback project pays school fees, puts food on the table](#)
- [11. PACNEWS DIGEST --- Clean Pacific roundtable enables Pacific Islands to enhance understanding of waste management sustainable financing systems](#)
- [12. PACNEWS DIGEST --- Clean Pacific roundtable maps out way forward to reduce impact off healthcare waste on our Environment and Public Health](#)
- [13. PACNEWS DIGEST --- UN Resident Coordinator presents credentials to Federated States of Micronesia President](#)

PAC - DIPLOMACY: MARIANAS VARIETY

PACNEWS 2: Mon 22 Nov 2021

## **U.S lawmakers press White House on Compact talks**

MAJURO, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (MARIANAS VARIETY) --- United States congressional leaders have ramped up pressure on the White House to elevate focus on negotiations over Compacts of Free Association with the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau — and to resolve all outstanding issues in the U.S nuclear test legacy with the Marshall Islands.

Ten Congress members signed a letter earlier this month to Jack Sullivan, President Joe Biden's national security advisor at the White House, "to express our deep concerns over stalled negotiations" with the freely associated states, raising the specter of China's increasing influence in the region.

Last month, Marshall Islands Foreign Minister Casten Nemra told a U.S congressional hearing on the Marshall Islands there had been no formal negotiations this year and none were scheduled, though he anticipated a session in the near future. A front-page article last week in Palau's Tia Belau newspaper reported an interview with President Surangel Whipps Jr. saying there was little progress in negotiations with the U.S. The article was titled "Palau-U. S compact negotiations not moving forward — Whipps."

Last week, Interior Department Deputy Assistant Secretary Keone Nakoa met with multiple Hawaii officials related to Compact issues. Together with Ambassador Karen Stewart, the former U.S Ambassador to Marshall Islands, they held the first face-to-face meeting with FSM Chief Negotiator Leo Falcam Jr.

The primary concern of an increasing number of Congressional leaders in both parties is that these important negotiations with the Freely Associated States (FAS) are being managed by low-level representatives of the U.S government who do not have authority to address negotiating issues that need to be handled in the Compact talks.

The U.S Congress people said the FAS "are crucial to United States' national security in the Pacific" and quoted Biden's Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who described the Compacts as the "cornerstone" of U.S-FAS relationships.

"It is distressing that these negotiations do not appear to be a priority — there have been no formal meetings since this Administration began — even as our international focus continues shifting to the Indo-Pacific," said the 05 November letter to Sullivan.

It was signed by eight Democrats and two Republicans. Democrats Dina Titus (Nevada), Ed Case (Hawaii), Michael FQ San Nicolas (Guam), Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (Northern Marianas), Katie Porter (California), Kaiali'i Kahele (Hawaii), Kathy Manning (North Carolina), and Ted Lieu (California); and Republicans Brian Fitzpatrick (Pennsylvania) and Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen (American Samoa).

This follows a letter that Reps Raul Grijalva, the chairman of the Committee on Natural Resources, and Katie Porter, the chair of this committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, sent in early September to Kurt Campbell, the Indo-Pacific coordinator at the National Security Council in the White House, calling for a complete change in tack in order to properly address the many issues in the Compact negotiations. They received only an acknowledgement of their letter, but no substantive reply from Campbell, according to Porter's office.

"Over the last six months Congress has repeatedly written members of the Administration to express our concerns over talks and urge the presidential designation of a lead negotiator on the National Security Council (NSC)," said the 10 Congress members. "A presidential representative with an NSC directive and a small staff could coordinate the 14 agencies with major programs in the FAS and ensure that negotiations reflect the values and priorities of the Biden Administration."

They said both parties in Congress agree on "the need for a new approach."

The letter criticises the current approach of the U.S administration in negotiations with the FAS, and says a Department of Energy official "misrepresented U.S bilateral agreements with the Marshall Islands" related to Enewetak Atoll's nuclear waste storage facility at Runit Dome during testimony last month to the Congress.

"In view of these issues, we again reiterate the need for a presidentially appointed lead (Compact) negotiator on the NSC," the 10 Congress members said. "This individual should ensure that unfulfilled Compact law commitments are honored, and that the U.S is not cutting aid to our strategic partners with maritime security in the Pacific hanging in the balance. Additionally, this individual should have the mandate to see that legacy issues related to U.S nuclear testing in the region are appropriately resolved, including proper environmental protections, clean up, health benefits, and monetary compensation for victims and their descendants.

"The current approach to (Compact) talks has only put the U.S in a weaker position, and while we know the FAS would prefer to continue their special relationship with the United States, China is all too ready to step in and provide the desperately needed infrastructure and climate resiliency investment that is sought by these long-time partners.... PACNEWS

NZ - CLIMATE CHANGE: THE NEWSROOM

PACNEWS 2: Mon 22 Nov 2021

### **British diplomat on climate: 'This is existential'**

WELLINGTON, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (THE NEWSROOM) --- The British High Commissioner to New Zealand says it's not her place to single out specific countries which need to do better on climate change, but that everyone could stand to be more ambitious in the aftermath of COP26.

In an exclusive interview with *Newsroom*, Laura Clarke said the climate summit in Glasgow succeeded at keeping the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees above preindustrial levels alive. But she quoted the United Kingdom's COP26 minister Alok Sharma, who said on the last day of the conference that the "goal remains in reach but its pulse is weak".

"It didn't, of course, meet everyone's expectations," Clarke said. A last minute effort from India to water down the pact that emerged from the summit, by changing language referring to a "phase out" of coal to a "phase down", was successful.

"It didn't even meet our higher end of ambition. But I think when you look at the overall package in terms of mitigation, in terms of finance, in terms of the various pledges, it absolutely takes us in the right direction. The trick next is how we deliver and implement what we've said we'll do."

At the end of the last major climate summit, in Madrid in 2019, just 30 percent of the global economy was covered by some form of net zero pledge or commitment. Now, that figure is 90 percent, Clarke said. Despite the brouhaha over coal, the Glasgow Climate Pact is also the first output from a COP summit that mentions reducing fossil fuel use.

The key focus over the next year, ahead of a summit in Egypt, will be for countries to set more ambitious short-term targets and detail how they'll meet them. In New Zealand, that means the Government's Emissions Reduction Plan, due by the end of May.

Climate Change Minister James Shaw has said that one of the key planks of the Glasgow Climate Pact, that countries will have to submit new targets (or NDCs) for 2030 by the Egypt summit, doesn't apply to New Zealand.

Clarke didn't say whether she disagreed with him, when asked.

"Our overall approach is that every country needs to be looking and checking that it is being as ambitious as possible. I'm not going to comment on what individual countries do," she said.

"New Zealand has just submitted its updated NDC, just on the eve of COP. It will be for the New Zealand Government to decide whether they need a new one. I think the critical thing for New Zealand next is getting its Emissions Reduction Plan up and running. We were really, really pleased to see the revised NDC and also New Zealand's increased climate finance commitments as well."

The high commissioner did say that she'd like to see New Zealand eventually adopt a net zero target that covers all greenhouse gases and all sectors of the economy. The current 2050 target in the Zero Carbon Act carves out methane emissions from agriculture and waste, which will only have to reduce by 24 to 47 percent over the next three decades.

According to leaked Cabinet papers, Shaw had asked his Labour colleagues to include an all gases net zero commitment in the updated NDC, but Cabinet evidently didn't sign off on it.

"We understand the challenge that faces New Zealand but we are also, as COP President and in our climate diplomacy, we are encouraging all countries to go for all sectors, all gases approaches," Clarke said.

"But it is for New Zealand to work out what's best for it and work out how it maintains the highest level of ambition," she added.

"The trick, of course, with all climate action is that you maintain a consensus and you maintain bipartisan consensus across politics and that whatever you do is sustainable and so you do bring people with you."

Nonetheless, Clarke did criticise those who had pushed against Shaw going in the lead-up to the summit. Those critics included both the National and ACT parties.

"It won't surprise you that I think it was incredibly important that countries went to COP. We were asking a lot, right? We were asking people to travel across the world to Glasgow, in November, which let's face it, it's not exactly the Cook Islands, is it?" she said.

"Cold and dark Glasgow, in November, people travelling across the world, massive logistical challenges - all of that, we get it. But this is the challenge of our time. This is an existential challenge and any country that wants to be a part of tackling these global solutions has to be represented at this meeting. To suggest that that was not a good use of an MIQ slot is a bit disappointing."

Clarke also touted the success of the conference from a logistical perspective.

"I was pretty amazed that in the midst of a global pandemic, amid huge numbers of cases of Covid in Europe and across the world, we pulled off this enormous conference. It was the biggest conference that we had ever hosted," she said.

"We had 120 world leaders there, we had I can't remember how many countries represented at ministerial level and hardly any cases of Covid because we had all the right protocols in terms of testing each day before people went in. I do think it was absolutely the right decision to stick with our plan to have an in-person COP because that's really how you get the negotiations done.

"It's much easier to avoid difficult decisions when you're on Zoom than if you're in a room and you have the ability to have pull-aside meetings and things like that."

Responding to criticism of the representation of fossil fuel companies at the conference, Clarke said everyone had a role to play in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

"Lots of energy companies are working out what their transition plan is. Everyone wants to not be the Kodak of the energy world," she said.

"I think your canny leaders of any sort of oil companies are investing massively in renewable energies and then slowly, slowly making that transition. I think you have to have an inclusive, all-of-economy approach."

In the end, Clarke said she was pleased with some of the achievements of the conference, even if it wasn't perfect. The three achievements she highlighted were the new net zero and 2030 targets that helped keep the goal of 1.5 degrees alive, the finalising of negotiations on technical matters from the Paris Agreement on carbon markets and transparency and the mobilising of finance to support the transition.

"I think that everyone is clear that this is existential as a challenge," she said.

"Of course you've got to then implement, but that's quite something in terms of the world saying this is really important, ambition is really important," Clarke said.... PACNEWS

PNG - HEALTH: CID

PACNEWS 2: Mon 22 Nov 2021

### **PNG deadly Covid crisis getting worse**

PORT MORESBY, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (CID) --- People in Papua New Guinea are not getting enough Covid vaccines due to misinformation. This is causing immense stress and suffering throughout the country, says Quenelda Clegg Chair of CID's Humanitarian Network.

The Humanitarian Network of the Council for International Development (CID) represents the aid agencies that respond to emergencies in the Pacific and globally on behalf of New Zealanders.

"It is a complex situation in PNG. For many people, especially those living in rural areas, it is difficult to get to health centres due to restrictions, there is misinformation everywhere, and fear of the vaccine and its side effects is getting in the way. People are afraid and it is putting their lives in danger."

"We support the government's recent decision to send a medical and logistics support team, plus essential supplies. But the risks of not doing more - and quickly - could see the death rate spiral, country health systems collapse, and even spread Covid19 beyond PNG," said Quenelda Clegg.

New World Bank research addressing vaccine hesitancy: Survey and Experimental Evidence from Papua New Guinea, showed that when people were given basic information on the safety of the vaccine and the dangers of Covid, the percentage of people who said they were willing to be vaccinated increased. There have been over 33,000 people infected with Covid, and over 430 deaths in PNG. Less than 10% of the population has been vaccinated.

"In some villages, two or more family members have died from Covid, just days or weeks apart. We have a health system overcome with sick people and our people are dying," says Oxfam's PNG Country Director Eunice Wotene.

Priority areas include:

- \*Donate spare vaccines in New Zealand to PNG
- \*Urgent support to increase the capacity of hospitals and health services to respond
- \*Reliable cell phone coverage and Wi-Fi so local health workers and community leaders can provide accurate and up-to-date information on the vaccine
- \*Increase security and protect local health workers rolling out the vaccine
- \*Fund mobile vaccine clinics so people in rural areas can be reached
- \*Support people to get transport to clinics, and to get deceased loved ones to morgues.... PACNEWS

FIJI - PARLIAMENT: FBC NEWS

PACNEWS 2: Mon 22 Nov 2021

### **I will support State efforts for equality: Fiji President Ratu Wiliame**

SUVA, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (FBC NEWS) --- Fijian President, Ratu Williams Katonivere has told parliamentarians that he will support the work of the State to achieve true equality for all Fijians.

Speaking at the opening of the new session of parliament this morning, Ratu Wiliame said while he may be Fiji's youngest president with limited public life, he has seen how past systems were not serving the interests of all.

The President urged all sitting Members of Parliament to put aside old, petty politics and look further than short term goals.

"The democracy created under our Fijian Constitution will wither with our complacency but comes alive with public participation, as does its values and principles. Thank you for your participation in the vital business of our democracy."

He said that politicians come and go, but public institutions that serve the people must not only remain but also thrive in serving Fijians.... PACNEWS

PAC - DISASTER RISK FINANCE: PIFS

PACNEWS 2: Mon 22 Nov 2021

### **Priorities for Capacity Building in Disaster Risk Finance Identified**

SUVA, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (PIFS) --- A regional approach is helping Pacific countries to strengthen their financial protection against disasters.

This co-ordination, along with knowledge brokering, private sector engagement and enabling disaster risk financing at the national level are priorities recently identified for disaster risk finance capacity building in the Pacific.

The Pacific Resilience Partnership (PRP) Disaster Risk Financing Working Group convened a two-day virtual workshop from 16-17 November. Participants included officials from Ministries of Finance, National Disaster Management Offices, and representatives of development partners and donors.

Speaking at the opening of the workshop, Dr Habiba Gitay, Senior Climate Resilience Development Specialist from World Bank mentioned that "having the Disaster Risk Finance Working Group endorsed by Forum Economic Ministers Meeting in July 2021 has been extremely important as it not only garners support from development partners but provides a platform for just-in-time learning amongst varied stakeholders."

Garth Henderson, Secretary of the Ministry of Finance in Cook Islands commented that we do need to maintain a focus on disaster risk financing, despite our attention being consumed with our efforts to recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19.

"Not only do we need to recover our economies, but we also need to sustain our economies from the continuing onslaught of climate change, and we need to plan for and respond to disasters of all nature. Disaster Risk Financing has an important role to play," he said.

Henderson commented that "at the forefront of national efforts will be the Ministries of Finance. At times like this when national resources are stretched the support by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), other regional organisations and development partners and the opportunity to work together in regional arrangements such as the PRP Disaster Risk Financing Working Group is a welcome boost to national efforts."

Participants shared what their respective countries are doing in addressing financial protection against disasters. They also highlighted the importance of having the Working Group to effectively coordinate disaster risk financing activities in the region and support country ownership as key to driving implementation of activities.

Director of the Department of Disaster Management in Tuvalu, Luka Selu said that promoting private sector engagement is an area that is still evolving in Tuvalu and the government is working to ensure that the private sector is fully engaged in resilience building.

Selu also stressed the importance of ensuring that monitoring and evaluation is included in the working group's priorities so that progress can be monitored.

The workshop was jointly organised by PIFS, Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company (PCRIC) and UN Capital Development Fund.... PACNEWS

SAMOA - HEALTH: SAMOA OBSERVER

PACNEWS 2: Mon 22 Nov 2021

### **Samoa vaccines rolled out in one-day campaign**

APIA, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (SAMOA OBSERVER) --- Samoa held a follow-up mass vaccination campaign on Friday where more than 2,000 people who were both unvaccinated and those waiting for their second dose receiving their AstraZeneca vaccine.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) with the assistance of various Government Ministries mobilised vaccination teams early Friday morning at Moto'otua to prepare for the rollout.

In the hope of achieving herd immunity in Samoa and in the country's collective efforts to fortify our national response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government together with its partners' have undertaken a 'follow-up mass vaccination campaign' on Friday from 8am to 6pm throughout the whole country.

Members of the public were advised to help the vaccination teams identify the families and individuals who require vaccination by tying a piece of red cloth or a red flag in front of their residences, organisations and businesses.

While the previous two-day nationwide vaccination led to a complete lockdown, the follow-up vaccination allowed all Government offices and private sector to remain open for normal business.

The National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) provided an update on the status of the vaccination operations around 3pm.

It was led by the Director General of the Ministry of Health, Leausa Dr Take Naseri and the Chairman of NEOC Agafili Shem Leo.

Leausa said that as of 2pm on Friday afternoon a total of 2,399 people have been vaccinated.

"Of this total 2,031 people were fully vaccinated while 368 people have just received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine," he said.

The Director General of Health also said that this is an indication that after the previous mass vaccination some people were still not get vaccinated until now.

"But the good thing we have seen is that many of our people have come forward to get vaccinated which we are grateful, this was seen at some of our fixed sites such as Moto'otua."

Leausa said that around 8am vaccination teams started heading out while there were some delays.

"Some of villages did not have many red flags [indicating the need for vaccinations] but when our teams visited, there were many families that needed to be vaccinated with the second dose.

"If there are no red flags, use any colour while some people wait for the vehicles to come around...we might miss but it is best to be on standby and let our teams know when they are coming around.

"I am aware that our district hospitals will open its doors for vaccinations until 6pm including Moto'otua."

The Chairman of NEOC thanked members of the public for their support as they rollout the nationwide vaccination campaign.

Agafili said that we must take into consideration that Europe has been affected yet again by the COVID-19 virus.

"The mass vaccination aims to protect our people, we also ask for our people to assist with our work in ensuring our people are well protected.

"We want to thank our village representatives, churches and villages for welcoming and treating our teams well which includes doctors and nurses.

He also said that the Minister of Health, Valasi Tafito Selesele will provide an overview of the campaign later in the evening.

Before the nation-wide vaccination campaign the Health Ministry figures revealed that more than 115,000 people in Samoa have received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine as of 16 November.

The latest data released by the Ministry of Health on Friday showed that 115,951 people received the first dose accounting for 95.1 per cent of the eligible population. Of this total 59,907 were male while 56,044 were female.

A total of 89,818 Samoans and residents have been fully vaccinated which represents 73.7 percent of the eligible population with 46,846 males and 42,972 females.

For the Pfizer vaccine a total of 22,023 received their first dose while three are fully vaccinated. The eligible population for Pfizer includes children from 12 -17 years, pregnant mothers and lactating mothers....

PACNEWS

VAN - DIPLOMACY: VANUATU DAILY POST

PACNEWS 2: Mon 22 Nov 2021

### **Vanuatu supports Kanaks' call to defer referendum date**

PORT VILA, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (VANUATU DAILY POST) --- Vanuatu Prime Minister, Bob Loughman told Parliament last week that he will write a note to the French Ambassador, Pierre Fournier, in Port Vila to support the demand of New Caledonia's indigenous Kanaks not to hold the referendum for their self-determination next month.

Kanaks have asked Paris to delay the referendum because in their tradition and culture, they are still mourning their families who died in the COVID-19 pandemic. The respect of traditional ceremonies of mourning in Melanesian culture does not such allow activities such as political awareness and campaigns to take place.

Leader of Opposition, Ralph Regenvanu, had asked parliament if government has planned to voice Vanuatu support on the Kanaks' demand to delay the referendum.

Loughman said that he will talk with Foreign Affairs officials and send a note to Fournier in Port Vila.

He said Vanuatu supports the Kanaks' request because they are still mourning their families.

France still maintains that the referendum takes place on 12th of December and had already sent extra military personnel to New Caledonia for the political event.

The Government and people of Vanuatu have always supported the independence of the Melanesian brothers of New Caledonia in regional and international meetings such as the Melanesian Spearhead Group and United Nations General Assembly.

Recent reports from New Caledonia indicate the Kanaks have threatened to go to war if France refuses their request.

Palika Party, one of the strong political parties who wants Kanaks to have their freedom from France said Paris is declaring war if the referendum goes ahead next month.

The former president of the FLNKS and current president of the Congress, Roch Wamytan, who also lost one of his sisters to COVID-19, said the request of Kanaks to delay the referendum is purely to pay their respects in the mourning period.

Approximately 50% of the 272 people who died from COVID-19 in New Caledonia are Kanaks.... PACNEWS

PAC - LANGUAGE: NZ GOVT

PACNEWS 2: Mon 22 Nov 2021

### **The talanoa about the future of our Pacific Languages**

WELLINGTON, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (NZ GOVT) --- A ground-breaking survey launched today will give researchers valuable insights into the state of Pacific languages in Aotearoa, said the Minister for Pacific Peoples, Aupito William Sio.

The Leo Moana o Aotearoa Pacific Languages Survey is part of a wider project that will support the revitalisation, and sustainability of Te Gagana Tokelau, Vagahau Niue, Te Reo Maori Kuki 'Airani, Gagana Samoa, Lea Faka-Tonga, Te Gana Tuvalu, Vosa Vakaviti, Fäeag Rotūma and Te taetae ni Kiribati.

"What's special about the online survey is that it will tell us about people's attitudes to Pacific languages in New Zealand, including the importance and value that people place on their own languages.

"It's also the first time data about the use of Pacific languages in New Zealand has been gathered in this way.

"Sadly, the number of people using our languages in Aotearoa has declined over the past two decades, and in the case of some languages, to the point where we are in danger of losing some.

"Our Pacific languages must be valued and used. They're the cornerstone of our Pacific cultures and identities.

"In the words of the Samoan proverb that was the theme of this year's Samoa Language Week: Poupou le lotoifale. Ola manuia le anofale. Strengthen the posts of your house, for all to thrive.

"We need a clear picture of the attitudes we, as Pacific peoples, have to our languages, to determine what's most needed to carry out the necessary strengthening of the posts of our houses.

"I encourage everyone to take part in the Leo Moana o Aotearoa Pacific Languages Survey, so we can make sure our beautiful Pacific languages are strong and resilient in the future," said Aupito William Sio....  
PACNEWS

# PACNEWS BIZ

PALAU - FISHERIES: ISLAND TIMES

PACNEWS BIZ: Mon 22 Nov 2021

## **Palau President Whipps says fisheries can be one key to economic growth**

KOROR, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (ISLAND TIMES) --- Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr said fisheries can be one of the drivers of economic growth in Palau amid the susceptibility of the tourism industry to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his remarks at the Economic Symposium President Whipps said COVID-19 has provided a reminder that "tourism is not enough" for the economic development of the nation.

"What we've learned from COVID is tourism is not enough... I think we can all agree that we cannot live on just tourism. We need to look at all other areas that we can develop. And when we talk about sovereignty, we talk about everything from our resources, whether it's fishing," Whipps said.

Whipps said there is more economic value that can be achieved from Palau's fisheries sector, maximizing the benefits to help the people in Palau.

He noted that offloading tuna in Palau and exporting high valued species of tuna to foreign markets would provide more economic returns.

"Probably the fish should be offloaded in Palau because if it's offloaded in Palau, we can put them on a plane, there's an extra-economic value added to the chain...so that's, that's what we have to look at. How do we maximise these resources to help the people of Palau?" he added.

Whipps said Palau is looking at new pathways to create other opportunities for Palau other than tourism.

In President Whipps's first State of the Republic Address in April, the president said one focus of the ministry of fisheries was to enhance domestic fisheries.

"Through its reconstituted bureaus, the ministry will enhance Sustainable Domestic Fisheries Development from the shoreline to the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) [boundary] to promote sustainable uses of our food source while also providing a path for new market opportunities for post-COVID-19 recovery," the president said in his annual message to the people.... PACNEWS

VANUATU - PLASTIC BOTTLE: SPREP

PACNEWS BIZ: Mon 22 Nov 2021

## **Vanuatu plastic bottle buyback project pays school fees, puts food on the table**

APIA/PORT VILA, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (SPREP) --- A plastic bottle buyback programme in Vanuatu recently injected VT\$10 million (AUD\$17,000) into the local economy, helping members of the community to pay school fees, put food on the table and most importantly preserve the island nation's beautiful environment.

In June this year, the Salem Plastik blong Sevem Solwora campaign offered members of the community 10 vatu for a plastic bottle. Run by World Vision Vanuatu's Waste Not, Want Not Project, the organisers were hoping to collect a moderate million bottles within a week. What happened, however, far exceeded their expectations.

“Our target was met within the four days of the event. We managed to receive more than a million bottles on the fourth day,” said Florence Bule, WNWN Programme Manager at World Vision Vanuatu. “With support from the Vanuatu Environment Science Society and Vanuatu Recycle Cooperation over 42 ton of waste plastic was removed from Port Vila Environment.” More than 1.4 million bottles were counted with money paid to 892 community members from all over Efate Island.

World Vision Vanuatu is a child-focused organisation. But the organisation's Waste management project, Waste Not, Want Not Project, funded by ANCP, is making a huge difference in the nation's battle against waste and pollution, ultimately contributing a better future for the children of Vanuatu.

“The goal was to prepare the greater Port Vila area for participation in potential future plastics buy-back schemes and lessen the negative impacts of waste and plastics in Port Vila environment and advocate for policy to start thinking about creative ways to keep the environment safe.”

Bule shared the success of the project on the 4th day of the Third Clean Pacific Roundtable (3rdCPRT) during a panel discussion on “Rallying communities around waste management.” She said World Vision Vanuatu was excited to be part of the 3rdCPRT, a forum that allows people from across the globe to share their experiences in how they are keeping the environment protected.

“Working together is the best part of bringing change, one person or organisation cannot impact a greater change, our partnership and sharing of learnings will ignite change,” she said. “It is important to be part of this meeting to share learnings and encourage one another to continue to do good for our environment.”

Looking at the wider Pacific, Bule said we cannot be ignorant about the risk of waste and pollution.

“If communities and individuals can recognize the risk of increase plastic containers in our environment, we can increase the frequency of conversations around encouraging recycling and proper waste management to lessen the negative impacts of waste plastics in our environment,” she said. “In order to achieve this, I feel that we must all speak the same language, take action to ensure our generation can live a long healthy and resilience lifestyle.”

Getting back to the Waste Not, Want Not Project, Bule said working with the communities in Port Vila and Luganville to strengthen the livelihood of community members to increase economic resilience and health, through improved waste management practices and business opportunities, has been one of the highlights. “Working with youths to empower them, strengthening their rubbish collection business by providing business trainings and connecting them with their customers is another highlight,” she said.

There are also challenges. “The biggest challenge is getting policy makers and individuals to understand the importance and planning towards a more sustainable waste management system,” she said.

But she is hopeful that as the work in Vanuatu and the Pacific continue to address waste management, these mindsets would eventually change.

The 3rdCPRT continues this week.... PACNEWS

# PACNEWS DIGEST

*The views expressed in PACNEWS are those of agencies contributing articles and do not necessarily those of PINA and/or PACNEWS*

## **Clean Pacific roundtable enables Pacific Islands to enhance Understanding of waste management sustainable financing systems**

APIA, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (SPREP) --- Pacific Island countries pursuing implementation and expansion of sustainable financing systems, such as an Advance Recovery Fee and Deposit (Deposit and Levy), as an effective way to respond to increasing challenges of waste management, were provided with a learning

opportunity from a panel made up of other Pacific countries with successful schemes in operation, during the Clean Pacific Roundtable Sustainable Financing Deep Dive session.

Advance Recovery Fee and Deposits schemes provide an ability to sustainably fund the collection and recycling of end-of-life products that would have ended up in landfills, stockpiled, or released into the environment creating pollution and environmental harm.

The intent of sustainable financing mechanisms for waste management is to create an "Extended Producer Responsibility" framework where importers and in-country manufacturers share the management and cost burden for end-of-life products accepted by Pacific islands countries and territories.

The purpose of these mechanisms is to charge the true cost of management, transport, and recovery or final disposal, and apply this fee to the importer or manufacturer.

An additional 'deposit' is then added to the sale of the product, which is returned, when the product is returned for recycling, incentivising recycling behaviour. This system is more commonly known as a 'Container Deposit' system applied to beverage containers.

Countries that contributed to the informative Deep Dive sessions included Palau, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Discussions during the session included details of the systems operating in the Pacific, what items are included, how is the fee collected, who manages the fund including options, and opportunities to implement or expand systems.

Several donor-funded projects are supporting the implementation of the Cleaner Pacific 2025 Strategy which encourages the adoption of sustainable financing mechanisms to fund sound waste management activities.

Donor funded projects managed by SPREP include the GEF ISLANDS Pacific Child Project which will be supporting several countries to complement sustainable financing initiatives that are being implemented under the European Union-funded PacWastePlus programme and the Commitment to Sustainable Waste Actions in the Pacific (SWAP) Project, funded by l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD).

JICA's Technical Cooperation Project J-PRISM II has been providing technical support to Samoa, Vanuatu, Tonga, and Fiji to enhance the financial capacity of waste services, and the has assisted the development and implementation of a Container Deposit System in RMI, FSM, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands.

The J-PRISM II project is assisting the peer-to-peer learning among member countries on financially sustainable waste management by actions such as the publishing of a guidebook and case studies of the Deposit-Refund System for Pacific Island countries on experiences at the national level.

The PacWastePlus programme is providing a range of programmatic support to the region to implement sustainable financing systems. Several activities include undertaking a feasibility study of applicable products that could be included in an 'Advance Recovery Fee & Deposit' (ARFD) system, and initial assessment on the economics of the system introduced into the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshal Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

The programme will also investigate the provision of legislative support, facility/equipment procurement, system design and community awareness to assist system design and implementation and undertaking a feasibility study of applicable products that could be added to the existing ARFD system with the provision of legislative support to assist system design and implementation.

The PacWastePlus programme will be undertaking the development of regional tools and guidance based on the outcomes and learning from the national interventions described above and the development of a tool kit of guidance and resources to guide process development and community engagement.

The proposed pathway for sustainable financing mechanism, developed by PacWastePlus to assist participating project countries outline 21 priority steps around the topics of identification of the need for legislation, research, political will and support, preliminary systems concept, feasibility study, consultations, confirmation of sustainable finance system design, legal drafting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and auditing.

SPREP will continue to assist members implement as well as coordinate this Pathway through the Cleaner Pacific 2025 and capitalising on current donor-funded projects such as the PacWastePlus Programme, GEF ISLANDS, SWAP and JPRISM II as well as any new projects that would be mobilised as part of the proposed pathway.... PACNEWS

For more information, please contact Hillary Boyes at [hillaryb@sprep.org](mailto:hillaryb@sprep.org) or Mayu Namura at [mayun.ext@sprep.org](mailto:mayun.ext@sprep.org) / [nmr.mayu@gmail.com](mailto:nmr.mayu@gmail.com)

# PACNEWS DIGEST

*The views expressed in PACNEWS are those of agencies contributing articles and do not necessarily those of PINA and/or PACNEWS*

## **Clean Pacific roundtable maps out way forward to reduce impact off healthcare waste on our environment and public health**

SUVA, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (SPREP) --- Reducing adverse health and environmental impacts from healthcare waste disposal, by extending the life of donor-funded healthcare waste management investments in incinerator technology, was the focus of the Clean Pacific Roundtable Deep Dive session on Healthcare Medical Waste Investment Plan.

Healthcare waste includes all the waste generated by healthcare establishments, research facilities, and laboratories. In addition, it includes the waste originating from scattered sources such as that produced during health care undertaken in homes like, dialysis and insulin injections.

Healthcare waste management (HCWM) is the process that ensure safe handling and disposal of medical waste.

The CPRT Deep Dive session discussion centred on the opportunities and employment advantages of in-country HCWM infrastructure, and the creation of a development partner funded technical facility to deliver long-term solutions to healthcare waste management issues.

Presentations from the World Bank, Advanced Combustion Engineering PTY Ltd, and the European Union funded and SPREP implemented PacWastePlus programme, provided participants an overview of how incinerators function, the purpose of the healthcare waste maintenance facility and discussed supporting creation of the maintenance Facility.

"Healthcare waste management deficiencies go beyond the availability of incinerators and often poor waste management practices in health facilities which includes segregation, handling, transport, tracking and storage", commented Rosie Davey a senior environmental specialist with the Environment and Natural Resources division of the World Bank.

Davey added that insufficient focus on healthcare waste management systems, plans, policies, procedures, capacity, budget at both district and facility level leads to ongoing poor outcomes in Pacific Island countries.

"Many existing incinerators are sub-optimal or not operational as poor maintenance and practices have led to inoperable, inefficient and polluting incinerators that often have a high level of operational risk," said Davey.

Reflecting on lessons learnt and way forward, Davey highlighted that sustainable operation of incinerators should include appropriate technology, robust management systems and plans, training, budget, and resource planning.

"We aim to integrate improved HCWM and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) into project design and have made significant investments including incinerators in PNG, Fiji, Samoa and the Solomon Islands," she added.

An insightful overview of how incinerators function, highlighting the various operating components, the importance of regular maintenance and proper operation was provided by Michael Coccia, Proprietor of Advanced Combustion Engineering PTY, Ltd.

"The design, quality of construction, installation and commissioning, backup and support from manufacturers and most importantly ownership by the end users is required for the success of incinerator projects", commented Cocci during his presentation.

The Deep Dive session participants were informed that the PacWastePlus programme is addressing HCWM issues through a regional healthcare waste management project to assist participating project countries to treat healthcare wastes efficiently and sustainably.

"The regional PacWastePlus healthcare waste project will refine, update, and develop training which includes storage, treatment, and disposal solutions for healthcare waste," stated Lance Richman, the PacWastePlus Technical Waste Project Officer for Hazardous Waste.

Richman added that the project will also undertake an assessment of the impact of a previously implemented PacWaste healthcare waste project along with the repair of selected healthcare waste incinerators in the region.

During the 2021 meeting of SPREP officials supported the development of a Healthcare Medical Waste Investment Plan in partnership with donor projects such as GEF ISLAND to enhance healthcare waste management in member countries.... PACNEWS

For more information, please contact Lance Richman at [lancer@sprep.org](mailto:lancer@sprep.org)

# PACNEWS DIGEST

*The views expressed in PACNEWS are those of agencies contributing articles and do not necessarily those of PINA and/or PACNEWS*

## **UN Resident Coordinator presents credentials to Federated States of Micronesia President**

POHNPEI, 22 NOVEMBER 2021 (UNDP RCO) --- The United Nations reaffirmed its commitment to the people in Micronesia when UN Resident Coordinator Jaap van Hierden, presented his credentials to David W Panuelo, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), today.

Appointed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in October 2021 as his official representative, van Hierden, a Dutch national, will be the most senior UN official in the country, responsible for the overall running of UN operations of the multi-country Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO), which includes FSM, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

van Hierden has devoted about 30 years to development, peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance. Prior to taking up the position of UN Resident Coordinator for Micronesia, he headed the international NGO Cordaid in Afghanistan. From 1991-2016, van Hierden held numerous managerial and leadership positions at the country, regional and corporate levels in Sierra Leone, Malaysia, USA, Denmark, Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines with the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), UN Development Programme (UNDP) and UNOPS. After having been part of the team that built up UNOPS, van Hierden went on to become the

UNOPS Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific from 2009 to 2013 and Country Director and Representative for Cambodia and the Philippines from 2013 to 2016.

van Hierden holds a Master's degree in Agricultural Economics from Wageningen University with specialisations in development economics, marketing and business administration.

an Hierden's appointment underscores the UN's commitment to Small Island Developing States and support towards Micronesia's realization of the central, transformative goals enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals represent the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals.

In his remarks to the President Panuelo, van Hierden confirmed that the UN will strengthen its support to the FSM government across all national priorities, leveraging partnerships and innovation in support of climate change adaptation, social development and inclusive, sustainable economic growth. It is anticipated that the UN presence in FSM and the other Micronesian countries, will be gradually reinforced due to the establishment of the multi-country office.

The Resident Coordinator is supported by the multi-country Resident Coordinator's Office, which, in accordance with the UN Reform launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2019, leads in UN strategic planning, communications and advocacy, partnerships and development finance, development analysis, as well as UN results monitoring and reporting. The multi-country RCO will work in close collaboration with all UN agencies, funds and programmes.

The appointment of a representative of the UN Secretary-General and the opening of the multi-country Resident Coordinator's Office Micronesia demonstrates a stronger focus on providing tailor-made, demand-driven support to the Micronesian countries.

van Hierden is married and has four children. He is accompanied in FSM by his wife and youngest son.....  
PACNEWS