



BUILDING A RESILIENT BLUE PACIFIC

2020

CROP Annual Report
to Pacific Islands Forum Leaders



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM



Pacific
Community
Communauté
du Pacifique



FFA



PACIFIC TOURISM
ORGANISATION



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme



USP
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE
SOUTH PACIFIC

FOREWORD



The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our world in ways unimaginable a year ago.

For our Blue Pacific region, it has exposed systemic vulnerabilities and wiped out decades of hard-earned development gains for our communities and economies. These effects will be felt for months and years to come, compounding the effects of the climate change crisis. In this regard, COVID-19 has highlighted the work we collectively have ahead to strengthen Pacific health systems and social services, diversify our economies, enhance digitalisation, and build resilience to climate change, disasters and other shocks.

In the face of such challenges, I believe that regional and international solidarity and collaboration are more important than ever and, indeed, the only way to successfully move forward.

This CROP Annual Report to Forum Leaders is testament to our collective efforts to support our Blue Pacific Continent in the face of challenging circumstances.

As the Heads of CROP agencies, we met weekly and then fortnightly as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded to support the establishment of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19; progress socio-economic impact assessments of COVID-19; and provide policy advice to Members on COVID-19 response and recovery plans and reprogramming.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, we continued to work together as CROP to support implementation of Forum Leaders' priorities including the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent; the Kainaki II Declaration; maritime boundaries and sea-level rise; and the legacy of nuclear testing in the Pacific.

As the CROP, COVID-19 has required us to rethink, reprioritise and streamline - to effectively deliver on Leaders' priorities and support Member States within available resources and through working virtually. It has provided learnings on innovation, collaboration and prioritisation that can be maintained and built upon.

As Chair of the CROP, this is my last Annual Report to Forum Leaders on our collective work to deliver on regional priorities. Over the past six years, CROP collaboration – while essential – has not been without its significant challenges. The differing governing structures and membership of CROP agencies has made working and responding as one region to Forum Leaders priorities difficult. At the same time, there

needs to be a greater level of coherence and messaging from the Forum member countries in these different governing councils to ensure that work programmes are better aligned to Forum priorities. The influence of external donor partners on the work of individual CROP agencies is also a significant factor. The complexity of the CROP architecture, including the many taskforces, working groups and stakeholder dialogues, is capacity intensive and requires intense coordination. Given this, CROP success ultimately depends on the commitment, drive and resources of individual CROP agencies, to deliver cohesive regional policy advice and implement Leaders' priorities.

Over the coming year, the development of the 2050 Strategy for our Blue Pacific Continent, and related review of regional architecture, provides a critical opportunity to set a progressive development agenda for our region led by the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and ensure fit-for-purpose regional architecture to deliver on it.

In closing, I sincerely acknowledge my fellow CROP Heads, both past and present, who have worked with me and our Member States to progress Forum Leaders' priorities for our Blue Pacific region.

My time as Secretary General of the PIF and Chair of the CROP has only strengthened my belief in the importance and potential of Pacific regionalism. It is only by combining our passion, ideas, expertise and resources that we will fulfill our Leaders' vision of a region of peace, security, social inclusion and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy and productive lives.

Tenk yu tru na lukim yu bihain.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Meg Taylor', is positioned above the printed name.

Meg Taylor, DBE

Chair of CROP



PICTURE: PIFS

Contents

1. About CROP	07
2. About this Report	10
3. About the <i>CROP Strategic Work Agenda 2020</i>	10
4. Special update – COVID-19 response and recovery	11
5. CROP delivery on Forum Leaders' priorities	16
a. 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the regional architecture	16
b. Climate change and disaster resilience	18
c. Regional security	22
d. Sea level rise, maritime boundaries, and baselines	24
e. Legacy issues of nuclear testing	26
f. Biological Diversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)	28
g. Regional mechanism to address oil spills	29
h. Regional fisheries	31
i. Regional health issues	33
6. Delivering on existing Forum Leaders' priorities	35
7. CROP financing to deliver	39
8. CROP delivery on SIS Strategy	40
9. 2021 and onwards	41
10. CROP agency expertise	43

1. About CROP

Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders established the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) in 1988 to improve cooperation, coordination and collaboration between Pacific intergovernmental organisations.

Today, as set out in the *2018 CROP Charter* and guided by the *Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR)*, CROP is a partnership of regional, intergovernmental agencies that support PIF Leaders' increased commitment to regionalism and the principle objectives of sustainable development; inclusive and equitable economic growth; strengthened governance, legal, financial and administrative systems; and peace and security for all.

CROP works to strengthen Pacific regionalism through consolidating regional knowledge, expertise and resources to deliver goods and services that are more effectively and efficiently provided at the regional level.

CROP provides high-level policy advice and support to Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) in the formulation of policy at national, regional, and international levels. This includes support at international conferences and negotiations; in reporting on international commitments; in crisis situations in the region; and in implementing regional frameworks and programmes.

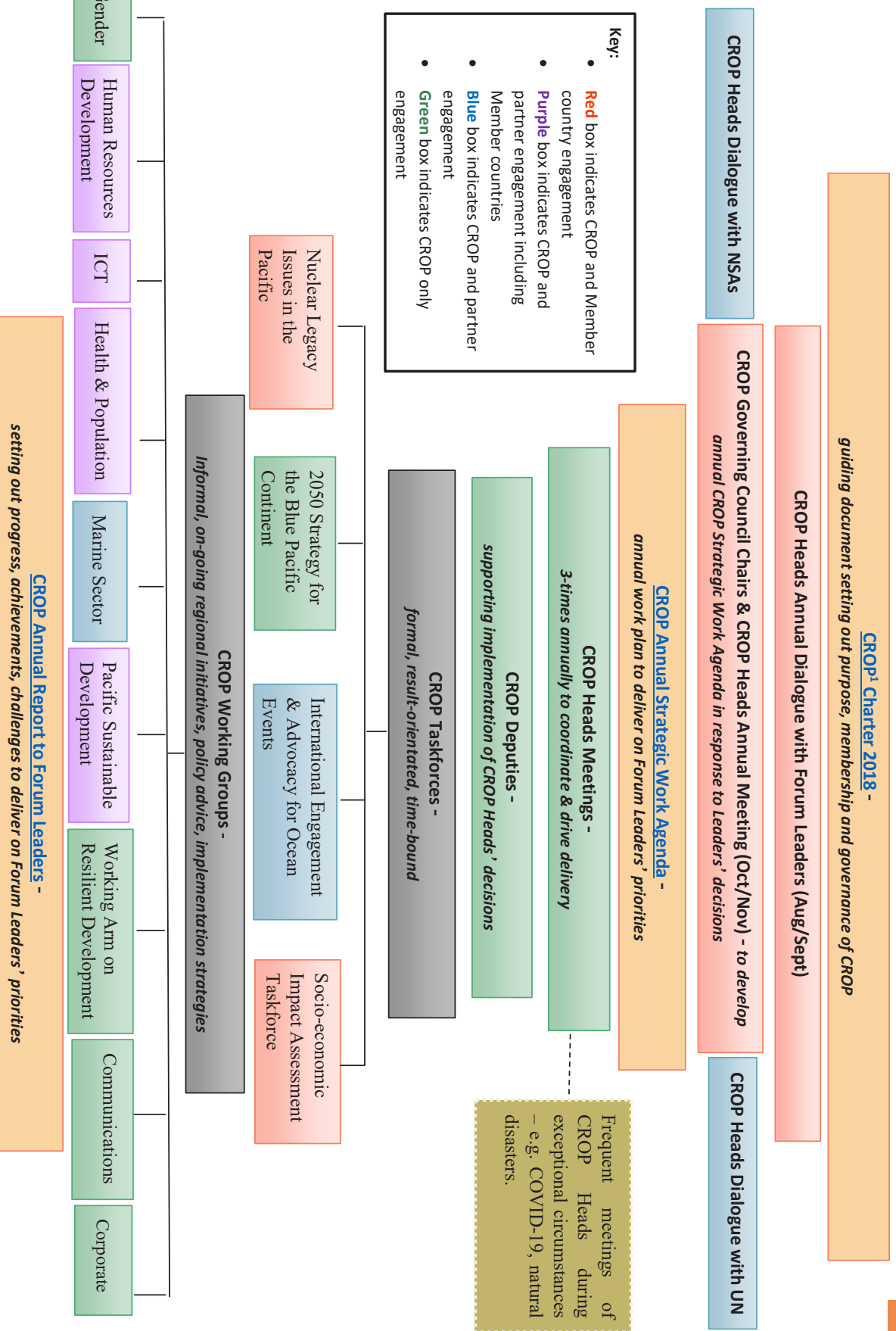
CROP also provides a forum to collectively respond to regional priorities identified by Forum Leaders through the public policy process of the FPR, and to ensure effective follow-up, implementation, and reporting on progress. This occurs through regular meetings of CROP Heads, CROP Deputies and thematic taskforces and working groups.

The work of CROP is based on mutual respect for the mandates and comparative advantages that each CROP agency has, in line with its work programme and priorities across the region.

Currently, CROP membership comprises the following Pacific regional intergovernmental organisations: [Pacific Aviation Safety Office \(PASO\)](#); [Pacific Community \(SPC\)](#); [Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency \(FFA\)](#); [Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat \(PIFS\)](#); [Pacific Power Association \(PPA\)](#); [Pacific Tourism Organisation \(SPTO\)](#); [Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme \(SPREP\)](#); [The University of the South Pacific \(USP\)](#) and the [Pacific Islands Development Program \(PIDP\)](#)¹. The Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum is the Permanent Chair of the CROP. Profiles of CROP agencies can be found on page 43.

¹ As per a 2019 decision of Forum Leaders, the eligibility of the Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) to remain a member of the CROP has been subject to a recent independent review.

CROP ARCHITECTURE AND COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS



 Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) membership comprises the following Pacific regional intergovernmental organisations: Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO); Pacific Community (SPC); Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA); Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS); Pacific Power Association (PPA); Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO); Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP); The University of the South Pacific (USP); Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) (Membership currently under review)



PICTURE: PIFS



2. About this Report

This report provides an update on CROP's work since August 2019, to deliver on decisions arising from the 50th PIF Leaders Meeting,² held in Tuvalu, including achievements, challenges, partnerships, and next steps.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic has been a major crisis and focus for our Blue Pacific region this year, the report includes a special update on the work of CROP to support PICTs to respond and recover.

The report also includes a summary of ongoing work by CROP Working Groups and Taskforces to progress existing Forum Leader priorities; a CROP financial summary; and an overview of CROP's work to deliver on the Smaller Island States (SIS) Strategy.



3. About the CROP Strategic Work Agenda 2020

In November 2019, CROP Heads and Governing Council Chairs met to agree on a 2020 *CROP Strategic Work Agenda*.³

Shared with respective CROP Governing Councils in early 2020, the *CROP Strategic Work Agenda* articulates the objectives, activities, and coordination mechanisms for CROP to deliver on the decisions of Forum Leaders, in collaboration with Members and other stakeholders. For 2020, the *Strategic Work Agenda* focused on nine priority areas:

1. 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the regional architecture
2. Climate change and disaster resilience
3. Regional security
4. Sea level rise, maritime boundaries, and baselines
5. Legacy issues of nuclear testing
6. Biological Diversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)
7. Regional mechanism to address oil spills
8. Regional fisheries
9. Regional health issues

Over the course of 2020, CROP agencies worked together to deliver on the *Strategic Work Agenda* including through providing regional policy and technical advice; programme delivery; meetings of CROP Heads and CROP Deputies; collaboration through CROP Taskforces and Working Groups; supporting FOC Sub-Committees including for the 2050 Strategy, Regional Security and Forum International Engagement and Advocacy; joint CROP communications; and input into regional reviews and reports.

To drive CROP collaboration and action on Forum Leaders' priorities, CROP Heads endorsed the establishment of four new, timebound CROP Taskforces this year: 1) 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent; 2) Nuclear Legacy Issues; 3) Socio-economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19; and 4) International Engagement and Advocacy for Ocean-Related Events.

2 As captured in the 50th Pacific Islands Forum Communiqué: <https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/50th-Pacific-Islands-Forum-Communique.pdf>

3 The CROP Strategic Work Agenda 2020 can be accessed here: https://www.forumsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CROP-Strategic-Work-Agenda-2019-2020_Final-@13.3.20.pdf

CROP Heads also reviewed existing CROP Working Groups⁴ and agreed to act as ‘navigators’ for those Working Groups where progress was slow or had stalled, in a bid to reinvigorate Working Groups critical to delivering on Forum Leaders’ priorities.

To strengthen CROP inclusivity and accountability, CROP agencies and civil society representatives have jointly developed a CROP Heads – Civil Society Dialogue mechanism this year. The first annual dialogue, focused on delivering the Forum Leaders’ agenda, will be held in late 2020.

4. Special update - COVID-19 response and recovery

In March 2020, Pacific Leaders recognised COVID-19 as a major crisis for the Blue Pacific region – its peoples, countries and economies, and invoked the Biketawa Declaration to collectively respond.

Forum Foreign Ministers then met on 7 April 2020 to establish a Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 (PHP-C), to support the timely movement of medical supplies, technical experts, and humanitarian assistance across the Pacific region.

In a joint statement on 8 May 2020, Heads of CROP agencies pledged their full support to COVID-19 regional response and recovery efforts. The breadth and scale of the pandemic, including public health, economic and social impacts, means that all CROP agencies have a role to play, and that a collaborative approach is essential. Further, the pandemic is directly impacting the operations of CROP agencies. This includes the need to respond to the shifting priorities of Members; the postponement of regional meetings; programming delays due to travel and social restrictions; and the need to re-budget in a tighter financial environment.



PICTURE: PIFS

CROP support to COVID-19 response and recovery

From March 2020, CROP Heads held weekly, and then subsequently fortnightly, teleconferences to share information, coordinate resourcing and provide collective advice to Member countries.

CROP agencies supported the establishment of the **Pacific Humanitarian Pathway for COVID-19 (PHP-C)**,

4 Current CROP Working Groups include: Pacific Sustainable Development Working Group, Gender Working Group, Human Resources Development Working Group, ICT Working Group, CROP Working Arm on Resilient Development, Marine Sector Working Group, Health and Population Working Group, Communications Working Group, and Corporate Directors Working Group.

including the development of five common regional protocols on 1) the deployment of technical personnel to and between Forum nations; 2) customs and biosecurity; 3) immigration; 4) repatriation of Forum nationals and 5) clearances for aircraft and ships transporting medical and humanitarian assistance, technical personnel, and repatriating nationals. CROP agencies, led by SPC and PIFS, have also **actively participated in the WHO-led Joint Incident Management Team (JIMT)** and its pillar working groups including on social inclusion, logistics and partnerships.

CROP Heads have collaborated to **re-prioritise regional cooperation funding towards COVID-19** response and recovery efforts while protecting the sustainability of existing programmes. This includes a portion of funding under the EU's Pacific Regional Economic Integration Support Programme (PRISE); the China – Pacific Islands Forum Cooperation Fund; the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) – Republic of Korea (ROK) Cooperation Fund and the Taiwan/ROC Cooperation Fund. CROP agencies are also working to coordinate donor engagement on COVID-19, including through the proposed Forum Economic Ministers – Regional Development Partners Roundtable.

Noting the importance of **clear and consistent communications on COVID-19**, CROP agencies supported the development of Ministerial statements on regional impacts and priorities for COVID-19. CROP agencies also developed a key messages guide for use by CROP agencies and Member countries. Further, CROP agencies issued joint advisories to collectively update Members on the operational impacts of COVID-19.

In support of regional recovery efforts, CROP agencies have been collaborating to **assess the economic and social impact of COVID-19 across the Pacific region**, and priorities for recovery over the short, medium, and longer term, for the consideration of Pacific Ministers and Leaders. This includes an initial regional economic assessment of COVID-19 for the consideration of Forum Economic Ministers, and the establishment of a CROP Taskforce to undertake a longer-term socio-economic impact assessment over 2020/2021.

CROP agencies stand ready to further support Members in implementing priorities and initiatives for COVID-19 recovery.

CROP agency initiatives

In addition to the collective work of CROP on COVID-19, CROP agencies have been working to support Members on actions relevant to their mandate and expertise, **as summarised below**.



Pacific Community

- **Coordination of regional mechanisms:** SPC is a member on of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway for COVID 19 (PHP-C) Regional Taskforce through its Disaster and Community Resilience Programme. SPC is also actively engaged in seven of the ten clusters of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT), namely: the JIMT; Safety and Protection; Water and Sanitation; Early Recovery; Food Security; Logistics; and Education. SPC's in-country offices in Melanesia and the North Pacific participate in the national cluster meetings. SPC also has coordinators embedded in government ministries to provide on-the-ground support for implementation of SPC sectoral work areas.
- **Public health:** SPC's Public Health Division (PHD) has worked closely with the JIMT to support implementation of the regional public health response to COVID-19. Key achievements include allowing

countries to be more efficient by using one cartridge to test four pooled samples as well as increasing the number of countries doing reverse-transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing, which is the gold standard for COVID-19 testing. The equipment provided will also allow PICTs to test for other conditions such as dengue, zika, chikungunya and leptospirosis, where previously specimens had to be sent overseas for testing. Infection prevention and control was another area of support where SPC provided training, guidelines and communications in different languages for PICTs. SPC support for intensive care units included procurement of equipment and supplies, biomedical support, and facilitating training for staff in critical care and biomedical support. Risk communication is also an area where SPC provided support including the development of PICTs communication strategies for COVID-19.

- **Statistics:** SPC has included a 'natural disasters and external shocks' section to its Statistics for Development website, to assist with preparedness and response work on COVID-19 and Cyclone Harold. It is also developing a Pacific 'economic vulnerability matrix' to highlight areas and countries of greatest vulnerability.
- **Food security and livelihoods:** SPC's *Pacific Regional Integrated Food and Nutrition Security Initiative to COVID-19 (PRISCO19) Programme* is addressing immediate food and nutrition security impacts through strengthened crop and livestock production systems and short-term value chains. SPC's *Pacific Seeds for Life Programme* has provided vegetable seeds to an estimated 28,000 farm families. In response to Member requests, SPC is also working on developing seed systems and home gardens in the Pacific. SPC's *Pacific Territories Regional Project for Sustainable Ecosystem Management (PROTÉGÉ) Project* is revising activities to focus on food security and food systems. SPC Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) has been working with members to scale-up community-based fisheries management for food security and livelihood opportunities in response to the internal movements of people from urban to rural/outer island communities and the increasing dependence on heavily harvested coastal marine resources. SPC is also working with FFA on understanding COVID-19 related impacts on the tuna fishery (see below).
- **Socio-economic assessment and recovery:** as well as supporting the regional socio-economic impact assessment for COVID-19, as endorsed by Forum Economic Ministers, SPC is providing support to the UN's socio-economic impact assessments. SPC is also undertaking a meta-synthesis of COVID-19 assessments in the region. The findings for this work will be used to inform the regional socio-economic impact assessment.
- **Maritime transport:** SPC coordinated advice to countries with regards to quarantine requirements and operational procedures for ports in the region. SPC also contributed to initiatives by New Zealand and ESCAP on guidelines for freight protocols and COVID-19 impacts on the shipping and port sector.
- **Education:** The Educational Quality and Assessment Programme has transitioned the study materials for all South Pacific Form Seven Certificate (SPFSC) courses to the Moodle learning management system, providing all SPFSC students with access to learning materials throughout the school year, including from home during school closures. Parallel sets of examinations have been provided allowing each SPFSC participating country to adjust the timing of examinations to their revised school terms and fee relief (through reallocation of DFAT flexible funding) has been provided for students most impacted by loss of income to ensure they are able to continue and complete their studies.
- **Climate change:** The SPC Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Programme has lobbied and worked to ensure that the short-term threat of COVID-19 does not overshadow the real long-term threat of climate change and environmental sustainability.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

- **Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 (PHP-C):** The Forum Secretariat supported Forum Leaders to enact the Biketawa Declaration to respond to COVID-19, and held a special meeting of the Forum Officials Committee and Forum Foreign Ministers to establish the PHP-C. Based on Forum Foreign Ministers' decisions, the Forum Secretariat has supported a Ministerial Action Group and Regional

Taskforce to oversee the PHP-C; the development of governance and operational guidelines for the PHP-C; and the development of common regional protocols.

- **Economic and geopolitical assessment:** The Forum Secretariat, in consultation with CROP agencies, developed an assessment of the initial economic impact of COVID-19 on the Pacific region, and potential regional recovery measures, as considered and supported by Forum Economic Ministers. The Secretariat is supporting the establishment of a COVID-19 Economic Recovery Taskforce as called for by Economic Ministers.
- **Stakeholder consultation and engagement:** The Forum Secretariat has ensured dialogue and engagement with key stakeholders on COVID-19, including senior level meetings with Forum Member governments; briefings with Forum Dialogue Partners; and consultations with regional civil society and private sector representatives.

Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency

- **COVID-19 Operating Protocols for the Fishing Sector in the Pacific:** FFA with key partners – DFAT, PNAO, SPC and MRAG - developed protocols to minimise the risk of transmitting COVID-19 on and between fishing vessels, and at port, in the Pacific. The protocols are designed to guide the fishing sector, flag States and coastal and island States to manage the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 on the fishing industry.
- **Pacific tuna fishery operations:** FFA has been working with Member countries to address urgent operational issues that have impacted on the Pacific tuna fishery. This included the suspension of requirements for fishing vessels to carry human observers, given health concerns and associated travel restrictions due to COVID-19. FFA Members have engaged in inter-sessional decision-making processes of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission to enable swift decisions to be taken. The key objectives of FFA throughout these negotiations was to a) ensure the health and safety of Pacific fisheries observers and wider Pacific communities, in collaboration with SPC's Public Health Division; and b) to minimise disruption to fishing activity given its critical economic importance to Pacific countries.
- **Economic impacts on tuna fisheries:** FFA has developed a report on the economic impact of COVID-19 on Pacific tuna fisheries and the associated implications for Pacific Island economies and food security. FFA is assisting Member countries to conduct national economic impact of COVID-19 studies specific to the tuna fishery.
- **Social impacts including contribution to food security:** FFA has commenced work to investigate potential opportunities for tuna fisheries, and associated industries, to increase their contribution to food security, including a study of how much tuna enters local markets as a result of transshipment activity. FFA is also conducting a study on the impacts of COVID-19 on women in Pacific offshore fisheries.
- **Monitoring Control and Surveillance (MCS):** FFA continues to conduct analysis and review data to support contact tracing of vessels using the Vessel Monitoring System. Working closely with Members, FFA has increased the use of various tools in the integrated MCS framework to continue to monitor fishing.

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

- **Healthcare waste management:** SPREP, through its Waste Management & Pollution Control Programme (WMPC), has been disseminating healthcare waste management information to Members and creating resources to assist hospitals and waste collection services to understand how to manage waste and protect workers from potential COVID-19 infection. This has included guidelines on environmentally sound management of biomedical and healthcare waste; the development and promotion of a COVID-19 waste management fact sheet by the PacWastePlus team; an assessment of healthcare waste incinerators in 15 Pacific countries; and plans for a joint donor effort for the repair of incinerators as required.

- **Cyclone Harold support:** In the aftermath of Cyclone Harold, SPREP, through its Climate Change Resilience Programme (CCR), reached out to affected countries and their National Meteorological Services (NMS). Given the postponement of the Pacific Meteorological Council (PMC) to 2021, SPREP utilised the budget for PMC, with support from Irish Aid, to provide assistance to the NMS. This included rebuilding a damaged weather station in Vanuatu, consultations in Tonga on impacts analysis, and replacement of damaged equipment.

The University of the South Pacific

- **Pandemic management planning:** On 12 March 2020, USP's Disaster Management Committee (DISMAC) released a COVID-19 Pandemic Management Plan, outlining response measures for the University based on four levels of response; the prevailing conditions at each campus; and advisories issues by respective governments. USP's senior management team and DISMAC meet regularly to consider the necessary precautionary measures that need to be implemented in the event of further escalation of COVID-19.
- **Student support:** The University was initially closed, with classes then resuming online on 20 April and all resources available via USP's online teaching platform, Moodle. The University has worked proactively to encourage students to continue their studies. This included the introduction of a call-fee number for students to raise queries and access information. USP also made 700 tablets available to students who did not have access to learning tools at home. This helped keep students engaged, with the number of student withdrawals for Semester 1 below 5%.

Pacific Tourism Organisation

- **Partner coordination and information sharing:** SPTO mobilised its Member countries and partners, including the WHO, UNWTO and SPC, to consolidate and disseminate information to support decision-making on travel and tourism at the national level, particularly for National Tourism Offices.
- **Tourism impact assessment:** SPTO collaborated with New Zealand to commission an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on tourism in the Pacific region. The initial report *Pacific Tourism – COVID-19 Impact & Recovery* has been shared with Members and tourism operators. This was followed by a second report: *Pacific Tourism: Scenario Development and Recovery Pathways Report*. SPTO also commissioned a rapid impact survey of its private sector members on the impacts of COVID-19 and provided support for the tourism component of the UN-led socio-economic assessment of COVID-19 in the Pacific.
- **Development partner coordination:** on 25 June 2020, SPTO coordinated a development partners forum to discuss the impact on the Pacific tourism sector and opportunities for a coordinated approach to sector recovery.
- **Tourism recovery strategy:** SPTO has developed and launched a *Tourism Recovery Strategy* to support and provide guidance for the recovery of the Pacific tourism sector.
- **Advocacy and awareness:** SPTO partnered with the United Nations and other project partners to deliver the Pacific Unite Virtual Concert, broadcast on 15 August 2020. The concert aimed to encourage Pacific leaders and citizens to work together to combat COVID-19. SPTO, in collaboration with industry stakeholders and experts, has been delivering a series of fortnightly webinars to assist and inform tourism stakeholders.

Pacific Aviation Safety Office

- **Technical aviation assistance:** PASO developed a Response Plan for COVID-19, setting out safety measures that PASO was taking to assist in containing the spread of COVID-19. This was shared with Member states, partners, and stakeholders. PASO has provided technical aviation assistance to its Members, including sharing updates and advice from the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) on the global aviation industry. While several operational activities and projects were temporarily

halted across the region, PASO continued its work programme where possible, using a risk-based approach, and its engagement with the CROP on COVID-19 response and recovery.

Pacific Power Association

- **Information sharing and assessing impact:** PPA has been sharing information with its Members on the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as surveying its Members to understand their fuel stocks and fuel supply lines; the relief mechanisms on offer by Member utilities; and the impact of the pandemic on Member utilities' revenue collections and financial sustainability.

5. CROP Delivery on Forum Leaders' priorities



PICTURE: PIFS

A) 2050 STRATEGY FOR THE BLUE PACIFIC CONTINENT AND REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE REVIEW

Leaders' 2019 decisions

- *Leaders endorsed the development of a 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and agreed the Strategy must ensure social, cultural, environmental, and economic integrity and sovereignty and security, to protect people, place and prospects of the Blue Pacific.*
- *Leaders tasked a review of the regional CROP architecture to re-examine and ensure the requisite governance and resourcing arrangements that promote, govern, and deepen collective responsibility and accountability to deliver the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.*

CROP Objective

CROP technical input and advice to support the quality development of a 2050 Strategy and a review of the regional architecture, to ensure a relevant, efficient and effective future regional system.

Progress snapshot: The FOC Sub-Committee of the 2050 Strategy, is co-chaired by Fiji and Vanuatu. Since its inception, the FOC Sub-Committee has had a total of nine meetings, with CROP agencies participating as observers. The Sub-Committee agreed on a methodology for Strategy development with regional consultations underway. For the Review of Regional Architecture, a draft concept note has been developed. In considering the Review, the 2019 Budget FOC agreed that this be sequenced after completion of phase one of 2050 Strategy.⁵

Partnerships and delivery mechanisms

CROP agencies actively participated in the development of the 2050 Strategy, in collaboration with other partners, including:

- participation in the FOC Sub-Committee for 2050 Strategy;
- consultations and input at CROP Heads meetings;
- CROP agencies contribution to the regional policy mapping exercise;
- CROP agency participation in scenario development workshops and consultations on regional 'drivers of change';
- CROP agency inclusion on the register of regional experts; and,
- establishment of a CROP Taskforce for the 2050 Strategy to formalise the role of CROP in providing technical and specialist advice for Strategy development.

Achievements

- **Establishment of FOC Sub-Committee** to guide the development of the 2050 Strategy with strong Member ownership and engagement and with CROP agencies participating as observers.
- **As driven by the Co-chairs of the FOC Sub-Committee, development of a revised approach to Strategy development** and an accompanying work programme.
- Establishment of a **register of regional experts**, inclusive of CROP agencies.
- Ongoing **mapping of national and regional policy frameworks and long-term strategies**, to understand the current context, with CROP agency participation.
- Holding **scenario development workshops** on plausible and preferred futures for the Blue Pacific region, with CROP agency participation. Progress update provided to the 2019 Budget Forum Officials Committee (FOC), 2020 Pre-Forum FOC, 2020 Forum Foreign Ministers Meeting and 2020 Budget FOC.
- Holding a FOC Sub-Committee **Drivers of Change Socialisation Workshop** which produced a workshop report which was subsequently endorsed.
- Supporting the Co-Chairs to initiate the **Drivers of Change regional consultations** with Members and stakeholders.
- Providing **preparatory briefings** with Members based in Capital on the Drivers of Change consultation process.
- Establishing a **CROP Taskforce** for the 2050 Strategy, based on a Terms of Reference.

Challenges

- Difficulties in keeping this work going in the COVID-19 environment, noting that Members need to focus on COVID-19 response and recovery.

⁵ Forum Members agreed to develop the 2050 Strategy in two phases. Phase one consists of developing a sound evidence base and 2050 scenarios for Leaders to consider at their 2020 meeting, in the form of an interim report. Phase two will take place between the 2020 and 2021 Leaders meetings, consisting of the development of the 2050 Strategy, based on the directions of Leaders arising from their 2020 meeting.

- Working within the tight timeframes prescribed within the revised work programme.

Next steps for CROP agencies

- Meetings of the CROP Taskforce to support and contribute to the work of the FOC Sub-Committee including technical advice and analysis of the “drivers of change” and contribution to the regional policy mapping.
- Based on Strategy development to date, contributing to the finalisation of a concept note and work programme for the review of regional architecture, for Member consideration.



PICTURE: PIFS

B) CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RESILIENCE

Leaders' 2019 decisions

- *Leaders reaffirmed climate change as the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security, and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific and their commitment to progress implementation of the Paris Agreement.*
- *Agreed to build on their Blue Pacific's Call for Urgent Global Climate Change Action through the Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Action Now as the basis of the Forum's leadership and moral authority to engage at the UN Secretary General's Climate Action Summit and COP 25.*
- *Agreed to extend the trial period on the Pacific Resilient Partnership (PRP)⁶ governance arrangements until 2020 to be informed by a review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the governance arrangements.*

⁶ The PRP is a mechanism to facilitate effective implementation of the FRDP through bringing together multiple stakeholders and communities of practice working on climate change, disaster risk management and sustainable development and providing the enabling environment to enable more people, more interests, to be involved and to have ownership of the resilience agenda.

- Directed the PRP taskforce to further elaborate the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) in line with the Paris Agreement, and to finalise the Monitoring & Evaluation framework by the end of 2021, with a progress update in 2020.

CROP Objective

International climate change advocacy to drive support for the priorities of the *Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Change Action Now* and strengthened implementation of the FRDP, particularly through the PRP.

Progress snapshot: Promotion of the *Kainaki II Declaration*, support to Members for COP 25 engagement, completion of review of PRP governance arrangements and drafting of tools to support the FRDP including Pacific resilience standards and a monitoring and evaluation strategy. Delays in regional and international initiatives due to COVID-19 and the need for greater clarity on the roles of all CROP agencies on climate change and resilience.

Partnerships and delivery mechanisms

CROP agencies actively participated in the delivery of the Leaders' decision on climate change and resilience, in collaboration with other partners, through the following mechanisms:

- The One CROP Plus Team supported regional engagement at COP 25 led by SPREP, with PIFS, SPC, USP together with PIDF, UNDP and UNEP. Representatives from SPREP, PIFS, SPC and USP were all in attendance at COP 25 to provide Members with on-the-ground support.
- PRP Taskforce - 15 members, with SPREP as CROP's nominated representative on the Taskforce and SPREP, PIFS and SPC acting as the PRP Support Unit.
- Technical Working Group (TWG) of the FRDP.

Achievements

International advocacy and engagement

- CROP assistance to develop and implement the 2020 PIF International Advocacy and Engagement Action Plan and Blue Pacific Messages Guide, with climate change a key priority.
- Promoting the *Kainaki II Declaration* including through Kainaki II to COP 26 High Level Roundtable in December 2020; briefings and letter writing to Forum Dialogue Partners to call for support; and media and social media.
- In the lead up to **COP 25**, the One CROP Plus Team, led by SPREP, provided support to Member countries in formulating and promoting negotiation positions, as guided by the *Pacific Voyage Plan*. This included the COP 25 preparatory meeting and negotiations training in Apia, Samoa from 5 – 7 November 2019, funded by IMPACT Project. Ahead of this, USP convened a pre-COP training session for 25 student participants from 15 – 17 October at its Suva campus.
- At COP 25 in Spain in December 2019, SPREP and the One CROP Plus Team supported Member countries in the negotiations and managed the Moana Blue Pacific Pavilion, in partnership with Fiji and New Zealand. The Pavilion provided a platform to amplify the Pacific's calls for urgent climate change action; to showcase the challenges and opportunities for climate change affected areas in the Pacific; and provided a space for Pacific delegations to convene and organise meetings. Open for 11 days, the Pavilion operated on green principles and received over 10,000 visitors, with 61 events held and over 60 news items generated. CROP agencies also provided financial support for participants to join Pacific delegations, including youth participants through USP's PACRES project.
- CROP agencies and the Office of the Pacific Ocean Commissioner (OPOC) coordinated a **submission to the UNFCCC** to inform a proposed UNFCCC meeting on climate change and oceans, to ensure a meeting reflect of Pacific priorities.

- To prepare for **COP 26**, scheduled for November 2021, the One CROP Plus Team engaged with Members in a virtual workshop on Post-COP 25 analysis, funded by the Intra-ACP GCCA+ PACRES Project. The workshop agreed to revitalise the *Pacific Voyage Plan* to guide regional engagement at COP 26, and to continue active engagement with PSIDS, AOSIS, Group of 77, and the UNFCCC. In addition, PIFS, in consultation with CROP, developed a draft political engagement strategy for COP26, that was considered and supported by FOC and Foreign Ministers.

Pacific Resilience Partnership/Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific

- CROP engagement in the **elaboration of the FRDP in line with the Paris Agreement** and a **review of the governance arrangements** for the PRP, with the final review considered by FOC in 2020.
- Establishment of an **affiliation process for the PRP**, with 120 agencies to date affiliating with the partnership and with the intent, principles, and objectives of the FRDP.
- Establishment of **Technical Working Groups (TWG)** that bring together agencies whose expertise and mandates are aligned with the issues being addressed and enable them to be addressed in a collective and coherent manner. TWG's established include: Disaster Risk Finance; Information and Knowledge Management; Human Mobility; Risk Governance; and Localisation with membership inclusive of all stakeholders actively engaged in these issues in the region. The TWG also serve as an expert group or think tank for the issues they are addressing.
- A **communications and engagement strategy** has been developed to promote Pacific resilience and the work of the PRP including:
 - development of the **PRP Charter** which outlines the accountabilities and responsibilities of agencies affiliated to the PRP;
 - a **PRP Webinar Series** which provides an online platform for sharing experience, exchanging information and facilitate learning across countries, communities and stakeholders, to drive improved resilience actions and impacts; and,
 - **PRP Facebook** has been reactivated with its contents shared through SPREP, PIFS and SPC individual Facebook pages.
- The development of tools that ensure the quality and integrity of resilience actions including:
 - The **Pacific Resilience Standard (PRS)** to ensure the quality, effectiveness and integrity of resilience building by providing 'good practice essentials' and 'progress criteria' that can demonstrate stakeholder achievement of the FRDP Guiding Principles. The PRS is adaptable for use in a range of development planning contexts across PICTs;
 - The **FRDP Monitoring & Evaluation Learning (MEL) Needs Assessment** which assesses the gaps and opportunities for monitoring and evaluating the FRDP, and highlights stakeholder views of what is considered important for monitoring and evaluating the FRDP; and,
 - The **FRDP Monitoring & Evaluation Strategy** that sets the path for monitoring and evaluating the FRDP and seeks to ensure good quality monitoring and evaluation evidence is integrated into climate and disaster resilience governance processes across sectors and at sub-national, national and regional levels.

Challenges

- At the global level, a lack of coherence with disaster risk management on one side (i.e. Sendai Framework) and climate change action on the other side (i.e. Paris Agreement) which refrains countries from taking an integrated approach.
- Given COVID-19, COP 26 has been delayed by 12 months, to be held in November 2021. This could result in delayed action on the Paris Agreement if Pacific, and other likeminded countries, do not work to build global momentum.
- At COP 25, the crowded agenda including the side event schedule made it difficult for Members to attend all events, and for the One CROP Plus Team to provide support across the breadth of

the agenda. Some Member delegations raised confusion over the respective roles of the CROP agencies, so there is a need to ensure clear advice to Member countries on the role of the One CROP Plus Team overall, and of individual CROP agencies.

- For the FRDP and PRP, there is a need for greater clarity on how such mechanisms are supporting implementation at the national level. Further, sub-regional representation on the PRP Taskforce has shown limitation in terms of outreach to the Member countries they represent. There is a need for strong county leadership to give further direction to the PRP. Progressing the work of the PRP has been hampered by COVID-19, making it difficult for Technical Working Groups and the Taskforce itself to meet.

Next steps for CROP agencies

- Supporting Member planning and preparation to drive momentum on climate change action in the lead up to, and at COP 26, through the One CROP Plus Team and guided by the post-COP 25 workshop, the *Pacific Voyage Plan*, and a political engagement strategy.
- Develop guidance for Members to ensure clarity on the role of each CROP agency and the One CROP Plus Team for the regional climate change and resilience work programme. This will be included in the revised *Pacific Voyage Plan*.
- Based on the decisions of FOC, implement the findings of the review of the PRP governance arrangements.
- Increased communications and advocacy to build regional understanding of, and engagement in, the FRDP and PRP, as driven by the work of the PRP communications and engagement sub-committee.
- Implementation of FRDP tools including the Pacific Resilience Standards and the monitoring and evaluation strategy.
- Continuation of technical activities to better understand the impacts of climate change on Members, e.g. impacts on regional and national tuna stock distribution, to better inform decision making.
- Continuing to support the work of the Regional Pacific NDC Hub, housed at SPC, in supporting Member states to meet their NDC commitments.



PICTURE: SPC

C) REGIONAL SECURITY

Leaders' 2019 decisions

- Leaders commended the progress made on implementing the Boe Declaration and endorsed the Boe Declaration Action Plan, including the establishment of the Sub-Committee of the Forum Officials' Committee on Regional Security.
- Leaders requested that traditional and cultural norms be acknowledged and considered as an underpinning imperative of all security initiatives under the Boe Action Plan.

CROP Objective

CROP technical support for the implementation of the Boe Declaration Action Plan including relevant CROP agencies' involvement in the FOC Sub-Committee on Regional Security (FSRC) and in the inaugural Pacific security dialogue.

Progress snapshot: While the inaugural meeting of the FOC Sub-Committee on Regional Security was held in October 2019, the COVID-19 crisis and establishment of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 meant a temporary focus away from implementation of the Boe Declaration Action Plan. A second meeting of the FOC Sub-Committee was held in September 2020 to progress work on the Boe Declaration Action Plan.

Partnerships and delivery mechanisms

- Delivery on Leaders' regional security decisions has been led by the Forum Secretariat, with the support of other CROP agencies and regional and international stakeholders.
- CROP agencies are Members of the FOC Sub-Committee on Regional Security (PIFS, SPC, SPREP, USP, FFA, PASO) and the Cybersecurity Taskforce (USP, PIFS).

Achievements

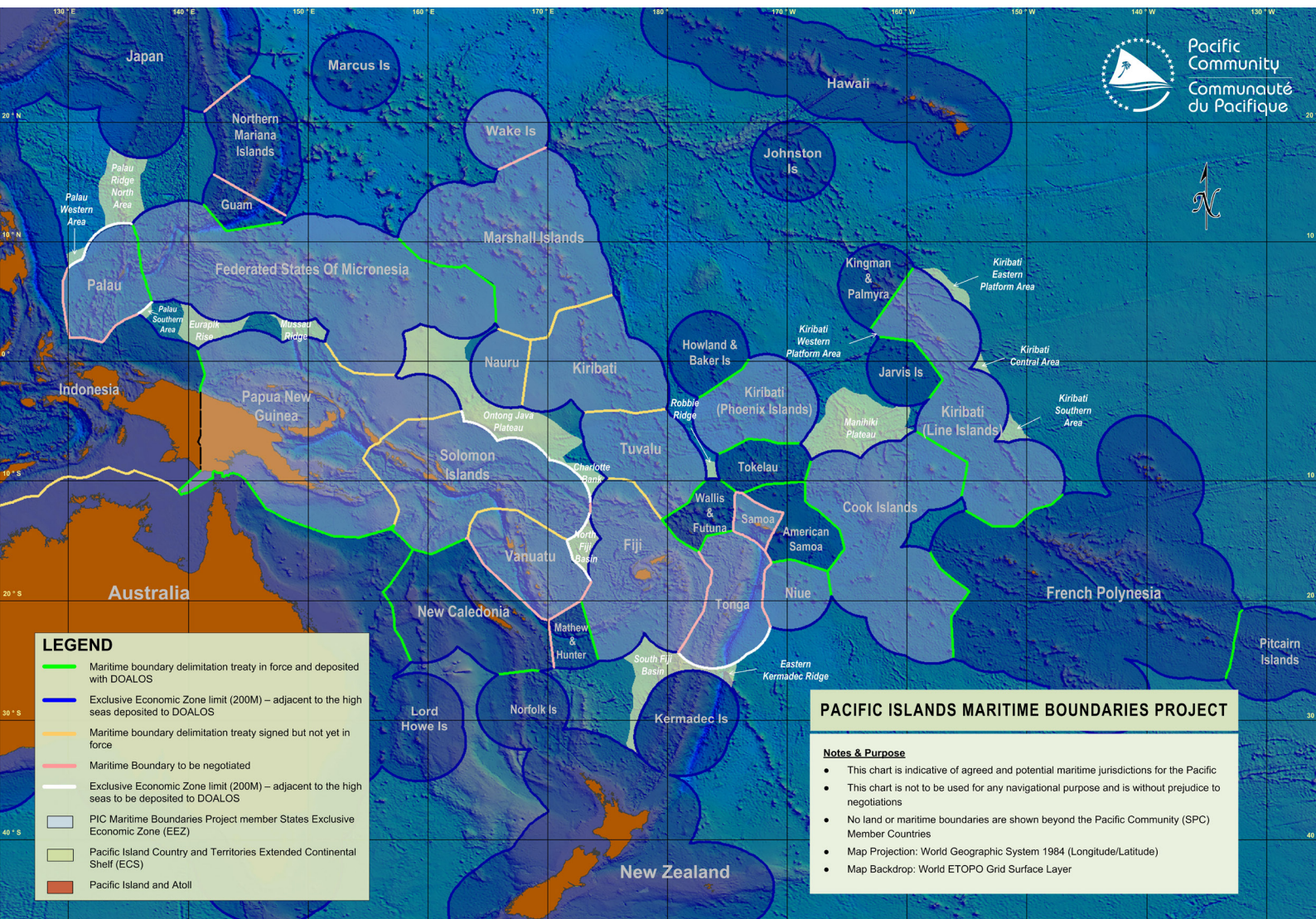
- Establishment of the **Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19** invoked through the **Biketawa Declaration** and supported by a Ministerial Action Group and Regional Task Force.
- Inaugural meeting of the **FOC Sub-Committee on Regional Security** in October 2019, and a second meeting held in September 2020 to progress implementation of Boe Declaration Action Plan.
- Development of a **concept note for a Pacific Security Dialogue**, tabled at Budget FOC in December 2019. This was followed with stakeholder consultations and further considered by the FOC Sub-Committee at its September 2020 meeting.
- Promotion of the **Boe Declaration** principles and priorities to international security partners including at the IISS Fullerton Forum in Singapore in January 2020.
- Desktop review and development of a concept note for a **revitalised human security framework** including the integration of a focus on women, peace and security and on traditional and cultural norms.
- PIFS and SPC co-convened a consultative workshop in March 2020 to commence the development of a **strategic roadmap for emergency management** as well as to consider approaches for a Regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Mechanism.
- PIFS, SPC and SPREP, together with Member states and the UN, participated in the Pacific validation workshop to develop a conceptual framework for **assessing climate change as a security risk**. Development of the framework continues through virtual meetings.

Challenges

- The COVID-19 crisis and focus on the development and operationalisation of the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway on COVID-19 has meant a temporary focus away from implementation of the Boe Declaration Action Plan.

Next steps for CROP agencies

- Continue to support the strategic and operational function of the PHP-C to ensure effective support to Member countries for the COVID-19 response.
- Supporting the work of FOC Sub-Committee on Regional Security to reprioritise the regional security effort, as outlined in the Boe Declaration Action Plan.



PICTURE: SPC

D) SEA LEVEL RISE, MARITIME BOUNDARIES, AND BASELINES

Leaders' 2019 decisions

- Leaders encouraged Members to conclude all outstanding maritime boundaries claims and zones.
- Leaders committed to a collective effort, including to develop international law, with the aim of ensuring that once a Forum Member's maritime zones are delineated in accordance with the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, that the Members maritime zones could not be challenged or reduced as a result of sea-level rise and climate change.
- Leaders agreed that pursuing their claims for extended continental shelf, under Article 76 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, is important and requested ongoing support and assistance by relevant regional agencies on Members' submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

CROP Objective

CROP technical support to conclude negotiations on outstanding maritime boundaries claims and zones, and to ensure Forum Members' maritime zones are not challenged or reduced as a result of sea level rise and climate change, including through the development of international law.

Progress snapshot: CROP agencies have provided Member countries with technical and legal assistance towards finalising maritime boundaries claims; supported a submission to the International Law Commission (ILC); and hosted a regional conference on Securing the Limits of the Blue Pacific. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in delays to planned in-country maritime boundary workshops, the 20th regional maritime boundaries working session, and global events and negotiations for advancing international law development.

Partnerships and delivery mechanisms

Delivery on Leaders' decisions on sea level rise, maritime boundaries and baselines was progressed through CROP agencies working with Members and regional and international stakeholders including:

- SPC coordinating the maritime boundaries consortium of partners and leading on providing technical and legal advice to Members on maritime boundaries and delineation of maritime zones.
- SPC supporting Members in revising and preparing submissions for extended continental shelf claims to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.
- PIFS, SPC, FFA, and OPOC providing legal and policy support, high level diplomacy and advocacy, and coordination of regional approaches.
- PIFS, SPC, FFA, and OPOC supporting Members at the United Nations and in other relevant international and regional meetings.

Achievements

- In support of finalising maritime boundaries, SPC and consortium partners have provided **technical and legal assistance** to Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Samoa. This includes calculation of equidistant line for Member States, draft treaty documents and preparation of schedule of coordinates and charts.
- As of November 2020, there are 8 maritime boundaries treaties signed but not yet in force; 13 maritime boundary treaties to be negotiated; and 5 exclusive economic zone limits (200M) adjacent to high seas to be deposited to DOALOS.
- On maritime boundaries in the face of climate change and sea level rise, CROP agencies held a **workshop for Forum Members on Impacts of Sea-Level Rise on Maritime Boundaries** on 29 February in Suva to share progress and discuss priorities at regional and international levels.

- On 9 – 11 September 2020, PIFS in consultation with CROP, hosted a **regional conference on *Securing the Limits of the Blue Pacific: Legal Options and Institutional Responses to the Impact of Sea Level Rise on Baselines-in the Context of International Law***. The conference was initially proposed for May however was postponed due to COVID-19. The conference resulted in an outcomes statement setting out the proposed approach for the Pacific region to progress this issue through international law.
- SPC and FFA collaboration including SPC providing maritime boundaries data and information of FFA members to be integrated into the FFA VMS for the purpose of monitoring control and surveillance. SPC established a database and platform for aggregating and discovering members' maritime zone information. This information can be found on the Pacific Data Hub (PDH). Phase 1 of data delivery agreement has been successfully delivered. The maritime boundaries information includes the gazetted FFA members exclusive economic zone and high seas. Phase 2 dataset compilation is underway.
- SPC has commenced the **Resilient Boundaries for the Blue Pacific (RBBP) Project** that will identify, analyse and evaluate the natural features and legal implications that are critical in securing maritime zones in the face of climate change.
- Through the Forum Chair Representative in New York, a **Forum submission was made to the International Law Commission (ILC)** on *Sea-Level Rise in relation to International Law*, as well as a Forum Contribution to the *Report of the UN Secretary-General on Sea-Level Rise and Its Impacts* for the Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP).
- CROP agencies supported OPOC to convene a **meeting of the Pacific Oceans Alliance** in November 2019 to progress Forum Leaders' oceans priorities and discuss joint advocacy approaches for the 2nd UN Ocean Conference.

Challenges

- Further regional political leadership to drive the importance of concluding maritime boundaries claims and zones.
- Critical need for sustained and targeted support for Members in the preparation and defense of claims to areas of extended continental shelf, to provide security for the Blue Pacific.
- Delays in international, regional, and country processes due to COVID-19.

Next steps for CROP agencies

- Taking forward the outcomes of the regional conference on *Securing the Limits of the Blue Pacific*- through supporting the work of the FOC Specialist Sub-Committee on Sea Level Rise in Relation to International Law.
- Undertaking a regional risk-based analysis to identify island features and legal options that are critical in securing the maritime zones in the context of climate change.
- Continuing to support individual Member countries and their established technical and legal teams to finalise maritime claims, as required, and to host the 20th regional maritime boundaries working session.
- Build on the success of the consortium of partners and the community of practice around maritime boundaries to ensure a proactive approach in the management of joint extended continental shelf claims.
- Development of Member guidance to set out the role of the Pacific Community Center of Ocean Science (PCCOS) and the application of ocean science in the integrated management of the Blue Pacific and the implementation of national ocean policies.
- Re-launch the Marine Sector Working Group (MSWG), as a CROP advisory group.



PICTURE: PIFS

E) LEGACY ISSUES OF NUCLEAR TESTING

Leaders' 2019 decisions

Leaders recalled their decision that the Secretariat coordinate assistance by CROP agencies to the Republic of Kiribati and the Republic of the Marshall Islands in addressing ongoing impacts of nuclear testing, including inter alia, human rights, environmental contamination, and health impacts, and acknowledged the ongoing dialogue between the CROP Agencies, particularly SPREP and SPC, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands National Nuclear Commission.

CROP Objective

CROP technical support to address the ongoing impacts of nuclear testing, particularly in the Republic of Kiribati and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and to support a comprehensive scientific assessment of the contamination issue in the Pacific.

Progress snapshot: CROP Taskforce established, and work plan developed to progress Leaders' decisions on legacy of nuclear testing including CROP support to impacted Member countries; commencing a study to consolidate existing data and research; and collective Forum advocacy.

Partnerships and delivery mechanisms

Delivery on Leaders' decisions on nuclear testing legacy issues and support to Republic of Marshall Islands and Kiribati has been coordinated through:

- Establishment of a dedicated CROP Taskforce with members from PIFS, SPREP, SPC and USP, as well as from the Republic of Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, and Fiji; and,
- PIFS providing support on political engagement on nuclear legacy issues, SPREP on environmental impacts of nuclear testing, SPC on human rights and health issues and USP and SPREP on educational awareness.

Achievements

- Supported by PIFS, the **Forum Chair wrote to the President of the USA and to the UN Secretary-**

General in October 2019 calling for action to address the ongoing impacts of nuclear testing and the threat of nuclear contamination.

- CROP Executive and CROP Governing Council Chairs agreement to establish a **CROP Taskforce on Nuclear Legacy Issues in the Pacific** to progress Leaders' priorities.
- Taskforce established, based on agreed Terms of Reference. Work plan developed to support greater coordination and action on nuclear legacy issues in the Pacific and initial priorities progressed including a mapping of existing CROP assistance; advocacy to mark the International Day Against Nuclear Testing; undertaking a study to consolidate existing research and data on the legacy of nuclear testing in the region; and development of strategic communications plan on legacy issues on nuclear testing.

Challenges

- COVID-19 pandemic resulting in re-prioritisation of activities and resources, and occupying Members' and regional agencies' attention.

Next steps for CROP agencies

- Implementation of CROP Taskforce's work plan to support greater coordination and action on nuclear legacy issues in the Pacific including undertaking study to consolidate existing research and data.



PICTURE: SPC

F) BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION (BBNJ)

Leaders' 2019 decisions

Leaders agreed to mobilise all relevant Forum mechanisms to advance the region's positions in the negotiations for a new Implementing Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

CROP Objective

Effective support to Members to advance the region's position in the negotiations for a new Implementing Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

Progress snapshot: Support provided to Member delegations for the 3rd Intergovernmental Conference for the BBNJ negotiations in August 2019 and subsequent analysis of the BBNJ zero-draft. Currently delays in the negotiations due to COVID-19.

Partnerships and delivery mechanisms

Delivery on Leaders' decisions on the BBNJ negotiations has been coordinated through:

- OPOC-led coordination of CROP agencies including FFA, PIFS, SPC, SPREP and USP; and,
- Pacific Ocean Alliance to ensure outreach to wider regional stakeholders.

Achievements

- **Forum delegations' meetings** were held during 3rd Intergovernmental Conferences for the BBNJ negotiations in New York in August 2019, supported by policy briefs, talking points and a PIF statement as developed by CROP agencies.
- A Forum negotiating delegations' preparatory meeting was held in February 2020 in Suva, advancing policy positions on common priority areas, and improving understanding on areas of divergence.
- CROP agencies provided Members with detailed **analysis on the BBNJ zero draft negotiating text** in late January 2020, with an updated analysis then provided in May 2020.
- **Media and communications initiatives** including videos and social media have been developed to promote understanding of the negotiations across the Pacific region.
- Established a CROP Taskforce for International Engagement and Advocacy on Ocean Events.

Challenges

- COVID-19 has caused substantial delays for the BBNJ negotiations.
- Lack of clarity by Members on the respective role of OPOC and CROP agencies in the BBNJ negotiations, highlighting the need for clear Member guidance.

Next steps for CROP agencies

- Continue to convene and provide policy advice to Members for the BBNJ negotiations.
- Ensuring a proactive approach to Forum advocacy and engagement at the 2nd UN Ocean Conference, Our Ocean Conference, and other ocean-related events including through the newly established CROP Taskforce for International Engagement and Advocacy on Ocean Events.

- Development of Member guidance to clearly set out the role of OPOC and CROP agencies in regional oceans work.



PICTURE: SPC

G) REGIONAL MECHANISM TO ADDRESS OIL SPILLS

Leaders' 2019 decisions

Leaders agreed that the Forum Officials' Committee and the Secretariat, in collaboration with other CROP agencies, work on a Regional Mechanism and Action Plan, and that the Action Plan be presented to Leaders for consideration in 2020, taking into account the review of the Pacific Island Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN) being undertaken by SPREP.

CROP Objective

Development of a regional mechanism and action plan to address the significant environmental risk posed by oil leaks and spills.

Progress snapshot: Finalisation of a revised Pacific Islands Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN) 2019, with implementation to follow.

Partnerships and delivery mechanisms

Delivery on Leaders' decisions on regional mechanism to address oil spills is being led by SPREP with the support of PIFS and SPC, and Member engagement through the FOC Sub-Committee for Regional Security.

Achievements

- Following a review of the current Pacific Island Marine Spill Contingency Plan (PACPLAN), a **revised version (PACPLAN 2019)** was considered and endorsed by the Noumea Convention COP15; the 29th SPREP Meeting in September 2019; and the 4th Ministers of Transport and Energy Meeting, as the regional mechanism to address oil spills. The PACPLAN 2019 does this by providing systems, frameworks, and guidelines to assist with the response and recovery of the environment and resources damaged by marine spills in the Pacific Islands region.
- SPREP is engaging with, and supporting, PICTs to become **members of Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL)** – an oil spill response industry provider based in Singapore - with funding support from New Zealand. This is a key component of the regional mechanism to respond to oil spills in the region.

Challenges

- COVID-19 travel restrictions have limited the ability to host a workshop for PICTs on PACPLAN 2019 and OSRL.

Next steps for CROP agencies

- Driving implementation of PACPLAN 2019 and holding a virtual workshop on OSRL membership.



PICTURE: FFA

H) REGIONAL FISHERIES

Leaders' 2019 decisions

- *Recalled their 2015 decision endorsing Fisheries as a regional priority and the 2017 decision that fisheries be a standing item on the Leaders agenda. Leaders further recalled their 2018 decision endorsing the establishment of a Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting to ensure effective oversight across the multidimensional issues that impact our region's fisheries.*
- *Endorsed the Terms of Reference for a Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting and agreed with the advent of the Special Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting to disband the officials level Fisheries Taskforce.*
- *Welcomed the adoption of the Regional Longline Strategy by Forum Fisheries Ministers.*
- *Reaffirmed their commitment to work collectively to harness, secure, protect and sustainably manage, use, and conserve, the living resources of the Blue Pacific such as coastal and oceanic fisheries – as part of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.*

CROP Objective

Strengthening regional fisheries including through the new annual Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting and implementation of the Regional Longline Strategy.

Progress snapshot: Implementation of the Regional Longline Strategy is on track. 2020 Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting was held on 26-27 August 2020. In this meeting, a new approach to incorporating non-state actors in community based fisheries management was agreed. Fisheries is being incorporated as a focus for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

Partnerships and delivery mechanisms

Delivery on Forum Leaders' fisheries decisions on tuna fisheries has been led by FFA, and on coastal fisheries by SPC, and strongly supported by PIFS, SPREP and USP in their respective areas of expertise.

The FFC Ministerial Meeting, Regional Fisheries Ministerial Meeting, Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNAO), Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), and SPC's Heads of Fisheries Meeting are other key mechanisms for delivery. It should be noted that the former Regional Fisheries Taskforce has been disbanded given its objectives have been met and noting other coordination mechanisms.

Achievements

- Completion of the **Tuna Fishery Report Card and Coastal Fisheries Report Card for 2019**, provided to Forum Leaders.
- Supported Member engagement at the **16th annual meeting of the WCPFC** in December 2019 including adoption of an FFA resolution on considering the impact of climate change on migratory fish stocks, food security and livelihoods.
- Successfully held the first virtual meeting of the **Regional Fisheries Ministers Meeting** on 26-27 August 2020 supported by CROP partners FFA, SPC, SPREP, PIFS and USP as well as the PNA Office, with a focus on impact of COVID-19; coastal fisheries and aquaculture; climate change and fisheries; and marine pollution and ecosystems.
- Development of an **Action Plan to drive implementation of the Regional Longline Strategy**, endorsed by FFC114 in June 2020.
- Adoption of the **Regional Longline Fishery Electronic Monitoring Policy** by FFC114 to ensure timely and accurate data submission and independent monitoring of fishing activities.
- Commencement of a PIFS-led **independent review to assess progress on Leaders' 2015**

decision to maximise the sustainable economic returns from the region' fisheries by 2020, supported by a CROP and PNAO working group.

- Supporting Member engagement on the **WTO negotiations on fisheries subsidies**, particularly through the PIFS Geneva Office, and Member engagement in the Post Cotonou Negotiations, particularly through the Pacific Islands Representative in Brussels.
- FFA-led workshop on the **impacts of climate change on tuna fisheries** and opportunities for action, supported by SPREP, PIFS and SPC in June 2020.

Challenges

- COVID-19 has meant that key regional fisheries meetings were convened virtually. It has also pushed back or cancelled international meetings including the WTO 11th Ministerial Conference and hampered consultations on initiatives such as the independent review.

Next steps for CROP agencies

- Implementation of Action Plan for the Regional Longline Strategy.
- Undertaking follow-up from the 2020 Regional Fisheries Ministerial Meeting.
- Ongoing support to Pacific WTO Members and Pacific ACP Members in negotiations.
- Progressing independent review on maximising the sustainable economic returns from the region's fisheries, for the consideration of Forum Fisheries Ministers and Leaders.



PICTURE: SPC

I) REGIONAL HEALTH ISSUES

Leaders' 2019 decisions

- *The critical impact of the climate crisis amplifies the challenges the region is already confronted with in the health sector. Leaders called for more consolidated and concerted efforts at national, regional, and global levels to raise our ambition and to better support those working to improve the health of our people.*
- *Recognising the centrality of the health of Pacific Peoples in the Leaders' vision for the Blue Pacific, the current state of crisis confronting the health of Pacific peoples, and the importance of ensuring adequate resources and a whole-of-government approach in the health sector, Leaders agreed that health remain on the agenda of future Pacific Islands Forums.*

CROP Objective

Supporting a more consolidated and concerted effort at national, regional, and global levels to drive better health outcomes, particularly combatting non-communicable diseases, and supporting those agencies working to improve the health of our people.

Progress snapshot: Progress made in the implementation of the Pacific NCD Roadmap, and implementation is on track.

Partnerships and delivery mechanisms

Delivery on Forum Leaders' health decisions has been led by SPC and PIFS with CROP collaboration through the Health & Population and Gender Working Groups.

Key regional mechanisms include: Heads of Health in the Pacific meeting, Pacific Directors of Public Health meeting, Pacific Heads of Nursing meeting, Pacific Director of Clinical Services meeting, Ministers of Health in the Pacific meeting (biennially), Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Development, ECHO Taskforce, Regional Reference Group on Disability and Disability Taskforce.

International partners include WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and engagement through the WHO Regional Committee Meeting and WHO World Health Assembly.

Achievements

- **Pacific legislative framework for NCDs:** Pacific Health Ministers approved the development of a Pacific legislative framework for NCDs to guide the strengthening of NCD-related legislation in PICTs. Legislative drafters and health policy experts continue to develop the framework which is to be finalised and possibly endorsed in 2021.
- **Pacific NCD Roadmap:** Implementation of the Pacific NCD Roadmap has been monitored annually by the Pacific Monitoring Alliance for NCD Action (MANA) dashboard. The baseline MANA report has been published.
- **National taskforces and strategies:** Five additional PICTs (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, and Tokelau) have established a multi-sectoral NCD taskforce to oversee the implementation of their national NCD plan, resulting in a total of 10 PICTs. Three more PICTs (Nauru, Solomon Islands, and Tokelau) have developed a national multi-sectoral NCD strategy resulting in a total of 16 PICTs.
- **Primary and secondary prevention of NCDs:** Most PICTs have national guidelines in place for the diagnosis and management of at least one of the four main NCDs and have essential NCD medicines included in the national list of essential medicines. Three additional PICTs (Samoa,

Tuvalu, and Wallis & Futuna) have legislation to provide maternity leave and breastfeeding facilities, resulting in a total of 11 PICTs.

- **Tobacco and alcohol taxes:** In the past 12 months, three PICTs (Solomon Islands, Tokelau, and Tonga) have implemented tobacco taxation measures, resulting in 19 PICTs that have maintained and/or implemented tobacco taxation measures. Twenty PICTs have maintained implementation of alcohol taxation measures.
- **Policies on food and drinks linked to NCDs:** Tuvalu adopted a taxation measure to discourage unhealthy food/beverage choices, resulting in 14 PICTs currently having taxation measures in place. Tonga put in place a policy to reduce salt consumption resulting in 16 PICTs having such policies in place. Two additional countries (Cook Islands and Samoa) have put in place policies to restrict marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children, resulting in four PICTs in total. Two more PICTs (Nauru and Tonga) have policies to encourage provision and promotion of healthy food choices in schools, resulting in 13 PICTs in total. Three countries (Cook Islands, Samoa, and Tuvalu) have policy measures to limit trans-fat in the food supply.
- **Promoting healthy eating:** USP developed the app *MyKana Grow Your Own*, which promotes healthy eating to combat NCDs. The app was launched on 28 January 2020, allowing people in Fiji to use the planting steps for home/family gardening. SPTO has been involved in advocacy targeting healthy lifestyles through the promotion of local cuisine in the tourism sector and input into the development of Pacific agritourism opportunities. SPC led in developing health promotion resources that address healthy eating and other NCD risk factors, to be adopted or adapted by PICTs. Some key resources include Pacific guidelines for healthy living, dietary guidelines for diabetes, nutrition guidelines for pregnant women, healthy cookbooks to promote local foods, and several resources that address childhood obesity.
- **Evidence base for better investment:** The monitoring of adult and adolescent NCD ‘risk factor’ data continues in 16 PICTs. Eighteen PICTs have functioning systems for generating ‘cause specific’ mortality data on routine basis. Three additional PICTs (Tonga, Tuvalu, Marshall Islands and Wallis & Futuna) have collected child growth data bringing the total to 13 PICTs. Some PICTs have undertaken tax impact assessments on unhealthy products.
- **Pacific Regional Working Group on Cervical Cancer:** Meetings with members were conducted in March – April 2020. A taskforce meeting was then held to discuss implementation by Forum Island Countries and on-going support for women and health.

Challenges

- Substantial efforts are required to further raise taxes on tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy foods and beverages in line with global recommendations and reduce taxes on healthy alternatives such as fruits and vegetables.
- There are ongoing policy and legislation gaps in addressing NCDs. These include preventing tobacco industry interference; limiting trans-fats in food supply; restricting marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children; restricting marketing of breast milk substitutes; and enforcing policies and legislations.
- There is also a need to engage ‘non-health sectors’ to address NCDs in a sustained ‘whole of government and whole of society approach’.
- There is a need for greater development financing for health, including to make the app *MyKana Grow Your Own* accessible across the region, and for greater data collection.

Next steps for CROP agencies

- Finalisation of draft Pacific legislative framework for NCDs.
- Calling for support from development partners and governments to continue to scale up implementation of NCD Roadmap recommendations, particularly to address NCD policy and legislation gaps at the national level.

6. Delivering on existing Forum Leaders' priorities

CROP agencies have continued to progress existing and ongoing Forum Leaders' priorities through CROP Working Groups, with an update provided below.



PICTURE: USP & PIFS

A. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Pacific Sustainable Development Working Group

The Pacific Sustainable Development Working Group (PSD-WG) provides technical advice and support to the Pacific Sustainable Development Steering Committee (PSDSC) in promoting effective implementation of the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development (PRSD). It is responsible for supporting coordination, implementation, monitoring and reporting on global sustainable development commitments including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the S.A.M.O.A Pathway.

Coordinated by PIFS, the Working Group includes SPC and SPREP together with UN agencies. Going forward, it is anticipated the Working Group will also include private sector and civil society representatives. The PSD-WG has met three times in 2019 and once in 2020.

Achievements

The PSD-WG continues to support monitoring and reporting on sustainable development commitments. Under the guidance of the Pacific Sustainable Development Steering Committee, the PSD-WG supported the development of the **2020 Biennial Sustainable Development Report**, launched in December 2020.

To date, nine Forum Members have undertaken and presented **Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)** to the UN High Level Political Forum, with four more to be undertaken in 2020. The PSD-WG provided technical support, as requested by Pacific countries, to complete VNRs. Through 2019 and 2020, the PSD-WG supported the Federated States of Micronesia and the Solomon Islands, who are submitting VNRs in 2020 and Cook Islands, who plans to report in 2021.

Challenges

The PSD-WG encountered challenges with the coordination of experts for the development of the Biennial Sustainable Development Report. Tropical Cyclone Harold and COVID-19 added to the difficulty of coordinating, communicating and writing the Biennial Report.

Next steps

- Review the membership of the PSD-WG to ensure appropriate expertise to support the Pacific Sustainable Development Steering Committee.
- Continue to provide technical support to Forum members undertaking VNRs, as requested.
- Continue to collect and update information for thematic briefs, meetings and the production of the 2022 Second Pacific Quadrennial Report on Sustainable Development.

B. GENDER

CROP Gender Working Group

The CROP Gender Working Group (GWG) was set up to encourage coordination and collaboration amongst CROP in addressing gender priorities and issues. This includes promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in the work of CROP agencies and intergovernmental processes regionally and internationally.

Co-chaired by PIFS and SPC, seven CROP agencies are members of the GWG. The GWG meets once a year. Linked to the GWG is the Gender Coordination Group, chaired by SPC and UN Women. This Group includes development partners working to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Progress

The CROP GWG met in August 2020, after a lapse of 18 months, with a focus on reinvigorating the GWG to align its focus and work with the 2018 CROP Charter.

CROP agencies have been working to support PICTs to progress gender equality commitments. Specifically, PIFS, SPC and FFA have worked through the multi-stakeholder Gender Coordination Group to provide support to PICTs with their engagement at the **Commission on the Status of Women**, and supporting the **Pacific Women Leaders Coalition** championed by former Republic of Marshall Islands President Dr. Hilda Heine.

SPC and PIFS, through the Gender Equality Technical Working Group (a subset of the Gender Coordination Group), partnered with the Government of Fiji to convene a **Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Beijing Platform for Action +25 Review Process** from 29 – 31 October 2019 in Suva - providing a space for Member governments and CSOs to agree on regional key messages and positions to take to CSW64.

SPC, in collaboration with the MSG, convened a **Ministers of Women and senior government officials' consultation on eliminating sexual and gender-based violence**. A key recommendation was to ensure that violence against women, girls and children is included as a standing agenda at the Forum Leaders meeting.

More recently, CROP Heads have agreed to work together to create awareness on violence against women

and girls within CROP agencies and activities through the **Thursdays in Black** campaign.

Challenges

As the GWG has historically only met once annually, it can be difficult to keep all CROP agencies engaged on gender equality, particularly if it is not a core mandate, and to drive CROP collaboration. At the meeting of GWG meeting in August 2020, it was agreed to review the Terms of Reference to align it to the CROP Charter and consider how the group could work collectively to progress gender equality within CROP and through dedicated actions. The meeting also discussed the option of more informal interactions outside of the annual formal meeting.

Next steps

- Finalise a few GWG Terms of Reference.
- Develop a GWG work plan.

C. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

CROP ICT Working Group

The CROP ICT Working Group (ICT WG), as per the decision of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders⁷, provides a common platform through which CROP agencies and stakeholders can address regional priorities for ICT in a collective, collaborative and coordinated manner.

Convened by USP, the ICT WG includes PIFS, SPREP, SPC, FFA, PIDP and SPTO together with Forum member countries, development partners and private sector actors. The guiding document for the Working Group is the *Pacific Regional ICT Strategic Action Plan (PRISAP)*.

Progress

The ICT WG hosted a **cybersecurity workshop** in November 2019 for regional stakeholders in collaboration with Global Partners Digital (GPD), Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC) and the Oceania Cyber Security Centre (OCSC). The ICT WG also engaged with ICT partners such as Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA) to host educational workshops and technical training for Pacific Island Countries.

The ICT WG explored the establishment of a proposed Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (CoE). Establishment has been hampered due to unavailability of funding. The Working Group progressed the initial phase of an e-Government and Digital Transformation Pilot Project with Tonga, which could serve as a working model for other Pacific countries.

The ICT WG worked in partnership with other regional organisations including the Pacific Islands Law Officers' Network (PILON) on cybercrime and online safety and security issues.

7 2015 Leaders Communiqué: Leaders noted the unprecedented economic and educational opportunities that Information Communications Technologies (ICT) offers including access to world markets and global knowledge. Leaders also acknowledged the challenges to realising these benefits which included under-utilisation of ICT services in Forum Island Countries (FICs), a lack of resources and expertise, and the threat of cyber-attacks and crime. Leaders tasked the Forum Secretariat and USP to consider the merit of a regional ICT Advisory Council.

Challenges

- Securing funding for implementing capital projects for the Pacific region and establishing models that would ensure long term sustainability of resources and ICT infrastructure.
- Coordination and commitment from Member countries, stakeholders and development partners to effectively progress ICT initiatives for the region.

Next steps

- The ICT WG will continue to work on its three-year work plan with a focus on accessibility and connectivity; ICT infrastructure; cybersecurity; digital transformation and monitoring and evaluation.
- A cybersecurity workshop is planned for the Pacific as part of the FOC Sub-Committee on Regional Security (FSRS) together with Forum Members, CROP agencies and regional law enforcement and legal agencies. This will be aligned to the Boe Declaration Action Plan.
- Establishment of a partnership with UN agencies on ICT and disaster risk, and information security and privacy, content and training modules.

D. EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

Human Resources Development Working Group

The Human Resources Development Working Group (HRD WG) coordinates regional activities to support national systems for formal and non-formal education from pre-school to adult, and across the public and private sector. The HRD WG, in collaboration with the PacREF Steering Committee, is also now responsible for providing oversight of the *Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) 2018-2030*.

Convened by USP, members of the HRD WG include SPC and PIFS together with UN agencies and development partners.

Progress

Confirmation of the HRD WG as the regional governance structure to support the PacREF, as well as the recognised decision-making body for the Global Partnership for Education. Establishment of a **PacREF Facilitation Unit (PFU)**, with the appointment of a coordinator position, to drive implementation of the PacREF and convene the HRD WG.

An **Inclusive Education Taskforce** was established to ensure inclusive education aligned to PacREF. The taskforce submitted a mapping report on the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) against the PacREF. Recommendations from the mapping report have informed a position paper on ensuring inclusive education systems within PacREF.

Challenges

- Ensuring the linkages between the HRD WG as a structure of established regional architecture for the PacREF.

Next steps

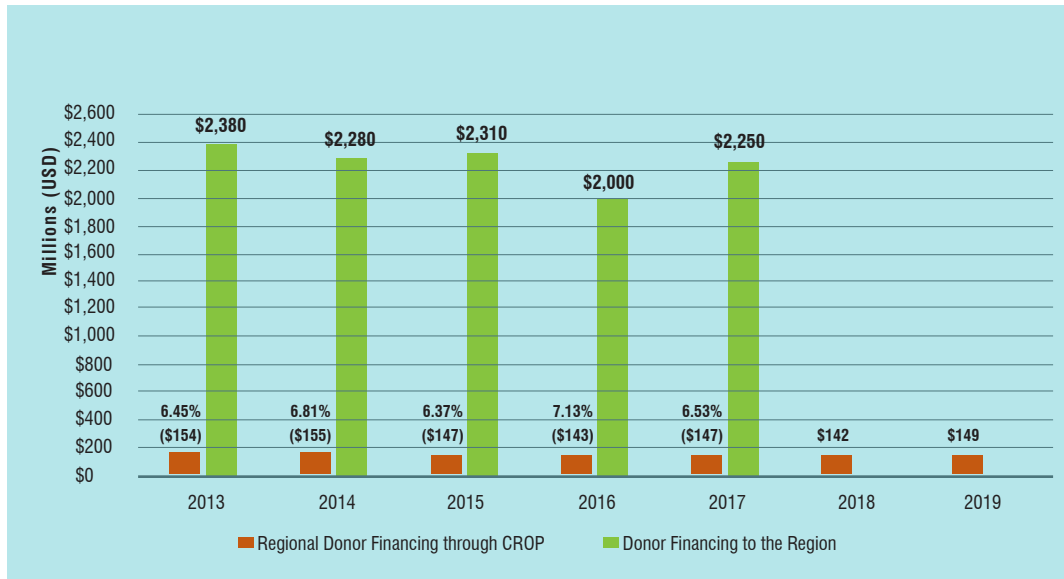
- Hold next meeting of the HRG WG to progress applications to the Global Partnership for Education and to finalise plans for the next Forum Education Ministers Meeting (FEdMM).

7. CROP Financing to Deliver

Based on data from CROP agencies and the Pacific Aid Map⁸, Figure 1 below sets out levels of donor finance flowing to CROP agencies annually, as a percentage of total flows to the region. It shows that for the past five years, CROP agencies received approximately 6.5% of total donor flows to the region, highlighting the limited levels of donor financing available to support CROP agencies' delivery on regional priorities.

One of the challenges with CROP agencies' delivering on Forum Leaders' decisions is that additional finance is not generally available to support delivery. A small number of development partners provide regional cooperation funding to the Forum Secretariat, targeted at CROP implementation, with a combined total of approximately USD 2 million. To ensure a transparent and accountable process for the allocation of such funding, CROP agencies this year developed *CROP Regional Funding Guidelines for Forum Leaders' Priorities*. The guidelines set out a process and criteria for targeting CROP funding windows towards delivery on Leaders' priorities.

Figure 1 – Regional Donor Financing through CROP Agencies



NB: The data for 'Regional Donor Financing through CROP' has been provided by the respective CROP agencies while the 'Donor Financing to the Region' is from the Lowy Institutes Pacific Aid Map. Pacific Aid Map data on total development financing flows for 2018 and 2019 is not yet available. The Pacific Aid Map also acknowledges limitations in its full coverage of donor financing flows to the region, particularly for China and India.

8

The Lowy Institute's Pacific Aid Map can be accessed here: <https://pacificaidmap.lowyinstitute.org/about>

8. CROP Delivery on SIS Strategy

SIS Leaders' 2019 Decision

Leaders further agreed that the endorsement of the proposed *Smaller Island States (SIS) Roadmap for Accelerated Development 2019 – 2020* would deliver on their commitment to revitalise the identity of the SIS through *The Blue Pacific* narrative as well as build on the theme from the 2018 Forum being “*Building a Strong Pacific: Our People, Our Islands, Our Will*”.

Progress snapshot: All activities remain on-going although experiencing slight delays due to the impact of COVID-19. The *SIS Progress Report 2019-2020* provides further details.

Role of CROP

The SIS Strategy 2016 – 2020 identifies CROP as a strategic partner for technical advice and implementation. As a result, SIS Officials have continued to promote SIS issues in CROP Governing Council meetings and in relevant CROP working groups, as well as to advocate specific activities and resources to address the expected results of the SIS Strategy.

In 2019, SIS Leaders endorsed a recasting of the SIS Strategy implementation plan to be the *SIS Roadmap for Accelerated Development* with a primary focus on five activities as opposed to seventeen in the original implementation plan. The intention is that all five activities will either be fully achieved or have undergone substantial progress by the end of 2020.

CROP delivery on SIS Roadmap for Accelerated Development

The four activities under the Roadmap and their corresponding CROP agency partner is summarised below.

SIS priority	Roadmap activity	CROP partner
Climate Change	Joint SIS Proposal to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) – promoting collective access to climate finance to combat the effects of climate change on the most vulnerable island nations with the submission of at least one joint proposal to GCF.	SPREP
Health	Regional Legislative Framework for Non-Communicable Diseases – a legal framework for SIS to manage access and availability of harmful products to reduce the incidence and prevalence of non-communicable diseases.	SPC
Marine	Maritime Boundaries and Sea Level Rise – promoting a regional approach to maritime boundaries in order to (i) assess the impacts of sea level rise on maritime boundaries and (ii) conclude claims and zones, in turn securing the boundaries of the Blue Pacific to promote economic prosperity and sustainable development.	SPC
	Nuclear Contaminants – part of the regional approach to fight for a nuclear-free Blue Pacific.	CROP Taskforce
Air Transportation	Upper Airspace Management – seeking viable options for upper airspace management that promote aviation safety and security as a driver of sustainable economic development and improved connectivity for the Blue Pacific.	PASO (limited)

CROP SIS Attachment Programme

Five CROP agencies are actively participating in the CROP SIS Attachment Programme, providing capacity building opportunities to SIS across a range of technical areas as set out below.

CROP Agency	Attachment	Participating Member State	Progress
SPC	Plant Health Research Intern	Fiji/Samoa ⁹	On-going
	Maritime Division Interns x 2	RMI Kiribati	Slightly delayed due to COVID19 restrictions
SPREP	PacMetDesk Internship	Samoa ¹⁰	Slightly delayed due to COVID19 restrictions
	Project Coordination Unit Internship	Kiribati Niue (withdrew)	On-going
PPA	Utility Attachment Scheme	PICT utilities that are SIS and members of the PPA	To commence in Q4 2020
FFA	Pacific Ocean Fellowships	Niue Cook Islands	Completed
SPTO	Short term attachment for SIS Countries	Kiribati Tuvalu	On hold till borders reopen
	Pacific Tourism Waste Action Initiative for SIS	Tuvalu Kiribati Nauru FSM RMI	Virtual Scoping Assessments and Planning in progress. Physical trainings on hold until borders reopen.

Post 2020 for Smaller Island States and the role of CROP agencies

The SIS Strategy will expire at the end of 2020. A critical issue for SIS is to decide on the way forward, with options to be presented to SIS Members. Regardless of the decision made, partnerships with CROP agencies will remain a crucial aspect in the way forward. In the meantime, SIS have expressed a desire to continue progressing the Roadmap utilising the current regional institutional arrangements with relevant CROP agencies.

9. 2021 and onwards

In late 2020, CROP agencies will develop a *CROP Strategic Work Agenda for 2021*, reflective of Forum Leaders priorities. This will include an ongoing focus on COVID-19 response and recovery as well as on the 2050 Strategy for a Blue Pacific Continent and related review of regional architecture.

The *2021 CROP Strategic Work Agenda* will be shared with CROP Governing Councils in early 2021, with CROP Heads to meet regularly over the course of the year to review and accelerate progress, and to report to Forum Leaders.

⁹ Recipient from non-SIS member state was accepted due to nil interest expressed by SIS

¹⁰ Recipient from non-SIS member state was accepted due to nil interest expressed by SIS



Pacific Aviation Safety Office
(PASO) General Manager
Andrew Valentine



Pacific Power Association (PPA)
Executive Director
Andrew Daka



Pacific Community (SPC)
Director General
Dr Stuart Minchin



Pacific Tourism Organisation
(SPTO) Chief Executive Officer
Christopher Cocker



Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries
Agency (FFA) Director General
Dr Manu Tupou-Roosen



Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme (SPREP)
Director General
Kosi Latu



Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
(PIFS) Secretary General
Meg Taylor, DBE



The University of the South Pacific
(USP) Vice Chancellor & President
Professor Pal Ahluwalia

CROP AGENCY EXPERTISE



Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO) **General Manager – Andrew Valentine**

PASO is a regional organisation overseeing aviation safety and security in the Pacific Islands. Its goal is to provide specialist technical regulatory aviation oversight services to Members to enable a safe and secure aviation environment at a lower total cost than Members would have to meet if they funded regulatory aviation separately. Established in 2005, with a secretariat based in Port Vila, Vanuatu, PASO currently has 13 Pacific government members. PASO delivers its services through a consultancy model underpinned by the standards and recommended practices as set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).



Pacific Community (SPC) **Director General – Dr Stuart Minchin**

SPC is the principal and largest scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, owned and governed by 26 country and territory members. SPC works for the wellbeing of Pacific people through the effective and innovative application of science and knowledge, guided by a deep understanding of Pacific Island contexts and cultures. SPC's focus is on major cross-cutting issues, such as climate change, disaster risk management, food security, gender equality, human rights, non-communicable diseases, and youth employment. Using a multi-sector approach in responding to members' development priorities, SPC draws upon skills and capabilities from around the region and internationally and supports the empowerment of Pacific communities and sharing of expertise and skills between countries and territories.



Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) **Director General – Dr Manu Tupou-Roosen**

FFA strengthens national capacity and regional solidarity so its 17 members can manage, control, and develop their tuna fisheries now and in the future. Based in Honiara, Solomon Islands, the FFA was established to help countries sustainably manage their fishery resources that fall within their 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). FFA is an advisory body providing expertise, technical assistance and other support to its members who make sovereign decisions about their tuna resources and participate in regional decision making on tuna management through agencies such as the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

CROP AGENCY EXPERTISE



Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) **Secretary General – Meg Taylor, DBE**

PIFS supports the 18 Forum Members to work together through deeper forms of regionalism in support of sustainable development, economic growth, good governance, and security. Its role is policy advice, coordination and ensuring the effective implementation of Forum Leaders' decisions, leading to tangible improvements in the lives of the people of the Pacific. Its key focus is on innovative, game changing initiatives for regional action. PIFS promotes an inclusive regional public policy approach to arrive at proposals for Leaders to consider and endorse.



Pacific Power Association (PPA) **Executive Director – Andrew Daka**

PPA is an association of electricity utilities, organisations, and individuals who have an interest in the operations and development of the power industry in the Pacific region. The main objective of PPA is to create an environment of “cooperative partnership” with the private sector, funding institutions, and others with interest in the development of the power industry and to enhance the role of the power sector in Pacific Island countries. PPA is an inter-governmental regional organisation founded by the electricity utilities operating in the Pacific island countries and territories. Established in 1992 with the Secretariat based in Suva, Fiji, PPA currently has a membership of 25 electricity utilities operating in 22 Pacific island countries and territories and 110 Allied Members world-wide.



Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) **Chief Executive Officer – Christopher Cocker**

SPTO is the mandated organisation representing tourism in the Pacific Islands region. With 21 government members and 145 private members, SPTO works to market the Pacific, collect data for informed decision making enhance the 'Pacific' brand and support the capacity of government and the private sector for sustainable tourism. Its key functions include strategic management, advocacy, communications, partnership development, governance and reporting.

CROP AGENCY EXPERTISE



Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Director General – Kosi Latu

SPREP promotes cooperation in the Pacific region and provides assistance in order to protect and conserve the environment and to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations. Based in Samoa, SPREP has 26 member governments including 21 Pacific island countries and territories. As outlined in the SPREP Strategic Plan 2017-2026, climate change resilience is its principal concern and oceans is a cross cutting theme. Other priority areas include: island and ocean ecosystems; environmental monitoring and governance; and waste management and pollution control. SPREP is an accredited entity to the Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund and host of the Pacific Climate Change Centre.



The University of the South Pacific (USP)

Vice-Chancellor & President - Professor Pal Ahluwalia

USP is a multi-modal teaching and learning institution providing innovative, cost-effective, relevant and internationally-recognised education and training. Jointly owned by the governments of 12 Pacific Island countries, USP has 14 campuses and 11 centres. In keeping with its charter, USP provides all levels of education and training to enhance regional capacity in a wide range of disciplines including agriculture, computing studies, economics, laws, environment, sciences, climate change, accounting, management, and teacher training. With the largest concentration of Pacific expertise, USP undertakes research in all aspects of the Pacific islands. It aims to significantly lift its research profile by pursuing strategic partnerships and linkages.

2020

CROP Annual Report
to Pacific Islands Forum Leaders

