



# SPREP

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional  
Environment Programme



10th Pacific Islands Conference

**NATURE CONSERVATION  
AND PROTECTED AREAS**

*Nature Conservation Action for a Resilient Pacific*

# Covid-19 and climate change

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# Disclaimer



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- Neither a doctor, medical researcher, quarantine expert nor epidemiologist
- There is always a good chance that we get our projections wrong – they are best estimates based on experience and knowledge
- Clouds do not always have a silver lining



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# Reality



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- We have had record breaking emissions over decades
- GHGs still linger and trap heat
- Hawaii measured 416.2 ppm in April/2020, highest in 800,000 years
- “Slowing the flow doesn’t mean the tub will stop filling”
- Annual 7.6% drop needed every year for 2° C to be reached, let alone 1.5 °



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# Positives



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- Estimates of 5-11% drop in GHGs in 2020
- US electricity emissions will drop 11% and RE will overtake coal
- Cleaner air in many heavily polluted cities is of benefit, but uneven distribution
- Aviation has seen 75% drop
- Significant drop in maritime transport



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# Challenge



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- Do not delay climate change programs, such as weakening standards for more efficient buildings and cleaner cars
- Economic responses to COVID-19 is likely to influence the pathway of CO2 emissions for decades to come
- Opportunities are there for a climate friendly response to COVID



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# What next?



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- Our fuel use has not fundamentally changed – less emissions from virtual meetings, but still lots of diesel for electricity
- Need to make fundamental shifts
- Pacific diplomacy also needs to be upgraded to these new realities
- When project funds flow again, re-direct or re-focus on climate friendly solutions