

Combatting Climate Change in the Pacific: Regional Governance, agency and dependency*

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Introduction

From the perspective of Pacific island states and territories (PICTs) much of the intense speculation and debate over climate policy seems irrelevant and immature given the oft-repeated warnings of the severe consequences for low-lying islands and atoll countries of climate change. The Pacific is not just 'any region' when it comes to climate change but rather, as Farbotko (2010) argues, is an 'experimental space' of climate change 'canaries'. The position of the Pacific at the frontline of climate change has spurred voluminous research, however studies of the politics of climate change within the region is limited, particularly with regard to and regional processes.

This paper explores the regional politics of climate change in the Pacific. Within the grand architecture of global climate governance, the region provides compelling new insights into the ways climate change is constructed, governed, and shaped by—and in turn shapes—regional and global climate politics. Through an exploration of regional governance as a strategy by which small vulnerable states respond to urgent crises, the paper explores both the potential and the limitations of collective action on environmental issues following the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris 2015. We argue that evolving regional governance on climate change is mobilizing resources and finance to combat climate change. On the surface it appears to be a successful manifestation of solidarity among states and territories facing a shared fate. This solidarity has been institutionalized in three key regional organizations that mobilize resources climate change action through distinct policy narratives about the place of the Pacific in global climate crisis. These organizations also distribute these resources to members. As a result climate

finance in the Pacific is mostly generated by multilateral rather than bilateral donors. However, despite this apparent demonstration of regional agency, beneath the surface regional climate governance is heavily dependent on donors for finance and expertise. This exposes a dual vulnerability of PICTs. They are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change while also being extremely vulnerable to growing dependencies on donors to address these impacts.

The paper has three sections. The first section discusses the various and often competing constructions of climate change in the region and their attendant policy narratives. The second outlines the regional architecture of climate governance in the Pacific in detail. The third demonstrates the flows of finance to the Pacific for climate change and the ways this creates a number of challenges for regional and local agency.

1. Constructing Climate Change in the Pacific

As noted by Connell (2003: 91), climate change first became an international concern in the 1980s as the global scientific community began to take note of global warming and sea level rises that would affect low-lying islands.¹ Climate change began to be conceptualized as a global, political problem of particular concern to island states following the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s first report in 1990, and the development and formation of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) at the Second Climate Conference (see Shibuya 1997; Tisdell 2008; Kendall 2012). The report underscored the dangers of climate change and the possibility of atoll nations being flooded by 2030. Furthermore, strong statements about the fate of small Island states emanated from Pacific leaders at the global level, such as Van Lierop (Vanuatu's UN Ambassador) bold plea: 'we don't have time to wait for conclusive proof. The proof, we fear, may kill us' (Betzold 2010: 138).

At first the dominant discourse on the implications of climate change for PICTs was largely focused on sea-level rises and the loss of land and, or, of whole Pacific island nations. By the 1990s

there were a number key works on the effects of sea level rising on atoll nations (Pernetta and Hughes 1990; Roy and Connell 1991) that added further evidence to the idea of complete obliteration. Whilst the impacts of climate change have been highlighted and accentuated, especially in relation to sea level rises, only a small portion of the literature discusses ways of addressing climate change in PICTs and this literature focuses almost exclusively on adaptation strategies (Kaluwin and Smith 1997). There are exceptions. Bell et al. (2013) argue that climate change is mostly a result of emissions by industrialized countries and it is therefore the responsibility of these polluters to develop mitigation policies to curb anthropogenic climate change. Moreover, Stokirsh (2007) points to the PICTs having to formulate adaptation strategies regardless whether industrialized nations adopt mitigation measures as there are some effects of climate change that are inevitable (see also Barnett 2001).

On significant shift over the last decade has been viewing climate change as part of a security discourse (or set of discourses) that links climate change to national, regional and global security. Barnett and Adger (2003) trace the evolution of the environmental security narrative to Falk's 1971 book, *This Endangered Planet* that links the environment to the politics of security. However they suggest that this narrative did not reach the international political scene until the Toronto Conference in 1988 labeled, "The Changing Atmosphere Implications for Global Security", which specifically identified climate change as an 'environmental security' problem. Even then environmental security and climate change as a security threat remained a niche issue outside academia (see McDonald 2012). Kendall (2012) argues that the correlation between climate change and security was slow to emerge given the dominance of realist thinking in security studies and policy research—whereby security is interpreted as an extraterritorial military threat—downplaying non-traditional threats like climate change. Dupont and Pearman (2006: viii) concur arguing that environmental security has largely been ignored and underestimated in public policy, academia and the media, however, as inter-state wars have diminished, non-state actors such as

terrorists, infectious diseases and unregulated migration have entered the discourse of international security.

Since then the correlation between climate change and security has become far more common in the media, academia, government, and in the institutions charged with addressing and governing climate change. Moreover, comments by key figures have affirmed the correlation and firmly associated it with the Pacific. Ban Ki-moon's statement that sea levels are the 'ultimate security threat' for small island states and Robert Aisi's famous words on addressing the UN Security Council (as a representative of the Pacific Islands Forum): 'the impact of climate change on small islands is no less threatening than the dangers that guns and bombs pose to large nations' are two pertinent examples (see Kendall 2009: 97-98). Within the dual imaginary of a set of states and territories with a shared fate and the securitization of this fate, several policy narratives have emerged at the regional level which seek to address climate change from a Pacific perspective.

A Pacific Climate Discourse: Framing Climate Change in the Pacific

Our focus on the evolution of key narratives and the resultant policy response is not meant to deny the urgency of responding to the threats posed by climate change for the PICTS. Indeed, we subscribe to the view that climate change will pose a severe threat to Pacific island societies. Nevertheless, a critical exploration of the role of regional cooperation in responding to these threats must begin not from a statement of the problem to be analyzed but through an analysis of the 'origins' of the problem. In other words, key questions such as: When was climate change recognized as a problem/policy issue for PICTs? And how was the problem defined and possible solutions articulated? – cannot be ignored.

To understand how climate change in the Pacific is constructed and policy implemented by national governments and regional organizations we engaged in a critical analysis of various policy

narratives developed by scholars, governments and regional bureaucrats. The data corpus of this analysis is based on a review of the extant literature, government documents, and analyses by regional organizations. A critical reading of these texts illustrates the different ways in which climate change in the Pacific has been conceptualized, and ways in which different narratives have influenced the ways that policy is conceived of and implemented on the ground. In this context we define a policy narrative as a narrative or story about a specific policy problem designed to influence decision-making, and shape policy implementation. These narratives create shared meanings for decision-makers both within and outside of a polity who are concerned with the same problem set. Thus in the case of climate change in the Pacific these policy narratives link decisions at the local, national, regional and transnational levels.

A central narrative is that of the necessity for regional cooperation. As early as 1983 a United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) report noted that the imperative of regional cooperation on 'environmental matters' arose from a shared heritage (Dahl and Baumgart, 1983: 25). As the contributors to a later UNEP report noted, sea level rise affects the coastal ecosystems of all PICTs (see Pernetta and Hughes 1990). The centrality of a shared fate is represented by Grasso (2006) who suggests constructing a regional Pacific agreement to work in conjunction with the Kyoto Protocol, which creates a distinction between mitigation and adaptation strategies.

A second key policy narrative focuses on the possible extinction of Pacific island nations and peoples. The extinction narrative effectively links events at the local and national levels. A number of studies have raised the extinction scenario. For example Edwards (1996:69-70) contends that climate policy for the Pacific is compromised because these islands will not exist in the future. At the local level the narrative emphasizes the threat that climate change poses to traditional cultures and socio-economic structures. At the national level it contends that sovereignty will be compromised. For example it has been argued that since atoll states are largely ethnically 'homogenous' with 'high population density... there is little political distance between

the people and the nation-state' (Barnett and Adger 2003: 327). A threat to the livelihoods and human rights of the inhabitants of atoll countries is therefore a threat to the 'nation-state' (Barnett and Adger 2003: 327). Fisher contends that poor levels of human security also exacerbate dependency and undermine states' sovereignty, threatening the stability of state structures and institutions (2011: 311).

Migration features widely in discussions of climate change and the Pacific and is at the center of a third policy narrative. Here the focus is on a dual issue. On one hand, some contend that migration poses a threat to the existence of communities. It has been argued that climate change threats can lead to migration, either to already saturated urban areas, or to neighbouring islands, potentially leading to poverty due to inadequate infrastructure and intensified competition in small labour markets (Edwards 1999: 316-17). On the other hand, others are more concerned with the possible threat that migration may pose to relations between the PICTs and Australia and New Zealand. Moore and Smith (1995: 119) argue that migration flows will depend on neighbouring countries' willingness to welcome climate refugees, and on the respective states' 'adaptive strategies'. The Pacific also features as the focus or—or in the background—of the voluminous literature on climate refugees, a category both adopted and resisted in the Pacific (Bettini 2013; Farbotko and Lazrus 2012; Hartmann 2010; McNamara and Gibson 2009).

A fourth narrative develops the theme of livelihoods. This narrative links the damage to ecosystems with agricultural production and food security. Fisher (2011) uses the example of Tuvalu to argue that 'biophysical climate changes combine with human systems to generate a series of interconnected and cascading effects that affect social vulnerability'. That is, the effects of climate change merge with and affect social security systems, such as 'sanitation, development, health, food security, quality environment, political capacity, resources, and ecosystem biodiversity' (Fisher 2011: 311). In linking climate change with food security Barnett argues that

climate change in the Pacific is indeed dangerous on an economic level, given its likely effect on agricultural production and fisheries, but also on subsistence of the population. He asserts that:

Through its impacts on production, the ability of countries to import food and the ability of households to purchase food, and human health, climate change puts at risk the very basic and universal need for people in the islands to have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food at all times. (Barnett 2005: 236).

These four policy narratives have become hegemonic in discussing the impact of climate change in the Pacific. However, this does not mean that dissenting voices are not to be found in the literature. Kempf (2009: 200-201) contests the hegemonic discourses that represent the Pacific as helpless, and argues that while migration due to climate change may be the ultimate solution for atoll states, adaptive strategies should not be undermined and voices from the Pacific should be heard. Concerning migration as a climate change adaptive strategy, Mortreux and Barnett (2009: 105) argue that the absence of sufficient focus on 'the capacity of social and ecological systems to adapt, the constraints and barriers to adaptation, and the costs of and limits to adaptation' means that conclusions on climate refugees are incomplete. In their view, the widely held notion that the low-lying atoll islands are doomed need not hold true, if measures are taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and adequate adaptation strategies are developed (Mortreux and Barnett 2009: 106). Further, they warn that dominant discourses of migration as a result of climate change can pose a future danger, in that 'large-scale migration may be an impact of climate change affected by policy responses in anticipation of climate impacts rather than by material changes in the environment *per se*.' (Mortreux and Barnett 2009: 111). Moreover, Barnett has challenged the dominant assertion that all PICTs will suffer the same fate. He argues that the effects of climate change are complex, and it cannot be assumed that all island states will become 'Titanic states'. A focus on solutions, such as a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and sustainable development is essential, rather than deeming the Pacific a doomed region (Barnett

2005: 216-17). Further, as noted above there is a strong critical undercurrent of literature that challenges the designation of ‘climate refugees’, a category which projects Pacific island peoples as ‘climate barbarians’ (Bellini 2013). With these ways of imagining the threat to climate change and various policy narratives emanating at the regional level, we now turn to the regional architecture of climate governance seeking to put these narratives into action and assess the prospects of regional agency.

2. The Architecture of Regional Climate Governance

Despite an emerging set of policy narratives, PICTs—like many other small states—lack the resources to respond adequately to the threat posed by climate change. In the light of limited national resources PICTs have sought assistance at the regional level. In this section we examine the role of regional organizations in developing regional climate governance, discuss the coordination of climate policy at the regional level, and assess the challenges faced by the key regional organizations. We argue that despite recognition of the need for regional solutions to climate change and the mobilization of financial resources to enable this, the imagining of PICTs as vulnerable with limited agency reinforces dependency on multilateral and bilateral donors and experts while also exposing the dominant role of regional hegemons Australia and New Zealand in regional climate governance.

Regional Actors: Mandates, Resources, and Competence

Three key regional organizations are at the center of the mobilization of resources to enhance climate security: (I) The Pacific Islands Forum and Secretariat (PIF), (II) the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and (III) the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). While all three are engaged in a vast range climate change related activities, we focus

here on their core climate activities through select examples along with their structure and funding.

I. The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

PIF represents the highest political organ of Pacific regionalism. Created in 1971 full membership is restricted to independent states.ⁱⁱ The PIF is an intergovernmental organization and the highest decision-making body is the annual Forum meeting. The 2005 Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum provided the PIF with a legal basis and formalized the transition from a leaders' meeting to an international organization. There is no formal constitution, which means any topic can be discussed and there are no formal voting structures to encourage decision making by consensus (Shibuya 2009: 105). This approach reflects the normative foundation of the PIF, the so-called 'Pacific Way' emphasizing consensus and solidarity. The decisions made are reflected through *Forum Communiqués* that establish the position taken by the group on issues such as climate change, nuclear testing, fisheries and security/environmental issues. The Communiqués often note the problems, progress or lack of progress on these issues rather than provide programs to solve them. The PIF is generally regarded 'as the authentic policymaker for the region as a whole' (Herr and Bergin, 2011: 15). For the past twenty years it is has played a significant role in bringing regional issues, especially climate change, to the international arena.

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat based in Suva, Fiji provides the continuity to the PIF. The Secretariat is relatively small with only 127 staff and is headed by a Secretary-General elected every three years. The Secretariat's role in regional governance is centered on three strategic programs: the Economic Governance Programme, the Political Governance and Security Programme, and the Strategic Partnerships and Coordination Programme. These programs provide policy advice and expertise to member states and works with other agencies to provide assistance in these areas.

The Pacific Plan whose main aim is to strengthen 'regional cooperation and integration' (Pacific Plan Review 2013:11) forms the basis of the Secretariat work program. The Pacific Plan was formulated by the PIF in 2005 and is considered a 'living document' outlining areas of work in the following categories: economic growth, sustainable development, good governance, and security (PIF, 2005b). The Plan outlines a particular approach to regionalism that values sovereignty: 'Regionalism under the Pacific Plan does not imply any limitation on national sovereignty. It is not intended to replace any national programs, only to support and complement them. A regional approach should be taken only if it adds value to national efforts' (PIF, 2005b: 3). A comprehensive review of the Pacific Plan was undertaken in 2013 and the Framework for Pacific Regionalism endorsed by Forum Leaders in July 2014.

The Secretariat's activities are financed through a budget made up of three components – a regular budget derived from member contributions based on economic size; a core budget based on voluntary contributions from members; and an extra budget derived from funding provided by non-members. In 2012 the annual budget was constructed as follows: \$4,923,567ⁱⁱⁱ (regular budget), \$13,134,222 (core budget), and \$8,922.219 (extra budget). Secretariat finances are heavily dependent on Australia and New Zealand. In 2012 in addition to each contributing \$1,498,230 to the regular budget, Australia contributed \$10,546,738 to the core budget and New Zealand contributed \$2,587,484. Thus the entire core budget was funded by these two states.

In the context of climate change the annual meeting of PIF leaders has provided a platform for bold political declarations and PIF has played two important roles in climate governance. First, it has been instrumental in setting the framework for overall regional governance. Climate change has featured in every PIF Communiqué since 1988. The 1988 Communiqué 'expressed concern about climatic changes in the South Pacific and their potential for serious social and economic disruption in countries of the region' (PIF, 1988). PIF addresses many of the institutional deficiencies inhibiting cooperation broadly, and is able to channel financial resources into regional

cooperation. The Forum established the current principles underlying collective action and regional priorities through three major documents. In October 2000 PIF adopted the *Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change, Climate Variability, and Sea Level Rise, 2000–2004*. This plan was updated in 2005 when Forum Leaders endorsed the *Pacific Islands Framework for Action on Climate Change* (PIFACC) as a regional mechanism to support responses to climate change. The Framework outlines the priority action areas for the Pacific and its central objective is to ensure that Pacific island peoples and communities build their capacities to be resilient to the risks and impacts of climate change by: implementing adaptation measures; governance and decision making; improving understanding of climate change; education, training and awareness; contributing to global greenhouse gas reduction; and partnerships and cooperation. The Framework was supplemented in 2007 when members adopted an action plan to carry out the PIFACC, in which national activities are complemented by regional programming. Further, in 2008 the Pacific Forum meeting in Niue adopted the *Niue Declaration on Climate Change* (PIF, 2008). *The Niue Declaration* is the principal political climate change statement of the Pacific region. It calls for urgent action by the world's major greenhouse gas emitting countries to set targets and make commitments to significantly reduce their emissions, and to support the most vulnerable countries to adapt to and address the impacts of climate change.

III. Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)

Within the fabric of Pacific regionalism, SPC is the oldest organization. Founded in 1947 as the South Pacific Commission the organization attained its current name on its fiftieth anniversary in 1997. In contradistinction to the PIF the SPC was founded as a non-political body. The current membership of the SPC stands at 26^{iv} making it the largest regional organization in the Pacific. Membership includes 22 PICTs along with Australia, New Zealand, France and the United States—a collection of former and present regional hegemony. The governing body of the SPC is the biennial

Conference of the Pacific Community (CPC). Each member state has one vote although voting is rare with the Pacific Way of making decisions by consensus the dominant mode of arriving at decisions in the organization. The CPC is complemented by the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) which meets annually. The CRGA is empowered to make decisions on the governance of SPC in the years that the CPC does not meet.

The SPC is headed by a Director-General who is assisted by three Deputy Directors-General. The headquarters of the SPC is in Noumea but four program directorates (Applied Geoscience and Technology Division; the Economic Development Division; the Education, Training and Human Development Division; and the Land Resources Division) are based in Suva. The organization also has regional offices in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia and in the Solomon Islands. Funding is provided under two budget headings – core and non-core. Core funding is derived solely from member countries and non-member countries provide non-core funding. In 2013 the total income^v of the SPC was \$117,817,480 of which \$58,507,676 was provided by members, and \$59,309,804 by non-members. Members contributed roughly 42% of their funding as a core contribution. The highest member contributions were made by the metropolitan members: Australia contributed the most to the SPC, \$33,941,115 (33.90%), followed by New Zealand (\$6,604,066), France (\$3,734,096) and the U.S. (\$2,740,922), which makes up approximately 93% of the total member government contributions made to the SPC. In terms of non-members, the two highest financial contributions to the SPC were from the European Union.

The SPC's work program is mapped into eight functional areas.^{vi} Through these SPC has positioned itself as the lead agency for a range of climate related activities and has secured funding from external agencies for capacity building, land-based and coastal adaptation measures. In practice the SPC is involved in attracting finance for climate change related projects in member states and territories. SPC currently has a *Climate Change Engagement Strategy 2011-2015*, which

contains three strategic outcomes: strengthened capacity of Pacific Island communities to respond effectively to climate change, climate change integrated into SPC programs and operations, and strengthened partnerships at the regional and international level.

The Geoscience Division has a leading role in responding to climate change and will be the focus of our discussion of SPC. Its goal is to 'apply geoscience and technology to realize new opportunities for improving the livelihoods of Pacific communities'.^{vii} Essentially the core work program of the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) is to be integrated into the Division, 'using the tools in SOPAC to assess whether the use of resources is viable, and to study natural disasters and their impact on island communities'.^{viii} The Division has a Strategic Plan 2010-2015 that lays out the key goals and means of delivery through three technical work programs: Geoscience for Development^{ix}, Water and Sanitation, and Disaster Reduction.

The Geoscience for Development Programme (G4D) supports increasing resilience and adapting to hazards through a "no regrets" policy. It specifically focuses on ocean and coastal adaptation responses through various means such as policy work and advice, vulnerability assessments and research. It carries out these operations through its subdivisions, four of which are climate focused: the Marine, Coastal Science and Survey, the Geology, Minerals and Hydrocarbons, the Pacific Sea Level Monitoring, and the Technical Workshop. Examples of the projects in these subdivisions include the Lifuka Project. The project assess the vulnerability and adaptation to sea-level rise in Lifuka, Tonga as part of a AUS\$12 million Pacific Adaptation Strategy Assistance Programme (PASAP) funded by the Australian Government. This demonstrates the way funding is channeled through SPC to local climate change projects. Similar examples abound, such as the Environmentally Safe Aggregate for Tarawa project based in Tarawa in Kiribati funded by the EU. The Tarawa project is a 'no-regrets' adaptation response to reducing pressure on South Tarawa's beaches. The 'no regrets' ethos is common in climate change projects in the region and exemplifies the particular temporal aspect of climate change measures for PICTs.

III. The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

In addition to these two political organizations, a third, functional agency has contributed to capacity building for climate change action. SPREP is the principal regional intergovernmental environmental organization (as opposed to PIF and SPC who have taken on environmental priorities in the era of climate change) and is involved in knowledge creation and sharing, maintaining an institutional 'home' that acts as an arena for deliberation and decision making, and acting as an interface between donors and local partners throughout the region. SPREP plays two important roles in regional climate governance. First, it is a leading Pacific organization in climate change work and is the largest climate change adaptation initiative in the region. It has implemented over 100 donor-assisted regional projects in climate change and environmental management (UNFCCC 2013). SPREP has endorsed climate change as a strategic priority as a part of its Strategic Plan 2011-2015, which states that:

By 2015, all Members will have strengthened capacity to respond to climate change through policy improvement, implementation of practical adaptation measures, enhancing ecosystem resilience to the impacts of climate change, and implementing initiatives aimed at achieving low-carbon development.^x

It also has a Climate Change Division that has three programs: Adaptation, Mitigation, and Policy and Science. The Policy and Science program coordinates regional activities. In this coordinating role SPREP hosts key meetings and reviews regional climate change activities. In support of this role SPREP has convened annual Climate Change Roundtables since 2008. The main objective of these meetings is facilitating climate action in line with the PIFACC. It provides support to PICTs in international climate change negotiations, specifically the UNFCCC. Since the inception of the UNFCCC, the Conference of the Parties (COP) was established, decision-making bodies of the Convention, in which all States of the Convention are represented. Due to the complexity of these

negotiations, SPREP has taken a leading role in providing technical advice through a negotiation skills training framework to further the interests of the PICTs in the international arena.^{xi}

It further supports the PICTs with their national communications preparations that are required as members of UNFCCC to enhance the understanding of overall global emissions and to establish what national climate change issues are prevalent and what type of financing is required to tackle these problems. The program also has a *Knowledge Management for Climate Change* initiative as a result of past Climate Change Roundtables meetings and PIFACC, and is in line with the SPREP Strategic Plan. The Initiative is designed to 'enhance and build capacity for conducting applied research, fostering meteorological, climatological, and oceanic observation and monitoring programs to improve understanding, awareness, and applications of targeted responses to climate change related disaster risk reduction.'^{xii} SPREP is also in partnership with other regional and international organizations performing systematic collection, analysis and sharing of information including traditional knowledge. A recent project was the development of the Pacific Climate Change Portal, which synthesizes all climate change information in the PICTs region.

SPREP's second role is to provide assistance to PICTs in environmental protection and implementation of sustainable development. This is implemented through the adaptation and mitigation programs. In pursuit of this role SPREP currently hosts three key projects. The Global Environmental Facility funded project *Pacific Islands Greenhouse Gas Abatement through Renewable Energy Project* (PIGGAREP) was started in 2007 as a part of the mitigation program. The project commenced at the completion of the preparatory exercise, the *Pacific Islands Renewable Energy Project*. The aim of the project is to reduce the growth of fossil fuel use in the Pacific region by 33% by using renewable energy. It is being implemented in 11 PICTs.^{xiii} The GEF, SPREP and UNDP are implementing partners. The GEF provided a US\$5.25 million project grant from the GEF Trust Fund (climate change focal area) with US\$20.88 million in co-financing from

PICT governments (approx. US\$16 million) small amounts from SPREP and local and development banks have been approached (US\$1 million).^{xiv}

In terms of adaptation projects, in 2009, SPREP commenced the *Pacific Mangroves Initiative*, which has two regional mangrove projects. The first one is the *Mangrove Ecosystem for Sustainable Climate Change Adaptation and Livelihoods* (MESCAL) project in Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The project is funded by BMZ (US\$3.44 million disbursed), and is administered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Worldfish Centre, Solomon Islands, and the Institute of Applied Science at the University of the South Pacific (USP). The second mangrove project is the *Mangrove Rehabilitation for Sustainably-Managed Forest* (MARSH) implemented in PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. MARSH is a 5-year project that began in 2012 and is funded by USAID, which aims at decreasing deforestation and forest degradation, and increasing the communities' resilience to the effects of climate change.^{xv}

SPREP also hosts the *Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project* (2009-2014), which began in 2009 and is currently being implemented in 14 PICTs countries. In Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands the project is focused on food production and food security, whilst the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Samoa and Vanuatu are addressing coastal zone management, and Nauru, Niue, Republic of Marshall Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu are aiming to enhance their water resources management. Due to the support of AusAID and USAID, Kiribati will also become members of this project. The UNFCCC Special Climate Change Fund is investing in the project with US\$13.13 million disbursed to date, AusAID is investing US\$7.8 million, and the project is being implemented by the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP).

SPREP works closely with PICTs to develop their National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPA). NAPA is an initiative by the UNFCCC that aims for Least Developed Countries (LDC) to identify and prioritize their adaptation needs, so that these requirements can be funded and

implemented. Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu have successfully submitted their NAPAs and therefore qualify for NAPA funding and are currently implementing their priority needs.

It becomes apparent from the description of these three key regional organizations that regional cooperation is fundamental to addressing climate change in PICTs and climate change is fundamental in shaping regional cooperation—and indeed mobilizing it. This mutually constitutive relationship between regional cooperation and climate change governance is on the one hand, a seemingly positive example of the collective agency of PICTs. It appears to exemplify the collective agency desired and lauded at the global level and within the region itself while challenging the assumption of a doomed region and of limited or non-existent agency in small, distant states and territories. It is also clear that these regional organizations play an enabling role in mobilizing resources and providing technical support for member states and territories for both adaptation and mitigation—for the pursuit of climate security. Yet on the other hand the heavy financial dependency on donor countries from within the region—Australia and New Zealand, and from the U.S., Japan and the EU epitomizes the dependency of PICTs that heightens the sense of vulnerability and limits to agency. In order to address climate change PICTs and their regional representative organizations remain heavily dependent on climate finance.

3. Climate Finance: Institutions, Distribution and Normative Implications

In this section we analyze climate finance in the Pacific to demonstrate the dependency of regional organizations on external finance—finance which is far from sufficient—and the normative and political implications for regional climate governance. It examines the impact of a fragmented, diverse, and complicated regime on the stated goals of climate finance.

The Institutional Framework of Climate Finance in the Pacific

Climate finance is of crucial importance in assisting Pacific nations to combat climate change. The PICTs lack the requisite financial resources to devise and implement adaptation and mitigation strategies. While partly arising from the size and scale of the challenges posed by climate change the dependence of Pacific nations on climate finance is a result of their general economic weakness and vulnerability, and dependence on foreign aid for standard development purposes. For example, in 2005, official development assistance accounted for 61% of Marshall Islands' GDP, 50% of the GDP of the Federated States of Micronesia, and 33% of Kiribati's GDP (Larmour 2007: 4). Despite receiving such high levels of foreign aid, economic growth in the PICTs in the post-independence period has been slow. The relationship between this heavy dependence on foreign aid and slow economic growth has been termed the Pacific Paradox (O'Brien and Williams 2007: 324). In the absence of the requisite financial capacity to invest in adaptation and mitigation policies, the nations of the Pacific are dependent on climate finance—particularly given the urgency of climate change scenarios on the so-called 'front-line'. It is important to make a point of clarity here. PICTs need finance to take action in climate change, yet the imagining of PICTs as climate 'canaries' also makes them a focal point for climate finance and aid. While dependency becomes clear in the following section so too does the lack of control over climate finance emanating from a raft of donors, schemes, and initiatives. Limited capacity in not only financial, but also manifests in a limited capacity to actually utilize the financial resources pledged to the region.

The context of climate finance in the Pacific has been established at the global level. There are currently 23 climate funds in operation, of which 19 are of relevance to the Pacific. Table 1 provides a summary of the funds currently in operation and their stated purpose in providing funds for either adaptation or mitigation measures. Currently there are an estimated 887 climate programs approved and/or underway globally with 30 programs in the Pacific. Total pledges

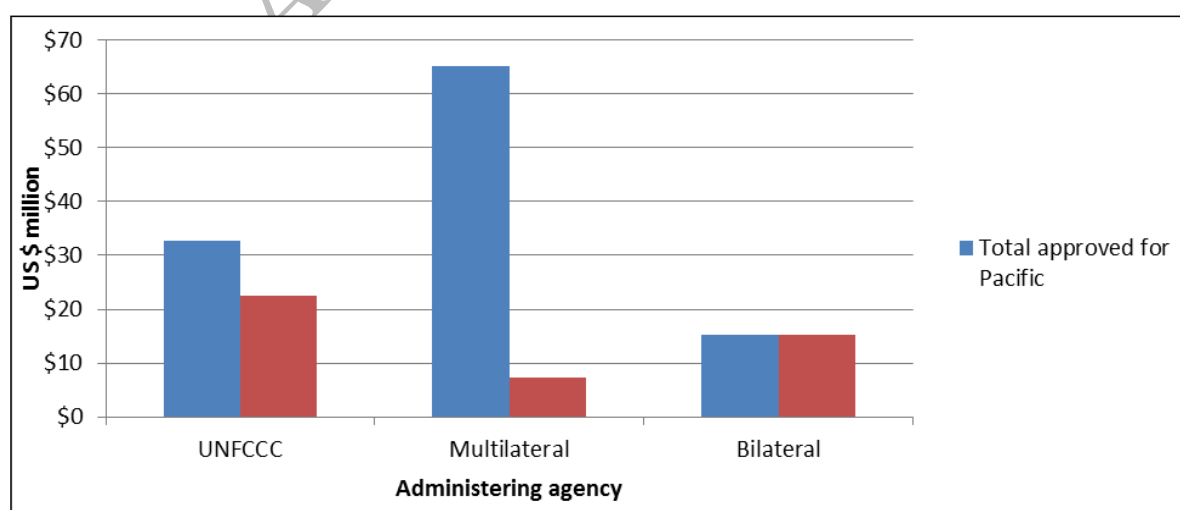
amount to \$32.9 billion of which \$5.5 billion has been approved and \$2.1 billion dispersed to recipient countries. The total funding approved for PICTs stands at \$109 million.

Table 1: Sources of climate finance (funds, administrating bodies and stated purpose)

Name of Fund	Administrating body/ies	Organisation type	Stated purpose
Adaptation Fund *	GEF (UNFCCC)	UNFCCC	Adaptation
Least Developed Countries Fund *	GEF (UNFCCC)	UNFCCC	Adaptation
Special Climate Change Fund *	GEF (UNFCCC)	UNFCCC	Adaptation
Pilot Program for Climate Resilience *	World Bank	Multilateral	Adaptation
Strategic Priority on Adaptation Programme	GEF	Multilateral	Adaptation
Strategic Climate Fund	World Bank	Multilateral	Mitigation and adaptation
Clean Technology Fund	World Bank	Multilateral	Mitigation
MDG Achievement Fund – Environment and Climate Change th	UNDP	Multilateral	Mitigation and adaptation
GEF Trust Fund (Climate change focal area) *	GEF	Multilateral	Mitigation and adaptation
Scaling-Up Renewable Energy Program for Low Income Countri	World Bank	Multilateral	Mitigation
UN-REDD Programme *	UNEP, UNDP and the FAO	Multilateral	Mitigation
Forest Carbon Partnership Facility *	World Bank	Multilateral	Mitigation
Forest Investment Program	World Bank	Multilateral	Mitigation
Indonesia Climate Change Trust Fund	UNDP as interim trustee	Multilateral	Mitigation and adaptation
Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund	European Investment Bank	Multilateral	Mitigation
Amazon Fund	Brazilian Development Bank	Multilateral	Mitigation
Congo Basin Forest Fund	African Development Bank	Multilateral	Mitigation
Global Climate Change Alliance *	EC	Multilateral	Mitigation and adaptation
International Climate Fund (formerly ETF-IW)	DFID	Bilateral	Mitigation and adaptation
Hatoyama Initiative *	JICA	Bilateral	Mitigation and adaptation
International Climate Initiative *	BMU	Bilateral	Mitigation and adaptation
International Forest Carbon Initiative *	AusAid	Bilateral	Mitigation
Norway-Indonesia REDD+ Partnership	Norad	Bilateral	Mitigation

In contradistinction to the global trend the majority of climate finance provided to the PICTs has originated from multilateral and not bilateral sources (see figure 1). Multilateral sources account for \$65 million, however, only \$27 million has been dispersed.

Figure 1: Approved and disbursed climate finance^{xvi} in Pacific by type of administering agency



For instance, there are four projects approved in the Pacific as part of the GEF Trust Fund (climate change focus). All four projects are focused on mitigation. Two projects have a regional focus and are concerned with renewable energy and energy efficiency. Two further renewable energy projects are underway in Palau, and in the Marshall Islands. The total financing for these projects is \$8.2million pledged. The Adaptation Fund has provided funding for adaptation programs in the Cook Islands (\$5,381,600 approved), Samoa (\$8,732,351 approved), and the Solomon Islands (\$5,533,500 approved). Two more project concepts in the Pacific have been endorsed in Fiji, and Papua New Guinea. The Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) has provided funding for nine projects in the Pacific. These projects have centered on the creation of NAPAs. In addition the LDCF has provided funding (\$2-3 million for each project to Samoa, Kiribati and Tuvalu) for adaptation projects.

The Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) under the UNFCCC was established in 2001 to finance projects relating to adaptation; technology transfer and capacity building; energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management; and economic diversification. Only one project has been undertaken in the Pacific with SCCF funding. A regional adaptation project, coordinated by SPREP is underway in Cook Islands, Fiji, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Samoa. The SCCF has disbursed \$13.125 million to the project but co-financing from the GEF, AusAID and UNDP has increased total funding to \$57 million.

Bilateral funding mechanisms have been developed in the Pacific by Australia and Germany. The Australian International Forest Carbon Initiative has financed a number of projects and the German International Climate Initiative (ICI) has financed three regional and one REDD project in PNG.^{xvii} Two of the regional projects^{xviii} are mitigation focused, and the other^{xix} adaptation focused. However, the status of bilateral funding is unclear given the difficulty in estimating disbursed Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funds targeted towards

climate finance because of the lack of transparency in the reporting of the Japanese government. Nevertheless, there are some indicators that can be used as measures of the status of Hatoyama funds pledged. The Japanese government has reported to the OECD that its funding of the *Samoa Power Sector Expansion project* (SPSE) is climate change focused. This project was reported by JICA as constituting \$39.4 million spent on climate change in 2007. However, the status of this project as a climate change project is unclear and raises the further issue in climate finance. On one hand, an ADB report outlines climate adaptation (rather than mitigation) as a special feature of the project. It states: 'The Project supports the objectives of the Government's National Adaptation Program of Action (2005) through the underground transmission network cabling program. The program will help to reduce exposure of transmission assets to cyclones and reduce the impacts to EPC and consumers of cyclone damage to the transmission network' (ADB, 2007: 9). On the other hand, project documents dated 2007 state the purpose of the SPSE is to expand and diversify the power sector to meet future load growth and reduce dependence on diesel imports. There was no mention of climate change in project administration documents at this time. In the absence of hard evidence it appears that this project was framed in different ways by the Samoan government and its financial partners. For example, AusAid reported to the OECD (also in 2007) its \$11.2 million pledged to the SPSE project fulfilled 'climate change and desertification' objectives. A further \$1.6 million was committed by AusAid to the project in 2009. The majority of these JICA and AusAid funds were delivered through the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as loans (ADB, undated). The ADB is providing a \$26.61 million loan and a \$15.39 million grant for the project, and the government-owned Electric Power Corporation (EPC) will cover the balance of \$12 million (ADB 2007).

This example illustrates the caution with which statistics on climate funding has to be approached. The SPSE does not seem to have begun its life as a climate change-focused project but it is framed as a climate change project by major funders. Given the sums involved the

inclusion or exclusion of this single project shapes regarding the balance between bilateral and multilateral sources of finance flowing into the Pacific.

Distributional Issues

Statistics on the total amount of funds pledged for climate finance provide only partial answers to questions concerning the sources of finance. Another key issue pertains to the speed of disbursement.

Climate Finance Update outlines four stages of climate finance:

Pledges: Verbal or signed commitments from donors to provide financial support to a particular fund.

Deposits: Funds that have been transferred from the donor into the account(s) of the fund (also known as committed funds.)

Approved: Funds that have been officially approved and earmarked for a specific project or country program.

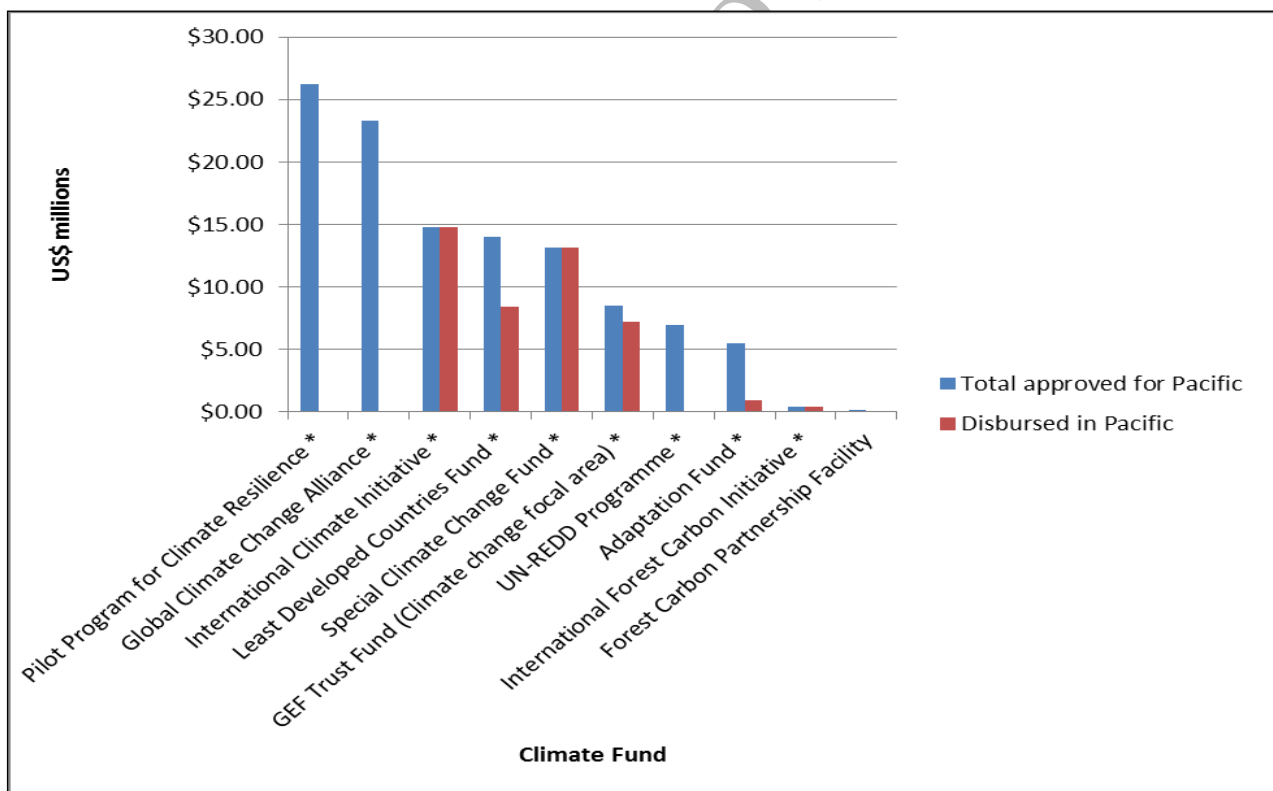
Disbursed: Funds that have been spent, either through administrative means or directly to an implementation programme or project, with proof of the spending.

At the global level the trajectory from pledge to disbursement has been slow. Only \$2.1 billion (6%) of the total US\$32 billion climate finance pledged has been dispersed globally. A further \$9.5 billion is in an approved status signifying that a relatively marked increase of funds will begin to reach designated climate projects shortly. It is worth noting here that an 'approved' status signifies the specific projects have been developed and passed the application process with the source institution. There will be a greater proportion of this money disbursed than the difference between global pledges and that disbursed.

There is no equivalent 'pledged' status of funds on a Pacific regional level since pledges from the various inter-governmental organization sources do not entail exact quantities of money for the Pacific. The dispersal of approved multilateral funding sources and UNFCCC funds are much

lower than bilateral funds in the Pacific, currently standing at 32% and 28% respectively. The largest set of funds approved, the World Bank Pilot Program for Climate Resilience (PPCR) has not to date dispersed any of the US\$26 million in approved funds for the Pacific. There are, however, three pilot programs for adaptation being developed in Samoa, PNG and Tonga. Samoa will be host to the first program with a US\$25 million project to enhance airport road and coastal infrastructure approved in February 2014. Tonga and PNG have been allocated small grants to enable them to develop proposals for the PPCR funds. The smallest multilateral source of climate funds approved and disbursed was for the GEF Trust Fund (climate change focal area). Of US\$8.51 million approved, US\$7.21 has been dispersed. The outstanding projects in this category come from the PPCR and GCCA. All of these projects are relatively recent; they were approved in 2011.

Figure 2: Climate funds in Pacific by initiative and status (approved, disbursed)



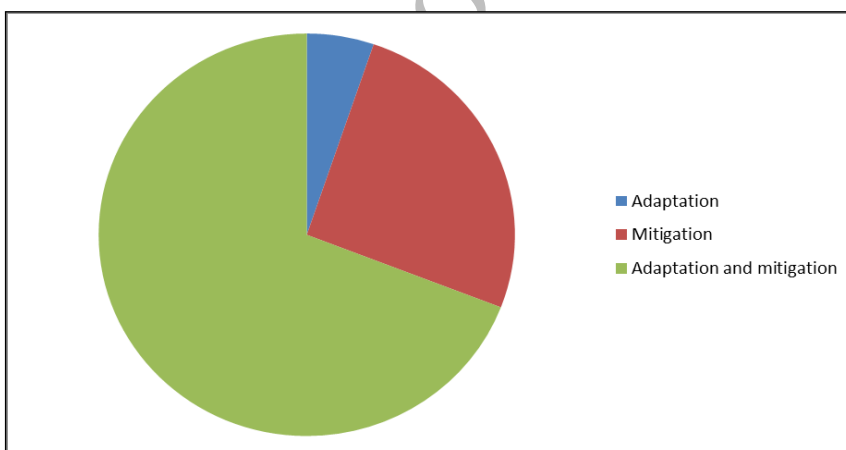
In the PICTs, all of the \$15 million bilateral funds that have an 'approved' status have been disbursed fully. This is likely due to the fact dispersal of funds approved in bilateral aid agencies is much faster. All but US\$400,000 (from AusAid) of this total comes from the four projects in the

International Climate Initiative (ICI) approved in 2008 or 2009. There may be more money pledged from bilateral agencies to the Pacific. For example, Australia has pledged AU\$134 million in total for adaptation in the Pacific (DCCEE, 2011). At present the German ICI and the UK ICF do not have specific pledges for the Pacific. These statistics for climate ODA (and loans) indicate that financing is limited in monetary terms and also limited in the number of projects.

Priorities of climate change finance

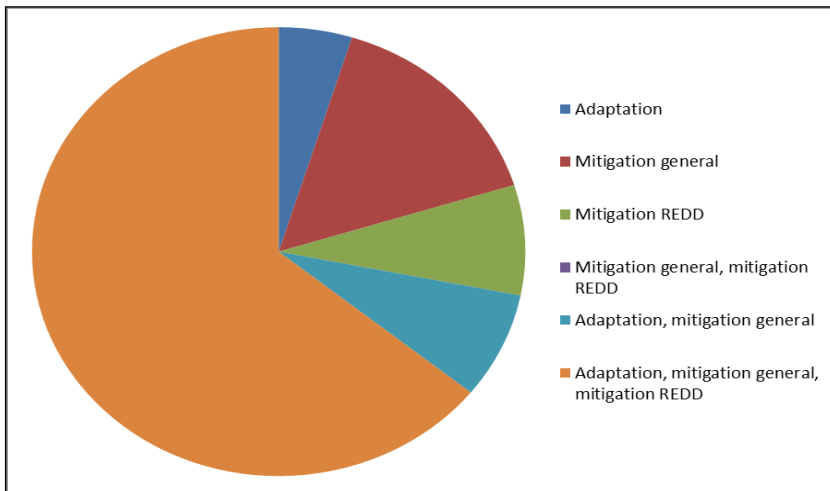
No single measure exists by which the priority of funders can be determined. For instance, if one looks at the stated purpose of climate funds pledged, there does not seem to be a distinct division between mitigation and adaptation activities. However, the result is different on a project-level basis. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 are based on data on the stated purpose of each fund in aggregate terms. It does not indicate the proportion of mitigation versus adaptation-focused funds on a project level that are undertaken across categories.

Figure 3: Climate finance by stated purpose of fund



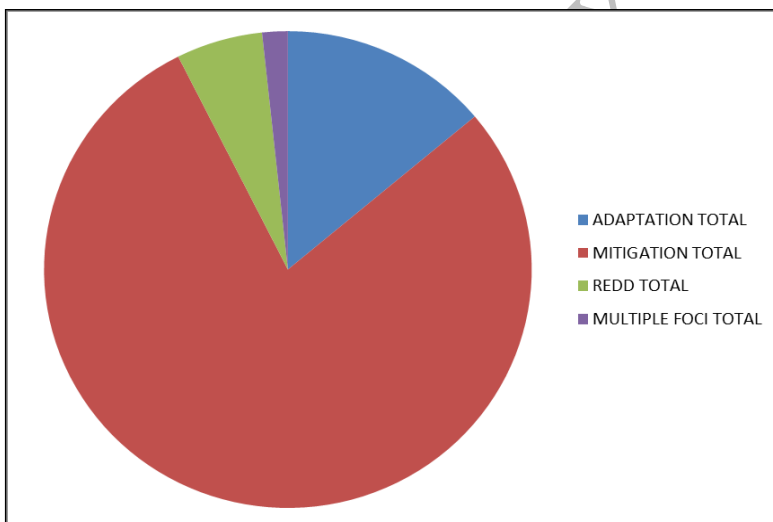
An illustration of complications that arise from this way of measuring priorities is the GEF Trust Fund. The GEF Trust Fund has both mitigation and adaptation as a stated purpose. However 98.5% of funds from the climate change focal area are spent on mitigation activities.

Figure 4: Climate finance by focus of national pledges (adaptation, mitigation general, mitigation REDD)



Looking at pledges on a project level paints a different picture. Chart 6 indicates a definite focused on mitigation over adaptation, REDD and projects with multiple foci. Of the US\$8.09 billion of approved climate projects, US\$6.27 billion is dedicated to mitigation only.

Figure 5: Climate finance by approved individual projects



From the perspective of PICTs, adaptation measures are of greater importance than those concerned with mitigation since these countries are minor contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. However, only 15 per cent of finance approved since 2003 earmarked for adaptation projects. In the Pacific the Adaptation Fund has approved one project for the Solomon Islands; and

endorsed project concepts for PNG, Fiji and the Cook Islands. Three further projects in the Pacific have been proposed by UNDP in the Cook Islands, Samoa and PNG.

Conclusion: Agency, 20/05/2016ependency and dual vulnerabilities

The climate finance regime has created a number of challenges for small Pacific island nations.

Three key challenges can be identified. First, financing is channeled through a variety of different mechanisms, including direct budget support, multilateral banks, global funds, and regional organizations. As the Natural Resource Minister of Tuvalu, Elisala Pita stated in 2014, 'They promise a lot of funding but the criteria to access them are so complicated, and we lack the capacity' (Sydney Morning Herald, 12/3/2014). Further the approach to climate finance is donor-driven—whether multilateral or bilateral—lacking effective coordination. Different funding mechanisms have a range of accounting obligations, varying timelines, and complex reporting requirements. Thus despite pledges and the existence of a regional architecture for climate governance (and the ways in which climate change has become integral to the regional architecture of inter-state and territory cooperation), capacity to utilize climate finance is limited. There is agency in the Pacific on climate change but it is heavily dependent on external finance and expertise.

Second, and closely related to the lack of coordination, is the absence of country ownership; echoing criticisms that have been leveled at development assistance by recipient countries for decades. Despite the high level recognition that climate change is a threat to the security and very existence of PICTs, climate finance has begun to mirror conventional aid and development finance—at least from the view of PICTs. As Toke Talagi, the Premier of Niue stated at the opening of the Pacific Climate Change Roundtable in 2011, 'I have enough problems just figuring out the acronyms let alone what they can do to assist all of us. And to make matters worse each and every donor and acronym has their own governance accountability transparency frameworks which is challenging and frustrating to all of us'.^{xx} Talagi's statement is instructive not

only for his admission of confusion, but his evocation of solidarity among PICTs 'all of us' and his distancing from the agencies, donors, and organizations financing climate activity. Thus PICTs are seemingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change while also being extremely vulnerable to growing dependencies on donors to address these impacts.

However, while our assessment of agency in the Pacific may appear pessimistic, we would like to conclude by mentioning ways in which agency has persevered. PICTs have not simply been passive recipients of climate finance but have exercised their agency to demand changes to the existing architecture. They have voiced their criticism of the regime and articulated for change in the UNFCCC through utilizing their memberships of Pacific regional organizations and key developing country coalitions. PICT nations are active in a number of different fora in the UNFCCC process. They have expressed their opinions as individual nations in COP meetings, and on various climate finance boards as well as collectively through membership of state-based coalitions such as AOSIS, the G77 and China, and the Coalition for Rainforest Nations. From the outset of the UNFCCC process i.e. at the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change (INCFCCC), AOSIS, the G77, and PICT nations have been pursuing the topic of climate finance in their submissions. Central to the concerns of these groups has been access to, and transparency of funds. Whether this will make significant changes to the global architecture of climate governance or to the positions taken at the regional levels remains to be seen, but will be a crucial area of inquiry in the coming years.

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ⁱⁱ The 16 member states of the PIF are Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Associate Member status has been granted to New Caledonia and French Polynesia (2006), and Tokelau, (2014). Special Observer status has been conferred on Wallis and Futuna (2006), the Commonwealth (2006), the United Nations (2006) the Asian Development Bank (2006), Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (2007), the World Bank (2010), the ACP Group (2011), American Samoa (2011), Guam (2011) and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (2011), Timor Leste (2002), and the International Organization for Migration (2014).

ⁱⁱⁱ In Fiji dollars.

^{iv} American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna, plus Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States of America.

^v In US dollars.

^{vi} Applied GeoScience and Technology Division; the Economic Development Division; the Education, Training and Human Development Division; the Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division; the Land Resources Division; the Public Health Division; the Statistics for Development Division; and the Strategic, Policy and Planning Facility.

^{vii} <http://www.sopac.org/gsd-overview>

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} It is also referred to as the Ocean and Islands Programme

^x <http://www.sprep.org/Climate-Change/climate-change-overview>

^{xi} <http://www.sprep.org/Policy-and-Science/conference-of-the-parties-cop-support>

^{xii} <http://www.sprep.org/Policy-and-Science/knowledge-management>

^{xiii} The Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Island, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

^{xiv} <http://gefonline.org/projectDetailsSQL.cfm?projID=2699>

^{xv} <http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/oceania/projects/?11590/Healthy-forests>

^{xvi} *Note:* The bilateral finance summarised in the table above does not include the currently unclear status of the JICA pledges through the Hatotoyama Initiative, particularly a power expansion project in Samoa.

^{xvii} The 'YUS Forest Reserve' (KfW Development Bank and Conservation International).

^{xviii} The 'Coral Triangle Initiative' (Nature Conservancy, WWF Indonesia and Mama Graun Conservation Trust in PNG), and the 'Advancing the Micronesia Challenge' through New Protected Areas project (various NGOs). The German aid agency GIZ has pledged and disbursed approximately US\$2 million for each project.

^{xix} The 'Pacific Mangroves Initiative' (The SPREP, IUCN, WorldFish Centre and Institute of Applied Science at the University of the South Pacific (USP))

^{xx} <https://www.sprep.org/Climate-Change/opening-statement-at-the-pacific-climate-change-roundtable>

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